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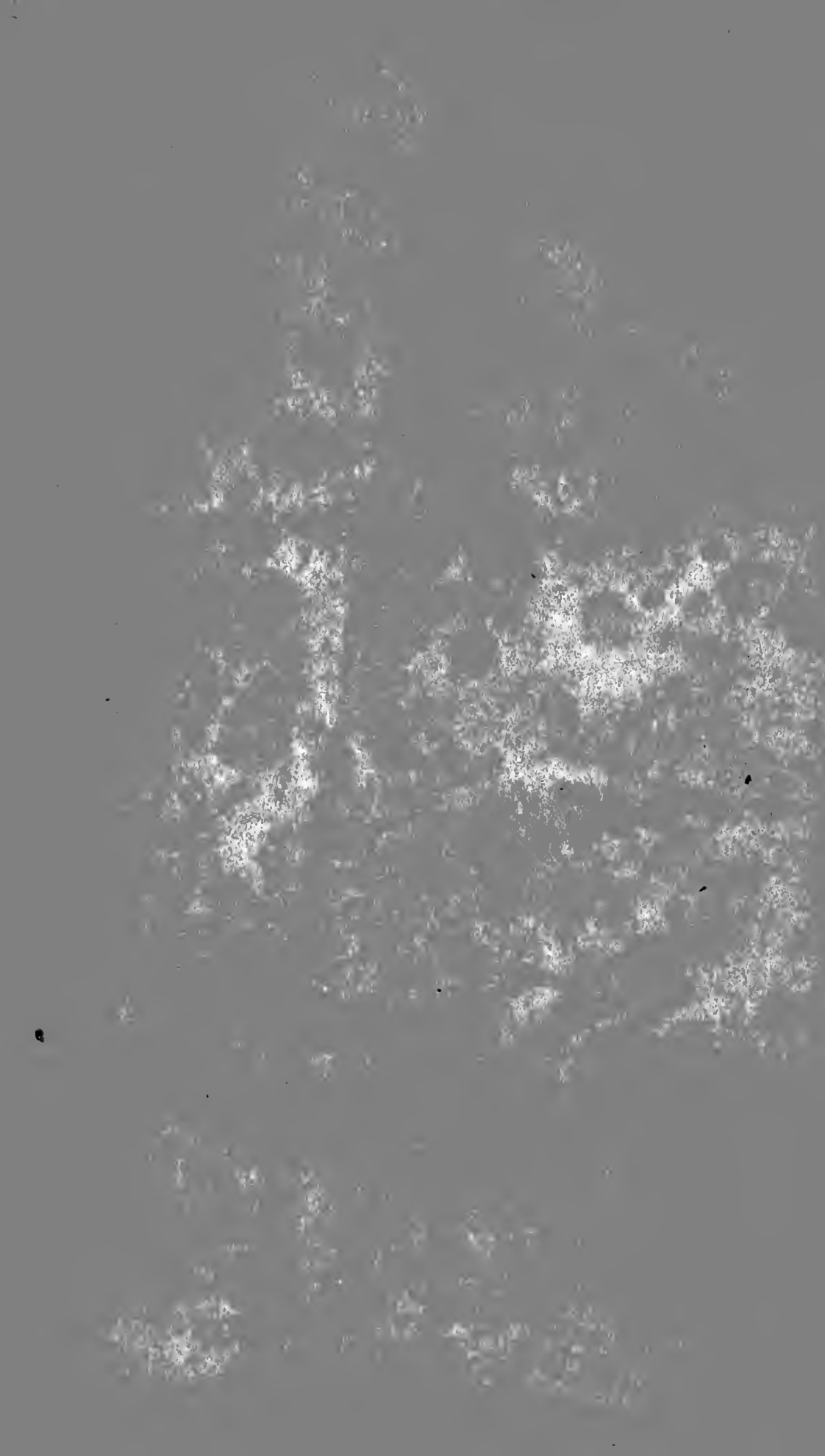
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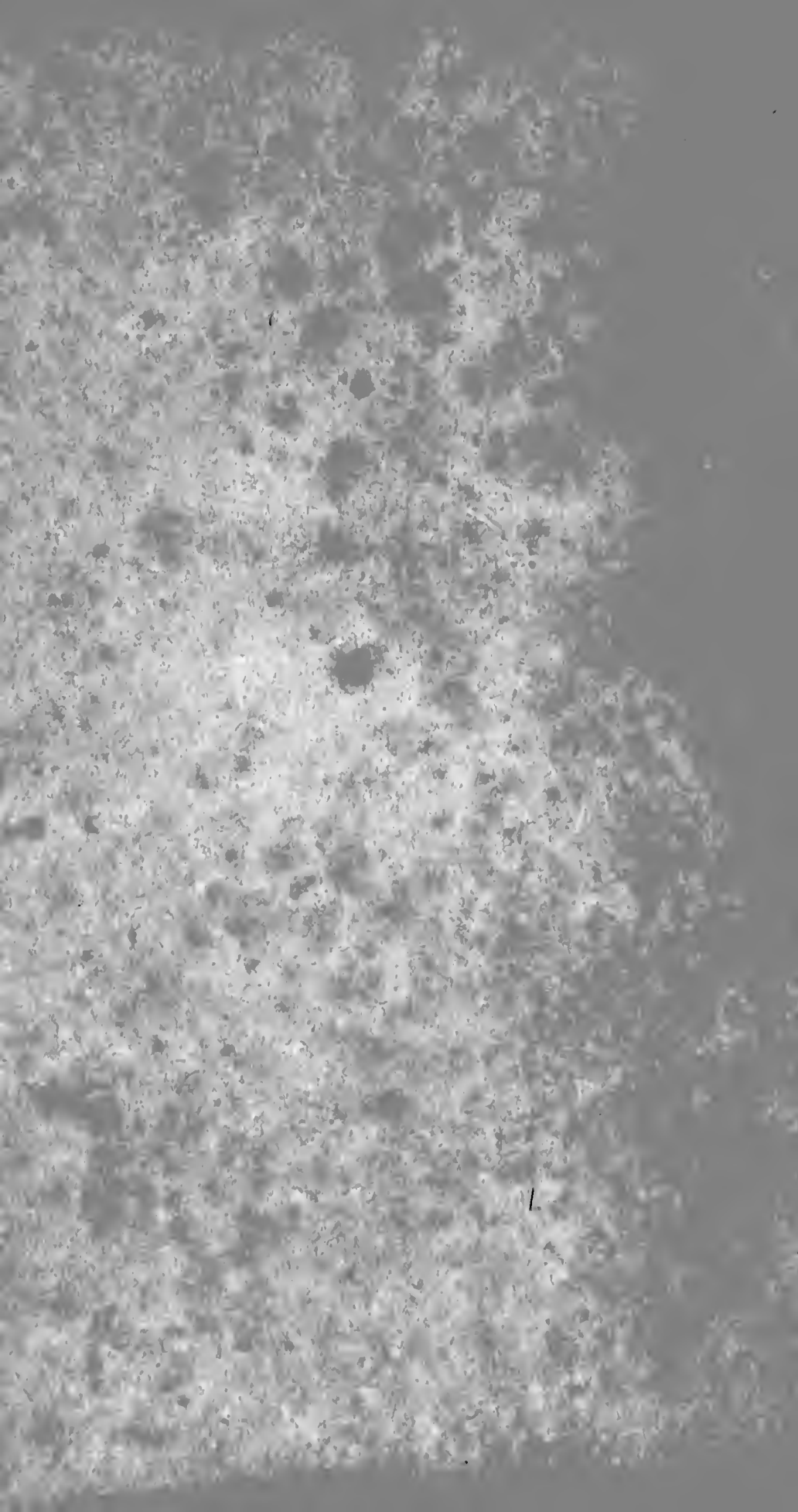
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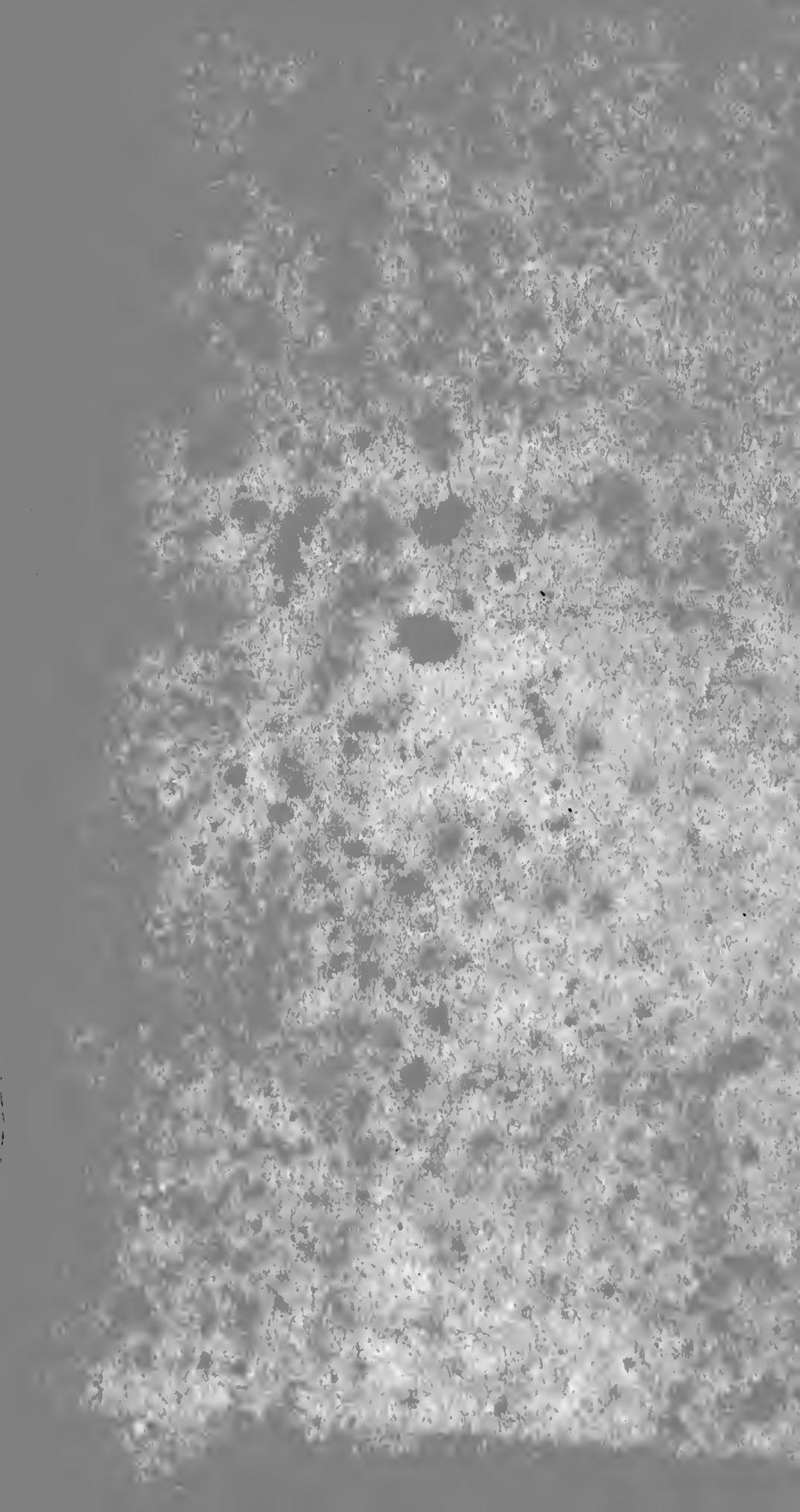
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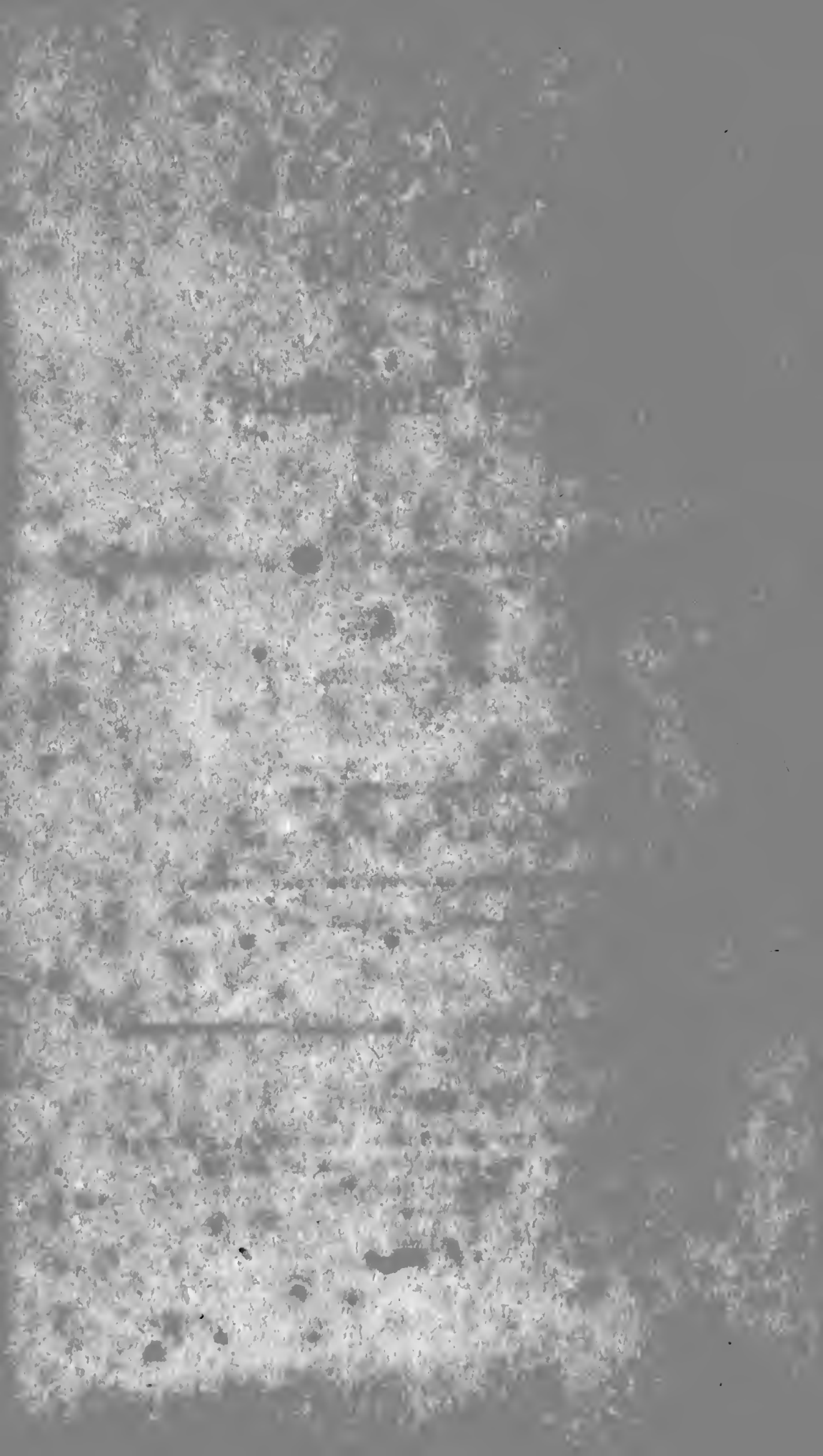
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And. Hunter

LECTURES

ON

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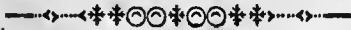
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BY DAVID TAPPAN, D. D.

LATE HOLLIS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THAT SEMINARY.



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LECTURES ON
JEWISH ANTIQUITIES.

LECTURE I.

Origin and progress of civil government. Political government at first parental or patriarchal. Illustrations and proofs from sacred history before and after the flood. Crime of Ham for which he was cursed. Why this curse was denounced, not on Ham himself, but on his son Canaan. In what respects this curse was fulfilled.

THE laws relating to the theological department in this Society, and the express will of the Founder of this professorship, require the Instructor to read to the two higher classes a weekly private Lecture on some topic connected with divinity. Complete arrangements for this purpose have been but recently made. The desire of the Corporation has determined me to employ a number of discourses on the subject of *Jewish and Christian Antiquities*. Some acquaintance with each of these is not only very necessary to those, who mean to be religious instructors, but is a useful and interesting science to all.

The Antiquities of the Jews are important and venerable on many accounts. They are more antient and better authenticated, than those of any other people of so early a date. The Jews ever have been and still are a remarkable nation. Their civil and religious institutions, their character, destination, and fortunes have been

singular and wonderful. Their history has a peculiar claim to the attention of Christians, who believe them to have been the favorite people of God, the appointed trustees and propagators of the true religion in the midst of an idolatrous world, the types and progenitors of the Messiah, who were to prepare the way for, and at length introduce his person and kingdom, and who are ultimately to rise to distinguished glory and happiness under his reign.

A knowledge of the antiquities of this people is the key to many parts of their inspired Scriptures, whose import or propriety cannot otherwise be distinctly and satisfactorily perceived. This knowledge will help to vindicate, yea highly to recommend many things in their laws, which at first view may seem inconsistent with the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, and which by some have been greatly censured and even derided. In short, this acquaintance with the early Jewish history will enable you to repel many plausible objections to the Bible, will open to you many new beauties in the sacred volume, and will greatly confirm your belief of its heavenly original. Agreeably, it will be my aim frequently to apply the subject of our disquisitions to the elucidation and defence of Scripture. If for this purpose we should sometimes go into short digressions, it will be readily excused by every friend to religion, to every fair inquirer after truth.

In treating of the antiquities of the Hebrew nation, we will begin with their CIVIL POLITY. This, like that of almost every other people, has undergone a variety of changes in several periods of their history. At first their government was *patriarchal*; a word derived from ΠΑΤΡΙ, *family*, and ΑΡΧΩΝ, *chief*, or ru-

ler. This mode of government is defined by *Godwin*, a learned writer of the last century, to consist “in the fathers’ of families, and their first born after them, exercising all kinds of civil and ecclesiastical authority in their respective households.” To throw light on this subject, we will briefly investigate the origin and progress of civil government in the early ages.

The natural dependence of children on their parents, and their early habits of reverence and subjection to their wisdom and authority, would of course give rise, in the first instance, to the *parental* government. The first man especially, who was the father of all mankind, would be naturally regarded by his descendants as their *common Head*, and have peculiar influence over their counsels and actions, so long as his life and understanding continued. For the same reason, when mankind had lost their common progenitor, and had branched out into several distinct families, each of these would become a little community, and would naturally look up to its immediate founder, as its sovereign ruler or prince. These distinct sovereignties would in time be greatly multiplied. In some instances those, who at first were kings of their own households only, would insensibly grow up into monarchs of larger societies by extending their authority over their remoter descendants. As disputes would also in time arise among small domestic communities, these contests would naturally urge them to form one common bond of union, and to elect a common and efficient sovereign. As larger societies would thus be constituted by an assemblage of smaller associations; so the frequent occasions and existence of controversies between neighbouring communities thus formed, would give rise to mutual and forcible opposition; in which case each community would naturally choose for its mili-

tary leader some one person distinguished for his wisdom and courage, his eloquence and virtue, his reputation and success in public or private concerns. These circumstances of preeminence, attending one man, would not only raise him to the chief command in war, but probably introduce him to permanent and perhaps supreme authority in the state. In these and similar methods we easily account for the establishment not only of civil government, but of small kingdoms or monarchies, which evidently existed in the early ages. Indeed, some kind of civil polity is so natural and even necessary to man, that many of the ancients, particularly Aristotle and Plato, call him ΖΩΟΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΟΝ, *a political animal*. For as the wants, faculties, and affections of men would early and forcibly urge them to associate; so their imperfections and vices would compel their resort to civil government for their common protection and prosperity. Perhaps if man had not fallen from virtue, or if a society were generally and even universally honest and benevolent; some kind of political rule might be expedient; because good men, who are united in the same object, may be ignorant, erroneous, or divided respecting the means of attaining it. In this case nature and reason would direct the society to commit the regulation of its common concerns to some persons of superior penetration and more enlarged views, whose wisdom should safely guide the actions of the multitude. But the early defection of man from his primitive rectitude, and the consequent reign of selfish ambition, avarice and injustice, would oblige the human race not only to adopt political institutions, but to arm them with sufficient force to guard the innocent, and to punish the injurious. It cannot however be supposed that any society of men would

subject themselves to the dominion of one or more persons, however respectable or beloved, without some equivalent protection of that liberty, property, and life, which are most dear to their hearts. To imagine therefore with some writers, that civil power, in the first instance, was forced upon mankind by violence or conquest is very incredible; because no one man could possess sufficient strength to compel considerable numbers into that servitude, which they naturally hate and resist; and because if one bold adventurer were assisted by others in this business, these latter must have been previously united with him in a political confederation; that is, civil government must have existed by express or implied compact before a subjugating force could be successfully exerted. Political authority therefore must in fact, as well as by right, have originated primarily from mutual agreement between rulers and subjects. Perhaps we may even assert, that where power has been directly obtained by artifice or by violence, there must be an ultimate and implied compact between the victor and the vanquished, to constitute a civil community; for till this take place, it is not a state of political order, but of anarchy and war. Suppose, for example, that Cromwell, the protector of England, and Bonaparte, the present chief consul of France, were in the first instance usurpers; yet if their subjects finally submitted to their authority from a belief or experience of public utility or expediency; this submission seems to be a virtual consent on their part to the existing form and administration of government. On these principles Dr. Hutcheson, though a most benevolent and able assertor of rational liberty and equality, yet declares that states may be justly formed without the previous consent of the people. He

says that “if a prudent and efficient Legislator can settle a plan of polity, effectual for the general good; among a stupid or prejudiced people at present unwilling to receive it; and can reasonably conclude that upon a short trial they will heartily consent to it; he acts with perfect justice, though in an extraordinary manner.” But he justly adds “that absolute hereditary monarchy can never be settled upon this pretence; as it can never tend to good to have all the interests of millions subjected to the will of one of their equals, as much, yea more subject to vice and folly than any of them.”

This leads us to apply the preceding observations more directly to the object of this discourse. Some writers in favor of absolute and hereditary power, have insisted that the first founders of families and tribes not only possessed this power, but transmitted it entire to their *first born*. This authority, according to them, was first vested in *Adam*, who had the absolute disposal both of the persons and estates of all his descendants. On his death it devolved upon *Seth*, his eldest son next to *Cain*, who had been disinherited for the murder of *Abel*. From *Seth* it was conveyed by lineal succession to *Noah*, the father of the new world; who, by divine direction, divided the earth after the flood among *seventy* of his posterity, who were made absolute sovereigns of so many nations. From them the right of sovereignty has been handed down to the present day; and every *reigning prince* of every country is to be presumed to inherit this right, unless some other person can prove *his* hereditary title. This extravagant scheme was eagerly supported in Great Britain during the arbitrary reigns of the *Steuarts*. For opposing this doctrine the immortal *Algernon Sidney* fell a victim under the government of *Charles the second*.

If we examine the scripture history, on which this system pretends to be founded, we find no evidence that even our first father was clothed with absolute sovereignty. His relation to his posterity, as their original parent, by no means gave him unlimited dominion. The grant made to him of the whole animal and vegetable creation for his service did not rest the property and jurisdiction of it in him only, but was intended as a common grant to the human race. But if we admitted that Adam possessed such authority, this would not prove its hereditary descent to his eldest son. Those words of God to Cain, "Unto thee shall be his (that is Abel's) desire, and thou shalt rule over him," may prove some preeminence in the first born over his brother; but can never establish an absolute power during life over him and all his posterity. The distribution of mankind after the deluge into seventy independent kingdoms not only contradicts the right of primogeniture, but it has no foundation in the sacred history. Besides, this history informs us that God often passed by the first born, and advanced younger sons to special dignity, privilege, and power.

Dismissing therefore this plan of hereditary unqualified sovereignty, as equally unsupported by scripture and reason, we proceed to observe that the patriarchal government, in the sense limited above, subsisted among God's visible people for a series of ages. We have some vestiges of it in the antediluvian world. The existence of some civil authority is intimated in the story of Cain, who was not only banished from the community, but was apprehensive of capital punishment for his unnatural fratricide. "And Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth,"

that is from my native country or territory; “and from thy face shall I be hid;” that is, I shall be excluded from the Shechinah, or visible glory, which is the stated symbol of thy gracious presence; “and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me;” every one will treat me as an outlaw from the government, as a common enemy to my species. We are told that among the antient Romans, when a person was outlawed or declared accursed for some heinous crime, any one might kill him with impunity. The reason why the first instance of murder was punished with banishment, and not with death, might be because the continuance of the murderer for several centuries a living and dreadful monument of divine vengeance, would probably afford more instruction and benefit to mankind than his immediate excision; or because in the infancy of the world his life might be important to the propagation and support of the species, and capital executions were then less necessary for the common safety. “The mark which God set upon Cain, lest any finding him should slay him,” has given rise to many curious and some very ridiculous conjectures. Dr. Shuckford’s opinion seems the most probable, who renders the text thus—“The Lord gave to Cain a sign” or token, probably by some miracle, assuring him of his protection, so that none who met him should kill him. The same word here translated *mark*, is applied to the visible token by which God assured *Noah* that he would no more drown the world; and by which he satisfied *Gideon* that he should destroy the Midianites.

The next intimation of civil government in the early ages appears in the story of Lamech. “Lamech said unto his wives, I have slain a man to my wounding, and

a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged seven fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold." Omitting the many fanciful or forced constructions of these words, I only observe that Onkelos, the first Chaldee Paraphrast on the Pentateuch, considers the former part of Lamech's speech as interrogative—"Have I slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt?"—and accordingly paraphrases it thus—"I have not, like Cain, killed a man, that I should bear the sin of it; nor a young man, that my offspring should be cut off for it." Dr. Shuckford has enlarged this idea by supposing that Lamech was endeavouring to quiet the apprehensions of his wives and family with respect to any penal consequences, which the murder committed by their progenitor Cain might entail upon them, as if had said, "What have we done that we should be afraid? We have not killed nor injured a man even of another family. And if God would not allow Cain to be killed, who had murdered his own brother, but threatened sevenfold vengeance on any who should slay him; certainly they must meet a far greater punishment, who should kill any of us. We may therefore assure ourselves of perfect safety under the protection of human government, and of divine providence." This construction to me seems easy and well founded.

Let us now descend to the history of man after the flood. The first instance of patriarchal authority, which occurs in this history, is the judicial sentence of Noah, denounced upon his grandson Canaan, "cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." As Noah was the second father of mankind, he was probably for a considerable time revered and obeyed as universal Sovereign. With respect to the par-

ticular exercise of his power now before us, he seems to have acted rather as an inspired prophet than as a patriarchal ruler ; that is, he was enabled to foretel the future fate of his three sons and their posterity, and thus to pronounce an effectual curse on one of them, and blessings upon the two other. His example therefore gives no warrant to rulers and kings in later times to decide the future fate of their children and dominions by their arbitrary pleasure ; to determine for instance, which of their sons shall possess the absolute jurisdiction and property of a great nation ; just as a private man bequeaths his lands or his cattle to his heirs.

There are several questions, which this part of sacred history suggests.

First, what was the crime of *Ham*, for which his father cursed him ? The answer is, having witnessed the infirmity and nakedness of a venerable parent, instead of concealing them beneath the veil of filial piety, he publicly and scornfully exposed them to his brethren ; which was at once an impious and shameless act, and evinced a very depraved character.

Secondly, why did Noah denounce this curse, not on Ham himself, but on his son Canaan ? We reply, the repeated mention of Canaan in this story, as well as the united opinion of the Hebrew Doctors, renders it probable that he was a partner with his father Ham in beholding and ridiculing the infirmity of Noah. We add, that as the curse here denounced was prophetic, and chiefly referred to the remote posterity of Ham and of Canaan, so there was no injustice in punishing this posterity for imitating the wickedness of their progenitors, nor any impropriety in punishing Ham for his crime by informing

him of the future depravity and servitude of his offspring, to which his own example would largely contribute.

A third question is, in what respects was this curse fulfilled? We answer, it was verified 1st, by the destruction or subjugation of the Canaanites to the people of Israel, the descendants of Shem; 2d, by the conquest and extermination of the Tyrians, Thebans, and Carthaginians, who were also Ham's posterity, by the Greeks and Romans, who descended from Japhet; and 3dly, by the present servile and wretched condition of the *Africans*, who sprang from the same fatal stock, compared with the state of *Europeans*, who originated from a different branch of the Patriarch's family. Those, who wish to be greatly entertained and confirmed by fully comparing these historic facts with the predictions of Noah, are referred to the masterly treatise of *Newton* on the prophecies.

LECTURE II.

Patriarchal government farther illustrated. Sentence of Jacob on his twelve sons. Special government of the Jews. Its leading design, the preservation of the true religion among them, in connection with their temporal freedom and prosperity. Why temporal blessings and evils employed to enforce this constitution. Objections answered. Hebrew policy contrasted with that of the antient heathens.

IN the beginning of our first Lecture of this kind we informed you that, in obedience to the will of the Founder of the theological professorship, and of the College Legislature, we had determined to give you a series of private discourses on *Jewish and Christian Antiquities*. After hinting a few things on the importance of being acquainted with the antiquities of the Jews, particularly as such knowledge affords the best clue to the meaning, propriety, and beauty of many parts of their inspired scriptures; we proposed to begin our disquisitions by attending to their *civil polity*. To throw light on this, we went into a brief investigation of the origin and progress of civil government in the early ages. The result of this inquiry was, that political government was at first *parental* or *patriarchal*; that in time it branched out and grew up into a number of more extended and independent monarchies; that the sovereignties, however, were primarily, or at least ultimately established by express or implied agreement between the rulers and subjects; and that there is no proof from Scripture, reason, or history, that the early founders and governors of mankind possessed unlimited power, much less that they transmitted it by hereditary succession in the line of their firstborn.

Having made these preliminary observations, we proceeded to notice some faint vestiges of a limited patriarchal government in the story of Cain and of Lamech before the flood, and in the sentence denounced by Noah after that deluge upon a wicked son and his future descendants.

Omitting several other traces of civil authority, exercised by succeeding patriarchs, let us advert a few moments to the sentence, pronounced by Jacob just before his death on each of his respective sons, and the several tribes, of which they were the destined founders. Two of these sons, viz. Simeon and Levi, for their perfidious and barbarous murder of the Shechemites, are thus denounced by their dying father—"Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." This prophetic doom was remarkably verified. For though the land of Canaan was divided among the Israelites by the contingency of lots; yet the tribe of Simeon had no distinct portion assigned to it, but only a small inheritance in the midst of the tribe of Judah; and the posterity of Levi had no separate inheritance in lands, like the rest of the Hebrews, except a few cities with their suburbs taken from the possessions of all the other tribes. Thus the families of Simeon and Levi, in exact agreement with this prophecy, continued divided and scattered in Israel, to the end of their commonwealth. This address of Jacob to his sons foretels with great exactness many other surprising traits in the characters and circumstances of their future offspring. We will select one remarkable instance. In blessing the tribe of Judah he utters this prediction—"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his

feet, until Shiloh come ; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." That by *Shiloh* is intended the *Messiah* appears from the import of the Hebrew word, which the most learned critics derive from verbs, signifying either to send, to enjoy peace, or to prosper and save ; and which accordingly denotes the great promised *Messenger, Peace maker, or Saviour*. It also appears from its being included in the appropriate blessing pronounced upon *Judah*, to whom the preeminence or highest privilege belonged ; from the gathering of the people to this Shiloh, which is the same with all nations being converted to and blessed in him ; from the consent of all the antient, and many of the modern Jews, as well as Christians ; and finally from the exact agreement of the prophecy, thus understood, with the truth of facts before and after the coming of Christ. It is a fact, that a scepter or lawgiver, that is the supreme government of Israel was first set up in the tribe of Judah, in the person of David, and continued in that tribe, in a line of regular descent from him till the time of the Babylonish captivity ; after which it still subsisted in the same tribe under a different form, till the birth of our Saviour. But soon after this event Judea was made a Roman province ; its civil administration was transferred to Roman governors ; and not long after its capital city was destroyed, and its surviving inhabitants dispersed. Since this dispersion the family of Judah has been so far from possessing civil authority, that its very existence, as a distinct tribe, has been confounded and lost. This train of facts at once explains the meaning, and proves the divine inspiration of this antient prediction.

Having briefly traced the history of that authority, which was possessed by the early ancestors of the Jew-

ish nation, we are prepared to examine the special government of this people from the commencement of their civil polity to its final extinction. To form a just estimate of this government, we must first attend to its *leading design*, or inquire what objects the Deity proposed in its erection. If we can show that the ends designed by it were worthy of God, and that the means employed were eminently adapted to those ends, you will need no other proof of its wisdom and excellence.

The Hebrew constitution, like all good governments, was intended to protect the freedom, property, and peace of the community at large, and of its several members. But this was not its only intention. It was also designed to preserve in that nation the knowledge and service of the one true God, and to set up an effectual barrier against the contagious and destructive evils of idolatry. Agreeably, the Jewish form of government was founded in a mutual and explicit contract to the following purpose:—The people, on their part, solemnly chose or accepted Jehovah as their political, as well as religious Sovereign, engaging to adhere to his worship and laws, in opposition to every species of idolatry: God, on his part, promised that on this condition he would govern, protect and bless them in a peculiar and immediate way, securing to them not only the transcendent privileges and comforts of the true religion, but high degrees of temporal liberty, peace and prosperity. The reasons why temporal blessings and evils are so much employed to enforce this constitution, are weighty and obvious. It was fit that God, as the political King of Israel, should guard his laws with political sanctions. Such sanctions were peculiarly needful and beneficial to so gross a people, as the Jews, and in a period of the world, when the doc-

trine of a future retribution was so feebly discovered, and of course had so little effect. The good and evil things of the present state were also the great incitements to idolatry : it therefore became necessary to press them into the service of true religion. The idolatrous nations believed in and worshipped subordinate beings, as the immediate dispensers of health and long life, of worldly affluence and prosperity. Several of the Old Testament Prophets charge the Jewish people with relapsing into the worship of inferior beings upon the fond conceit, that they gave them their corn, and wine, and oil, their silver and gold. This prevailing notion, that temporal blessings came from some demon, idol, or tutelar deity, whom for this reason it was necessary to conciliate, rendered it highly expedient that an institution intended to guard the belief and adoration of the one true God, should hold up these blessings as exclusively his gifts ; to be sought and obtained, only by a strict adherence to his worship and commands.

But you will ask, was it proper to protect the true religion, and prevent idolatry, by civil establishments and temporal considerations? Did not this directly operate to crush free inquiry, and to foster religious persecution, hypocrisy, and severity?—We reply, as the Jewish constitution was a Theocracy, in which Jehovah was the temporal Sovereign ; as that people held the land of Canaan, and all their peculiar privileges, upon the footing of their alliance to him ; so idolatry in them was high treason against their acknowledged King, and against that original compact, on which their national happiness and even existence depended. Besides, God had given that nation peculiar and abundant evidence that he was the true and only Deity, and that every blessing and calamity result-

ed from his favor or displeasure. It was therefore both just and merciful to enact severe penalties against those, who should traiterously revolt from him. Such penalties were but an equitable counterpart to the high rewards connected with obedience. They were needful and benevolent guards to the public virtue and safety. They implied no infringement of the just rights of the subject, any more than the penal laws of other states, which punish conspiracies against the constitution. In short, they were absolutely necessary, as things then were, not only to preserve rational piety and virtue, with their attendant blessings, among the Jews, but to prevent their total extinction through the world. Those, who censure the Jewish government for thus patronising the true religion, do not sufficiently consider the evil nature and effects of idolatry, and its rapid and general propagation in the early ages. Even the antient Egyptians, a people celebrated for wisdom and science, were among the most stupid and extravagant idolaters. The Hebrews themselves, notwithstanding their special religious advantages, were exceedingly addicted to this prevailing abomination. Lest any should view idolatry as a harmless or venial error, I will mention some of the dreadful evils wrapped up in it ; that we may be struck with that enlightened and benevolent policy, which aimed to arrest and destroy it.

One of the principal evils of idolatry was, that it led away the human mind from the knowledge, obedience, and imitation of the all perfect Being, and of course from that true holiness and morality, which alone could engage his acceptance and blessing ; and transferred its homage to imaginary local divinities, whose protection was to be obtained by magical rites, or by absurd, im-

pure, or barbarous ceremonies of worship. Hence mankind became necessarily vicious both in principle and practice. Instead of aiming to please the true God, and procure needed blessings from him, by adoring and copying his purity, justice, and benevolence, they sought the favor of *Jupiter*, who with all his power and dignity was exhibited to them as a hero in lust, intemperance, and wickedness; of *Mercury*, the patron of thieves and robbers; of *Bacchus*, the god of drunkenness; or of *Venus*, the model and protectress of debauchery. As the characters of such deities, so the most sacred rites and mysteries of their worship extinguished in their votaries every principle of moral rectitude, and nourished every evil propensity; they not only licensed but even consecrated the most shocking scenes both of lewdness and of cruelty. It was a known custom among the Canaanites to sacrifice even their own children to one of their idols.—When we contemplate these and many other detestable crimes, which the Scripture charges upon these Canaanitish idolaters; must we not pronounce it wise, just, and even benevolent in the Supreme Ruler to inflict upon them exemplary punishment? And had he not a right to commission the Israelites to execute this punishment?—As this dreadful execution of the Canaanites gives rise to one of the most popular, and at the same time unjust clamors of infidelity against the constitution and consequent proceedings of the Hebrew nation, I would just remark, that the question between us and such objectors is not, whether the Israelites had any natural right to take away the lives and estates of the Canaanites, who had never injured them? We grant they had not. But certainly the righteous Judge of nations had a right to exterminate those wicked idolaters by whatever

er instruments he chose to employ. If a human government may lawfully commission one man to kill another, who has forfeited his life ; much more may the Supreme Governor do the same. To say that the Israelites had no such commission, but only made a false pretension to it, is meanly to shift the question before us ; which is, whether their conduct, with all its circumstances, as stated in Scripture, be justifiable? We confidently maintain not only the equity, but the peculiar wisdom and goodness of God in this mode of proceeding. For nothing could more powerfully operate to suppress idolatry and its attending vices, and to encourage true religion and virtue, than for Jehovah publicly to commission and miraculously to assist a nation, who openly professed and worshipped him, to extirpate mighty nations of idolaters, and to grant and permanently secure to his conquering people the possessions of the latter, on the express condition of their stedfast obedience to his laws. By thus destroying the Canaanites the God of Israel publicly triumphed over their idol deities ; he showed that these could neither give nor secure to their votaries life and prosperity, but that he was the sovereign dispenser of blessings to his friends, and of plagues to his enemies. This whole proceeding was especially fitted to impress the Israelites with a perpetual abhorrence and dread of those crimes, which they had been the instruments of punishing, and to secure their fidelity to that Being, whose wonderful interposition they had experienced, and whose continued favor was connected with their loyalty.

As the peculiar manner, in which the Jews were made to possess the land of Canaan, was thus highly favorable to their virtue, and of course to their prosperity ; so many of their laws, which, at first view, may seem tri-

fling or severe, will appear important, if we keep in view the great design of their national establishment. Thus the laws, which prohibited familiar intercourse and especially intermarriages with their heathen neighbours, though censured by infidels as unsocial and savouring of misanthropy, were highly useful to preserve the Israelites a distinct and holy community, and thus to keep alive in the world the pure principles of piety and morals. So easily were the Hebrews enticed into idolatry, that a frequent participation in the society or even innocent entertainments of heathens would endanger the purity of their character.—Many other statutes derive their chief importance from the same source. The ablest of the Jewish Doctors gives this general reason for them—“They were made to keep men from idolatry, and such false opinions as are akin to it, such as pretences to incantations, divinations, foretelling things by the stars, or by the possession of some spirit or demon, or consulting with such persons.” He farther observes, that “many of the magic rites consisted in certain gestures, actions, or words ;” and mentions several examples of such superstitions ; among the rest a remarkable rite to prevent a storm of hail. Now not a few of the Mosical laws, which would otherwise seem unworthy of the wisdom of God, were yet necessary guards against these idolatrous pagan customs.—That statute, for instance, which forbids the Jews to “round the corners of their heads, or to mar the corners of their beards,” will appear important, when we consider it as a barrier against a magical custom of the heathen priests, who made this mode of treating their hair and beards essential to their idol worship, and a grand prerequisite to the success of their petitions.—We likewise instantly perceive the wis-

dom of that prohibition, “neither shall a garment of linen and woolen come upon thee,” when we know that such mixed garments were the appropriate habits of idolatrous priests, and were supposed to possess some great magical virtue.—We also understand the propriety of that law, which forbids each sex to wear any garment peculiar to the other, when we find that it was a standing injunction among the antient heathens, that men must stand before the star of Venus in the flowered garments of women; and women were to put on the armour of men before the star of Mars. Agreeably, Macrobius tells us, that men worshipped Venus in women’s habits, and women in the habits of men.—How wise and benevolent was it in the divine Legislator, by such minute and strict precepts, to guard a gross and superstitious people from the dangerous customs, which every where surrounded them, and which, without such checks, must have operated to destroy every distinction between Jews and pagans.

Let us then steadily keep in mind the noble and complex design of the Hebrew government. Let us view it as intended to preserve in our world rational piety and virtue, and in connexion with this to dispense liberty, order, and happiness to the Jewish commonwealth. Their constitution, thus viewed, resembles the pillar of cloud and of fire, which attended their camp through the wilderness. While it guided, protected, and cheered the obedient Jews, it held up to the surrounding world a public and impressive monument of the supremacy of Jehoyah, of the blessings, which attend his faithful servants, and of the detestable and destructive evils, which accompany idolatry, superstition, and vice.

LECTURE III.

Objection of partiality in Jehovah toward the Jewish nation, answered. Objection to the Hebrew constitution as a system of intolerance and war, of conquest or extermination, answered. System of Hebrew policy contrasted with that of the antient heathens.

IN our last Lecture we showed that the great design of the civil constitution of the Jewish nation was the preservation of the true religion among them, and in connexion with this, their temporal freedom and prosperity. I presume you will all grant, that such a design was truly benevolent and noble, and that every regulation necessary to its accomplishment was highly important. We have already remarked, that many statutes in the Jewish code, which, at first view, seem puerile, were needful barriers to that people against the enticing, but dangerous customs of their idolatrous neighbours. Yet still many features of the Hebrew government differ so widely from the best sentiments and usages of modern times, that it requires a candid and attentive survey to make us fully see their propriety and beauty. As I trust that both you and myself are honest inquirers after truth, I hope you will cheerfully accompany me in the disquisition before us; and the rather, as the question concerning the merits of the Jewish polity and laws affects the reputation both of the Old Testament and the New; and it has accordingly been the practice of many enemies to Christianity to attempt its subversion, not by direct assault, but by casting reproach or ridicule on the institutions of the antient Jews. We are willing to meet them on this ground. If these institutions cannot

be fairly vindicated, we stand ready to give up all revealed religion as indefensible.

We have represented the civil government of the Hebrews as founded on a peculiar compact or relation between God and them, by which he became their political Sovereign and Protector, and they engaged themselves to worship and obey him, in opposition to all pretended or rival deities. But some may object that there is a great absurdity in supposing God, the universal Parent and Ruler, thus to connect himself with one particular nation, and to become a partial and tutelar Deity to them, while he seemed to exclude from his favor a great majority of his human family. This plausible objection is capable of two satisfactory answers. *First*, God's peculiar relation to the Jews did not in the least diminish or hinder his paternal and beneficent care of *all* his rational offspring. Will any person say, that the supreme Governor, by giving one portion of mankind greater privileges than the rest, excludes the latter from his notice, or conducts in a partial and injurious manner? Would it be wise to infer that, because the constitution and laws of the United States appropriate the city of Washington, and a small district around it, to the special residence and jurisdiction of our national rulers, therefore the rest of the Union is shut out from their patriotic inspection and influence? Yet this conclusion would be far less absurd than the objection before us;—especially when we add *Secondly*, that God's design in thus selecting and covenanting with a particular nation was not so much their peculiar benefit, as the *general good* of mankind; for this constitution was a light set up in the midst of a dark world; a light, which preserved and in some measure diffused the knowledge and practice of pure religion and virtue, and thus

kept alive in the human mind those principles, which are the basis of liberty and order, of improvement and happiness both to individual and social man. That we may distinctly see how far this constitution promoted these excellent purposes, I would observe that the very existence of this frame of government led up the minds of the Jews to that One true God, by whose wisdom it was formed, by whose authority it was enjoyed, and by whose extraordinary providence it was visibly carried into effect. The tenure, by which they claimed and enjoyed the benefits of this constitution, was their firm and exclusive loyalty to Jehovah. On this condition he promises and actually gives them a pleasant and fertile country, which they hold by his conditional grant. By their instrumentality he expels the former inhabitants for their abominable crimes, the fruits of their idolatry. He blesses the new tenants of this country with freedom and plenty, with peace and prosperity, while they retain their religious and virtuous character; but when they apostatize he permits their enemies to afflict and oppress them. Thus a weak and little nation, surrounded on all sides, and frequently invaded by great and powerful empires, is visibly protected against them all by the superior power of Jehovah, and subsists much longer than any known kingdom in the world. What an august and impressive spectacle! How forcibly did it teach beholding nations the vanity of idols, and the supremacy of the God of Israel! How pathetically did it call them off from the fatal service of the former, to the worship and protection of the latter!—Let it be further noted, that the central situation, which the Jews occupied with respect to the then inhabited globe, and the stupendous works of divine power, by which their government

and laws were introduced, supported, and executed, by which they themselves were often chastised, defended, or delivered, and their mighty adversaries defeated or ruined, were admirably calculated to spread the glory of God, and the knowledge and obedience of his laws, into the surrounding world. Even the captivities and dispersions, which this people suffered for their transgressions, were made subservient to the extension and triumph of their religion. The eminent virtues and extraordinary gifts displayed by some of these captives, and the wonderful interpositions of Jehovah in their favor, impressed on the minds of heathen princes and nations a high reverence for the religion and the God of Israel. The celebrated learning of the antient Eastern world, especially on civil, moral, and religious subjects, was doubtless in great measure derived from the laws and writings of this favored people. The nearer we come down to gospel times, the more extensive is the beneficent influence of their system on neighbouring countries. As the Jews were gradually diffused over the Roman empire, as well as over the Asiatic regions, so they every where converted great numbers from idolatry to the faith and worship of the true God. While the greatest pagan philosophers, instead of turning any of the people from superstition to rational piety, conformed themselves to the reigning idolatry, and recommended the same conformity to others; the Jews propagated their own religion far and wide, and thus contributed to prepare mankind for the perfect dispensation of the gospel. In a word, the erection of this people into a peculiar and separate polity rendered them the safe depositaries of those promises, predictions, and types, which excited in mankind the cheering hope of a future Redeemer, which gradually

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fitted them for his coming, and which gave a distinct and full testimony to his divine mission, when he actually appeared. Thus the Mosaic constitution, far from having a partial operation in favor of one nation only, was a designed and unspeakable blessing to the human race.

This train of thought leads us to answer those objectors, who represent this constitution as a system of intolerance and war, of conquest or extermination against all the rest of the world, under the pretense of building up the true religion upon the ruins of idolatry. We readily grant, that this government was primarily and especially designed for the benefit of the Jews ; just as the constitution of our country is peculiarly intended for the happiness of Americans. The Hebrew Lawgiver and people, like the framers and supporters of our government, were strangers to that *refined philanthropy*, which seeks the good of the whole by the destruction of its several parts. Their benevolence operated in the first place towards themselves and their own nation. In this view the laws of Moses were excellent. Far from encouraging a narrow or malignant spirit, they cherished every feeling and office of brotherly kindness and patriotism. They required the Jews to abstain from every species of enmity, revenge, or oppression ; to treat their poor neighbours and debtors, their domestic servants, and even their enemies, with mildness and liberality. They strictly prohibited them from ridiculing or taking ungenerous advantage of the bodily infirmities of any person, such as laying a stumbling block before the blind, or cursing the deaf. Their civil code is full of such precepts ; and in these instances it displays a spirit of equity, of tenderness, and generosity, which cannot be paralleled in any other system of antient policy. Not was

this just and humane treatment to be confined to members of their own community. They are very frequently commanded to show kindness to *strangers* or foreigners ; to love them as themselves ; to love and do them good in imitation of the divine example, and because they themselves had experimentally known the condition and the heart of strangers. The strangers are often joined with the poor, the widow, the fatherless, and the Levites, as peculiar objects of their pity and succour. The gleanings of their fields were to be left for them, as well as for their own poor ; and those who oppressed them were classed among the vilest criminals. It was also a very amiable feature in the Mosaic constitution, that one express design of their weekly Sabbath was, that their servants, and the stranger, and even their cattle, might rest and be refreshed. We grant that no foreigners were permitted to reside among them, who openly professed idolatry, because this, as we showed in our last Lecture, was directly subversive of their government. But in every other case they were obliged to receive and comfort strangers, even though they did not become naturalized, or incorporated with their society. Nor is there one statute or precedent in their law, which authorized them to propagate their religion by force, or to persecute foreigners for not complying with their peculiar customs.

It is therefore a great mistake, to consider the Hebrew polity as a system of general persecution or extirpation. For the commands, given to destroy idolatry and its votaries, are evidently limited to the land of Canaan, which God had granted to the Israelites, to be the exclusive seat of uncorrupted religion and morality, with which idolatrous worship was totally inconsistent. With re-

gard to other countries, there is no requirement, permission, nor example of the Jews making war upon them, for the mere purposes either of religion or of conquest. On the contrary, the whole plan of their government was fitted to check the views of foreign ambition. For it circumscribed them within the limits of a small country. It parcelled them out into several tribes; it assigned to each its peculiar and unalienable territory; it obliged them to offer all their sacrifices in that country, and at the tabernacle or temple placed in its capital; it limited the observance of their Sabbatical years and their Jubilees, and all their other peculiar institutions, to the land of Canaan. These fundamental articles restrained them to the quiet enjoyment of their religion and laws within their own boundaries, and were incompatible with the acquisition, the improvement, or the defence of extensive dominions. It is accordingly remarkable, that the national blessings promised to them on their obedience, never include an enlargement of empire, but only an assurance of distinguished prosperity and happiness in their own country, and of victory over all that “should rise up against them,” that is, who should disturb or invade them in their rightful possessions. Agreeably, their military code directs them how to conduct such wars, as their own defence made just and indispensable. Let the cause of the war be ever so urgent, and the facility of destroying their enemies ever so great, yet they are required first to *proclaim peace* to them, that is, to offer them the quiet enjoyment of their country and possessions, on condition of their paying a certain tribute to the Israelites. If a city thus summoned refuse the proposal, they are directed to besiege it; but if it surrenders before it be carried by assault, the lives of its inhab-

itants are still to be spared. But if it finally reject all pacific overtures, after being fairly warned of the consequences, should it be taken by force ; they are allowed after subduing it by storm, to kill all the males, that is, all who bore arms ; but the women and children they are strictly required to spare even amid the fury of an assault. They are also forbidden to destroy the fruit trees of the enemy, because they are man's life ; which the Hebrew doctors justly interpret as a prohibition of every needless waste or cruel devastation in the hostile territory. Though one part of these regulations does not fully correspond with the present humane and refined maxims of the most civilized christian nations ; yet this mode of conducting war is far more just, more tender and liberal, than was common in those rude and barbarous ages ; it greatly exceeds in moderation even the conduct of the Roman armies, under generals famed for their humanity, as Scipio, Germanicus, Titus, &c.

In a word, that you may be forcibly impressed with the excellence of the Hebrew policy, considered as a preservative of rational piety and morals, and consequently of private and national happiness, I will briefly contrast this system with that of the antient heathens ; referring you for a more full illustration to a series of discourses delivered at Philadelphia by the candid, industrious, and learned Dr. *Priestley* ; many of whose thoughts I gladly abridge in the following observations.

First, while the most monstrous polytheism pervaded all the nations of antiquity, the first and vital principle both of the Jewish government and religion was the acknowledgment of One Supreme Being. “Thou shalt have no other gods beside me” is the first command delivered from Mount Sinai ; and “thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thine heart," with an undivided and exclusive homage, is a precept, which animates and dignifies all the Hebrew institutions and writings. In vain do we look for a sentiment so just, so sublime, and beneficent, in the best systems of heathen government or philosophy.

Secondly, while the pagans worshipped their deities under the debasing figures of animals, and even inanimate forms, yea, adored brutes and images themselves; the second commandment of the Mosaic law expressly shuts out this degrading practice; and the whole Jewish constitution holds up an intelligent, immense, and almighty spirit as the sole object of homage; a spirit, who cannot be represented by any visible likeness.

Thirdly, while the gods of the heathen were limited and local deities, and their characters polluted with the grossest vices; Jehovah, the King and God of the Hebrews, is always described as infinitely wise and powerful, holy and good. Accordingly, while the worship of the former consisted of the most cruel, obscene, and demoralizing ceremonies; that of the latter was strictly pure and decent, and the whole law of the Israelites was fitted to exalt their moral character into a resemblance of the perfect rectitude of Deity. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," is the great precept of their divine King.

Fourthly, while the public festivals, consecrated to the heathen gods, were scenes of riot and debauchery; those of the Hebrews were devoted to innocent rejoicing, intermixed with solemn acts of religion; and every thing, which approximated to the horrid customs of the pagan world, was banished with abhorrence from the service of their temple. Their religious rights were as remote from needless severity, as from moral impurity. Their law

enjoined no painful ceremony, except that of circumcision. It required only one fast, viz. that of a single day in a year, while it ordained three annual festivals of considerable length. But the heathens began even their principal festival with the most barbarous rites of mourning, with tearing their hair, shaving their heads, and mangling their flesh. These cruel rites of worship are expressly forbidden to the Israelites.—“Ye shall not cut yourselves nor make any baldness between your eyes; ye shall not print any marks in your flesh; for ye are a holy people to the Lord.”—Every incentive to lewdness, which was openly practised in the pagan worship, was far removed from that of Jehovah. As the heathens were fond of worshipping on the tops of mountains, and in groves, where every kind of abomination was conveniently committed; the Jews on this account were forbidden to plant groves near to the altar of God. While the superstition of the former converted their temples and altars into a sacred asylum for all sorts of criminals; the altars of the latter afforded no refuge to presumptuous offenders;—“If a man, says the king of Israel, come upon his neighbour, and slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.”

Fifthly, the heathen nations were extremely devoted to divination, witchcraft, and necromancy; insomuch that even the refined Romans held the established *auguries* in the highest veneration; and many serious christians, as well as infidels, in this enlightened age have great faith in similar superstitions. But every thing of this kind is severely interdicted in the Jewish law. This circumstance, especially considering the times in which this system was framed, strongly evinces the superior, the divine wisdom of its Founder. We may add, the heathens

reserved some part of the first fruits of their harvests for magical purposes. When they had gathered all their fruits, they took a kid, and boiled it in its mother's milk, and with magical rites sprinkled it on their gardens and fields, thinking hereby to render them fruitful. This superstitious practice is forbidden to the Hebrews—"thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk." And when they presented their first fruits, they were directed to recount, with decent and pious gratitude, the goodness of God to them and their fathers.

Sixthly, the antient pagans had many superstitious rules with respect to *sacrifices*. Thus hogs were sacrificed to Ceres, an owl to Minerva, a hawk to Apollo, a dog to Hecate, an eagle to Jupiter, a horse to the Sun, a cock to Esculapius, a goose to Isis, and a goat to Bacchus. They also reserved some of the flesh of these victims for superstitious uses. But to prevent every such use of sacrifices, the Jews were ordered to keep nothing of theirs till the ensuing morning. They were also strictly forbidden to eat any part of it raw; which was a superstitious and savage custom of the Egyptians and some other nations. In short, the Hebrews alone kept to the rational and useful idea of sacrifices; for they confined them to things most proper for the food of man, in order to express their acknowledgments to God, as the giver of this food, and to sit down as thankful guests at his table.

Finally, if we duly attend to the regulations prescribed for the diet of this people, permitting some kinds of food, and prohibiting others, we shall find them restricted to such provision, as best suited their intended climate and the purposes of health. Whereas the restrictions laid on many of the heathens in this particular sa-

vored of gross superstition. In short, you can scarcely name any kind of superstitious absurdity practised in the pagan world, which is not particularly reprobated and barred in the Jewish laws.

How false and injurious then is the representation of many writers, that this system is a most degrading, oppressive, and detestable superstition ! The conclusion of the celebrated author abovenamed is infinitely more just and enlightened ; who pronounces the great object of this institution to be “ the most worthy that can be conceived,” and declares, that “ considering all the circumstances of the antient Jews and of neighbouring nations, their system was the best possible one, as much superior to any of human invention, as the works of nature excel those of art.”

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LECTURE IV.

Hebrew constitution adapted to secure the freedom and happiness of its subjects. Hebrew government originally a free and equal republic. Fundamental laws required, that the territory should be equally divided ; that estates should be holden as a freehold from God himself ; and that they should never afterward be alienated, but descend in perpetual succession. Agrarian law, or year of Jubilee. Military regulations. Population encouraged. General government for the common safety and happiness.

IN considering the civil government of the ancient Jews, we have shown that its primary object was the preservation of the true religion in that nation, and consequently in the world. We have also seen that the leading provisions of this government were excellently adapted to this design. The other object of the Hebrew policy was the temporal freedom and happiness of its subjects. These outward blessings indeed would naturally, as well as by divine promise, result from their faithful adherence to the pious and virtuous principles prescribed in their law. But besides the salutary influence of these principles, their whole political constitution was eminently fitted to the same beneficent end. This will fully appear from a brief survey of their form of government, as appointed by Jehovah, and delineated by his servant Moses.

As property is the usual source of power, and consequently of civil authority ; hence every government receives its complexion from the manner, in which its lands or other possessions are distributed to its several members. If the prince, as in some eastern communities, be

proprietor of the territory, he will of course be absolute ; since the tenants of the soil will in this case hold it at his arbitrary will, and thus must feel a servile dependence on his pleasure. If the property be shared by a few men, and the great body of the people hold it under them ; these few will constitute a ruling nobility, who will really concentrate the authority of the nation. But if the property be divided in a nearly equal manner among *all* the members of the society, these will naturally possess both its physical and civil power, whatever be the form of their political union.

If we apply these remarks to our present subject, we shall find that the Hebrew government was originally a free and equal republic. According to the mean computation of the most accurate authors, the territory of Canaan settled by God on the Jewish nation, though a small country, contained at least fourteen millions of acres ; which, divided among six hundred thousand people, the estimated number of that nation, will give to each person the property of twenty one acres, after reserving more than a million acres for public uses. This distribution of property, under a constitution, which animated and dignified industrious, simple, and frugal manners, and in a period of the world, when such modes of life were honorable, would secure to each virtuous Israelite a decent, comfortable, and independent support, especially in a climate and country so propitious as those of Judea. At the same time this provision was so moderate, as to preclude in the best manner the baneful vices of idleness and luxury ; and every man's circumstances would forcibly recommend the opposite virtues.

As the most effectual securities for the permanent freedom and purity of the Jewish government, and the equal

rights and property of its subjects, the wisdom of the divine Framer enacted the following fundamental laws ;— that the territory should be equally divided to the several members of the community ; that every man should hold his estate as a freehold immediately from God himself, without any tenure of service or vassalage to intermediate lords ; and that the estates thus settled upon the several families should never afterwards be alienated from them, but descend by an indefeasible entail in perpetual succession. The first article, viz. the division of the land, was ordered to be carried into effect with the utmost exactness, under the inspection of the high priest, the judge, and one of the princes of the tribe. The manner of this division was by *lot* ; and it was so conducted, that each tribe and family received their share *by themselves*. To use the modern style, every tribe lived together in the same county, and the members of every family occupied the same town or vicinity. To prevent the distinction of tribes from being confounded, their sons and daughters were not permitted to marry into any other tribe but their own. The celebrated *Harrington* justly describes the process of dividing their territory by lot, in the following manner. There were two urns, one containing the names of the tribes, the other the names of those parcels of lands, which they were to draw. Accordingly the name of a tribe, for example of Benjamin, being drawn out of one urn, to that name a parcel was drawn out of the other, for instance, the country lying between Jericho and Bethlehem. This being done, the prince of that tribe chose in what place he would take his agreed proportion ; for our author supposes the chiefs of tribes and of families had a larger assignment of land on account of their quality and power. After

this, the remainder of the parcel was subdivided according to the number of families in said tribe ; and these subdivided parcels being put in one urn, and the names of the fathers of families in the other, each house or family drew its particular lot. Every patriarch or head of a house then selected his proportion of this lot ; and the rest was again subdivided according to the number of names in each family. If these were more than the lot would supply at twenty one acres per man, the defect was filled up by additions from the next parcel ; and if they were fewer, the overplus was transferred to the next division. Thus, in a manner similar to the drawing of modern lotteries, an accurate division of the land of Canaan by lot was both practicable and easy.

This original equality of landed property was an instance of wise policy on many accounts. While it gave birth to general economy and diligence, it secured to every citizen a free, easy, and honorable condition. It nourished the spirit, the virtues, and the blessings of agricultural life, in opposition to the evils, which grow out of foreign commerce and conquest. It precluded or powerfully checked every ambitious invasion of the public liberty ; for no person in the nation possessed, or could legally acquire such property, as would enable or encourage him to oppress his fellow subjects. As none had great wealth, by which to corrupt others ; so very few could be so poor, as to become the easy prey of corruption. It could never be in the power of one or a few men to force the community into subjection to their ambitious views ; for the aggregate power possessed by the numerous freeholders of the several tribes was a mighty barrier against all such usurpations. In short, the arrangement before us was fitted to create and maintain a

large body of able and independent yeomanry, of patriotic and brave militia, whose constant possession of valuable property and freedom enabled them duly to appreciate and defend them.

When a good constitution is once established, sound policy will make the best provision for its permanent existence and effect. For this purpose an Agrarian law, or a year of Jubilee was instituted, by which, at the expiration of every half century, alienated estates were to revert to their original owners, or to their natural heirs, and every obligation, by which a Hebrew had bound himself to a state of servitude, was dissolved. This peculiar provision of the Jewish law had an excellent effect in perpetuating both the freedom and property of the several families and citizens of that commonwealth. It prevented the most idle and extravagant householder from entailing hopeless slavery and ruin on his family. "He could only mortgage his possession for a limited time; nor could there be any instance of a dangerous and lasting accumulation of landed property." How effectually did this guard the reasonable liberty and happiness of all! What an attachment to the soil, and of course what an ardent love of country must have grown out of this unalienable right to their several possessions!

The wisdom of the abovementioned institutions will strike us with greater force, if we consider that the Hebrew government was designed to continue for many hundred years. The Jews were to enjoy their civil polity and their religion, and thus to keep alive in the world the knowledge and service of the true God, till a better constitution should take place under the reign of the Messiah. To effect this most benevolent purpose, it was necessary to guard their constitution against all the ave-

nues of corruption, slavery and dissolution ; it was necessary to preserve them a free and united, a hardy and invincible people, till the great end of their government should be superseded by the coming and kingdom of Christ. We are to remember that the Jews in Canaan were surrounded by very great and powerful enemies, particularly by the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. As the Hebrew constitution made no provision of a standing defensive army against such formidable neighbours, but rather precluded its existence ; it was important to provide for the exterior security of the nation in some other mode. Accordingly the whole community was obliged to appear in arms, when legally summoned. Thus the whole nation became a standing army. This feature of their polity deserves a more particular attention. " Every Israelite of an age capable of bearing arms was required to join the army, when danger threatened his country ; but at the head of the forces a proclamation was directed to be made, excusing every person from going into the battle, who had either lately married a wife, built a house, or planted a vineyard ; as these circumstances would naturally render him too fondly attached to life, and more unwilling to expose it in the public service. Every man too, who felt himself fearful and faint-hearted on any other account was wisely dismissed previously to the engagement, lest their timidity should infect his brethren in arms." Dr. Priestly justly observes, that maxims so full of good sense and moderation cannot be found in any other antient nation. But these exemptions of particular persons from military service necessarily imply, that all others were bound to attend it ; and even those, who were excused from engaging in the war, were obliged to appear at the general muster. The

officers could not on any occasion grant liberty of absence for more than one year ; and those men, who were unfit to occupy the post of danger, were still required to assist the army by such services, as they were qualified to perform. We find that Moses, the Hebrew Lawgiver, urged with great force the duty of uniting the whole military power of the nation for the purpose of effecting their settlement in Canaan. Such a union was afterward enjoined as equally necessary for their continued security. The importance of such union fully justifies those severe laws against desertion, and those dreadful executions for this crime, which the sacred history records. To desert the common cause in seasons of danger is to expose to ruin the welfare and even existence of the community. To punish such deserters with death has been the just and even benevolent policy of all nations and constitutions. Those therefore, who censure the laws and proceedings of the Israelites on this ground, discover a want either of judgment, integrity, or candor.

In considering the military force of this people I will just add, that, as the great strength of any country lies in its population, so the uniform principles of the Jews led them beyond any other nation, to view celibacy and the want of posterity as a great affliction and reproach, and a multitude of children as the noblest blessing. But in heathen communities many persons aspired to perpetual celibacy, as a high instance of religion and of human perfection. From this pagan source have been derived the absurd and pernicious institutions of monastic life in some christian countries.

Having contemplated the twelve tribes of Israel not only settled, but permanently secured and protected in their several portions of the holy land, as so many distinct

provinces, we will now more particularly inquire into their general government, by which their counsels and energies were combined for the common safety and happiness. As their government was a theocracy, in which Jehovah himself was their Supreme Lawgiver and King; so their constitution could not vest any proper *legislative authority* either in the individual or confederate tribes; for the laws of both were enacted by their divine Sovereign, and were declared to be sacred and immutable. They were forbidden to add to, or diminish from them, under the penalty of forfeiting all their possessions and privileges. Yet still many subordinate regulations were needful to the due observance and execution of these laws. Such regulations were accordingly left to the wisdom and authority of the nation. But in what manner, or by what organs were the national wisdom and authority expressed? We reply, the organ of the public will was threefold, viz. a popular assembly, an advising senate, and a presiding magistrate. In these particulars the ancient Hebrews, under the special direction of heaven, adopted the same general system, which the most improved wisdom of after ages has selected as the most perfect form of civil policy. The best features of the Grecian and Roman, and perhaps we may add, of the present American republics were exhibited, from remote antiquity, by the comparatively small and despised commonwealth of Israel. To verify this assertion, we will attend distinctly to each of the three branches of government just named.

First, the existence of a popular or democratic assembly under the Jewish constitution appears from those scriptural passages, which speak of *all Israel*, of *all the congregation*, of *the whole congregation of the Lord*, as hav-

ing a voice in the original covenant or compact, which Jehovah made with that nation, and in every subsequent transaction of great public importance. This assembly is styled the *whole congregation*, because every one of the hundred thousand freeholders, who consented to the covenant, and in whom the property of Canaan was unalienably vested, had a constitutional right of suffrage in this body, and because while the whole nation was encamped together under Moses, he could and probably did propose public measures to the whole, and obtain their united consent. But after they had become spread abroad over the promised land, and were industriously engaged in cultivating the soil, then the tribes appeared by their *Representatives*, that is, by a certain number of their provincial officers, who are called *Elders*, *Heads*, and *Judges*, and sometimes *all Israel*, because they were the legal representation of the whole. This delegated body bore a striking analogy to the popular assembly of antient Rome, to the house of Commons in England, or to the house of Representatives in the United States. When Moses summoned all Israel to hear and consent to the constitution and laws proposed to them by God, we are informed that all the people expressed their concurrence with the proposal—"All, that Jehovah hath spoken, we will do." By this act of concurrence the proposed covenant became a national law. How remarkably does this mode of proceeding coincide with the legal forms in the Roman commonwealth; in which the senate or magistrate proposed a measure to the people in such words as these—"Romans, is this your will? Do you resolve it?" To which the people answered, "we will, and resolve it." This answer gave to the measure proposed the stamp of a law. The same or similar forms character-

ize most of the antient governments. We are further informed that when Joshua was made successor to Moses, and when Saul was appointed king at the request of the people, both the one and the other were presented to the whole congregation, and their election was ratified by their unanimous consent. It also appears that Solomon, though proclaimed king in the first instance by David's order, yet was afterwards proposed to and confirmed by the people. In short, the popular branch of the Hebrew government, though it could not enact new laws, was entrusted with many concerns of high national moment, such as settling internal disputes, making foreign war and peace, establishing the principal officers and magistrates, exercising jurisdiction in many civil and criminal causes, and in fine, using much the same powers, which other free constitutions have lodged in the same department. The weight of this department in the Jewish state, and the high spirit of liberty, which pervaded it, are remarkably exemplified on several occasions ; one of which I will briefly recite. Saul, the first king of Israel, who was an imprudent and arbitrary despot, in the ardor of battle with the Philistines, had adjured the people, or laid them under oath, not to eat any food till the evening, that is, not to suspend the victorious conflict for the purpose of taking the least refreshment. His own son Jonathan through ignorance and necessity transgressed this order. His father, as king and general, instantly and solemnly determines his death—" God do so to me, and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan."—that is, " may God inflict the heaviest vengeance upon myself, if I do not put thee to death." It might seem, at first view, that this royal sentence was final and irreversible. Yet even here the popular author-

ity interposed ; the assembly of the people thus addressed their sovereign—" Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation for Israel ? God forbid ! As Jehovah liveth, there shall not a hair of his head fall to the ground : so the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not." It is generally agreed that this intervention of the people was not an act of military violence and sedition ; it is equally evident that it has not the air of humble petition or supplication ; for it speaks the language of decisive authority and resolution. It is therefore probable that the assembly (or representatives) of the people retained, and in this instance exercised, even under a monarchical, yea oppressive administration, the right of condemning or absolving criminals ; a power, which confessedly belonged to the popular branch in other celebrated communities. In a word, it was a chief excellence of the Hebrew constitution, that it was peculiarly fitted to guard that people forever against kingly despotism. Jehovah condescended to be their king, for the express purpose of excluding all other monarchs, and thus perpetuating among them republican liberty. Accordingly, when they desired a king, in conformity to their surrounding nations, it was considered by God as a rejection of his mild and equal government, and a mad surrender of themselves and their children to the curse of tyranny. On this peculiar provision in favor of public liberty Dr. Priestley justly remarks—" What could have led Moses to think of such a mode of government as this ? He could not have seen, nor heard, nor imagined any thing like it. For at that time no such thing existed either in fact or in idea." It must therefore have been the offspring of divine wisdom.

LECTURE V.

Senatorial branch of the Hebrew government. The manner, in which this body was instituted. The similarity between this government and that of some of the European and American states. Its executive branch. Patriotic administration of Moses and Joshua.

IN our last lecture we noticed several excellent provisions in the Hebrew constitution for securing the freedom, property, and happiness of its subjects. Among these provisions we especially considered the following articles ;—the equal division by lot of the territory of Canaan to the several members of the community ; the free, independent, and unalienable manner, in which each tribe and family held their possessions ; the military service required of every freeholder ; the encouragement, which these and similar arrangements gave to agricultural diligence, simplicity, and contentment, to patriotic zeal and courage, to the population, vigor, and prosperity of the country ; and finally the happy distribution of the national sovereignty into three departments, viz. a popular assembly, an advising senate, and a presiding magistrate. In contemplating the first of these departments we have shown, that the assembly of the people, convened either in person, or by their representatives, and styled in scripture *the whole congregation*, exercised much the same powers, which other free constitutions have vested in the popular branch of government. We have shown that the Jewish polity in its original form was fitted above all others to guard public liberty, because it set up a perfect monarch, viz. Jehovah himself, as its Protector, to the exclusion of all earthly kings and despots.

Having viewed the share, which the people had in this government, we are now to consider, *secondly*, the *senatorial branch* of it.

The most free and equal governments both of antient and modern date have wisely introduced a *senate* in some form or other, to check popular rashness, precipitation, and intrigue, and by their temperate wisdom and influence to guide, mature, and control the public opinion and conduct. The inestimable value of this branch both in the individual and united States of America was early anticipated, and has been constantly felt by our enlightened citizens. It is pleasing to observe that the doctrine of checks and balances, maintained by our illustrious countryman in his defence of the American constitutions, was essentially understood and practised as early as the days of Moses. From the time of this great Lawgiver down to the extinction of the Hebrew commonwealth, we constantly meet with *Princes, Elders, and Heads* of the people, who formed a senate or national council. But the persons composing or the powers exercised by this body are not so forcibly marked either by sacred or Rabbinical writers, as to place the subject beyond the reach of dispute. The scripture history of this very antient government is as we might justly expect, very short and scanty, compared with that of later communities; yet the materials, which that history affords, may, if accurately digested, give us a true, though general idea of this venerable system, particularly in the article before us.

If we look back to the state of the Hebrews, while in Egypt, we find that when Moses was first sent to them with a gracious message from God, he was directed to “gather the *Elders* of Israel together,” and deliver the message to them, which direction he exactly followed.

It appears then that, the Israelites had a body of Elders or Rulers even in Egypt ; and that every application or divine command was delivered, not to the whole multitude, but to this select body. If you ask, when and how was this body instituted ? we reply, so long as Jacob lived, his twelve sons and their posterity formed but one family or community under him. But when he drew near his end, he summoned all his family, in order to distribute it into twelve distinct tribes, and to appoint heads and rulers over them. Accordingly he addresses his sons, as the Representatives of so many distinct societies. He foretels such things concerning them, as are applicable, not to single persons, but to communities. Agreeably after this time, but not before, the Israelites are mentioned as distinct, but confederated tribes ; the heads of which were their constituted rulers or princes, and formed what may be styled the *aristocratical part* of their government. It appears that the rulers of no one tribe had a superiority over those of another ; but each portion of the confederacy, like the several states of America, possessed a local and independent sovereignty. This remark is verified by many passages of their history. Thus upon the death of Joshua, the people inquire of God, who should go up for them, or at their head against the Canaanites. This question would have been impertinent, if any one tribe or ruler had the right of leading and governing the rest. In like manner when the Benjamites had committed an outrage in the affair of the Levite and his concubine, no one tribe or ruler pretends to call them to account ; but all the tribes, met in legal convention, demand justice on the offenders, and upon refusal have recourse to arms. It also appears that while the princes of the several tribes possessed an equal and independent

jurisdiction, they were early united into one great council for the common welfare ; for Moses was ordered to lay his proposals before all the elders of Israel, that is, before a general council of the whole nation. It is also remarkable, that when the Hebrews went out of Egypt, they departed, not like a tumultuous mob, but as a regular army under proper commanders, and each host ranged under its own standard ; which proves that they had been previously habituated to order and discipline, both civil and military, and also renders it probable that the princes of tribes had been acknowledged as general officers of their forces, and the heads of families as subordinate officers. This very early existence of civil and military rule among the Hebrews will account for that kind and degree of order, authority and dignity, which afterwards subsisted among them. In these antient usages we perceive the rude beginnings of their national senate.

While the people were encamped in the wilderness, Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, on a visit to his camp, advised him to choose out of all the tribes “able and true men, fearers of God, and haters of covetousness,” and to appoint them assistant or rather subordinate judges. These judges seem to have been so many justices of peace, and to have constituted inferior courts of judicature in the several tribes and cities of Israel. By these magistrates local and smaller causes were determined ; while matters of great or general importance were decided by Moses. Lord Bacon observes that this judiciary arrangement is considerably illustrated by the regular gradation of magistrates, introduced by king Alfred in the several counties and corporations of England. It does not however appear that this early arrangement, adopted by the advice of Jethro, was intended to create a *na-*

tional senate, as many Jewish writers, and after them Grotius, Selden, and others have supposed ; but only to provide for the more general and prompt administration of justice in every part of the nation. Sometime after this appointment, Moses, afflicted by the uneasy and murmuring spirit of the people, and the anger of Jehovah enkindled by it, complains that he was not able to bear the whole burden of the people alone ; upon which, by divine direction seventy men from among the elders of Israel were selected by Moses, confirmed by the people, and then supernaturally qualified by God, to be a standing council to the chief magistrate, to relieve and assist him in the arduous business of governing the nation. As this appointment grew out of the public exigences, so its direct object was to divide the burden of the national administration between Moses and a constant senate or privy council. Here then we behold the full birth and prominent features of an intermediate body, intended on the one hand to repress popular sedition, and on the other, to strengthen, and if needful, to control the supreme executive power.

If it be asked, whether the national senate consisted of these seventy elders only ; we answer, that many Jewish authors, from a fond desire of magnifying their famous sanhedrim or council of seventy, have ascribed to this body such exclusive or paramount dignity, as totally contradicts many passages of Old Testament history. From these passages it appears that all the princes of the tribes and chief heads of families, who possessed authority before the institution of the sanhedrim, still continued to sit and to act in the general council. We may therefore conceive of the seventy elders as a select and smaller council, to assist the chief magistrate in the

common business of the nation. But on extraordinary and more momentous occasions *all* the princes of Israel united with these elders in one national council. There is something analagous to this in several of the American states, and especially in some of the governments of Europe. Thus in Great Britain the king has a small privy council, who constantly assist him in the ordinary duties of his office. But when high national concerns require the meeting of all the peers, as well as the commons of the realm, those select counsellors mingle with, and become in a sense lost in the grand senate of the nation. So in France, before its late revolution, the king appointed a number of men, distinguished by their legal and political abilities, as a standing court of justice and advice. But on very great occasions he summoned to this court all the peers of the kingdom, each of whom had an equal vote in the assembly ; and he directed his standing counsellors, who were called masters of parliament, to assist this body with their best advice. These modern examples may throw much light on our present subject.

It has been much disputed whether this Hebrew council of seventy was a perpetual, or only a temporary institution. The Jewish Rabbies, though they allow that the session of this court was sometimes discontinued under the government of their kings, yet insist that it was intended to subsist, and actually flourished, with small interruptions, from the time of Moses to the end of their republic. The truth seems to be, that though the Hebrews had a permanent senate, composed of the heads of the tribes, yet the appointment of seventy select counsellors was designed for the temporary purpose of assisting Moses, and his successor Joshua during the unset-

tled state of the Israelites ; and that the sanhedrim, which made such a figure in the latter periods of their history, and which then concentrated their national dignity and power, was set up in the time of the Maccabees, between two and three centuries before Christ ; that it grew up from feeble beginnings to high degrees of authority. Agreeably, in the time of our Saviour and his apostles this court, which the New Testament writers call the council, was the grand judicatory of the nation, before whose tribunal Jesus himself was arraigned and condemned. This council extended its jurisdiction to all persons and things ; it exercised the power of life and death ; its decisions were final ; it was made a capital offence, not only to counteract, but even to controvert its decrees.

We now proceed to the *third department* of the Hebrew government, viz. that of *presiding magistrate*. As the popular branch of this constitution secured the liberties of the people ; as the senate of elders tempered the spirit, and guarded the enjoyment of liberty by wise and wholesome regulations ; so an efficient executive was equally necessary to add life, vigor, and protection to the whole. Without this, liberty is licentious and despotic anarchy ; and the wisest laws are but a dead letter. The most free and enlightened nations have found it expedient to lodge the executive power in one hand, or at least in a few, for the sake of greater responsibility, dispatch, union, and energy. The best forms of government have set up one chief commander of their forces, and one or a few principal magistrates, to preside in the execution of the laws. “ Thus the Lacedemonians have their *kings*, the Athenians their *archons*, the Ro-

mans their *consuls*, and the Hebrews their *judges* ;” and thus the admired constitutions of America have their *governors* and *presidents*. In antient governments the name *king* often implied no more authority than that of *consul* ; and there is one instance in the present age, in which the latter title covers as much power, as perhaps was ever annexed to the most pompous appellation. Accordingly, among the antient Jews *king* and *judge* were convertible terms. Thus Moses is called “ king of Jeshurun ” or Israel, because under God, their real Sovereign, he possessed the supreme executive power. But the style of *judge* is the more usual epithet to describe this officer under the original form of the Hebrew government. Let us then inquire into the import of this office, as instituted by God, and virtuously exercised by Moses and Joshua. From the summary account of it in the scripture history we learn that this high function was not to be *hereditary*. The upright policy of Moses, far from seeking to perpetuate the chief magistracy in his own family, devoutly repaired to God for the appointment of his successor. This wise and disinterested magistrate spurned the idea of any hereditary claim, even in favor of his own posterity, as equally absurd, base, and pernicious. He saw that great qualities of understanding and heart were the only titles to an office so important. Accordingly, Jehovah, by the voice of his oracle, and in answer to the request of his servant, appoints Joshua, a man of another family, and even of another tribe, to be his successor. What an excellent trait does this circumstance hold up both in the Hebrew government, and in the character of its first minister ! It further appears that the authority of the Hebrew chief ma-

gistrate, though great and extensive, could not be *arbitrary*. For he was obliged, as we have seen, to propose all greater matters to the congregation and senate for their consideration and decision ; and both he and they were to consult and be directed by the *oracle* ; the import of which may hereafter be explained. The executive power then was sufficiently balanced by the advice of the senate, the consent of the people, and the approbation of Jehovah, expressed by his oracle. This part of the Jewish constitution will receive still further light from the manner of Joshua's induction or accession to the government. In the first place Moses, a little before his death, by divine direction, publickly invests him with the office, and administers a solemn charge of fidelity. After the decease of Moses, God by the voice of the oracle solemnly approves and confirms him in his new function, and engages to him *his* patronage and benediction. In the next place all the people and their elders expressly recognize his authority in these words—" All that thou commandest us, we will do ; whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. As we hearkened unto Moses, so will we hearken unto thee only ; the Lord thy God be with thee as he was with Moses." Thus he was legally established in his authority by the formal consent both of God and the people. In a word, the Hebrew judge was vested with the chief command in war, and the first magistracy in peace. He summoned the senatorial and popular assemblies, proposed subjects for their deliberation, presided in their counsels, and executed their resolutions. He acted in all things as viceroy of Jehovah, the king of Israel. To use the words of the very learned *Calmet*, " he was protector of the law, defender of

religion, avenger of crimes, especially of idolatry ; still he had no power to make new laws, or to impose new taxes. He was without show, without pomp, without followers, without equipage. The revenues of his office were merely gratuitous ; he had no settled stipend ; nor did he raise any thing from the people." How liberal and beneficent was this part of their government ! It united their wisdom and force in one man for the common safety ; while it prevented him from stretching his authority into despotism, and protected him from every ambitious encroachment or seditious attempt. He could not acquire unlimited power, not only for the reasons before hinted, but because his very counsellors were both rulers and members of three distinct tribes and armies, consisting of free, hardy, and jealous freeholders. A mercenary standing army had no existence. If instruments of wicked ambition could have been hired, yet neither the chief magistrate, nor any other citizen possessed or could raise a sufficient fund for that purpose. For similar reasons no aspiring demagogue, nor supposed combination of them, could effectually resist or subvert the supreme executive authority. We readily grant, that the Jews did not for any great length of time enjoy freedom and prosperity under this happy constitution. The cause is evident. They soon departed from its excellent principles. By neglecting to appoint or to cooperate with the executive power, they first experienced the dreadful evils of anarchy ; and then by an easy transition they gradually and easily resorted to absolute monarchy. May we, who enjoy civil constitutions in many respects corresponding with theirs, learn wisdom and virtue from their fatal example. In particular at this mo-

ment, when the Moses and Joshua of our American Israel have retired from the administration, let us, like good citizens and christians, devoutly pray and hope that their spirit of wisdom and integrity, and the presence of their God, may eminently characterize and prosper their successor, and all our future magistrates and people to the latest generation.

LECTURE VI.

The superior excellence and authority of the Hebrew constitution and laws, as an immediate communication from Jehovah. The manner, in which this communication was made. Hebrew theocracy the most antient system of government. The particular design of the Jewish oracle, and the happy effects of its establishment.

IN several preceding lectures we have given a brief analysis of the antient Hebrew government. We have shown that this government, besides possessing other advantages peculiar to itself, combined all the essential features of the most perfect constitutions adopted in after ages ; particularly that it established those three great departments or balances of power, a popular assembly, a senatorial council, and a presiding magistrate. But the most distinguishing and crowning excellency of this constitution was, that it placed at the head of administration a perfect Sovereign, viz. Jehovah himself. As God was the Creator and moral Governor of the Israelites, in common with the rest of mankind, and in this capacity enjoined upon them all moral duties ; and as he was also their religious or ecclesiastical Head, and in this character prescribed the peculiar forms and rites of their worship ; so he was the Sovereign of their body politic ; and in this relation he gave them civil and judicial laws, proclaimed war and peace, and appointed officers in the state. As their political King, he ordered a palace to be built for his residence among them, I mean the *tabernacle*, and afterward the *temple*, in which he visibly dwelt, or manifested his presence, by the *Shechinah*, or bright cloud of glory, appearing over the mercy seat between

the two cherubims, in the innermost room of the palace ; on which account he is said to “ dwell,” and to “ sit between the cherubims.”* From this seat he gave forth oracles, or notified his pleasure respecting important matters, which were not previously settled by the written laws.

It is evident, at first view, that if God was in a peculiar sense the King of the Hebrew nation, as their whole history proves ; he must have had some fixt and unequivocal method of conveying to them his royal pleasure ; otherwise his authority would have been nugatory, and his will perpetually liable to be counterfeited, mistaken, or perverted. It is therefore an important question, how the voice or oracle of Jehovah, which was the highest and last resort in the Jewish administration, was given forth and ascertained ? This question demands a more critical attention, on account of that fashionable incredulity and indiscriminate contempt, with which some modern inquirers regard every antient story of oracular or supernatural inspiration. The mind of man, at this day, enlightened by christian knowledge and human science, is forcibly struck with that combination of deep cunning and ignorant superstition, which gave birth and reputation to the heathen oracles and auguries even among the refined Greeks and Romans. We readily grant that the heathen oracles were in general the artful devices of priests and priestesses, who gave forth responses according to the pay, which they expected or received ; and who uttered their predictions in such equivocal terms, as might suit the event, whether favorable or adverse. Kircher, an eminent philosopher, with a view to undeceive the credulous, and to account for some strange

* Psalm lxxx. 1. xcix. 1.

things related of the Delphic oracle, fixed a tube in his bed chamber in such a manner, that, when persons called him at the garden gate, next to his lodgings, though they spoke no louder than ordinary, he heard them as distinctly, as if they were in the room, and returned as audible an answer. This tube he afterwards wrought so artificially into a figure in his museum, that the statue would open its mouth, move its eyes, and apparently speak; when he supposed that the heathen priests by a similar artifice made the superstitious people believe that the idol returned answers to their questions. But the oracle of the God of Israel was totally different from the pagan divinations. It could not therefore originate from the same source, nor be the mere imitation or offspring of heathen superstition.

For *first*, none of the pagan communities regarded as their political sovereigns those deities, whose oracles they consulted. For the most part these deities were not owned as the tutelar gods even of those particular cities, in which their oracles were stationed. This remark applies to the famous oracles of Apollo at Delphi, and of Jupiter Hammon in Libya. But the oracle of Jehovah among the Hebrews was part of a very peculiar and sublime policy, constituting him their supreme Lawgiver and Magistrate, and was of course the appointed and suitable organ of his will on every great political occasion. A plan of civil policy so novel and grand could not be borrowed from the heathens, whose ideas and customs were opposite to it; but was evidently designed to counteract their favorite and pernicious idolatries.

We add *secondly*, that the theocracy of the Hebrews is far more *antient* than any of the pagan oracles. A de-

istical writer* of the last century has insinuated, that “while the Jews were in Egypt, they had been much surprised and dazzled with the infallible declarations and decisions of Jupiter Hammon,” and from this source took the first hint of a future oracle among themselves. But unluckily for this suggestion, the fact is, that Jupiter Hammon was not born till above four hundred years after the Jews went out of Egypt. The true chronology of Egypt, as restored by the great Sir Isaac Newton, places Hammon, king of that country, about one thousand and thirty four years before the Christian era, that is, about four hundred and fifty years after the law of Moses. This illustrious writer gives us the first rise of heathen oracles in the following words. “The year before Christ one thousand and two *Sesac* reigned in Egypt; he erected temples and oracles to his father in Thebes, Ammonia, and Ethiopia, and thereby caused his father to be worshipped as a god in these countries. This was the original of the worship of Jupiter Ammon, and the first mention of oracles I meet with in profane history. The Greeks in their oracles imitated the Egyptians; for the oracle of Dodona was the oldest in Greece, and was set up by an Egyptian woman, after the example of the oracle at Thebes.” To derive therefore the Hebrew oracle from the Egyptian, discovers an ignorant or wilful misrepresentation of chronological facts.

We observe *thirdly*, that the design of the Jewish oracle, and the manner, in which it uttered its decrees, precluded every appearance of imposture or superstition. The design or use of this oracle was very limited. It was not intended to issue any new laws, nor to repeal or change any former statutes, nor to decide private matters,

* Dr. Morgan, author of the “Moral Philosopher.”

or common judiciary causes ; for a complete and unalterable code of laws was already established, and provision made for their due application in every ordinary case. The oracle was therefore instituted for the sole purpose of determining judicial and public questions of extraordinary moment and difficulty. As such an establishment suited the Jewish theocracy, so it was an instance of great condescension and goodness in God, the political King of that nation, and an inestimable privilege to his loyal subjects, as it insured to them his unerring and gracious direction. Thus, while they had an assembly of the people, who gave their free and general consent to public measures ; while they enjoyed a wise senate, to examine, prepare, and mature those measures, and to check popular rashness ; while they had an executive Judge, to convene and preside in those bodies, to carry their resolutions into effect, and to command the armies of the nation ; they were also favored with a standing *oracle*, by which on great occasions they were to ask the counsel, and obtain the royal assent of their divine Sovereign. This operated as a final check upon any hasty or wrong measures, which the people, senate, or judge might in difficult cases be led to adopt. It was also an excellent mean of keeping alive in that nation a sense of their constant dependence on, and duty to God, as their immediate Director and Patron ; of making them feel that their safety and prosperity must result from a close adherence to his counsels and commands. Thus it directly promoted the pious and beneficent object of their constitution. But it may be asked, might not this business of consulting the oracle be abused ? Might not the High Priest, who alone was authorized to consult it, fabricate or report such answers, as suited his own policy ? Might

he not in this way artfully draw to himself and his own order the power and revenues of the state? We reply, there were two different modes, in which Jehovah declared his will by the oracles; each of which was completely guarded against the abuses just mentioned. In the first place God sometimes uttered his voice from the Shechinah or cloud of glory immediately, without being consulted by any one. In this manner he gave the law on Mount Sinai; his voice was heard by the whole Hebrew nation; and it was attended with such awful solemnity, as not only silenced all suspicion of priestcraft or political fraud, but imparted such credit and authority to Moses, that all the people requested that thenceforward he might be employed as the medium of divine communications. Thus the Hebrew constitution and laws were in the first instance enacted and published in a manner, and amid a scene of miracles, which convinced the whole nation of their divine original. But though the first establishment of their polity wore the evident marks of immediate divine agency, and excluded the possibility of human fraud; yet as future public exigences would require special direction from the oracle, the business of consulting it in such cases was entrusted to the high priest; who was ordered to “put in his breast plate the *urim* and *thummim*, that they might be on his heart, when he went in before the Lord.” It is not essential to determine what the *urim* and *thummim* were. It is sufficient to know they were something in the breastplate, which was part of the appropriate dress of the high priest. “Their names, which signify *light* and *perfection*, denoted the *clearness* and *fulness*, which the oracular responses always carried in them. These answers were not like the heathen oracles, enigmatical and ambiguous, but always plain and

luminous ; nor did they ever fall short of perfection, either of fulness in the answer, or of certainty in the truth of it." It is remarkable that all the answers of this oracle, recorded in scripture, are clear, explicit, and direct. It also merits our notice, that the high priest could neither consult, nor give answers, whenever he pleased. He could not ask counsel of the oracle on private subjects, nor in a private manner. The law directed that the judge or chief magistrate should propose the questions to the priest, and be with him, when he consulted the oracle. The account, which the Talmudists give of this matter, seems to be founded in truth. "The High priest stood with his face toward the ark, or presented himself with his breastplate before the veil, exactly over against the mercy seat, where the divine presence rested ; while the person, who consulted the oracle, stood behind him, and said, shall I do this thing, or shall I not do it ? And when he thus presented himself in due manner, God answered him in the same manner as he did Moses, that is, by an audible voice from the mercy seat. For this reason the holy of holies, where the mercy seat stood, is so often styled the oracle ; because from thence Jehovah gave forth answers to those, who asked his direction." Josephus tells us that any person, who thought fit, might be present, when the oracle was consulted, in order to remove all suspicion of imposture, and to give satisfaction to strangers, as well as to Jews. That the answers were given by an audible voice is evident from many plain passages of scripture. Thus when the ten commandments were given, we are told, that *God spake all these words, saying*. In the after laws the common phrase is, *the Lord spake, saying*. In another place we are told that when Moses was gone into the tabernacle

to speak with him, that is, to consult him, then he heard the voice of one speaking to him from off the mercy seat. The same form of expression is used on the same occasion in after ages.

From all which it appears, that this part of the Jewish constitution gave to the high priest no dangerous authority over the people or their rulers. For he was to ask counsel, not at his own pleasure, nor for his own interest, but under the direction of the magistrate, and on such questions only as respected the public, and were previously determined by common consent. Nor could he consult and give answers even on these subjects in a private or clandestine manner, but he did it in the presence of those, who propounded the questions; and the answers, being uttered in a distinct, audible voice, from within the veil, were, in all probability, directly heard, not only by the priest, but by the person, for whom he consulted. The priest therefore on this occasion was merely a public servant or messenger, through whom the people corresponded with Jehovah, their political King. In this view he may be compared to a messenger of the American congress, carrying up to the president some public bill or question for his signature, and reporting his answer. Would it not be absurd to say that such messenger could fabricate and impose upon the nation any answer or law, which he pleased, to promote his own views? We accordingly find no instance in the whole Jewish history, of a high priest attempting thus to prostitute his office to sinister purposes.

The preceding observations not only vindicate, but highly recommend the antient Hebrew oracle, as a most needful and beneficent part of their civil, as well as religious constitution. We grant that this institution was

singular and extraordinary. It has no parallel in the political history or experience of any other nation. But this is no just objection either to its reality or excellence. We have formerly shown that it was most worthy of God to take the Jewish people under his immediate government, for the purpose of preserving true religion and morality in the midst of prevailing idolatry and wickedness. To secure this great object, it was necessary that the Deity should sensibly reside among them by some striking representation of his gracious presence. The human mind in those early ages, being in a state of infancy, could not ascend to abstract and realizing conceptions of an infinite, omnipresent Spirit. Besides, the Jews had been familiarly conversant with nations, who gloried in the visible presence and protection of their idol gods. The genius, education, and circumstances of the Israelites at that period made it necessary that their invisible Sovereign should in some sense become embodied among them; that he should statedly appear to and for them in a manner so splendid, as might fully establish their faith, and engage their confidence, veneration, and obedience. Nothing but this could wean them from the pompous and alluring idolatries of the heathen, and reconcile them to a system of belief, and of worship and practice so singular, so pure, and so burdensome, as their law prescribed. Nothing but some constant and impressive symbol of Jehovah's presence could have animated them to conquer, to settle, and defend the promised Canaan amid the most formidable enemies and dangers; and nothing short of this could have kept them in awful and regular subjection to the divine government. The standing visible appearance of Deity in the Hebrew tabernacle and temple; the pillar of fire or cloud of glory,

which resided over the mercy seat ; and that audible declaration of the divine will, which frequently issued from it, these sensible manifestations of Jehovah, which the Bible so often mentions, are so far from being incredible, that sound reason and philosophy compel us to admit both their expediency and their truth. They were necessary for the moral and religious education of mankind during their age of minority. They were suitable and condescending methods employed by infinite goodness to bring forward the human mind to that mature and more perfect state, which it now enjoys. To pour contempt therefore on these extraordinary appearances, as absurd or romantic fables, would be as unphilosophical and ungrateful, as for a child, when arrived at manhood, to censure and despise those condescending methods, by which parental wisdom and love moulded and carried forward his childhood. Dr. Robertson in his history of America justly remarks, “ that man in his rudest state confines his feeble mental exertions to a few necessary objects ; that he forms no abstract original ideas ; and that in this situation he is incapable of rising by his own energies from visible nature to the knowledge of an invisible Creator and Governor.” How proper, how needful for man in such a state were those manifestations of Deity, which the Jewish history records ! They had the same necessary use in religion and morals, which pictures and hieroglyphics then answered for the mutual communication of thought. But as these have long since been superseded by the invention of alphabets ; so the former have equally given place to the more refined dispensation and views of religion, which distinguish the manly and christian age of the world.

LECTURE VII.

The commencement and operation of the Hebrew constitution. Corrupt and degenerate state of the Jewish people after the death of Moses and Joshua. A temporary state of anarchy. Introduction of judges and kings; their duties prescribed and their power limited by the express commands and prohibitions of Jehovah.

HAVING surveyed the great features of the Hebrew government according to its original model, we will close this branch of Jewish Antiquities with a brief history of the several modifications and revolutions of this government, from its first establishment to its final dissolution.

This constitution commenced its being and operation in the wilderness of Arabia, during the migration of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan. During this period Jehovah, as their political Sovereign, conducted them in their various marches and battles, by the symbol of a pillar or cloud of glory. From this circumstance the heathen poets probably derived the fabulous stories of their deities appearing in a cloud, illumined with extraordinary brightness. As God thus condescended to appear and act as the king of the Hebrews, so he constituted Moses his viceroy, or lieutenant, in whom the supreme power, under himself, was vested. On this account Moses is called king in Jeshurun or Israel. For though the government by kings was not yet erected in that nation, yet the title was in ancient times given to persons of high rank and authority, though they never wore a crown, or appeared in royal state. Agreeably, in after times the Roman dictators are sometimes styled

kings both by the Latin and Greek historians. While Moses thus exercised the supreme magistracy under God, the king of Israel ; the priests and levites, who statedly attended on the royal presence in the tabernacle or temple, and who were intrusted in many cases, not only with the explanation, but with the execution of the laws, were properly ministers of state, as well as of religion. Indeed the worship of the true God was so interwoven with the civil polity, as its grand basis and end, that the public functions of both would in many cases properly and even necessarily meet in the same offices. Hence, by the way, the sacrifices, which the priests offered, and a part of which fell to their share, as a perquisite of their office, were intended not only for a religious use, but for the support of the civil list, or the necessary officers of government. On this ground we may, I think, fairly justify an action of St. Paul recorded in the twenty first chapter of the Acts ; I mean his consenting to offer sacrifice in the temple, in order to conciliate the superstitious Jews, though he knew and taught that their peculiar rites were superseded and abolished by the death of Christ. But if we reflect that the Jewish sacrifices were a part of their civil as well as religious establishment, and that their civil polity continued forty years after our Saviour's death, that is, until their temple and city were destroyed by Titus ; we may justly infer both the right and duty of good citizens to support the government while it lasted, by paying the legal and customary tribute. Of this kind I conceive was the offering presented by Paul. This peculiar complexion of the Hebrew government also points out in what sense the levitical sacrifices could make atonement for sin. They might be a proper fine, or an equitable compensation for political offences, or

for certain trespasses against the state or the authority of its great Sovereign ; but they had no power to expiate moral guilt, especially presumptuous sins against God, considered as the moral Governor and Judge of men's hearts.

Such were the outlines of the Jewish administration during the life of Moses, and of his successor Joshua. After the death of these excellent rulers, the people became corrupt, and the government degenerated both in its form and execution. It was administered first by occasional judges, then by a long race of kings, and at length ended in a tributary commonwealth. These political changes, however great, were by no means equal to those, which the most celebrated governments of Greece and Rome underwent in a far less space of time. The Roman people, so famous for their wisdom, their ardent and jealous zeal for liberty, effected or permitted greater and more pernicious alterations in their polity in one century, than the whole Jewish history can furnish. It is a preeminent trait of the Hebrew constitution, that it made the best provisions against frequent and dangerous innovations. It precluded the usual incitements and engines of selfish ambition, by securing a perpetual equality of landed property, by forbidding usury, by barring all the citizens against great wealth, or extreme poverty, by rendering departments of power burdensome rather than lucrative, by appropriating every station of eminence to heads of houses and leaders of tribes, by duly balancing the several parts both of the local and general governments, and thus rendering it impracticable for any person or order of men to seize the property or freedom of their country. To what source then shall we ascribe the political calamities, which that people experienced ? I answer, we must trace them to their own neg-

lect or abuse of their original constitution. When Joshua and the elders of his council died, it appears that the people chose no chief magistrate or counsellors in their place. The consequence was a *temporary anarchy*, in which, we are told, every man did what was right in his own eyes. This state of things gave rise to *occasional judges*, of whom we read in the next book to that of Joshua. These officers were appointed only on particular occasions ; to deliver the people, for instance, from the power of some oppressor. They resemble therefore the Roman dictators, who were created on some extraordinary emergencies, and whose power, while in office, was very great. The history of these judges proves that their office was temporary, and their authority in some respects absolute. Though the duration of their power was not precisely limited, like that of the dictators ; yet we may rationally conclude that when they had accomplished the end of their appointment, they retired to a private station. This is naturally inferred from the answer of Gideon, when the people offered to invest him and his family with perpetual sovereignty—“ I will not rule over you ; nor shall my son rule over you ; the Lord shall rule over you.” This noble declaration proves, that in the view of this pious patriot permanent and hereditary dominion in one person and family was inconsistent with the Hebrew theocracy.

As one main object of these lectures is the elucidation and defence of scripture, we will stop a few moments to explain a remarkable circumstance related of one of these judges, which has created much dispute among serious readers and learned critics, both Jewish and Christian. The circumstance, to which I refer, is the singular vow, and the corresponding action of Jephthah. This judge and captain of Is-

rael, when going out to war against an invading foe, solemnly vowed, that if Jehovah would crown him with victory, he would, on his return, offer up for a burnt offering whatever should come forth from his house to meet him. Having gained a complete victory, and returning in triumph to his house, he was met by his daughter, an only child, who came out to congratulate him on the glorious event. Though he was overwhelmed with sorrow at meeting such an object after making such a vow, yet the history informs us that he did with his daughter according to his engagement. Several infidel writers have eagerly laid hold of this story, as an indelible blot upon the Jewish religion, which allowed a Hebrew judge to sacrifice his own child; while many Jewish commentators, zealous to prevent or to repel such a charge, have denied the fact in this instance, and have insisted that Jephthah devoted his daughter not to death, but only to perpetual celibacy, or the life of a religious recluse; and many learned Christians have embraced the same hypothesis, not only from pious tenderness for the honor of the Jewish scriptures and law, but from their inability to reconcile such an unnatural murder with the good character given of Jephthah in the epistle to the Hebrews. No one would rejoice more than myself in vindicating this renowned captain from so barbarous a deed. But all the learned criticism, which his advocates have employed on the Hebrew text, have not, I think, fairly rescued it from the common interpretation. Nor can I see that the honor either of the Jewish or Christian revelation is much interested in this question. It will not follow that the law of Moses allowed the practice of human sacrifices, because one of the Hebrew magistrates was once chargeable with it, or because his conduct in this instance was

not explicitly censured. It is sufficient that the Mosaic law nowhere requires nor warrants such sacrifices, but in general pointedly forbids and condemns them as heathenish and detestable ; and that no one instance of a decidedly good and great man offering up such victims occurs in the whole Jewish history. We grant that Jephthah is ranked by one of the New Testament writers in the catalogue of antient believers and worthies ; but this gives no sanction to his conduct in the case before us, any more than the high approbation bestowed on David's general character implies a specific commendation of his adultery and murder. As the children of Israel in those early times were comparatively rude and barbarous in their opinions and manners ; and as Jephthah in particular had enjoyed very slender advantages for religious knowledge ; we may suppose that he made and performed his rash vow with a truly pious though misguided zeal ; at least we may suppose him to possess so much faith in the God of Israel, as enabled him to defend his cause and people with laudable heroism, for which he is justly commended in scripture, though he might want that noble principle, which constitutes the good man and the heir of salvation. "It is highly probable that Homer derived his fable of Agamemnon's sacrificing his daughter Jphigenia from some tradition of Jephthah's sacrifice. And indeed the name Jphigenia seems to be a corruption of Jephthigenia, the daughter of Jephthah."*

The next change, which occurs in the Hebrew government, is the substitution of *kings* in the room of temporary judges. We are informed that when Samuel, the last and best of the judges, was bending under the weight of

* Ovid has introduced and dressed up a similar story, which was evidently borrowed from the same source.

years, the people came to him and clamorously demanded a king to judge them like all the other nations. This request was exceedingly displeasing to Samuel, who charged them with great wickedness in asking for a king ; and when he referred the matter to God, the Most High declared that by this act *they had rejected him, that he should not reign over them.* From hence some writers have inferred that monarchy is in its very nature criminal ; that it impiously invades the prerogative of the Supreme Ruler, as well as the equal rights of man ; that to desire and especially to set up kingly government is not only treason against human liberty, but rebellion against God. This inference was plausibly enforced on the American people, in the beginning of the year 1776, by a very popular but desultory writer ; and this sentiment, with others equally well timed, operated with the swiftness and force of the electric fluid in preparing this country for a formal separation from the British monarch. But however beneficial this doctrine may have been to America at a critical moment, yet it is not fairly deducible from the passage before us. For the criminality of the Jews in wishing for a king arose from the peculiarity of their original constitution, which had been settled by God himself, and which placed the royal authority in his hands. Hence their request implied a rebellious wish to change *his* model of government, to set up another sovereign in *his* place, to conform their political system to that of their surrounding nations, and thus to hazard the great object of the constitution, which was to keep them at a sacred distance from heathen customs and manners. This part therefore of the Jewish history furnishes no *general* argument against monarchy. At the same time we maintain that so far as the character of any peo-

ple is formed by the divine maxims of the Hebrew and the Christian law, they are fitted to enjoy a free republican government ; and so far as they deviate from these principles, they need the restraints of regal dominion. Accordingly the Supreme Being, finding his antient people perversely bent on having a king, and perceiving that their turbulent disposition would require the strong corrective of royal power, condescended to their earnest petition. As he early foresaw this future propensity, and was determined to permit its gratification, he thought fit in framing their laws, to prescribe some regulations both concerning their election of a king, and the manner of his administration. In the first place he expressly reserved to himself the choice of their future sovereigns—“Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God will choose.” Accordingly he appointed Saul, by lot, to be their first king ; David, by name, to be their second ; Solomon, his son, to be his successor ; and then made the regal government hereditary in David’s family. But while Jehovah thus nominated the person, the concurring act of the people invested him with the sovereignty. A second regulation was, that their king must be a native Israelite—“One from among thy brethren shalt thou set over thee ; thou mayst not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother.” This limiting statute was well adapted to inspire a just dread of foreign intriguers and invaders, and a united vigilance in repelling them from the government. One who is born and educated in a community, is its natural brother ; his habits, attachments, and interests strongly link him to it. But the sentiments, feelings, and interests of a stranger, do often as naturally connect him with a foreign country, and alienate him from that,

in which he resides. At best they frequently attach him to some visionary, undigested, and impracticable theory, which by no means applies to the people, among whom he dwells. It is therefore in most cases unnatural and dangerous to entrust such a person with supreme power, or even with a high subordinate station.

Thirdly, their king was not to multiply horses. This prohibition was intended either to check unnecessary pomp, so incident to royalty, and often so oppressive to the people ; or to restrain the Jews from using cavalry in war, and thus lead them to confide not in their own military preparations, like the nations around, but in the special protection of Jehovah.

Fourthly, the king is also forbidden “ to greatly multiply to himself silver and gold ;” which was doubtless designed to restrain royal avarice and luxury, the physical and moral effects of which are national poverty, corruption, and ruin. He is further enjoined to write out in a book, for his own use, a correct copy of the divine law ; which injunction was intended to rivet this law more firmly in his memory, and to hold him in constant subjection to its authority. For the same purpose he is required to “ read in this copy all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all his statutes.” Thus the power of the Hebrew kings was circumscribed by a code of fundamental and equal laws, provided by infinite wisdom and rectitude. That the monarchs of that nation, even in the worst times, were considered, not as above law, but restrained by it, is strictly verified by the story of Ahab, a most abandoned prince. Though he earnestly coveted the vineyard of Naboth, one of his subjects, and offered to purchase it ; yet because the law forbade the alienation of lands from

one tribe or family to another, he could not obtain it, till he had, by bribing false witnesses, procured the legal condemnation and death of Naboth, as a traitor and blasphemer. It appears then that a Jewish king was only God's vicegerent, governing by his laws, which he could on no occasion alter or repeal. In fine, the monarch is charged not to let his heart be lifted up above his brethren, but to govern his subjects with condescending mildness and beneficence, not as slaves, but as brothers. Thus David, addressing his subjects, styles them his brethren. This amiable model is imitated by the first christian emperors, particularly by Constantine the Great. Thus we find that even the regal government, though originating in the perverse impiety and folly of the Israelites, was so shaped and guarded by the divine law, as to promise the greatest public benefits.

With respect to the ceremonies of inauguration, by which the Hebrew kings were actually invested with the royal dignity, it may suffice to observe, that the head of the person elected was first anointed with oil, and then crowned with a diadem; after which he was saluted with the kiss of homage, which was followed by the acclamations and benedictions of the people.

The kingly form of administration continued about five hundred and thirty years, that is, from Saul to the Babylonish captivity. In travelling over this long period, though we meet with forty two crowned heads, we find but eight truly virtuous princes, whose authority and example were consecrated to the best interests of the people. This circumstance, compared with the general history of kings and emperors, affords mankind but little ground of confidence in the virtue of monarchs, or the blessings of royalty.

Another remarkable fact is, that the character of the reigning prince always gave a leading complexion to that of the nation. When a good king ascended the throne, he never failed to reform and exalt the public manners and condition; and when a wicked king assumed the government, he never failed to draw the community after him into deep depravity and suffering. What a solemn lesson does this hold out to all, who either possess or expect stations of honor and influence in society! Many of you doubtless anticipate some degree of future eminence. You will remember that your power, and consequently your obligation to reform and bless mankind will keep pace with this eminence. If one sinner, possessing genius and science, influence and fame, may and will destroy much good, and produce incalculable mischief; then one virtuous person, clothed with the same advantages, may and ought to produce great public benefit. It is a serious truth, that every man of influence is as much accountable for the effects of his principles and conduct on mankind, as a monarch is for the extensive good or ill, which flows from his example and administration. If in your future spheres of operation you steadily feel and practically comport with this truth, you may, in the language of the poet, look down and pity kings; for in true honor, satisfaction, and usefulness you will excel a great majority of them, and will finally inherit thrones of glory

LECTURE VIII.

An examination of Jewish Antiquities recommended from the novelty of the subject, the pleasure it affords, and the advantages to be derived from it. Religious peculiarities of the Hebrew nation. Idolatry considered a capital offence against the state. Temporal rewards and punishments annexed to the observance or violation of the Hebrew ritual; and the general tendency of God's conduct toward his antient people, to the final establishment of the christian system.

AS this private lecture will now be addressed to an audience consisting partly of new members, it will be proper for their sakes briefly to explain the nature and importance of the subjects, which here invite their attention. The legislature of this university have wisely judged that a series of discourses on *Jewish and Christian Antiquities* might be rendered both entertaining and profitable to every lover of useful knowledge; especially to those, who mean to be religious instructors.

With respect to Jewish Antiquities, the study of these recommends itself to curious and liberal minds by many weighty considerations.

In the first place it is recommended to us by the charm of *novelty*. It leads us into a field for the most part new and untrodden. I grant that a number of writers, both Jewish and Christian, have employed much labor in unfolding the peculiar laws and customs of the antient Hebrews. Yet very few have ever attempted to explore the true causes or ascertain the rationale of these laws; and most, who have attempted it, have left the subject at least as dark and perplexed, as they found it. While a crowd of authors have exhausted their learned industry in trac-

ing out the origin of pagan rites and customs amid the obscure recesses of antiquity ; in bringing to light the peculiar laws and ceremonies of the antient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans ; they have suffered the venerable peculiarities of the Hebrew nation, though emanated from the Deity, either to sleep in unworthy oblivion, to be ridiculed by petulant but ignorant adversaries, or disgraced by fanatical and superstitious friends. In such a situation ought not both the rarity and the dignity of the subject to rouse our honest and thorough investigation ? Especially when we add

Secondly, that the inquiry before us is as *pleasing*, as it is novel. If the study of the Attic and Roman laws, and other monuments of antient wisdom, afford a delicious entertainment to intellectual curiosity ; if we enjoy with transport every new discovery respecting nations, languages, and arts, which can boast of high antiquity ; if we should survey with delight a piece of coin fashioned in the reign, and bearing the image of Cesar or Alexander ; must not the far more antient monuments of divine wisdom, erected in the Hebrew church and commonwealth, be still more delightful ? How solid and noble the pleasure of tracing back the present meridian splendor of religious, moral, and political knowledge to the early dawn of each upon the Jewish world ; of contemplating the church of God in the cradle of infancy, and following her through the several stages, by which she gradually rose to maturity !

Thirdly, the *utility* of such researches is equal to their entertainment. For an accurate knowledge of the civil and religious peculiarities of the antient Hebrews will at once disperse the witty sneers and serious reproaches, with which they have been loaded. It will

show us that such sneers and reproaches are founded wholly in ignorance and misrepresentation. It will also clearly instruct us in the superstitious folly of those modern Jews and Christians, who fondly cling to a part or the whole of that pompous and burdensome system of rites, which was intended for the Hebrews only during their more gross and puerile state, and which has long since given place to the more perfect dispensation of the gospel. In short, it will add much light and beauty to many parts of the scripture, which cannot be properly understood and appreciated without knowing the antiquities of that people, and the reasons of those laws to which they refer.

Finally, what object of inquiry can be more worthy of a christian student, than those antient laws which have God for their author, his chosen people for their subjects, and the divine Savior for their final scope and consummation ; laws which were nicely suited by unerring wisdom to the genius of the age, people, and dispensation, for which they were intended, and which of course, if correctly understood must reflect great light on the general history and state of the antient world ?

Influenced by these considerations, we have employed a number of lectures upon the *civil polity* of the Hebrews. This, as we have shown, was originally a *Theocracy*, that is, a government, of which God was not only the framer, but the immediate sovereign ; a government, whose primary intention was to preserve in that nation, and consequently in the world, the principles of true religion, and of course the interests of genuine virtue, in the midst of surrounding idolatry and vice. It had likewise for its secondary object the protection of that people in the enjoyment of high temporal

freedom and prosperity, on condition of their approved fidelity to their divine King. We have largely shown that their political constitution and laws were admirably adapted to both these designs. We have particularly noted that their general or national government was that of a complex or confederate republic, combining the best features of the most perfect constitutions which were afterwards established in Greece and Rome, and at present in United America, that is, comprising a popular or representative assembly, an advising senate, and a presiding judge or executive magistrate. At the head of all these was Jehovah himself, directing and controlling the whole by a *standing oracle*, which on great occasions publicly notified his royal pleasure. This happy form of government continued, till the people wantonly insisted on having a king; from which period to the Babylonish captivity they were ruled and for the most part severely scourged by a long succession of monarchs. After this, until the final extinction of their civil polity, their government was that of a tributary commonwealth.

Having thus displayed the leading *political antiquity* of the Jewish nation, we proceed to the *second great branch* of our subject, viz. the *religious peculiarities* of this ancient and remarkable people. These form the most distinguished trait in their history. Their civil polity, as we have seen, was chiefly intended as a handmaid to religion, and was principally exerted in establishing and enforcing its doctrines and institutions. Agreeably we find that idolatry, or an open departure from the belief and worship of the one true God, was made a capital offence against the state; and political or temporal sanctions are constantly annexed to their religious ordinances. This mode of proceeding is so repugnant to the best

ideas of modern statesman, moralists, and christians, that a close attention to the peculiar reasons of it is necessary to a full conviction of its propriety. We instantly perceive that no human magistrate can rightfully dictate or punish the religious creed and worship of his subjects, because he is equally fallible with them, and was appointed to superintend the body politic, not the spiritual state of individuals; and because the Deity alone is Lord and Judge of men's consciences. But these reasons do not apply to the antient Hebrew government, which was erected and administered by GOD HIMSELF, who is an infallible judge of religious truth and falsehood, who has a right to enjoin the belief and observance of those doctrines and institutions, which are evidently stamped with his authority, and who precisely knows the degree of criminality implied in every deviation from his requirements. Besides these general considerations, there were many special circumstances, which rendered temporal rewards and punishments the most proper sanctions of the Hebrew ritual.

It is to be remembered that this ritual was chiefly intended as a remedy against idolatry, to which the Israelites, as well as neighbouring nations, were extremely addicted. Now the assurance of worldly blessings or calamities annexed to the divine law was the most effectual ground against this evil. For it best suited the genius and taste of a gross and ignorant people. As the long servitude of the Hebrews in Egypt, and intercourse with its sottish inhabitants, had rendered their minds very abject and carnal; the Deity wisely accommodated his discipline to their low apprehensions and desires; he allured them to duty, and deterred them from transgression by such motives as they could understand and feel; that

is, by the promise of a pleasant and fertile country, of a numerous offspring, of a long and tranquil life, of splendid victory and honor, and by the threatening of famine, want, pestilence, defeat, and slaughter. Thus the divine Legislator condescended to reconcile them to his prescriptions, just as prudent parents and teachers stimulate young children to their appointed task by incitements fitted to their puerile state.

2. These temporal sanctions directly struck at the root of idolatry, and destroyed its principal support. For it was the leading sentiment of those early times that worldly prosperity was inseparably connected with a strict observance of their idolatrous rites, with a devout worship of the stars, of demons, of tutelar deities, and that a contempt of these gods, or a violation of their institutions would be punished with terrible calamities. Even the Israelites, as appears from their history, were deeply infected with this vain and pernicious idea ; and this was the main source of their frequent relapses into idolatry. To eradicate this fatal error, it was necessary that their divine Lawgiver should denounce and inflict the same penalties on those, who deserted his worship, which were supposed to follow the neglect of the pagan deities ; and that he should promise and conspicuously grant the opposite blessings to those, who, abjuring their former idolatry, acknowledged and obeyed him as their only Sovereign ; in short, that he should hold up full evidence, that he was the sole Dispenser both of good and evil. This was to destroy idolatry with its own weapons ; it was to tear away the grand props, on which it rested, and to transfer them to a directly opposite use, viz, to the support of that allegiance, which is exclusively due to Jehovah.

This observation will receive further light and strength if we add

3. That the religion, which universally prevailed in the antient world, was chiefly, if not wholly, limited in its views to the present life. Those only were worshipped as gods by the heathen nations, who were considered as having merited that honor by some great temporal benefits. On this ground the beneficent luminaries of heaven, the inventors of useful arts and laws, and other signal benefactors of mankind, were ranked among the gods. Hence the Egyptians worshipped the river *Nile* on account of the annual plenty, which its inundation poured over their country. The *sacrifices* too, which the Gentiles offered, were intended merely to procure or to acknowledge some temporal favor, that is, to appease the anger, to avert the judgments, or to requite the benefits of those divinities, to whom they were presented. Their religious *festivities* had much the same object; they were designed either to refresh and cheer the bodies and spirits of the worshippers, to render the gods propitious to their fields and vineyards, or to celebrate their benignity manifested in their worldly prosperity or success. In short, the titles and attributes, the prayers and other addresses, by which they honored their deities, were all confined to the good and evil things of this transitory state. Does not this survey of the early and general state of religion unfold the wisdom and beauty of the divine economy towards antient Israel? Was it not fit that God should adjust the rights and sanctions of his worship in some degree to the prevailing genius and sentiments of the age; that he should instruct his people to ascribe to him those political titles and temporal favors, which the rest of the world false-

ly attributed to imaginary gods ; that he should prescribe a system of pure ; but in some measure carnal ordinances, suited to the complexion of the times, and encourage the observance of them, as the sure means of obtaining those blessings from him, which the pagans eagerly but vainly expected from their gross ceremonies and idols ?

The fitness of this conduct will strike us with greater force, if we consider how deeply and almost immovable this notion was rivetted in the human mind, that all worldly advantages depended on a sacred adherence to the ceremonies of pagan worship. Even the Jews, after they had enjoyed means of better instruction for many hundred years, made this reply to their prophet Jeremiah, who had been solemnly testifying against their idolatry, “as for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of Jehovah, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly go on to burn incense to the queen of heaven (that is, to Juno, to the Moon, or some great celestial luminary) and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we and our fathers have done ; for then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.” The same opinion is zealously advocated by *Celsus*, a very learned heathen, and one of the most early and sagacious writers against the Jewish and Christian religion ; speaking of corn and wine, of the fruit of the trees, and the benefits of water and air, he says, “men receive each of these from some one of the gods to whom the care of these things are assigned.” We may add that the famous emperor *Julian*, who apostatized from christianity to paganism, reproves

the inhabitants of *Alexandria* for the respect they showed to the persons and doctrines of Christians—"You Alexandrians, says he, tamely endure and even minister to those who despise the religion of your fathers. You do not recollect the antient prosperity, the fullness of good things, which we then enjoyed, when all Egypt held a strict communion with the gods." This opinion had taken a deeper hold both of the Jewish and Gentile world, on account of the singular affluence and felicity, which for a long series of time were possessed by the Egyptians, who were uncommonly devoted to idolatrous worship. The fame of their unexampled prosperity, and of those religious rites which were supposed to procure it, drew to their country a vast confluence of foreigners, not only Hebrews, but Persians, Arabians Phenicians, Babylonians, and Greeks, who eagerly resorted thither to learn from their sacred mysteries the art of private and national happiness. In such a state of things how indispensable was it, that Jehovah the true God and King of Israel, should engage to his loyal subjects an abundance of earthly good, and threaten idolaters with the greatest temporal evils; that they and the whole surrounding world might experimentally know that obedience to Him was the best, yea the only road to happiness!

We might mention several other weighty reasons, why the Mosaic religion was chiefly enforced by political and worldly motives. The nature of that system required it. The institution itself was worldly, ceremonious, and temporary. The observance of it was therefore fitly enforced by temporal rewards. Whereas the gospel, being a more spiritual, refined, and durable religion, is properly accompanied with more sublime and durable sanctions, with motives which respect the soul and eternity. More-

over, as the Mosaic law was an appendix, or extraordinary burden superadded to the natural and primitive duties of man; it was proper and just that some peculiar recompense superadded to the natural rewards of virtue, should be annexed to its observance. As God likewise assumed the name and function of the political king of Israel, and in this character gave forth all his laws both sacred and civil; it was fit that he should enforce them by rewards and penalties corresponding with those of other political rulers and states. It would but ill suit the style of a civil or temporal sovereign to hold up celestial rewards or invisible punishments to those, who obey or violate his precepts.

Finally, as the Jewish economy was designed to be an obscure, imperfect, and preparatory dispensation, a faint shadow of spiritual and heavenly things; it was necessary that the doctrines and rewards of immortality should be in a great measure concealed under the veil of terrestrial promises and blessings. It was reserved to the Son of God, the promised Messiah, to bring life and immortality fully to light. It seemed good to infinite wisdom to dispense religious truth to the church and the world in a manner similar to that, in which the minds of individuals are carried forward from infancy to manhood, that is by slow and regular gradations. We grant that the Jewish system is very imperfect, compared with the christian; yet this very imperfection made it the most fit and useful discipline for mankind during their weak and rude state of childhood.

It is a great error of some speculative geniuses to infer that no constitution can proceed from God, but what is in all respects the most perfect. They might with equal propriety assert that there can be no *gradation* or

variety among the works of Deity ; that it is inconsistent with absolute wisdom and goodness to create a worm, an insect, or even a human infant, because each of those is inferior to a man, yea that it is unworthy of God to form any creatures but those of the highest possible rank. But all such speculations are confuted by uniform facts. We must therefore take things as they are, not as we may vainly fancy they ought to have been. Now if we soberly view the antient world, both Jewish and heathen, as it really was ; we may readily perceive that such rules and enforcements of duty, as the law of Moses held up to Israel, were admirably suited to existing circumstances, and wisely fitted to prepare mankind by degrees for the far nobler discoveries and blessings of the gospel.

LECTURE IX.

Ceremonies of the Hebrew worship, and the special objects of their appointment. Their suitableness to the existing state of the world, and to the Israelites in particular. Institution of the Jewish sabbath, and the extensive benefits resulting from it.

IN our last discourse we largely showed the fitness of those worldly motives, by which even the religious rites of the Jewish law were enforced. We pointed out many reasons which justified and even necessitated those political or temporal rewards and penalties which were employed to stimulate and hold fast to their duty a rude, carnal, and untractable nation. Having surveyed the most conspicuous sanctions of their religious code, we will now attend to the leading rites, of which it is composed.

That the antient Hebrew worship embraced a great variety and abundance of ceremonies is manifest to all; but many at this day do not appear to know the special and wise reasons of their appointment. There are two modes of communicating religious instruction, as well as of offering religious worship; one by plain, intelligible *words*, the other by significant *actions*. The question is, which of these was best fitted to promote the great ends of religion among the Jewish people. It will be easy to prove that the latter method was most eligible, or that expressive and striking ceremony suited the genius and circumstances of that nation, far better than a simple and rational mode of instruction and worship.

For in the first place the Israelites had just emerged from the bondage of Egypt, where a low education and

grievous oppression had weakened their minds, and where they had been dazzled with the pompous ceremonies, as well as the celebrated wisdom of that idolatrous country. Besides, the most familiar mode of instruction in those times, and probably the only method which they then understood, was by *Hieroglyphics*, or external symbols representing invisible objects. Now ceremonies in religious worship corresponded to Hieroglyphics in writing, and were equally necessary and beneficial, before the invention and established use of letters. And as this symbolical method of writing and of worship was greatly studied and practised by the antient Egyptians; both habit and necessity would dictate a similar mode to the early Hebrews. To such a mode of religion they were so accustomed, and so fondly attached, that they very early compelled Aaron to make them a golden calf, as a visible symbol of the divine presence, and honored this symbol with the ceremonies of a public feast. The genius and habits of the Hebrews at that period did, therefore, evidently require a symbolical or ceremonious kind of worship. As this symbolical form of religion thus suited the genius and exigences of that people; so it was farther necessary and useful, as *a wall of partition* between the people of God and surrounding idolaters. For as the Jews would not have been easy without a ceremonious religion, so without this they could not have been kept from adopting or participating in the idolatrous rites of their neighbours; especially as many of these had every charm of splendor, luxury, and festivity. To guard them still more effectually against these allurements, it was necessary that their law should forbid, or hold up as unclean and detestable, those things, which idolaters esteemed most sacred. Thus eating the

blood of the victims was deemed an essential act of religion in the heathen festivals, because blood was accounted the food of their demons or gods, and because the worshippers by partaking in this food were supposed to hold communion with these gods, and to receive peculiar discoveries or benefits from them. Was not this a sufficient reason for the prohibition of blood to the Israelites? Was it not important that a people, visibly consecrated to the true God, should be effectually barred from all the idolatrous customs of pagans? Was it not important that such a people should be conspicuously exalted above the heathen world by the superior dignity and purity both of their doctrine and worship? Would not this give them, both in their own esteem, and in the sight of surrounding nations, a proper and honorable distinction as the people of Jehovah? And was not a peculiar system of ceremonies necessary to exhibit and preserve this distinction?

Finally, as the law of Moses was intended not only as a remembrance of the past favors and wonders of the Most High, but a figure of better things to come; it was needful on both accounts that it should consist chiefly of significant rites; and that these rites should be especially fitted both to preserve among the Jews the memory of the grand promise relating to the Messiah, and to typify and prepare for its future accomplishment. Accordingly, the law of Moses is really the gospel of Christ in a hieroglyphical or figurative dress; it wonderfully represents the person and office, the actions and sufferings of the promised Redeemer, and the future spiritual blessings of his church.

If then the ceremonies of the Jewish law, considered as parts of one great whole, were admirably suited to

the then existing circumstances of the world in general, and of the Israelites in particular; if they were necessary to check idolatry and its destructive effects, to preserve pure religion and morals, and gradually to introduce the more perfect system of Christianity; if these things can be proved, the wisdom of this institution will be amply vindicated even though the utility of some detached parts of it cannot now be fully perceived. If the system at large, like that of nature, be evidently wise and good; the just inference is, that its minutest parts, like those of creation, though singly or apparently trivial, yet contribute in their place to the harmony and perfection of the whole. In this case those, who lay hold of some particular ceremonies as objects of ridicule, and from these point their artillery against the institution in general, act as unfair and impious a part, as those philosphists, who from a few seeming blemishes in the works of nature conclude that the universe is not the offspring of wisdom and goodness.

Having made these general observations we will now briefly analyze the Hebrew Ritual, and inquire into the reasons which gave rise to its principal component parts, and on which their value and usefulness depended.

We will begin with *circumcision*; which properly claims our first attention, because it was the rite of initiation into the Jewish church. The origin of this rite has occasioned much learned discussion; for it is well known that the practice of it obtained very early, not only among the Jews, but likewise among the Egyptians, Phenicians, Syrians, Arabs, and several other antient nations. Two early Greek writers, Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, have intimated that this custom probably originated in Egypt; and several modern deistical authors,

relying on their opinion, have labored to prove that the Jews borrowed it from their Egyptian neighbours. But how unfair is it to prefer the mere conjecture of two writers, who lived at a great distance both of time and place from the event in question, to the authority of Moses, who had the best means of information, and to the authentic record, the uninterrupted tradition, and the constant usage of the whole Hebrew nation for more than three thousand years! These regular sources of information give sufficient light both to the origin and the import of this ceremony, by tracing it up to Abraham, the venerable father of the Hebrews, and by representing it as the appointed token of God's covenant with him and his posterity. It is very probable that the Egyptians afterwards derived it either from Joseph while he was the first and favorite minister of their government, or from the Arabians, descendants of Abraham, who for a time ruled over Egypt; or that they were induced to adopt it by the great reputation of Abraham and of the Israelites, or by the reverence and terror excited in their minds by the marvellous works of Jehovah in favor of the Hebrews, and against their oppressors. Even the principles of idolatry might lead the Egyptians and some other nations to view the God of Israel as a very powerful Deity, and fit to be ranked among their other divinities; and according to a well known heathen custom, to court his friendly protection by embracing one of his peculiar institutions. It is, however, of small importance to determine how or on what principles this rite was introduced into pagan countries; our main business is to show the fitness and utility of it to the antient Jews. Now the ceremony of circumcision was prescribed to Abraham, to confirm his faith in the wonderful promise of

Jehovah, that he should have a son in his advanced age, that a numerous progeny springing from this son should inherit the land of Canaan, and that an illustrious person should at length proceed from this family, who would be a blessing to all nations. How kind was it to this patriarch, and how necessary to his posterity, that a promise so singular, so complex, and requiring so long a series of ages for its perfect fulfillment, should be preserved, and ratified by some conspicuous and permanent sign ! Had the Most High on this occasion selected some ceremony, which might be easily performed or counterfeited, which but rarely occurred, or which was often out of sight ; the salutary influence of it would have been comparatively feeble and interrupted. But by constantly wearing in their very flesh a character which neither time nor art could efface, they always had an impressive monument both of the divine promise and their own corresponding engagements. While this memorial thus enlivened their faith, it equally tended to encourage their obedience. It also strikingly enforced that circumcision of the heart, that mortification of inward lust, that substantial moral purity, on which their whole law laid the principal stress. Agreeably Moses, their law-giver, thus exhorts them, “ Circumcise, O Israel, the foreskin of thy heart, and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” This and many similar passages show that circumcision had a most important moral design ; that it constantly urged its votaries to internal and practical holiness ; that it taught them to esteem and to preserve themselves a holy people, dedicated to the true God ; that it admonished them to shun all defiling conversation, and especially all intermarriages with impure and uncircumcised idola-

ters; in short, that it was an open badge of distinction and bond of union to the posterity of Abraham, intended to keep them cemented in one peculiar, holy, and happy fraternity. Even the difficult and painful nature of this rite eminently contributed to these moral advantages, as none would be likely to submit to it from any other principle than that of a religious faith and obedience, or a cordial esteem of the laws and privileges of the Hebrew church. In this view it was an excellent mean of preserving the religion and character of that people pure and inviolate.

It had also a most useful tendency in another point of view. For it was first appointed not only for the confirmation of Abraham's faith, but as an honorable testimonial of his pious character; and the ready submission of this patriarch to an operation so hazardous and distressing, in the belief of a promise, which to human view seemed impossible to be realized, was a glorious exploit both of faith and obedience. Now the design of God in choosing the posterity of Abraham was to engage them to transcribe his excellent character, and thus to distinguish them by their natural relation to their illustrious progenitor. And what could better answer this purpose, than to impress on their bodies a constant memorial of his singular faith and piety. Whenever a Jew performed, witnessed, or reflected on the rite of circumcision, could he easily forget or forbear to admire and emulate this father of the faithful, this favorite of heaven? That we may duly appreciate this memorial, let us suppose the American people in the same situation with the early Hebrews, without the use of letters, depending on oral tradition and visible symbols for the conveyance of historic and religious knowledge; how

inestimable would be the moral effect of some standing ceremony or mark in the flesh, which should transmit to every citizen to the latest generation the story and the virtues of his venerable ancestors, for instance, the superior excellencies of the American Washington; especially if this visible token were prescribed by the Deity, for the purpose of obliging us to copy these virtues, and in this way assuring us of his special benediction!

Which leads us to add, that circumcision was not only an expressive token, but a solemn *seal* or mutual *ratification* both of the temporal and spiritual covenant between God and Israel; it ratified God's promises to that people, and their peculiar obligations to him. For when Jehovah directed the posterity of Abraham to be openly separated from all other nations by this distinguishing mark; he in effect called on all the world to witness the transaction, and to observe whether his promises to this people were fulfilled; for the world could easily see whether this circumcised nation enjoyed those singular divine blessings which they had been encouraged to expect. By this rite therefore the faith of Deity was publicly pledged to this people. On the other hand, they by the same token openly abjured idolatry, and bound themselves to the true religion; they took a solemn oath of allegiance to the true God, both as their political and spiritual King. Agreeably St. Paul tells us that "every one who is circumcised, becomes a debtor to the whole law". This import of the rite in question is illustrated by the practice of the antient heathens, who impressed the names or appropriate characters of their several gods on the bodies of their respective worshippers. Thus a *thunderbolt* was marked on the votaries of Jupiter; a *wand* on those of Mercury; a *helmet* or *spear* on

those of Mars ; a *trident* on those of Neptune, &c. At other times the *names* of these and other pagan deities were imprinted on their several adorers. In such a state of things was it not suitable and even necessary that the servants of the true God, should be distinguished and protected from idolatry by some appropriate and conspicuous character ? Now circumcision was a mark excellently fitted to this end. It constantly held up to the Israelites the dignity of their pedigree, the vows of their parents, the covenant of their God, the penalties of perjury, and the rewards of fidelity. It served as an impregnable barrier between the Jews and pagans ; for it compelled the former to abstain from mixing with the latter either in marriage or any familiar correspondence ; while it deterred the latter, through a dread and abhorrence of this painful ceremony, from uniting with the former. It was also so visible and lasting a mark, that deserters from the standard of Jehovah to that of idolatry would be easily detected and punished. In every view then no rite could have been better calculated to answer the great purposes of the Mosaic dispensation.

Another institution admirably adapted to the same purposes was the JEWISH SABBATH. Some great men, as Spencer, Le Clerc, Paley, and others, think that the first appointment of a weekly Sabbath took place in the wilderness, and was one of the peculiarities of the law of Moses ; and consequently that the account in the second chapter of Genesis of God's resting on and hallowing the seventh day, is only an anticipated view of the future institution of a sabbath for the Israelites. But it is certainly more natural to apply this passage to the first age of the world ; especially as some allotted season for rest and devotion is plainly dictated by the law of nature ; which not only

points out to man the necessity of some periodical relaxations from bodily and mental toil, but also the duty and advantage of social worship; but such worship cannot be suitably performed unless certain times are appropriated to it. It is also most reasonable to suppose that man immediately after his creation, when a sense of his Maker's kindness and glory was fresh on his mind, would consecrate certain seasons to his worship; and that his Creator would call him to the religious observation of the seventh day for the same general reasons, on which he afterwards prescribed it to the Jews. These rational deductions are confirmed by facts. It is a fact that the patriarchs long before the Jewish sabbath, and all, even the most antient heathen nations, distinguished time into weeks of seven days, which no appearances in nature could have suggested, and which therefore must have resulted from the early appointment of a weekly sabbath. It is also a fact that the earliest pagan writers, particularly *Homer* and *Hesiod*, speak of the seventh day as peculiarly sacred. The latter styles this day "the illustrious light of the sun;" the former has this verse, "then came the seventh day, which is holy." Dr. Kennicott also justly notes, that when the sabbath is first mentioned by Moses, he speaks of it, not as a novel institution, but as one, with which they were familiarly acquainted. In some respects however the Jewish sabbath was a new and peculiar appointment.

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LECTURE X.

Nature of the Hebrew worship. Sacrifices and offerings. Their fitness and utility.

IN our last Lecture we made some general observations, to show the expediency of religious ceremonies or symbols in the early ages, with a view to justify the numerous ritual observances prescribed in the Jewish law. We then proceeded to analyze this ancient ritual, or to point out the special import and utility of the leading ceremonies, in which it consisted. We largely explained and recommended the initiatory rite of circumcision, and made a few remarks on the antiquity and advantages of a *weekly sabbath*. We endeavored to show that this institution was probably observed from the beginning of the world. It was however in some respects a new and peculiar appointment to the Jewish nation. For

1. A *new day* seems to have been selected for its observance. For the day first marked out for the Jewish sabbath by the circumstance of the manna's not falling upon it, was not the day originally observed; for the day thus marked out was the twenty second of the second month; and counting backward seven days (to the fifteenth) we find the Jews on the fifteenth, by divine direction, performing a long and wearisome march, which would not have been allowed, on the day originally consecrated by God. It is therefore highly probable, and some learned men have accordingly computed, that the Jewish sabbath was appointed on that day of the week, on which their deliverance from Egypt was completed

by the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea ; which deliverance was a special and superadded reason for their celebration of a weekly sabbath. Agreeably, that people are directed on this day to commemorate this glorious deliverance. Their sabbath is also called a perpetual covenant and sign between Jehovah and them, by which they acknowledged him as their God. But how could it be a distinguishing sign to that people, if it were merely the old sabbath given to all mankind? Besides, their sabbath was expressly limited to the duration of their commonwealth—"thy children shall observe the sabbath throughout their generations," that is, as long as their polity shall continue ; whereas the primitive sabbath, being founded on moral and perpetual reasons, will remain in force to the end of the world. We may add, it is probable that the antient heathens, having received the original sabbath from Adam and Noah by tradition, consecrated it to the worship of their chief god the sun ; and that one reason for God's changing the day to Israel was to restrain them from joining in this idolatrous worship. On the same principle, as the pagans began their sabbath from the rising of the sun, or the first appearing of their deity, the Jews were ordered to begin theirs from the sun setting—"from evening to evening shall ye celebrate your sabbath." Finally, it is a probable calculation of some learned men, that the Jewish sabbath, reckoning from the creation, was the *sixth* day of the week ; and of course that the day, on which our Savior rose, and which is observed as the christian sabbath, is the seventh day, which God originally appointed, and which is sometimes called sunday, because the early heathens dedicated it to the sun. If this be fact, there is a most striking fitness and beauty in the revival and ob-

servation of that primitive day, which is now a memorial of those two greatest works of Deity, the creation and redemption of man. We observe

2. That the *rest* required on the Jewish sabbath was probably new and peculiar. They were ordered on penalty of death to abstain from every worldly occupation, toil, and diversion. They were forbidden even to kindle a fire in their habitations, that is, for the purpose of dressing their food or for any other work. Their ancient doctors pushed these precepts to a very superstitious length, forbidding the most necessary act of self-defence on that day. Agreeably, a thousand Jews, in the beginning of the Maccabean war, suffered themselves to be killed on the sabbath, without making the least resistance. This unwarranted superstition gave advantage to the Romans under Pompey to take their capital city, and to subjugate their nation.

3. Their worship, as well as rest, on this day were peculiar. They were to offer *double sacrifices* on the sabbath; which denotes it to have been a day of extraordinary devotion. *Holy convocations*, or assemblies for religious worship, were also required on that day. Agreeably, the Apostle Paul testifies that the law of Moses “from old time,” or from the first ages was “read and preached in the synagogues every sabbath day.” Josephus and Philo also tell us that Moses commanded the Israelites every week to lay aside all worldly business, and to assemble in public to hear the law read and expounded.

4. The ends of this institution were partly political and partly religious. It contributed to the welfare of the body politic by giving needful rest and refreshment both to laboring men and beasts, and by diffusing that knowledge and impression of religious, moral, and polit-

ical truth, which are the basis of civil order and prosperity. Its influence on the spiritual condition of that people was still more important. For the solemn rest and worship of the seventh day, after six days of labor, held up to the very senses of that rude and ignorant nation a lively image of the work of creation and its infinite Author. The sabbath was to them the *birth day* of the world; it led them to recognize and adore the divine power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator; it effectually taught them that the gods, which the heathens worshipped, such as the sun, moon, and stars, were the mere creatures of that Being, whom they celebrated. Thus it openly separated them from the whole idolatrous world. By calling them every seventh day to the devout acknowledgment of One eternal, omnipotent, all perfect Being, it proclaimed and confirmed their contempt and abhorrence of the senseless and impotent, the impure and fictitious gods of the Gentiles. It kept them stedfast to the worship of Jehovah, and to a thankful, united celebration of his attributes and benefits. It allured them to this by the sweets of rest after toil, and compelled them to it by awful punishment threatened to transgression. It taught them humanity and kindness to strangers, to their laboring servants, and even to their cattle, by giving to these an equal share with themselves in the refreshing rest of the sabbath. It conferred upon all classes of the people the incalculable moral advantages and pleasures, which result from public religious instruction and devotion. It led forward the contemplation of the pious Jews to that heavenly rest, of which their sabbath was a lively figure and anticipation. Agreeably, one of their learned writers has these remarkable words—"the law of the sabbath points not only to that fundamental

article of religion concerning the creation of the natural world, but to that spiritual world, where there shall be true rest, and real enjoyment. There we shall obtain a true respite from all corporeal labors. We have therefore, adds he, two sabbaths, the one bodily, in memory of the creation; the other spiritual, in memory of the soul's immortality and refreshment after death." Hence the Jews to this day, far from esteeming the strictness of the sabbath a burden, venerate and delight in it as the greatest blessing. Beside the moral advantages, it brought to their minds a standing confutation of the old pagan doctrine, that the world was eternal, that the celestial luminaries were so many deities. The strictness of their resting on the seventh day was to them a striking image and enforcement of the Mosaic history of the creation, and tended to keep alive in their minds that reverence and homage, which are exclusively due to the infinite Creator. Thus it operated as one of the best checks upon idolatry, and one of the most powerful supports of true religion and virtue, which could have been devised. And though the peculiarities of this Jewish institution have ceased; we have reason for grateful joy that a weekly Lord's day has succeeded in its place. The liberal dispensation of the Gospel, and the more improved state of the world, have indeed removed the necessity of observing the christian sabbath with the Jewish precision and severity. Yet every pious christian, every good patriot, every true scholar and philosopher, will reverently and thankfully observe that day and those public religious ordinances, which are dedicated to the memory of our creation and redemption, and which are so propitious to the best interests of individual and social man. He will detest the thought of idolatrously sacrificing to

sensual ease and pleasure a season, which from the beginning of the world has been sacred to God and virtue. On the return of every sabbath his heart will echo that sublime language of antient piety, “this is the day, which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Having in this and the preceding discourse sufficiently explained the import and high utility of those two capital institutions of Judaism, circumcision and the weekly sabbath, we will attend in the *third place* to the nature of the *Hebrew worship*. As this worship, externally considered, abounded with ceremonies; so these consisted very much in *sacrifices* and *offerings*, or in presenting to the Deity certain slain animals and fruits of the earth. The *origin* of sacrifices has been greatly disputed. Some have supposed that mankind in their early and uncultivated state would naturally offer to their divine Benefactor a part of his own gifts, especially a share of those things, which were most valuable and delightful to themselves; that they would be prompted to this by an idea, that what was most pleasing to them, would be most acceptable to him, and also by witnessing the efficacy of costly gifts in appeasing the anger and procuring the favor of men. Others, improving upon this scheme, and finding the use of sacrifices to have commenced soon after the fall of man, have supposed that this practice became so general and radicated, that the Most High, though he did not originally appoint or approve it, yet thought fit to indulge the Israelites in this favorite custom, and at the same time, took care to purify and guard it from every defiling and idolatrous abuse. This opinion is strongly patronized by Grotius, Spencer, and other respectable names. These

writers forcibly urge those texts of scripture, which speak of sacrifices as having no value in the sight of God, and as forming no part of his original prescriptions. It is certain that the divine institution of sacrifices is never mentioned, until the Israelites had shown a mad propensity to them in the affair of the golden calf. Yet on the other hand, both Moses and Israel, long before this event, yea, the early patriarchs as far back as righteous Abel, certainly practised this kind of worship. Now what should lead these holy men into a practice like this? Could they, on any principle of nature or of genuine piety, imagine that the blood of innocent animals would be grateful or conciliatory to the infinite Spirit? Could Cain and Abel infer this from the effect of gifts on men, at a period when both man and gifts were but beginning to exist? Besides, if these two brothers both sacrificed on this wrong principle, why were not both rejected? We may further ask, how could Abel offer his sacrifice "in faith," as we are told he did, without some divine institution and promise, as the ground of that faith? And if we consider how severely God resented and punished unauthorized or will worship in other cases, we cannot suppose he would have shown such high approbation of Abel's sacrifice, if he had not previously commanded it. It is therefore at least highly probable that this mode of worship was appointed by God himself in the first age of the world; and that it was traditionally conveyed from Adam and Noah to all the antient nations. This hypothesis, and this only, satisfactorily accounts for the early prevalence of religious sacrifices, not only among the worshippers of the true God, but among pagan idolaters. For in process of time, this branch of worship, in common with every other part of reli-

gious faith and practice, was wretchedly corrupted by human folly and wickedness. “Instead of brute animals, which God had appointed, human sacrifices grew into use; and it became no uncommon thing in several countries for parents to sacrifice their children. Not only the matter but the object of sacrifices was also changed; “for the Gentiles sacrificed to demons and not to God.” When therefore Jehovah selected Israel to be the depository of the true religion, it was necessary that the primitive law concerning sacrifices should be published anew, with such additions, as would better preserve them from corruption, and render them more suitable and beneficial to such a people as the Jews. Let us then critically inquire into the nature and use of this part of the Hebrew Ritual.

The Jewish law prescribed or allowed five sorts of sacrifices, three of beasts, and two of birds. The general design of these was to express the various acts of devotion, which dependent, guilty, and favored creatures owe to their Creator; or in other words, to express by significant action their dependence on and gratitude for divine favors, their penitent acknowledgment of transgression, and their hope in the mercy of God, through the future atoning sacrifice of his Son. Agreeably, the several sacrifices of their law were so many symbols, which, according to the usage of those early times, corresponded to the several duties or branches of piety, or which manifested by some striking ceremonies the same sentiments and affections, which are verbally expressed in prayer and praise. To confirm this observation, we will briefly run over the several kinds of Jewish oblations.

The first and most antient sort was the *burnt offering*,

or as the Greeks style it, the *holocaust*, derived from *olos* whole, and *kaiōo* to burn, because the victim was wholly consumed with fire, except the skin, and made to ascend entire in flames from the altar. This species of sacrifices is often mentioned by heathens, as well as Jews. Thus Xenophon in his *Cyropedia* speaks of sacrificing holocausts of oxen to Jupiter, and of horses to the Sun. These oblations were in use long before the date of the Mosaic law. They are expressly mentioned as early as the age of Job, of Abraham, and even of Noah. They appear to have been common to all nations. Hence during the subjection of the Jews to the Romans, it was not unusual for the latter to offer this kind of sacrifices to the God of Israel at Jerusalem. In the works of Philo the Jew, it is related, that the emperor Augustus ordered a holocaust of two lambs and a bullock to be offered for him daily *τῷ ὑψίστῳ θεῷ*, to the most High God, at Jerusalem. “The Jew’s esteemed their burnt offering the most excellent of all their sacrifices,” not only on account of its superior antiquity, but because it was wholly consecrated to the divine honor, no part of it being reserved to gratify human selfishness or avarice. It was therefore in the earliest ages the only sacrifice in use, and embraced every part of natural worship, whether confession, petition or thanksgiving. Accordingly, the law of Moses begins with prescribing the ceremonial of this sacrifice. From the directions given concerning it we infer, that it was intended as a general act of homage to Deity, as Creator, Benefactor, and moral Governor; and likewise as a general confession of sin, and a token of the offerer’s giving up himself entirely to God, as he gave up the victim to be wholly consumed on the altar. In allusion to this, the apostle exhorts Christians to “present their bodies, or their whole selves, a living sacrifice to God.”

Besides this general offering, the Mosaic law prescribed particular sacrifices for special occasions. It enjoined *sin offerings* and *trespass offerings* on occasion of legal pollutions, or on account of sins of ignorance and inadvertency, that is, such transgressions, as were committed ignorantly and inconsiderately, or such, as others would not have known, if they had not been discovered by the free confession of the guilty party. These offerings were therefore designed to encourage and constrain a penitent acknowledgment of trespasses, which could not otherwise be proved on the offender, and the confession of which was important, both in order to do justice to the party injured by full compensation, and to bring the offender to a salutary and exemplary repentance.

Further, as both societies and individuals constantly depend upon, and are indebted to the blessing of divine Providence; to express and nourish a spirit of corresponding trust and thanksgiving, eucharistic sacrifices were instituted, which were called *peace offerings*, that is, oblations intended to acknowledge, to obtain, or to preserve peace with God, and the benefits resulting from his favor. These offerings were either expressions of gratitude for mercies received, or votive sacrifices, that is, prayers and vows made to procure some needed good, or free will offerings, presented as means of continuing and perpetuating peace with Heaven. Which leads us to add, that as mankind in their infancy needed to be instructed and encouraged in their duty in the most tender and condescending manner, God was pleased to deal with them in the way of covenant, and to seal this transaction by certain sacrifices; which being partly consumed on God's altar, and partly eaten by the offerers, denoted a friendly compact and communion between God

and man ; just as sitting and partaking together at one table was an antient token of friendship, and ratification of covenants among men.

Further, as the Israelites owed the fruitfulness of the land, which Jehovah had given them, to his special benediction, they were required to acknowledge this by solemnly presenting to Him some of its productions, in particular the *first fruits* of their harvest.

Finally, there was one kind of offering which was called the *daily sacrifice*, because it was offered every day, evening and morning, for the whole congregation. It was therefore a daily expression of national, as well as individual repentance, prayer, and thanksgiving.

From this cursory view of the Jewish sacrifices we may, I think, strongly infer their fitness and utility. I am sensible, that according to the refined ideas of modern times, animal sacrifices are a very absurd and savage method of expressing and promoting devout sentiments and dispositions. The imagination and sensibilities of a christian philosopher, may start a thousand objections against it. But if we steadily keep in view the genius and habits of antient nations, and the special circumstances of the Hebrews, these objections will vanish, and the expediency of the Jewish institutions will forcibly appear. When the practice of sacrificing was first appointed, the use of letters was probably unknown, and consequently the mode of instruction by visible emblems or symbols was both indispensable and highly beneficial. In such a state of things the offering of animal victims was made to answer for that more simple and rational devotion, which words are now happily fitted to express. When we consider sacrifices, with all their attendant rites, as appointed by God, to assist the religious instruc-

tion, improvement, and consolation of man, we must conclude that the Most High would in the first instance clearly explain every part of this institution ; otherwise it could not answer its proposed ends. Now if the moral import of sacrifices were thus explained, the utility of them to mankind in their rude and simple state is beyond calculation. In untutored man reason is weak, the mental feelings heavy and rough, while sense, imagination, and passion are the leading avenues both to the understanding and heart. To man thus situated, the appointment of sacrifices is peculiarly adapted ; for these convey a most pathetic and awful address to his very senses, and thus rouse him to the most serious and impressive reflections. The frequent spectacles of bleeding and smoking victims, suffering and atoning for the guilty offerers, would give them the deepest impressions of the purity, justice, and majesty of God, of the evil of transgression, of their own ill desert, of the necessity of some adequate atonement, and of the readiness of Deity to pardon the penitent. The numerous and diversified offerings of the antient Jews, with the striking pomp, which preceded and attended them, were fitted not only to excite and express the most reverential, humble, and grateful devotion, but to give the best direction to their whole temper and conduct. The many washings and purifications enjoined, previous to the oblation of sacrifice, were not only physically beneficial in the eastern countries, but directly tended to impress a simple people with a scrupulous regard to inward and moral purity, especially in all their approaches to the Deity. That this was the primary intention of these ceremonies was a maxim frequently and solemnly enforced. In those early ages the language of these well chosen emblems could not fail to

be well understood and strongly felt. Above all, the frequent sacrifices of the Jewish law were intended to prefigure, and gradually to prepare men for the great atoning sacrifice of the promised Messiah. Agreeably, our Savior, in allusion to those antient oblations, is called by way of eminence a sin offering, a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. In a word, the religion of the Jews and that of Christians form one great and harmonious plan. The Jews saw gospel truth in its early and gradual dawn ; we behold it in its meridian splendor. When Christ appeared, the candid and pious Jews embraced him, because they saw in him a glorious counterpart, a perfect accomplishment of their antient rites and predictions. The Gentiles, on the other hand, were led to venerate and believe in the Hebrew law, because they beheld in it an exact, though imperfect figure and prophecy of the gospel. What beauty and glory do these observations reflect both on the Jewish and Christian dispensations ! What admirable depths of wisdom do they discover in both !

LECTURE XI.

Three great annual solemnities of the Hebrew nation. Feast of the Passover ; of Pentecost ; of Tabernacles. Benefits resulting from the appointment and observance of these festivals.

IN some late discourses we showed not only the general fitness of the Hebrew Ritual, but the special utility of circumcision, the weekly sabbath, and the several kinds of sacrifices instituted by the Mosaic law.

But it may still be asked, was it worthy of infinite wisdom and goodness to impose upon the Israelites such a vast number of minute, burdensome, and apparently trivial regulations? What reasonable or benevolent purpose could be answered by prohibiting and enjoining so many things, which in their own nature were neither good nor evil? On supposition that sacrifices *were* expedient in those early ages, yet what necessity or reason could justify so great an abundance of them, or the injunction of so many little niceties in performing them? The general answer is—Divine wisdom descended to these numerous and exact regulations, for the great purpose of establishing a system of worship and manners directly opposed to, and strongly fortified against the prevailing and idolatrous superstitions of the antient heathens. It would be dishonorable to the Supreme Lawgiver to suppose, with some learned writers, that many of these prescriptions were the offspring of his mere will and sovereignty, or were intended to foster in the Jews a distant, unsocial, and hostile spirit to other nations, and an indiscriminate warfare against all their customs, however innocent and laudable. The object of Deity was to

close up every avenue to idolatry and its destructive retinue, by shutting out, or inspiring a vigilant fear and hatred of those things, which were usually connected with it, as its causes or effects, its symbols or instruments. To verify this remark, and still further to recommend the Hebrew worship, we will distinctly notice the great *annual solemnities* of this nation. Three yearly Festivals were instituted by their law, corresponding with the three delightful and convenient seasons of spring, summer, and autumn. They were primarily intended as perpetual memorials of three distinguished national blessings, their deliverance from Egypt, the promulgation of their law from Mount Sinai, and their entrance on the promised land. The reason and practice of all civilized nations, and of our own in particular, recommend solemn anniversary celebrations of great public events, as decent offerings and instruments both of piety and patriotism, as excellently adapted to keep alive through every age, the memory of divine favors, and in this way to promote public knowledge, gratitude, and virtue. Accordingly, while the children of Israel were yet in Egypt, God appointed the *feast of the Passover*, which derives its name from his *passing over* or sparing the houses of the Israelites on that memorable night, when he destroyed all the first born of the Egyptians. As this awful scene gave rise to, and immediately preceded the glorious deliverance of the Hebrews from bondage; their sacred year was thenceforward made to begin with the month of this deliverance, which answered to our *March*; and their first passover began on the very night of their redemption, which nearly coincided with the vernal equinox. As the former harvest in the climate of Canaan commenced at this season, a thankful oblation to God of a small portion of the

first fruits was properly made a part of this festival. If you consider the wonderful nature and interesting consequences of the deliverance commemorated by this feast, and the solemn rites, which preceded and accompanied the celebration; you will readily admit and even admire its fitness and utility. This solemnity was analogous to our *fourth of July*; it celebrated the birth day of the Hebrew nation, the nativity of their independent freedom, of all their civil and sacred privileges; it commemorated that train of divine wonders, which accomplished, and that long series of blessings, which followed, this capital event. How needful and how forcible was this striking memorial to instruct and quicken a rude and untoward nation, to hold them fast to their great Deliverer and King, and to their high duty and destiny as his peculiar people! Besides the moral benefit, which the general design of this observance afforded, each part of it was a lively symbol or medium of some special instruction. What could more powerfully enforce the greatest caution and purity in their approaches to God, than the careful and solemn preparation enjoined upon them, previous to this sacred celebration? What could more strongly remind them of their bitter servitude in Egypt, or of the grievous nature and fruits of sin, and that mourning for it which true repentance implies, than the *bitter herbs*, with which they were required to eat the passover? Was not the *hasty manner* of preparing and eating it, with staves in their hands, and their bodies equipped for travelling, was not this a striking image of their hasty flight from Egyptian bondage, and of the sudden and surprising redemption, which Heaven had granted them? Did not the unleavened bread, which they used at this feast, inculcate a temper of inward sim-

plicity and truth, a heart free from the sour leaven of malice, hypocrisy, and wickedness? * Was not the continuance of this solemnity for seven days, and the succession of rites, which pervaded the whole, admirably fitted to impress the moral import of it on the mind in very deep and durable characters? In addition to all these advantages of the Jewish passover, I cannot help thinking that many ceremonies of it were directly pointed against the reigning idolatry of surrounding nations, especially of the Egyptians, with whose superstitions the Jews were peculiarly infected. My sentiments on this head will be seen, and perhaps be confirmed by the following observations.

1. The Israelites were directed at this feast to sacrifice a *male lamb*. Now antient and learned writers, particularly Juvenal, Strabo, and Plutarch, assure us that the Egyptians esteemed sheep as sacred, and religiously abstained from using them either for food, or clothing, or sacrifice; and in particular that they worshipped the ram as a god, or at least as a symbol of divinity, especially of their principal deity. We are also assured by good authority, that they worshipped this creature at the time of the vernal equinox, when the sun enters the sign *Aries*. When therefore Jehovah directed his people at this season, on thier first passover, to sacrifice and eat this animal, and publicly to sprinkle his blood on the door posts of their houses, as a pledge of their security from that sword, which should destroy the Egyptian first born; did he not hereby teach the Israelites to pour contempt on this idol of Egypt, in the very presence and in open defiance of its adorers? Did he not signally triumph over this heathen god, by rendering his flesh and

* 1 Cor. v. 7. 8.

blood more propitious to his destroyers, than his life could be to his worshippers? And did he not instruct his people to renounce the idolatry of Egypt, at the same time that they escaped from its tyranny; and to regard every new celebration of *this* deliverance as a fresh call to abjure *that* idolatry?

2. Another rule, prescribed for this feast, is that no part of the lamb shall be eaten *raw*. We are surprised at the prohibition of an act so unnatural and horrid, till we find from the best authorities, that raw flesh and palpitating limbs, torn from living animals, were used in some of the old heathen sacrifices and festivals, particularly in honor of the Egyptian god *Osiris*, and the Grecian *Bacchus*, who were the same idol under different names. That no resemblance or memorial of so barbarous a superstition might ever debase the worship of Jehovah, he made this early and express provision against it. On the same ground probably he required the paschal lamb to be eaten *privately*, and *entire*, in opposition to the Bacchanalian feasts, in which the victim was publicly torn in pieces, carried about in pomp, and then devoured. The same general principle adds lustre and importance to several other minute circumstances, which would otherwise appear puerile and insignificant. Why, for instance, should the divine wisdom seriously forbid the lamb at the passover to be boiled in water, and command it to be roasted with fire? The most satisfactory reply is, that it was a favorite superstition or magical rite with the Egyptians and Syrians, and afterward with the Athenians, to boil their victims, and especially to seethe a kid or lamb in the milk of its dam. And was it not worthy of Deity to exterminate this foolish and idolatrous practice? Why also does the divine Law-

giver solemnly and repeatedly order that the *whole* of this lamb, not excepting his inwards, shall be roasted and eaten, and that *no part* of it shall remain until the morning? The answer, I think, is manifest. The priests of antient heathenism carefully preserved, and religiously searched the entrails of their victims, and thence gathered their pretended knowledge of futurity. Those likewise, who frequented the temples of the pagan gods, were eager to carry away and devote to superstitious uses some sacred relics, or fragments of the sacrifices. Did it not become the supreme Divinity to provide, that no part of a festival, consecrated to Him, should be left to supply materials or temptation to such impious magic and idolatry?

In short, as far as we can judge from the best lights of antiquity, the whole ceremonial of the passover appears so adjusted, as to wage an open and destructive war against the favorite gods and ceremonies of Egypt, and form an early and mighty barrier around the true worship and servants of Jehovah. If some of our solutions should seem only plausible or conjectural, yet they ought to guard us against deciding positively or contemptuously against an antient institution, *all* the reasons of which we at this day cannot expect to ascertain. Such confident decisions are the offspring, not of superior information, but of conceited ignorance. I will dismiss this head with one additional remark. We have reason to admire the deep and manifold wisdom of God in so contriving this grand festival, as to make it embrace at once time past, present, and future. It looked back to time past, as it annually renewed the recollection of their wonderful deliverance from Egyptian servitude and superstition. It regarded time present, as its rites were di-

rectly opposed to the existing customs and principles of surrounding nations. It looked forward into futurity, as many parts of it presented a lively figure of the christian passover and sacrifice, of the spotless Lamb of God, in due time to be offered, whose blood secures us from a destruction far more awful than that of the Egyptian first born, and seals a redemption unspeakably greater than that of antient Israel.

The *second great festival* of the Jews was the *feast of pentecost*, so styled by Greek writers, particularly those of the New Testament, because it was the *fiftieth* day from the Passover. It was also called the *feast of weeks*, because it commenced at the distance of seven weeks from the first day of the preceding festival; and it is denominated the *feast of harvest*, and *of the first fruits*, because their wheat being at this time mature and gathered in, they were required to offer to God a sheaf of the first fruits, as a solemn acknowledgment of his goodness, and of their own dependence and obligations. The propriety of this grateful homage to their divine Benefactor is too obvious to be disputed. A plentiful harvest, produced by skilful and laborious culture, is very apt to be considered as the natural effect or merited reward of human wisdom and industry; and thus it often nourishes a proud and impious contempt of God, rather than a spirit of humble and thankful devotion. How proper and useful then was this feast of harvest, which seasonably checked this odious temper, and revived the opposite feelings of religious dependence and thanksgiving! How suitable were the several oblations, both vegetable and animal, prescribed on this festival; how suitable to express the goodness, faithfulness, and authority of their divine King, and their own happiness as his favored sub-

jects ! How affectingly were they hereby taught to regard both the possession and fertility of their land, as the fruits of his peculiar and covenanted favor ! How forcibly were they stimulated to secure the continuance of this favor by exact and persevering obedience ! How important and beautiful was this yearly solemnity, as the corrective of a very common error in antient times, I mean the error of ascribing propitious seasons and fruitful fields to certain demons, genii, or tutelar deities, who were thought to preside over them ! I must add, as the publication of the law at Sinai formed a most interesting epoch in the Jewish history ; as it took place on the fiftieth day from their departure from Egypt, and thus coincided with their wheat harvest ; this institution was doubtless intended to commemorate the former, as well as the latter. And how unspeakably important was it, that a law so excellent, so awfully announced, and comprising the basis and spirit of their constitution, should be solemnly impressed on their memories by an annual celebration of its delivery !

Their *last great festival* was called the *feast of tabernacles*, because the people were ordered, during this solemnity to dwell in booths or tents made by the branches of trees, and adorned with the most agreeable flowers and fruits, which that fine country afforded in the month of September ; for this institution was observed about the autumnal equinox, immediately after the ingathering of the productions of their vines and olives, and other fruits of their trees. It was therefore intended as a public thanksgiving to Jehovah for giving them so rich and beautiful a land, and with crowning it with annual plenty. It was also primarily intended to lead back their minds to that interesting period of forty years, during

which their ancestors sojourned in *tents* in the wilderness, and were constantly fed, guided, and protected by miracle. What emotions of grateful wonder and devotion must these recollections inspire, especially when aided by that lively scenery, which brought home to their senses the humble and exposed condition of their fathers! How must the contrast between that condition and their present happy state heighten their esteem and enjoyment of the latter, and tend to exalt their thankful praise and obedience! Every candid and devout mind must applaud an institution, whose object and tendency are so decent and noble. The religious festivals of the Hebrews must be highly approved by every good citizen of New England, who experimentally knows the pleasure and advantage of uniting with his brethren in those yearly thanksgivings, which bring up to his view the image of his forefathers, which contrast their condition with his own, and which recognize the smiles of Heaven on the past and present state of his country. This train of thoughts suggest two or three general remarks, which shall finish this discourse.

1. Beside the several advantages peculiar to each of these Jewish observances, there were some great national benefits common to them all. For these festivals could be legally celebrated only at Jerusalem, where the temple of Jehovah was erected. Of course all the males of Israel were required to resort thither three times in every year. What salutary effects was this fitted to produce? These anniversary meetings of a whole nation, to renew their oath of allegiance to the one true God, and to their excellent constitution of polity and religion, displayed a most sublime and impressive scene; a scene, which tended to inspire the actors with peculiar emotions of friend-

ship, patriotism and piety. It tended to absorb the local and discordant feelings, manners, and views of distant tribes and individuals in one great national character and interest. It eminently promoted social affection, refinement, and felicity. Above all, it strengthened their union and zeal in the profession and practice of the true religion. These frequent and solemn interviews were peculiarly precious to a people separated from, and often assailed by the rest of the world; for they supplied the want of foreign intercourse by cheering domestic communion; they nourished an ardent and courageous defence of the common interest. These national feasts also afforded a needful and innocent gratification to that taste for pompous and festive celebrations, which characterised those early ages. It is remarkable that each of the Jewish festivals, though founded primarily on some reason peculiar to that nation, yet combines some secondary object or ceremony, which resembled the favorite customs of surrounding countries. As the heathens kept splendid festivities, at the end of their harvests, in honor of their deities; the Jews, who were enamoured with such rites, were allowed to celebrate the same seasons, with similar rejoicing and magnificence, in honor of the true God. They were directed to transfer to an honorable and pious use those decent occasions and ceremonies of gladness, which the pagan world prostituted to superstition and vice. This wise indulgence allured that people to the peculiar and arduous services, which their religion enjoined. How amiable, how beneficent were these institutions, viewed in this light!

2. These anniversary celebrations were still more important in another view; for they were standing and conclusive monuments of the truth of the Mosaic relig-

ion. For in the first place no impostor would have dared to institute public memorials of extraordinary facts, which never existed, and especially to require all the citizens of a nation frequently to leave their territory and families undefended, in order to attend these memorials. As none but a madman would attempt such an imposition; so no people in their senses could be seduced by it. Certainly Moses could not persuade the Jews of his age to believe and commemorate their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and preservation in the wilderness, if these wonders never took place. Nor could a bold deceiver, in some after age, impose a false history of these facts and observances upon the public credulity; because the history itself, which was received by the Jews, frequently asserts that the institutions contained in it, were appointed, published, and stately observed from the very time, when the facts are said to have happened. But surely no people could be made to believe that they and their ancestors had constantly performed certain rites in memory of certain events, when both the events and rites were wholly unknown, till their pretended history appeared. The sacred festivals and other observances of the Hebrews are therefore invincible arguments both to them and to us, that their religion is true and divine. These arguments are exceedingly strengthened, when we consider how extravagant, dangerous, and even destructive these celebrations must have been, had they not been warranted by truth, and protected by heaven. Yet it is a well known fact that the Jews constantly attended these ceremonies without any fear of danger; and that their most vigilant enemies never invaded or injured them during these sacred rites. Can any sober philosopher account for these facts, without admitting

that this wonderful people were assured of the divine authority of their institutions, and were favored with extraordinary protection in observing them?

LECTURE XII.

Importance of God's early and visible manifestations of himself to his antient people. The manner in which these manifestations were made. Nature and use of the tabernacle. Particular description of the temple at Jerusalem.

OUR last lecture explained the import and utility of the three great annual feasts of the antient Hebrews. It also hinted several particulars relative to these solemnities, and to the Jewish worship in general, which require a more distinct elucidation. Among these may be reckoned the visible appearances of Deity to his antient worshippers, his peculiar and stated abode in the sanctuary, and the limitation of his worship, at least of its principal rites, to *one place*, viz. the temple at Jerusalem. These circumstances may strike us, at first view, as inconsistent with the spiritual nature and universal presence of the infinite Being. They may seem to represent him as a material and local deity, and thus to nourish in his votaries a gross and debasing superstition, instead of rational piety and virtue. But a due attention to the reasons, on which these circumstances were founded, will lead us to admire their fitness and beauty.

In the first place, the importance of some visible appearance of Jehovah, or symbol of his presence, will be readily perceived, if we advert to the condition of man in the early ages. The state of mankind at first was simple and uncultivated. In this state they were incapable of that abstract reasoning, of that quick mental perception and feeling, which are found among polished nations. The first ideas of every human being must be

borrowed from sense. In the untutored mind scarce any ideas exist, but those, which the senses introduce. The laboring classes of men even in the most refined communities derive their religious belief, not from their own researches, but from instruction and tradition. They have neither leisure nor capacity for that nice and abstruse speculation, by which natural theology and ethics are investigated, systematized, and rationally confirmed. In the early state of society the human faculties are chained down to a few necessary objects of attention, and cannot of themselves ascend to original ideas or spiritual contemplations ; they cannot rise from material and finite effects to an immaterial and infinite cause. The idea of a universe produced from nothing, constantly sustained and governed by an intelligent, allpowerful Spirit, though familiar to our minds, exalted by science and revelation, is too profound and remote for the rude sons of nature. We hence see the necessity, not only of a supernatural revelation to mankind in the early ages, but of some visible appearance of Deity, to give credit and force to such revelation. A divine revelation to us does not need this enforcement, because it is amply attested by miracles and prophecy. But in the first ages mankind could not be convinced by miracles, because they had too little experience and information of the laws of nature, to distinguish accurately between miraculous and natural effects. Nor was prophecy a suitable mean of conviction ; because this kind of proof depends on the future accomplishment of the prediction, which often requires a long interval of time. It remains then that the visible presence or appearance of Jehovah was the only proper expedient, which suited the early exigences of mankind. Of this appearance, however miraculous, they

were qualified to judge. For since their first notions of the Author of their being would present him as transcendently great, some glorious appearance of his presence, accompanying and giving sanction to sublime and useful discoveries of his will, would coincide with and confirm their natural sentiments. It is probable that mankind in their infancy had no just conceptions of God as an *infinite Spirit*. Perhaps too a discovery of his spiritual nature was not proper to be communicated at first. The first needful instructions were their dependence on and obligations to their Maker. These would be strikingly taught and impressed on their hearts by some august exhibition of his presence, attended with such communications of truth, as suited their puerile state. Instruction, thus addressed to their senses, would find the easiest access, not only to their understandings, but to their feelings and practice.

The account, given in the Old Testament, of God's early dealings with men, especially with his Hebrew church, admirably corresponds with these rational deductions. We have indeed no express narrative of any visible appearance of Deity until the time of Abraham. But this need not surprise us, when we consider that the Mosaic history, prior to this period, consists only of a few leading hints, and often crowds the events of many ages into the compass of a single chapter. But these hints, compared with the subsequent story of the divine conduct, strongly infer that God, from the beginning, conversed with man in a visible manner, that is, by some sensible and glorious manifestation of his presence. That he conversed in this mode with our first parents in innocency is suggested by this circumstance, that after they had lost their robe of purity and glory, they are said to have "hid

themselves from the presence," or face, "of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." Does not this intimate that before their fall they had been accustomed to some visible presence of Jehovah, and to a voice issuing from this presence; which voice they no sooner hear in their naked, lapsed condition, than they shrink from that presence, which before they met with rapture? Might not this visible appearance or symbol of Deity be the same with the cherubims and flaming sword, or rather sword like flame, which were afterward stationed without the garden? A former Hebrew professor of this university remarks, that the original seems to convey this idea by prefixing the emphatic article *the* to cherubims and sword like flame. Accordingly he renders the text thus—"So he drove out the man, and placed the cherubims and the flaming sword at the east of the garden &c." This naturally implies, that before man's expulsion these symbols had a different station, perhaps in the middle of the garden, where they might be a standing token of God's favorable presence, to which innocent man might resort for the purposes of religious worship and instruction. As cherubims, and a luminous, often a flaming cloud were afterwards the appointed symbol of Jehovah's presence, we are led by analogy to suppose that they might be so to Adam, who in the infancy of his being needed such a sensible mode of instruction. And as these symbols were placed without the gates of paradise, when man was banished from it, so their new station might be designed not only to prevent his reentrance into that happy abode, but to hold out a continued token of God's gracious presence, or to show that man, though barred from the tree of life in Eden, might still have access to and intercourse with his Maker. This hypothesis

of an early and stated symbol of the divine presence is confirmed by many passages in the sacred history; particularly by the story of Cain and Abel.

As one main object of these lectures is to explain and recommend the Jewish scriptures; so I cannot place the narrative of these two brothers in so satisfactory a light, as by giving you the ingenious comment of the learned Hebreician just mentioned. The text informs us that “in process of time Cain and Abel brought their offerings to the Lord.” The phrase, “brought an offering to the Lord,” indicates that the invisible, omnipresent Jehovah did, in that period of the world, visibly manifest himself in some particular place; to which all religious oblations were brought. The original expression, here obscurely rendered “in process of time,” may be justly interpreted, “at the end of the year;” that is, probably at the same season of the year, in which the great anniversary atonement was afterwards prescribed and performed under the law; for many of the Jewish rites were but new editions or copies of the patriarchal usages. We hence see the reason why Cain’s offering was not accepted. It was not of the expiatory and animal kind, which was appointed for this season. His proud spirit felt no need of expiation for sin; and being a tiller of the ground, he chose to bring an offering of his own produce, rather than be indebted to his younger brother, who was a shepherd, for an animal victim. Cain having shown his resentment at the divine preference of Abel’s offering, Jehovah thus addresses him—“Why art thou wroth? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.” This passage in our translation is not only obscure, and too figurative for

simple narration, but, as our author shows, does violence, in one instance, to the grammar of the original. He therefore gives the following version as more literal and probable—"If thou doest well, hast thou not the preeminence? and if thou doest not well, there is a sin offering lying down at the door. And unto thee is his desire, and thou rulest over him." This short passage, thus rendered, intimates the following things. 1. That there was then a tabernacle or tent, where the symbol of God's presence resided, where offerings were presented, and where Jehovah now conversed with Cain. 2. That Cain, being only a cultivator of land, must have been obliged to Abel for an oblation suited to the season. 3. That there were then animals lying at the door of the tabernacle; and 4. that though these belonged to Abel, yet he would readily yield them on this occasion to an elder brother, to whose superiority he cheerfully submitted. The sense therefore of God's address to Cain may be thus expressed—"If thy conduct be good, thou hast a native right to preeminence. And if thy conduct has been wrong, there is still room for an expiatory sacrifice; animals proper for a sin offering are now lying down at the door; of these thou mayest freely take; for thy brother, whose property they are, is cordially subject to thee."

The sequel of this story is well known. Cain having persisted in proud impiety and malignity, and having murdered his brother, was banished from "the presence, and hid from the face" of Jehovah, that is, from the visible symbol of his presence, and place of his worship; the consequence of which was, that he and his posterity had no appearance of religion; on which account his female descendants are styled "the daughters of men," that is

merely human and earthly beings ; while the offspring of Seth, who enjoyed God's visible presence and worship, are called the sons of God."

This idea of God's visible intercourse with good men from the beginning, is also favored by the account of his interviews with Enoch, Noah, and others ; of their "coming to him, and walking with him ;" which implies sensible intercourse, like that of two friends walking together. During the patriarchal period, when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were sojourners in Canaan, the symbol of the divine presence removed with them from one station to another ; as it afterwards did with the Israelites during their marches and encampments in the wilderness. We accordingly read of frequent appearances of Jehovah to Abraham in the different places, where he resided. We are also told that God appeared to Jacob, as he was going, with his family, into Egypt, and assured him "that he would go with him and bring him up again," that is, that he would accompany and reside with Israel in that country, by the visible symbol of his presence.

Having thus proved in general from reason, scripture, and analogy, that God manifested himself to men both before and under the law, in a sensible and local manner ; let us now more distinctly inquire into the nature of this manifestation. It is styled by the sacred writers the *presence*, the *face*, the *countenance*, the *name*, and the *glory* of the Lord. By later authors it is called the *Schechinah*, that is, the dwelling or tabernacling of God with men. That we may rightly conceive of it, let us attend a few moments to the structure and furniture of the Jewish tabernacle or temple, and then to the manner, in which Jehovah manifested himself in this sacred habitation.

The tabernacle was a moveable tent, erected in the wilderness; the temple was a stationary and magnificent building erected by Solomon. As both had the same nature and use, a description of either will give us the true design of both.

Some eminent writers have contended, that temples had their origin in heathen countries, and that Jehovah condescended to gratify the taste of the Hebrews, by setting up among them a religious fabric resembling, yet far exceeding in splendor any of the idol temples. But the Scriptures assign a very different origin and intention to the Jewish tabernacle and temple of the Jews. They represent each of them as designed for the visible palace of Jehovah, as king of that chosen nation. They represent each, as constructed, not with any reference to, nor after the model of heathen temples, but by the sole direction of God, and according to the exact pattern delineated by him. And though Strabo describes the antient Egyptian temples, as bearing some similitude to that at Jerusalem; this fact is easily solved by supposing, that skilful architects of the former emulated the incomparable structure of the latter. The Hebrew tabernacle and temple were built of the richest materials. Each was divided into two apartments; the outer room was called the holy place; the inner the holy of holies. The former was furnished with the table of shew bread, the candlestick or lamp, and the altar of incense, all of pure gold. These utensils not only suited the notion of a house, in which the King of Israel dwelt; but the table of bread, of which his ministers and the people's representatives partook, denoted God's favor to and communion with Israel, as his favorite guests, his covenant people; the altar of incense fitly represented the ascent and accep-

tance of their prayers and praises, which went up to heaven, while the fragrant incense arose from the altar; the golden candlestick, with its seven lamps, which were lighted anew at the time of every morning and evening sacrifice, was a striking emblem of that moral light, purity, and ardor, with which the church should daily serve and honor her divine King. The inner room called the most holy place, contained the *Ark*, which was a chest made of the finest wood, overlaid with gold. The cover of this chest which consisted of pure gold, was denominated *the mercy seat, or propitiatory*. Under this cover were deposited the two tables of the law; on the ends of it were placed two cherubims, with their faces inclined toward each other and towards the mercy seat, and their wings stretched out, so as to overshadow it. Upon this cover, and between these cherubims, the symbol of the divine presence resided. "Here, says God to Moses, I will meet with thee, and commune with thee." While Israel thus beheld the visible presence of their King residing in the mercy seat, covering the ten commandments, a transcript of the divine rectitude, how forcibly were they taught that justice, covered or tempered by mercy, were the habitation of his throne, or the basis of his government! And while they saw him manifesting his glory and his will *between the cherubims* with outstretched wings and inclined faces; how naturally did this teach them that the highest orders of finite and tutelary spirits, far from being objects of worship, were but the creatures and humble ministers of Jehovah!

If you ask, what this visible symbol of Deity was? We reply, it was a cloud of glory. When the divine favor was shown, the cloud became shining. Hence those petitions, "thou that dwellest between the cherubims,

shine forth; cause thy face to shine upon us, and give us peace." The issuing of fire from the cloud, to consume the sacrifice, was also a token of divine acceptance, In this way Jehovah probably shewed his respect to Abel and his offering. At other times fire proceeded from the same divine presence, to destroy presumptuous offenders, as in the case of Nadab and Abiha. Hence we read, "Our God is a consuming fire." It is worthy of notice, that before the erection of the tabernacle and temple, God usually appeared to his servants in much the same manner. Thus, when he made a covenant with Abraham, he passed before him in "a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp." When he appeared to Moses in Midian, he exhibited himself in "a flaming fire in the midst of a bush." When he led Israel from Egypt through the desert, "he went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night." When he visibly descended on Mount Sinai, and published his law, there were lightnings, and fire, and a thick cloud on the Mount.

If you ask, why light and flame were chosen, as the emblem of God's presence; we modestly answer, because light is the most splendid and beneficent object in nature, and the most fit to represent the knowledge and purity, the diffusive presence, goodness, and glory of Deity. It was therefore natural for the wiser heathens to regard the sun, the visible center of light, as the habitation and throne of God.

Besides the reasons assigned above for such a local and splendid symbol of the divinity, on which the mind and feelings of untutored man, might easily fix; it had the further advantage of bringing the divine presence and protection near to the Hebrews; it made them feel that Jehovah was personally among them, to inspect their

conduct and circumstances, to guard, direct, and supply them amid a barren and perilous wilderness, to lead them on to ultimate quiet and prosperity, to reward their persevering loyalty to his government, and to punish with prompt severity every wilful transgression. This sensible assurance of the immediate and constant presence of their almighty King was necessary to reconcile and keep them fast to a new and burdensome religion, to animate their courage and efforts against formidable enemies, to subdue internal discord and sedition, to enforce and to sweeten their subjection to the divine administration. We may add, this emblem of God's presence, though material and confined, had no tendency to encourage superstition and idolatry; for it held up no definite form or similitude, which the spectators could copy; it represented no corporeal, or tutelar deity, like the pagan Jupiter or Osiris, but the only true and universal Divinity; and though it exhibited this divinity under the symbol of light, yet its westerly station in the tabernacle obliged all the worshippers to turn their backs on the *rising sun*, and to pay their homage to a far different and superior object; and lastly, by requiring the Hebrews to worship one Jehovah, represented by one emblem, fixed in one place, it forcibly inculcated the *unity* of the godhead, and thus erected an invincible barrier against surrounding polytheism and its destructive effects.

LECTURE XIII.

Appointment of ministers of the Hebrew worship. Their qualifications. Ceremonies, which attended their induction into office; and the duties connected with it.

THE long suspension of this as well as other college exercises, makes it proper to remind you that the ground we have travelled embraces, first the civil and second the religious antiquity of the Jews. Under the second head we have shown not only the general fitness of their antient ritual, but the special expediency of circumcision, the weekly sabbath, the several kinds of levitical sacrifices, their three great annual festivals, and lastly the visible appearance or symbol of Deity in a luminous or flaming cloud, which stately resided first in the tabernacle; afterward in the temple.

Our last lecture was employed in illustrating the nature and expediency of those *visible appearances*, by which God exhibited himself to his antient worshippers. As these appearances may seem to contradict the refined ideas, as well as the uniform experience of modern times; a close attention to the reasons of them was thought necessary, both to display their wisdom, and to confirm their reality. As the infant state of man needed this sensible mode of instruction; so the peculiar character and condition of the Hebrews made it indispensable. Figure to yourselves a great and refractory multitude, just emancipated from cruel bondage, plunging into a pathless, and barren wilderness, exposed to incessant danger, fatigue, and famine; behold them in this situation required to embrace and stedfastly to adhere to a

scheme of government and religion novel, burdensome, and extremely opposite to their previous notions and inclinations. What could have reconciled and held them to this new order of things, but the personal and glorious residence of Deity among them? What could have attached their unsuspecting and persevering confidence and submission to the administration of Moses, but the visible presence of God, directing and patronizing his measures? What but this could have produced that harmony, fortitude, and energy, which their situation and destiny required? We find in fact that this alone repressed their murmurings, dispelled their fears, encouraged their dutiful obedience, and at once gave spirit and success to their arduous enterprises.

If we view the matter in a somewhat different light, the importance of some external symbol of the true God will forcibly strike us. The antient heathens courted and exulted in the immediate presence of their false deities. They allured them to reside among them, by splendid images, temples, and offerings. These images and temples they fondly regarded as the fixed habitations of those gods, for whom they were erected. They esteemed it their greatest privilege and glory to have such divine protectors in the midst of them, to whom they could directly repair on every emergency, and for every blessing. The Hebrews, during their abode in Egypt, and by their subsequent intercourse with heathen nations, had acquired a strong attachment to these visible emblems. Their weak and prejudiced minds needed a similar indulgence in the worship of Jehovah. The learned *Buxtorf* therefore justly observes, that God, by favoring them with sensible tokens of his presence, accommodated himself to their rudeness and infancy, kept them within due lim-

its, and restrained them from idolatry. For had they not been indulged with some symbol of the divinity, that was visible and palpable, they either would not have believed in the divine presence with them, or would easily have slidden into idolatry. This is verified by their eagerly demanding and actually framing a *golden calf*, as a visible emblem of Deity, during the absence of Moses in the mount. The omnipresence of the Supreme Spirit was a truth too abstract and profound, to engage the lively faith and steady obedience of a gross and fickle multitude. God therefore thought it expedient to appoint a sensible symbol of his presence, to fix it in his sanctuary, and to make it the grand center of the whole civil government and religious worship of the Hebrews. As he was their supreme Magistrate and King, it was fit that he should have a visible palace in the metropolis of the country, where his royal dignity might be displayed, and from which all his laws and directions might be issued. Such a palace was the temple at Jerusalem. In the inner room of the temple the king of Israel symbolically resided, manifested his glory, and gave out his orders. It was equally proper and necessary that all the worship of this select people should be directed to one central point. Accordingly the visible presence of Jehovah in his sanctuary was the object to which all their religious services were offered and limited. Although this symbol of God's presence was local and sensible, yet it did not infer the Being represented by it to be a local, material, or tutelar deity. On the contrary, they were abundantly taught that the God of Israel was an infinite Being, whose presence fills heaven and earth, that he was the only true God, and that they were to acknowledge and worship no other deity but him. The pagan theology held up a great plurality and

subordination of gods, which presided over and claimed the homage of particular cities or countries. It also authorized an *intercommunity* of worship, that is, it encouraged the votaries of one local god to join in the homage paid to another. But the doctrine of one Jehovah, of one exclusive object of worship, was the fundamental and vital principle of the Hebrew ritual. Accordingly, there was but one divine presence ; but one most holy place, the seat of that presence ; but one altar, at which all the priests were to minister, and on which all sacrifices were to be offered ; and but one temple, consecrated to One infinite Being, who made and fills all things. The whole system of their worship was so adjusted, as to be a perpetual remembrancer of the first and chief of their ten commandments—"I am Jehovah thy God ; thou shalt have no other gods before me." As the belief and adoration of one supreme Being form the basis of all true piety and virtue ; so all the ceremonies, as well as doctrines, of the Hebrew code were admirably suited to impress this sentiment on the memories, consciences, and habits of worshippers. The unity of God was, if I may so speak, embodied, and continually made visible to their senses. How infinitely superior in this respect was their despised ritual to the boasted light of nature ! For though the doctrine of one first and allperfect cause be dictated by sound reason, as well as revelation ; yet the world has in fact derived it from the latter source ; and all the antient nations except the Jews, were strangers to this principle, at least to its just and practical influence. For though some of them had an idea of one deity superior to the rest, whom they styled the father of gods and men ; yet they actually paid homage to gods without number, and worshipped

them by rites as foolish, impure, and savage, as were the characters of their fancied divinities. This fact strongly evinces the importance of those symbols in the Hebrew worship, which, by constantly pointing it to one object, excluded the fatal evils of polytheism. It is also a remarkable fact, that when Jeroboam, at the head of the ten tribes, revolted from the house of David, and set up a new altar, temple, and symbols of deity; his departure from the unity of the Hebrew worship directly introduced and permanently established the most corrupting idolatry. The inference from this fact is obvious.

We might assign many other reasons, why the visible presence and worship of Jehovah were fixed in his temple at Jerusalem. This arrangement promoted brotherly affection and national union among the Jewish people, by mingling them frequently together in the most solemn and endearing exercises, in the presence of their common Father and God. It prevented those superstitious and endless abuses, which would have arisen, had each individual been allowed a private altar and worship. It was especially fitted to draw them off from worshipping in *groves and high places*, which the former inhabitants of Canaan had prostituted to the most obscene and idolatrous rites, and which held out very dangerous allurements to the Israelites. In a word, this public national worship, performed in the capital city, gave splendor and publicity to the true religion; it proclaimed to surrounding nations that the God of Israel was the one supreme Jehovah, and that the Jewish people were his church, established and protected by his auspicious presence. When the neighboring nations beheld all the Hebrew citizens frequently leaving their territory and families without any human defence, and resorting without inconvenience or danger to the center of national worship; was not this

spectacle a public and divine attestation to the Jewish religion? Was it not admirably fitted to diffuse the knowledge and recommend the service of the true God to the Gentile world?

Having thus contemplated the appointed *seat* and *emblem* of the divine presence among the Israelites, and seen their manifold utility, let us now survey the *ministers* of the Hebrew worship, or the persons selected to preside in the public offices of religion. Every religious establishment requires an order of men to perform its public rites. The Mosaic economy restricted this order to a certain tribe, viz. that of Levi. In the patriarchal ages the father of the first born of every family exercised the priestly office. But this hereditary prerogative unchecked would in time give rise to the greatest abuses. To remedy these was one capital object of the levitical dispensation, which not only confined the sacerdotal order to one family, but subjected it in every punctilio to the divine direction. It also afforded the expectants of this office every motive and opportunity to become qualified for it; and when initiated into it, to give themselves up to its duties, as their subsistence was wholly derived from this source. These religious officers consisted of three grades, the high priest, the priests, and the Levites. The first grade was an hereditary office in the family of Aaron, and generally descended to the firstborn son of every generation. As the high priest was the prime minister of religion, the ritual minutely prescribes his qualifications, his induction, and his official duties. We will take a cursory view of each, and point out its fitness and utility.

As it was a necessary qualification for this office to be descended from Aaron; so the law further directs that the high priest shall not marry “a divorced woman, a

profane person, or a harlot," but shall unite himself to one of a pure and honorable character. This was a wise provision to preserve the virtue and dignity of the priesthood, to protect from the least blemish the important and delicate reputation of this sacred order, whose honor is so closely connected with that of God and religion. The wisest heathens, particularly the antient Greeks and Romans, carefully preserved the honor of marriages, and interdicted such as were unsuitable and debasing. Was it not then worthy of God to provide for the unsullied purity and respectability of a family consecrated to himself; especially as this provision would naturally excite the members of it to a universal decency and dignity of character? Did it not become the divine wisdom to prevent or exterminate those pagan customs, which pronounced the offspring of the most abominable incests the best qualified for sacred employments? For similar reasons the ritual also required the priests to be free from such natural defects or blemishes, as might degrade their high function in the view of the multitude.

It also required, that all, who were found qualified, should be properly inducted into office; and it regulated the whole ceremony of this induction. This ceremonial chiefly consisted in washing them with water, putting on them the sacerdotal garments, anointing them with oil, and applying the consecrating blood of a victim to their ears, their hands, and their feet. These costly, multiplied, and pompous rites do not exactly accord, either with the philosophical refinement, or the christian simplicity of modern times. But this is no objection to their propriety in the early ages. Mankind then needed a visible language, a language, which should strike their bodily sight, and through this their hearts. What

could better answer this end, than the ceremonies here prescribed ; while washing the body with water was physically necessary, and frequently used, in those warm eastern climes ; it was easily and commonly transferred, both among Jews and pagans to point out and enforce purity of heart, or to represent the importance of a mind cleansed from sin, in order to the acceptable service of God. This rite is so plain and significant, that it is adopted as a religious ceremony by the simple dispensation of the Gospel.

With respect to the garments, in which the priests were to officiate, it was proper that these should be regulated by the divine law, that no room might be left for the wild operation of human fancy, or the intrusion of heathen idolatry. The rites of pagan worship respecting the dress of the priests were in some instances highly indecent, and in all superstitious. It was fit that the ministers of Jehovah should be secured from the least participation in such idolatrous customs. It was fit that their whole apparel should display a decorum, a beauty, and a grandeur, becoming the presence of that King in whose court they attended, and fitted to impress both themselves and the people with the sacred importance of their character, and to inspire both with reverence and purity in the service of God. Agreeably, the holy scriptures represent these garments as designed emblems of those inward graces, which are the proper dress and beauty of the soul. The anointing of the priests with precious oil, in the name of Jehovah, was an expressive act, by which they were visibly dedicated to their office, invested with its authority, and encouraged them to expect a divine unction or benediction in discharging it. Agreeably, Jesus the Son of God is called the *Messiah* and *Christ*, both which signify *the anointed*,

and are explained by the declaration, that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power.

The last part of this solemnity consisted of a three-fold sacrifice. The first was a *sin offering*, to denote that they must in the first place be purged from their sins, in order to their acceptably appearing in the holy presence of God. The second was a *whole burnt offering*, an *oblation of sweet savor*, signifying that being now purified from guilt, they were received into the divine friendship, as a sweet savor of rest and peace, and were entirely devoted to the sacred office, as the burnt offering was wholly consumed on God's altar. The third was called *the ram of consecration*, or a *peace offering*. The blood of this victim was partly sprinkled on God's altar, as an offering to him, and partly on Aaron and his sons, as a consecration of them to the sacerdotal function. A portion of this sacrifice was reserved, to be eaten by the priests at the door of the tabernacle, to show that they were now admitted as guests at God's table. The application of a part of this blood to the right ears, hands, and feet of the priest strikingly admonished them that, being now consecrated to God, they must hear his word with attention, perform his will with promptitude and energy, and constantly walk in his statutes.

The official duties of this order consisted not only in presenting the victims appointed for every occasion, but in attending to all the other services of the temple. They were expressly charged to instruct the people in all God's statutes and were authorised to interpret and apply the laws to every dubious or controverted case.*

They were to sanctify the most holy things, to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to

* Levit, x. 11. Deut. xvii. 9. 10. and xxxiii. 10.

bless the people in his name.* Beside these common duties of the priestly office, there were two great prerogatives peculiar to the high priest, viz. the privilege of appearing before God in the most holy place on the day of atonement, and the privilege of consulting the divine oracle on important occasions, whether civil or religious. As mankind in the first ages had probably abused the easy access, which they had, to the visible presence of God; he thought it expedient in after times, to limit this presence to the *holy of holies*, and to appropriate the liberty of access to the high priest. In what manner this officer approached and consulted the oracle, and received its answer, on great questions, was formerly explained.

Beside this prime minister of religion, and the subordinate priests, who belonged to the family of Aaron, there was a third order of ecclesiastics, called *Levites*, comprising the remaining part of the tribe of Levi. These were inferior agents, who performed the more laborious services of the tabernacle and temple, and assisted in the great work of instructing the people. When God smote the first born of the Egyptians, and spared the first born of Israel, he claimed the special service of the latter, as a due acknowledgment for this distinguishing mercy; but in place of this service, and as a memorial of this wonderful act of goodness, he accepted and consecrated these Levites in the room of all the first born of Israel. Accordingly, when the former were to be initiated into their office, the first born Israelites laid their hands upon them, to recognize the claim of Jehovah to their own personal service, to ratify the substitution of the Levites in their place, and to express their

* Levit. ix. 22. Numb. vi. 23. Deut. xxi. 5.

solemn engagement to treat them as their representatives and ministers in the worship of God. These Levites were also dedicated to their employment by certain rights of purification and atonement, and by a public act of the high priest, offering them to the immediate service of Jehovah. These ceremonies tended to impress both them and the people with the awful dignity of their function, and to enforce that inward reverence and practical holiness, which become the public officers of religion.

Before I dismiss this topic, I would remark, that each of these religious orders had an important share in the civil and forensic administration. However improper such a mixture of political and spiritual employment may be in other establishments; in the Jewish state it was highly expedient; for religion was eminently the object and basis of the Hebrew commonwealth, it was essential to all its political interests; a departure from the true religion was high treason against the constitution and King of Israel. Most of their civil statutes were chiefly intended to guard and promote the pure worship of God. Hence the ministers of this worship would properly and even necessarily bear a part in explaining and executing those statutes. It was also most wise and salutary to exalt the credit and influence of these ministers, by thus clothing them with civil dignity; as this would heighten the effect of their religious ministrations, on which depended the welfare and even existence of their commonwealth.

LECTURE XIV.

Punishments inflicted on those, who assumed the priestly office. Description of the priestly garments.

HAVING in our last lecture given a general account of the *Jewish priests*, of their qualifications, their induction to office, and their appropriate duties; we shall subjoin some further observations on this distinguished order of men, tending at once to vindicate their appointment, and throw light on various passages of scripture.

We have already hinted that, before the establishment of the Hebrew ritual, the father of every family officiated as priest in performing its sacred rites, or in offering domestic sacrifices. Thus when Cain and Abel brought each of them an offering to Jehovah, it is probable that they delivered them to Adam, that he might present them as their common head. Thus Noah immediately after the preservation of his family from the deluge, offered a sacrifice for himself and his household;* and Job “ offered burnt offerings for his sons and his daughters, according to the number of them all.† This domestic function probably descended from the father to the eldest son. “ When in process of time several families were united into one civil community, the chief magistrate of the society officiated as its priest.” Thus Melchizedek was both king and priest in Salem; and Moses‡ as under God, the governor of Israel, acted as priest in the solemn national sacrifice offered on occasion of their first entering into covenant with God. On that occasion Moses took the blood of the sacrifice, and sprinkled it upon the altar, and

* Gen. viii. 20.

† Job i. 5.

‡ Exod. xxiv. 6, 8.

upon the people, as a seal of the compact now formed between Jehovah and them.

But when God had perfectly settled their national constitution, the public sacerdotal office was appropriated to Aaron and his posterity; and it was made a capital crime for any other persons to intrude into this employment. Hence when Korah and his associates, who were not of Aaron's family, though of the same tribe, invaded this office, they were made signal monuments of divine vengeance; and the priesthood was confirmed anew to Aaron and his descendants by the appointed miraculous token of the budding of his rod.* After this establishment, it was equally presumptuous for the king to exercise this function, as for the meanest of his subjects. Thus when king Uzziah undertook to burn incense upon the altar in the temple of the Lord, from a proud ambition of equalling the pagan monarchs, he was instantly struck with a perpetual leprosy, and banished forever from the house of Jehovah, and the government of his people.† But here it may be objected, that we read of several kings, judges, and prophets, who did not belong to the sacerdotal family, and yet occasionally officiated as priests without incurring the divine censure. Thus the prophet Samuel, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, on one occasion, according to his custom, "blessed the sacrifice;" and on another, "offered a lamb for a burnt offering."‡ The prophet Elijah too, in his famous contest with and triumph over the prophets of Baal, directed them to sacrifice a bullock to their idol, while he himself offered another to Jehovah.§ We find also that kings Saul, David, and Solomon, on several urgent or great occasions, offered sacrifices, or publickly prayed and blessed the peo-

* Numbers xvi. 10, 31—33. and Numb. xvii.

† 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, 21.

‡ Sam. ix. 13. and vii. 9.

§ 1 Kings xviii. 30.

ple;* all which acts were peculiar to the priestly office. The best solution of this difficulty is, either that these prophets and kings are said to do what the priests did by their order; or rather that they were prompted by a special divine impulse to do that on extraordinary occasions, which they were forbidden to do in ordinary cases; in other words, the same infinite Sovereign, who enacted the law, authorized them in these instances to depart from the letter of it.

In our last discourse we observed in general that the sacerdotal vestments were minutely and very fitly prescribed by Deity; and that they were decent, beautiful, and magnificent. It may be a useful entertainment to your curiosity to view these garments more distinctly. For as these form no inconsiderable part of Jewish Antiquities; as they occupy a conspicuous place not only in the most learned authors, but even in the sacred volume, and tend to throw light both on scripture and other ancient writings; and as I am sure you will attend to this and every other article of sacred antiquity with candor and serious respect; I will therefore give you a distinct but concise view of the several parts of dress appropriate to the priestly order, abridged chiefly from two great writers. These garments were eight in number; four were common to all the priests; the other four were peculiar to the high priest. The former were called the *linen garments*, and consisted of drawers, the coat, the girdle, and the bonnet. The drawers were prescribed for the express purpose of, “covering their nakedness,” that is, to preserve the priests from an indecorous and ludicrous appearance, when they stood aloft on the altar, over the heads of the people, or when their service demanded a va-

* 2 Sam. xiii. 5. 2 Sam. vi. 17, 18. 1 Kings xviii. 30.

riety of of bodily gestures in the view of the multitude. This garment prevented those shameful exposures of their bodies, either through accident or superstitious design, which some heathen idolaters esteemed honorable and even religious in the worship of their gods. A learned writer with good reason supposes that no such article of dress was used in Noah's time, from the circumstance of his being found uncovered in his tent ; nor among the Jews, except by their priests in the days of Moses and of David, from several intimations in their history and law ;* nor even among the later Romans ; as appears from Martial's ludicrous description of a person sacrificing ; and from the account given by Suetonius of Julius Cesar's behaviour, when he found himself expiring by the strokes of the conspirators.† We may therefore justly trace this decent part of dress to the divine law respecting the Hebrew priests.

The second garment was the *chetnet* or *coat* ; which was a brodered or thick checkered linen. Dr. Jennings observes that the form of this garment is not delineated in scripture, except in the visionary appearance of Christ to St. John in the habit of a priest, related in the first chapter of his apocalypse ; where he is represented as “ clothed with a garment down to his feet.” This perfectly accords with the description of the sacerdotal *coat* by Jewish writers.

The next garment prescribed to the priests was a *girdle*, made of linen curiously embroidered ; which was a long sash, intended to bind the coat closely around them, and thus to serve at once the purposes of warmth and

* Deut. xxv. 11. 2 Sam. x. 4, 5. Lib. iii. Epigram 24. Ipse super virides aras luctantia pronus—Dum resecat cultro colla, premitque manu, ingens iratis apparuit hernia sacris.

† In vitâ Jul. Cesaris, cap. 82. Togâ caput obvolvît ; simul sinistra manu sinum ad ima crura deduxit, quo honestius caderet ; etiam inferiore corporis parte velata.

strength, of convenience and ornament. Josephus tells us that it was woven hollow, like the skin of a snake, and thus answered the double use of a girdle and a purse. To this latter use girdles were antiently applied both among the Jews, and Romans. Hence Horace says in the second epistle of his second book—"Ibit eo, quo vis, qui zonam perdidit." *Zonam perdere* is a latin phrase for being a bankrupt. Our Savior too, when he sent out his disciples to preach, enjoined them to provide neither gold nor silver nor brass, *eis tas zoonas*, in their girdles or purses.

The fourth garment was *the bonnet*; which was a linen cap for the head, in the form of a half sphere. Josephus says it was like a linen helmet, one wreath being plaited and folded over another, and a thin covering put over all to prevent its unfolding or growing slack. By this covering it was securely fastened to the head, so that it could not fall off in the time of service. In short, it resembled the *turban* among the eastern nations.

Besides these common priestly vestments, the ritual provided for the high priest garments far more rich and splendid. These were distinguished by the name of the *golden garments*, because they were wrought with gold, as well as purple and scarlet.

The first of these was the *blue robe*. "This, according to Dr. Lightfoot, was without any sleeves, and consisted of two pieces, one of which hung before, and the other behind. In the middle was an opening through which the priest put his head. From the collar downward the pieces were parted, and his arms came out between them. At the lower end of each piece were thirty six small golden bells with clappers, and pomegranates of needle work between every bell." As the pomegran-

ates added to the beauty of the robe, so the sound of the bells gave notice to the people in the outer court, of the high priest's entrance into the holy place, to burn incense, that they might then apply themselves to their devotions, as an expression of their concurrence with him in his offering, and of their hope that their prayers, accompanied with the incense he offered, would ascend as a fragrant odor before God. The opening at the top of this garment, which is expressed in Hebrew by the mouth or collar of the robe, may throw light on a beautiful passage in the hundred and thirty third Psalm, which describing the sweetness of brotherly love, compares it to the precious ointment poured on the head of Aaron, which ran down *to the skirts of his garments*, that is, as the original properly signifies, to the *mouth or collar* of his robe; not to the lower skirts or bottom of his garments, as our poetical versions render it; for it is utterly improbable that God would direct such costly and beautiful vestments to be defaced with oil, as soon as they were put on. The idea therefore seems to be, that the consecrating ointment flowed down to the extremity of his hair and his beard, which probably extended as low as the upper edge or collar of his garment. This in antient times was esteemed both ornamental and refreshing. Hence oil is said to make man's face to shine. The continuance of this custom to the time of our Savior appears from one of his female friend's pouring precious ointment on his head, and from his reproving Simon the Pharisee, who entertained him at his house, for neglecting this common mark of civility. If it be objected that the splendid dress of the high priest must at least have been greatly deformed by the ceremony, used at his consecration, of sprink-

ling blood upon it ; we reply, the Hebrew word in this instance signifies sprinkling in a very small quantity, and may denote that Moses dipped his finger in the blood, and by touching the garments in one particular place impressed God's mark upon them, and thus consecrated them to him.

The second peculiar vestment of the high priest was the *ephod*, so called from a Hebrew verb, signifying to *gird* or to *bind*. Josephus and the Septuagint call it in greek *επωμίς*, importing something worn on the shoulders. It was like a short cloak, reaching down to the feet behind ; while before it hung down in a rectangular form, about the length of a cubit. It had a rich button on each shoulder, made of a large onyx stone set in gold ; so large, that the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraven, six on each stone. To the ephod there belonged a curious golden girdle, which, being woven into it on each side, was brought under the arms like a sash, and tied upon the breast.

The third garment was called the *breast plate of judgment*, because the high priest always wore it, when he consulted the oracle, which gave forth judicial answers in great and doubtful cases. This breast plate, which consisted of the same rich materials with the ephod, was two spans in length, and one in breadth ; and folding up double, it was a span square. It was fastened upon the ephod by chains and rings of gold at the four corners. It was also adorned with four rows of jewels, set in sockets of gold, three jewels in a row. On these twelve jewels were engraven the names of the twelve patriarchs or tribes of Israel. These jewels, thus engraved, are called *Urim and Thummim*, which signify *light and perfection*. As the use of this breast plate was to enquire of God,

and to receive and publish his decision on great occasions; so these two words were probably inscribed on or woven into it, to signify that the answers given on such occasions should be luminous and complete. As God was the political King of the Hebrews, the high priest was of course his minister of state; and these names worn on his breast, when he went to ask counsel of his sovereign, were a fit pledge and medium of divine direction. At the same time his bearing the names of the twelve tribes both on his shoulders and heart, when he appeared before God, forcibly instructed him to cherish the tenderest affection, and to exert his utmost power for their welfare. It also comforted them with the assurance, that though they were personally debarred from the most holy place, yet they really had access by the high priest, who wore their names on his breast, and feelingly represented their interests. I cannot forbear adding that we are fully authorized to view the Jewish high priest, as typifying our Lord Jesus, who carries the whole christian church on his shoulders, as their all powerful King and support; who, as their Priest and Intercessor, constantly appears before God, with their names and interests engraven on his heart; and who, as their Oracle, as the true light and Prophet of his people, fully declares the divine will. It is proper to subjoin, that when the high priest appeared before the ark, to ask counsel of God, the answer was probably given by an audible voice from the mercy seat. But if he were at a distance from the ark, as Abiathar was, when on two several occasions he inquired of the Lord for David,* the answer was then given either by a voice from heaven, or by a secret impulse on the mind of the high priest. This oracle was finally lost in the Babylonish captivity.

* 1 Sam. xxiii, 9, 11. and xxx. 7, 8.

The last peculiarity in the dress of the high priest was a *crow*n or *mitre*, on the front of which was a plate or leaf of gold, bearing this motto, *Holiness to the Lord*. This inscription, engraven in deep characters, and placed on his forehead, strongly reminded him that his public ministrations and private deportment must be eminently holy, must be an open transcript of the divine purity, and wholly dedicated to the divine honor. In like manner piety, or a heart and life devoted to God, should be written on the forehead, should be the most prominent and commanding feature of every one, who designs or is engaged in the christian priesthood. Without this he wants the distinguishing spirit and badge of his office, and cannot discharge it either with satisfaction or honor, with fidelity or success.

Having thus introduced you to God's antient ministers, arrayed in the full dress of their profession, I will dismiss this subject with a few general remarks.

1. The priests wore this dress, only when they officiated. This suggests one solution of St. Paul's behavior before the Jewish council, recorded in the twenty third chapter of Acts; I mean his declaration, that he did not know that Ananias was high priest. For Ananias at this time was not engaged in any sacerdotal duty, and of course could not be distinguished by his dress. And as Paul had been long absent from Jerusalem, he might not personally know him, or at least might be ignorant that he was high priest at that juncture. This is the more supposeable on account of the frequent and violent changes in this office, which happened in those times.

2. These garments were provided at the public expence, or by the free donations of the people,* and were

* Ezra ii. 68, 9. Nehem. vii. 70, 72.

by them appropriated, not to particular persons, but to the use of the order.

3. None of the priests had any covering assigned either to their hands or feet. As their sacrificial duties would not well consist with a covering on the former; so making bare the feet was thought a due mark of veneration for the divine presence, even before, as well as under the law. Thus Moses and Joshua were required to put off their shoes from their feet, when Jehovah on different occasions honored them with his visible presence. We may add here, that the Jews also esteemed it an expression of reverence to worship God with their *heads covered*. Agreeably, both their priests and people have constantly maintained this usage, as a sign of their conscious unworthiness to look up in the divine presence. When God appeared to Moses and to Elijah, we are told that each of them hid or covered his face.* The cherubims, in the vision of Isaiah, are introduced covering their faces with their wings in the presence of Jehovah. Virgil, in the third book of his *Eneid*, likewise represents the antient Romans as performing their religious ceremonies with a veil on their heads.† The Greeks, on the contrary, as Macrobius informs us, attended their sacred rites bareheaded. Hence St. Paul, in a letter to the Corinthians, who were Greeks says, “Every man praying or prophesying with his head covered, dishonoreth his head,” that is, he dishonors Christ his Lord by a practice, which, according to the Grecian custom, denoted want of humility and reverence. The apostle in the same chapter declares that “the woman, who prays to God uncovered, dishonors her head,” because she throws off the common token of subjection to

* Exod, iii. 6. 1 Kings xix. 13.

† Line 403, &c. and 543, &c.

the man, and by affecting his dress confounds the distinction of sexes, and aspires to that superiority, which God has denied her. The general spirit of this reasoning will apply to all countries and ages ; that is, it obliges people of both sexes to worship God with such circumstances of dress and behavior, as the customs of different regions have rendered decent and respectful.

4. We have already glanced at the moral instruction, which was presented by the sacerdotal apparel, as well as by other sensible symbols of the early ages. In allusion to the linen garments of the priests, the church of Christ is said to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white ; which, we are told, signifies the righteousness of saints. In the same allusive style christians are called a holy nation and a royal priesthood, to show forth the praises of God. In a word, the ceremonial worship at large, and the Jewish priests in particular, are said to be “ a shadow or type of spiritual and heavenly things.”

The Jewish writers have discovered, it seems, a world of philosophy in these vestments. According to Josephus and Philo, the high priests linen garment represented the body of the earth ; the glorious robe, which encompassed it, heaven ; the bells and pomgranates, thunder and lightning. Or, the ephod of various colors is the universe ; the breastplate, the earth in its centre ; the girdle, the sea ; the onyx stone on each shoulder, the sun and moon ; the twelve jewels in the breast plate, the twelve signs of the zodiac ; the mitre, heaven ; and the golden plate, with the name of God engraven on it, the splendor of Jehovah in heaven.” Some christian divines have allegorised them in a manner equally extravagant. But such wild comments serve no other purpose, than to spread an air of romance, of uncertainty, and

ridicule over these sacred things. It is sufficient for us to be assured that these minute prescriptions were adapted to wise and excellent purposes in the puerile state of the church; in particular that they served the general uses of an emblematical and typical religion, intended to impress moral and spiritual truth by sensible and striking representations.

LECTURE XV.

Answers to various inquiries and objections respecting the Jewish priesthood.

HAVING given you some account of the Jewish priesthood, I will dismiss this topic after stating and answering a few inquiries and objections, which the subject itself, or sceptical ingenuity has suggested.

First, it is natural to inquire, why such a vast number of men, viz. a whole tribe, should be called off from useful secular employments to the service of the temple? Might not this service have been decently performed by fewer hands, and in a style far more simple and economical? We reply first, it was necessary, for reasons heretofore given, that the religion of the antient Hebrews should embrace many pompous and striking ceremonies, and consequently that many persons should be appointed to superintend and perform them. Secondly, as Jehovah, for important reasons, assumed the twofold character of the political and spiritual Sovereign of that people; so the priests and Levites ministered to Him in both these capacities. They at once served at his court, and attended on his altar. To display his royal dignity, to attach the respect and obedience of his subjects, and thus to secure the great ends of the theocracy, it was requisite that the splendor of his court, and the number of his ministers should bear some analogy to those of other monarchs. Hence third, the duties assigned to the Levitical Order were so numerous and diversified, so critical and momentous, as to furnish a whole tribe with adequate and useful employment. For while some officiated at the temple in Jerusalem, the rest were occupied in

the several districts of the community, in expounding the law, administering justice, and thus promoting the knowledge, order, and virtue of their fellow citizens. This leads to a

Second Enquiry, by what means was this numerous order maintained? Must not the support of so many ecclesiastics have operated as a grievous tax upon their laborious brethren? To resolve this question, I must remind you that the several tribes of Israel, except that of Levi, were settled by lot in so many distinct provinces of Canaan, each having a separate government, subordinate to that of the whole, and each possessing an equal portion of territory according to its number of citizens. But the sons of Levi, instead of living together, like the rest, in one body politic, and proprietors of one district, were dispersed through all the tribes, without any distinct power or property of their own, and consequently depended on their fellow citizens both for subsistence and protection. It was made a perpetual statute, that the Levites, as a tribe, should possess no landed inheritance, but that an annual tithe should be paid them by their brethren, as a reward for that religious service, to which they were separated. The wisdom and equity of this constitution may be easily discovered. As the Levites were charged with those civil and religious services to Jehovah, which would otherwise have been incumbent on the whole nation; so the rest of the tribes were by this expedient released from the expense and toil of personal service, and of course were bound to recompense those, who performed these offices in their stead. The peculiar function of the Levites made it highly unsuitable, that they should be embodied together, possess land, and be subject to agricultural and military duty, like their

fellow citizens. It was necessary that they should enjoy full liberty for their public duties, and that they should be spread abroad through the whole community ; that each tribe might equally share in their instructions and services. This order then had a just claim to a generous public support. This claim rested on several grounds. It rested on their dignified character, as ministers of that civil and religious constitution, which was framed and exercised by God himself. It rested on their beneficent services, in teaching the people, and relieving them from a personal attendance on the tabernacle. It rested on this circumstance, that the Levites parted with their own inheritance in territory to the public, and therefore had a right to an equivalent. I have largely stated these claims, to fortify you against those ignorant or malevolent cavils, which hold up the Jewish religion, as an artful contrivance to draw all the wealth of the people into the coffers of a useless and a covetous priesthood. As a further confutation of these cavils, I will distinctly show you the manner and degree of that provision which the law made for the Levites. This provision consisted of two articles ; first, a yearly tithe of the produce of the lands, payable by all the tribes ; and second, forty eight cities for the residence of themselves and their families. The tithe was a tenth part both of the animal and vegetable produce. With respect to the former the law stands thus, “ concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord.” The learned Selden informs us, that their mode of tithing agreeably to this law was as follows—“ They used to shut the lambs, for instance, in a sheepcoat, where the straitness of the door permitted but one to come out at once. Then open-

ing the door, and causing them to run out in succession, a servant standing at the door, with a rod colored with oker, solemnly counted to the tenth, which tenth he marked with his rod ; which explains the expression of "passing under the rod." The tithe of cattle then, which was paid to the Levites, was merely the tenth lamb, calf, &c. which were annually produced ; and not as some have misrepresented it, a tenth part of all the beasts, which were fed in the Hebrew pastures, and of all the yearly income, which they afforded. The tithe of vegetable produce was a tenth of the product of the arable lands and fruit grounds, which probably were not more than a third part of the whole country ; so that this tax, compared with the aggregate yearly produce of the territory, was but one third of a tenth, or a little more than three per cent.

Besides this annual tribute of the Levites, there were other revenues to defray the constant charge of the temple and the national worship, and to support, if I may so speak, the table and household of the King of Israel. For instance, the law directed a *second tithe*, to be employed by the people in making a yearly feast for themselves and their households in some apartment of the temple, as a token of their grateful joy in the divine bounty, and to this entertainment they were commanded to admit the Levites. This was called by the Jews the *owner's tithe*, because it was chiefly spent in entertaining the proprietors themselves. Every third year it was spent at their own place of abode, and was peculiarly devoted to the refreshment of the poor, the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless.* This was usually called the *poor man's tithe*. The people were also directed to bring some of their *first*

* Deut. xii. 17, 18. xiv. 28, 29.

fruits, and present them in the house of the Lord ; which fruits were to be eaten by those priests who then waited in the palace of Jehovah.* The donations now mentioned afforded only occasional refreshment to some of the levitical order, but formed no part of their stated provision. The law further enjoined that the *first born* both of men and of beasts should be offered to the Lord ; but it also provided that the first born of men and of unclean animals should be *redeemed* by a sum of money paid in their stead ; while those of other beasts were to be sacrificed.† But neither of these formed any part of the Levites' portion ; for what was sacrificed could be eaten only by the priests in actual waiting ; and the money paid for the others was appropriated to the repairs, ornaments, and offerings of the sanctuary, and to other public expenses. There was also a *poll tax* of half a shekel, or about two shillings and three pence sterling, which the law imposed for adorning the tabernacle in the wilderness, and which, in later periods, was continued for public exigencies. But this, instead of going to the priests, was equally levied upon them, as upon the other citizens.‡

It appears that only one of the taxes abovenamed was appropriated to the sacred order, viz. a tenth of the annual increase; produced by a minor part of the national property. The remaining contributions formed the whole revenue for supporting the government, laws, and religion of the nation. This revenue, compared with the public demands, is certainly one of the most frugal, that antient or modern history can furnish.

As the Levites had no distinct landed inheritance, and as they, as well as others, needed some fixed and conven-

* Deut. xxvi. 7 &c. † Exod. xviii. 15 &c. and Num. xiii. 13. ‡ Exod. xxx. 11.

ient habitations; the law assigned them *forty eight cities* in the midst of the other tribes; thirteen of which cities belonged to the priests, and were for the most part situated near to Jerusalem, where those officers were called frequently to attend; while the other thirty five were distributed by lot to the rest of the Levites.* These forty eight cities were so many public seminaries planted in all the Hebrew provinces, where the ministerial order studied the law, and diffused the knowledge and observance of it. Of these, six were selected as *cities of refuge*, to which persons, who had committed involuntary or accidental homicide, might flee for protection. Each of these cities with its suburbs contained four thousand square cubits,† that is, on the largest computation, eleven hundred and one acres. Of course the total area of the forty eight cities will amount to fifty two thousand eight hundred and forty eight acres; which was not a two hundredth part of the Hebrew territory. This moderate proportion of the country was intended not only to furnish the Levites and their families with habitations, but to afford them small fields and vineyards,‡ for their needful amusement, and a part of their subsistence, when they retired from their attendance on the sanctuary.

In short, when we view the great sacrifices and services of this order, and duly compare these particulars with the recompense they received, we are struck in this instance with the simplicity, moderation, and justice of the Hebrew provisions. The ideas now suggested lead us to inquire

Thirdly, why God suspended the support of the priesthood on a precarious annuity? Why did he not make it

* Num. xxxv. Josh. xxi.

† Numb. xxxv. 4. 5.

‡ Levit. xxv. 34.

more independent and certain by investing his ministers with a competent share of unalienable property in lands? In addition to the reply already hinted, we answer first, because a large landed interest would engross their time with secular business, their minds with temporal cares, and their hearts with worldly affections, and thus would alienate them from those sacred duties, which demand their entire and fervent attention. We find that those clergymen for the most part but poorly discharge the ministerial function, who, from necessity or choice, "entangle themselves with the affairs of this life." Those establishments therefore, which preclude the necessity, the temptation, or the possibility of such entanglement, are most friendly to clerical usefulness, and to the public good. Secondly, it is a favorite objection of infidels and libertines against priests, that they generally possess exorbitant power and influence in the state, and that in most cases they derive these from their great independent revenues, and in particular from their territorial possessions. Now the antient Levitical institution is wholly free from this objection; and probably one design of this was, to prevent the ecclesiastics from gaining an undue ascendancy in the commonwealth. Thirdly, this arrangement furnished the Levites, not only with full leisure, but the strongest engagements to diligence and fidelity, particularly in the great duty of teaching and enforcing the divine laws.* For their subsistence very much depended on the people's exact knowledge and observance of these laws. So far as the people were deficient in this knowledge and obedience, they would fail of those punctual oblations and contributions, prescribed in the law,

* That this duty was a main branch of the levitical office, appears from *Lev.* 1. 2. *Deut.* xxxiii. 10. *II Chron.* xvii. 7, 8, 30, 22. *Neh.* viii. 7, 9. *Mal.* ii. 4, 7.

by which the sacerdotal order was maintained. Fourthly, this establishment gave the people ample scope to display their pious gratitude and liberality to their spiritual instructors, and thus of drawing more closely the bonds of their mutual affection. The dependent state of this class, joined with their benevolent labors, frequently roused the solicitous and generous attentions of the people; insomuch that Philo, speaking of the zeal of the Jews in his time, in bringing the first fruits, &c. says, "that they prevented the demand of them, and paid them even before they were due, as if they had been receiving rather than giving a benefit; and that both sexes brought them in with a readiness, alacrity, and studious zeal, which were beyond expression." Fifthly, God might require the Israelites to support his ministers by a tenth of their produce, as an acknowledgment that they had received their estates from his free gift, and held them by no other tenure, than his royal bounty. In this view the tithes were a *quit rent*, annually paid to the original Proprietor, who had conquered the land for them and instated them in it. Thus William the conqueror, when he parcelled out the English territory, reserved a small rent to be annually paid to the crown, as an acknowledgment that it was received from, and held under him. But as the divine King of Israel did not need this acknowledgment for his own use, he directed it to be paid to his public servants for their maintenance, which was virtually paying it to Him. By refusing this rent the holders forfeited their estates. This leads us to answer a

Fourth question, why did God require a *tenth*, rather than any other proportion? The Jews say, it was because *ten* is a perfect number, as it is the end of simple and

smaller numbers, and the beginning of greater. The learned Grotius and other great writers observe, that *ten* is the end of numbering with almost all nations; that it comprehends in itself alone not only all simple numbers, but all their differences and analogies, kinds and perfections; that it corresponds with the number of fingers, which man possesses, and by which in antient times he used to count, and to keep an easy and exact register of things; that for these reasons the Pythagorean and Peripatetic philosophers reduced the several species of things into *ten categories*, and the divine Lawgiver summed up all moral precepts in *ten commandments*. Hence, not only under the law of Moses, but long before it, a tenth part of the produce of their estates, and of their spoils in war, were devoted by pious men to God, and sometimes by subjects and inferiors to kings and magistrates. It is probable that wise and good men in that early period might be led to dedicate *this portion* of their goods to the Deity by an idea, that this being the most perfect number, the beginning and end of arithmetical computation, was a proper symbol of the most perfect Being, the beginning and end, and sum of all things; and that by thus giving him a tenth of their possessions they most expressively acknowledged him as the great origin and end of the whole. This practice, thus early and fitly adopted, was afterward by divine institution transferred into the Hebrew church and commonwealth; and thence widely diffused itself among the surrounding nations. We learn from the best writers of antiquity, that tithes were paid in the eastern countries to their respective rulers and gods. And as Jehovah was at once the King and God of the Jews, he justly claimed and limited to himself this customary tribute, and severely pro-

hibited the alienation of it to idolatrous uses. It is proper to add, that as tithes were a branch of the Hebrew theocracy, which has long since been abolished; and as the gospel nowhere enjoins the payment of them to christian magistrates and bishops; the latter have no divine right to this tribute; though they may justly claim a liberal support from those, to whose service they are devoted.

Our fifth and last question is this—Was not the union of civil and spiritual jurisdiction in the Jewish priesthood an impolitic arrangement? Did it not clothe this order of men with a power dangerous to the freedom and property of the people? This question has been artfully magnified into a formidable objection by some deistical writers, particularly by Dr. Morgan, who wrote about seventy years since, and whose falsehoods have been echoed by more recent authors. But it is sufficient to reply, that the supreme power of the nation, under God, was constitutionally vested, not in the Levites, nor even in the high priest, but in Moses, in conjunction with a senate and a popular assembly. The inferior judges, and the seventy elders appointed to assist Moses, were chosen out of *all* the tribes;* and all the Jews agree that the Sanhedrim or supreme judiciary consisted not merely of ecclesiastics, but of persons in any of the tribes, who had a competent knowledge of the law. The Levites were equally subject to the magistrate and the law, as the other citizens. The judges were required impartially to decide on *all* causes and persons. They were commanded to take a criminal *even from the altar*, and put him to death; that is, as eminent Jewish commentators interpret it, they were to take a criminal priest, or even high priest, though actually ministering at the altar, and doom

* Numbers xi. 16, &c,

him to death. The priests had no interests separate from, much less hostile to that of their brethren. The constitution guarded them, as we have seen, against an accumulation of landed property. They could not be enriched by pecuniary presents in a country which afforded so little money; nor could any gifts of this kind produce an annual increase of revenue, because putting out money to usury was forbidden by the law. Their participation of civil power was confined chiefly to courts of justice. Their leisure and knowledge of the laws rendered their assistance in these courts convenient and proper. But the exercise of this office yielded little or no personal emolument. It conferred but a small portion of power. A large majority, who shared it were not Levites. Of course this order could draw from it very little wealth or dominion. The Levites were not *sole* judges in any court. They formed a small minority of any assembly, whether judicial or legislative, provincial or national.

Their interest as a tribe must have engaged them to avoid and to prevent all party ambition and animosity; because every factious disturbance in the state tended to lessen their own revenue or yearly dividend, by diminishing either the produce of the territory, or the regular payment of their dues.

Thus the Levitical constitution precluded every incitement to covetous and ambitious views in the priesthood. It also rendered the accomplishment of such views impracticable. Nor could the body of the Levites execute any similar plot to increase their own wealth and importance; for in order to this, they must set aside two capital articles of the constitution; one of which prohibited alienation of landed property; the other, interest on money. If a power of repealing the constitution, framed

by God himself, had even been vested in the local or national assemblies; yet the Levites, who had so little share in them, could never procure such a repeal in their own favor against the general interests of the people. Nor could they attain this object by force; for they were not only comparatively few, and scattered over the community, but their religious functions barred them from military discipline and skill, and even from the possession of arms. They had not one person of knowledge and experience in these matters to conduct them, and were surrounded by an armed, trained, and officered militia, above ten times more numerous than themselves, and ready at short warning to suppress any insurrection, which threatened their freedom or property. Accordingly no instance occurs in the long history of the Hebrews of any such effort on the part of the Levites. Amid the frequent changes and even revolutions in their government, this order never appeared either to have originated, or assisted, or profited by any of them. The grand revolution under Jeroboam, by which ten tribes revolted from the house of David, was so far from being a plot of the priests, or conducive to their advantage, that it was a fatal blow to their constitutional privileges. It stripped them of above three fourths of their revenue, as well as degraded them from their office and dignity in the revolted tribes.

I thought it necessary to be particular on this subject, that you might be convinced of the ignorance or malice of a favorite objection against the Jewish constitution, and might join with me in admiring its excellent provisions against ecclesiastical, as well as political oppression.

I cannot close without adding, that the same remark eminently applies to the civil and religious constitutions

of these United States, especially to the institutions and habits of New England. These institutions and habits render our clergy so dependent on the people for their support, so united to them by interest and affection, as well as by duty, and at the same time so effectually close against them every avenue to great worldly wealth and dominion, as to preclude this order from seeking, and much more from accomplishing any object inconsistent with the general freedom and prosperity. For our christian leaders to conspire against the people would be not only to contradict and stifle the whole spirit of their religion and office, but to wage destructive war against themselves and their families, against the sources of their own temporal comfort and even existence. Can you possibly believe that the body of our clergy are such desperadoes and monsters? If on some political occasions they think and act differently from many of their parishioners, does not candor and even common sense oblige us to suppose, that they would not thus risk their popularity and subsistence, unless compelled to do it by conscientious motives? In short, the situation of our spiritual guides, abstracted from their moral characters, is so analogous to that of the antient Jewish priests, as to lay them under a happy necessity of seeking the temporal, as well as eternal good of their people. I have made these remarks with the friendly design of preventing or extinguishing in your minds those prejudices against gospel teachers, which have a most unfavorable aspect upon religion itself, and consequently upon the dearest interests of our country.

LECTURE XVI.

The nature and design of the prophetic office.

THE next religious order of men among the Hebrews were the *Prophets*. This appellation strictly denotes a person inspired with a knowledge of secret, especially of future things, and commissioned to publish them to others. In a more lax sense it designates a person eminently devoted to religious studies and exercises. Thus this title is given to the sacred *musicians*, who with their voices or instruments sung the praises of God; these are said to prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals. Agreeably, the heathen poets, who sung or formed verses in celebration of their gods; were styled by the Romans *vates* or prophets; which is synonymous with the Greek noun *προφητης*, which St. Paul applies to Epimenides, the Cretan poet.* This use of the term, as a learned writer observes, may throw light upon those words in the first epistle to the Corinthians, which speak of a woman's publicly praying or *prophesying*.† Prophe- sying here cannot be understood in the highest or most proper sense; because this same epistle forbids women to instruct or even to speak in the church. They may indeed be said to *pray* in public, as they silently join with the minister, as the mouth of the congregation; but they cannot be said to preach or to prophesy, merely as they attend to his preaching or message, because in this he represents, not his audience, but the Deity. Female prophesying therefore in this passage probably signifies the same act, which we have just stated, viz. praising

* Tit. i. 12.

† Tit. xi. 5.

God in psalms and hymns. In this view it is fitly connected with praying, because in these two parts of worship the whole congregation may and ought to unite. Perhaps too the term prophecy was originally applied to sacred music, because the songs in some instances were composed and adapted to certain tunes or instruments under the influence of divine inspiration. From this circumstance the term might be transferred to all, who taught or practised this excellent art. It is likewise probable that the name of *prophet* or *inspired person* was by the Greeks and Romans given to their poets from an idea, that poetic genius and harmony were the offspring of divine inspiration. Agreeably they first invented, and then invoked certain imaginary powers, styled Apollo and the Muses, who were supposed to be prompted by and to preside over this species of composition. It is possible however that the sentiments and style of pagans on this subject may be a corrupt derivation from the real union of inspiration and poetry in some of the prophetic writings of the Hebrews.

That there was in the Jewish church a succession of prophets in the most strict, as well as loose sense of the word, is attested by the general current both of scripture and history. Moses, the great founder of their civil and ecclesiastical polity, was likewise the first and most eminent of their prophets; not only as he immediately received from God, and communicated to them the whole system of their laws, but as he circumstantially and precisely foretold many singular events of their history, which have been and still are coming into existence. The past and present state of the Jews admirably confirms the prophetic character of their antient lawgiver. The scripture tells us that “there arose not a prophet in Israel like to

Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." That is, Moses had a more free access to Jehovah, saw more of his glory, was favored with more clear, familiar, and abundant revelations of his will, ratified and executed his high commission in a style far more awful and sublime, than any succeeding prophet. In short, Moses erected and put into operation the Hebrew constitution; his successors were occasionally employed to explain and enforce it. A series of these divine messengers was continued to the Jews from Moses to Malachi, whose prophecy closes the Old Testament scriptures. After this the prophetic spirit seems to have been withdrawn for almost five hundred years, that is, till the birth of John the Baptist; who brings up the rear of prophets under the Jewish dispensation. For though this harbinger of the Messiah is introduced in the gospel history, yet his ministry preceded the erection of the christian church, and therefore must be referred to the Old Testament economy. Accordingly, though our Savior pronounces John a very great prophet; yet he declares "the least in the kingdom of God to be greater than he;" that is, the least minister or disciple of Christ is superior to the greatest Jewish prophet, on account of the far superior light and fulness of the gospel revelation.

In the age, and under the direction of Samuel, *prophetic schools* or *seminaries* appear to have been established. Thus we read of "a company of prophets prophesying together, and Samuel standing as appointed over them."* It is very probable that this and other companies mentioned in scripture were societies of young men, trained up, under one or more eminent prophets, in the knowledge of Jehovah and his law, and in those devout and

* 1 Sam. xix. 20. See also 1 Sam. x. 5.

sublime sentiments, which ennoble the prophetic writings, and employed in frequent exercises of prayer and praise, or in composing and singing hymns to the divine honor. Persons educated in these colleges were called prophets, or sons of the prophets. Accordingly Jezabel, the idolatrous wife of Ahab, is represented as destroying the prophets of the Lord, because she labored to extirpate these prophetic nurseries and their contents, which eminently diffused and maintained in the community the knowledge and practice of pure religion. Though many pupils of these schools never rose to the highest grade of prophets, nor were honored with immediate inspiration, yet their religious education and habits qualified them for distinguished usefulness; particularly for public preaching, which seems to have been their business on sabbath days and festivals; and probably from these select societies God usually chose the subjects of his extraordinary influence.* The prophet Amos therefore admires it as an unusual condescension, that “though he was not one of the sons of the prophets, but an herdsman, yet the Lord took him, as he followed the flock, and said unto him, go prophesy to my people Israel.” That the prophetic spirit might not be ascribed merely to human education, God saw fit to honor a few with extraordinary gifts, who had not received the usual preparation.

It may gratify a laudable curiosity to advert for a moment to the style of living in these antient academies, so far as sacred history informs us. The buildings occupied by the members of these sacred academies, were generally mean, and built by their own hands.† “Their food was chiefly pottage and herbs, unless when better provision was sent them, as bread, parched corn,

* 1 Kings xx. 38, 41, 31. 2 do. iv. 23.

† 2 Kings, vi. 2—4.

honey, or dried fruits.*” Their dress was plain and coarse, tied about with a leathern girdle.† Wealth had no temptation for them; therefore Elisha not only refused Naaman’s presents, but severely punished his servant Gehazi for clandestinely obtaining a small share of them.‡ This recluse, abstemious life, and mean apparel, sometimes exposed them to contempt among the gay and the courtly. Perhaps it was the singular dress and appearance of Elisha, which occasioned the impious scoffs of the children at Bethel.¶ But in general the prophets were regarded with high esteem and veneration by the wise and good, and even by persons of the first rank in the state§.

The ends, for which God raised up these extraordinary ministers, were very important. They were usually sent to Israel on urgent occasions. Their errand was to instruct an ignorant, to rouse a stupid, to recal a backsliding, or to reanimate a desponding nation. For these purposes they presented to the people the noblest views of God and religion, the most pathetic incitements to repentance and virtue, the most pointed reproofs of idolatry and wickedness, the most lively admonitions of impending judgments, accompanied in many instances with plain and bold predictions of future events: These several particulars are admirably exemplified in the prophetic parts of the Old Testament. These occasional addresses of inspired messengers comported at once with the extraordinary nature of the Jewish economy, and with the peculiar genius and circumstances of the Hebrew nation. As that economy was professedly derived from and administered by Jehovah, and intended to preserve the purity of his worship among a people strongly tempted and inclined to idolatry; it was suitable and

* 2 Kings iv. 9. † 1 Do. 14. ‡ 2 Do. v. 15. ¶ 2 Do. ix. 11. § 1 Do. xviii. 7.

even necessary that this singular institution should be frequently enforced by extraordinary means, and particularly by teachers supernaturally endowed and attested. The ordinary ministers of religion were so much occupied, and often so much dazzled with external ceremonies, as to be unfitted for duly perceiving and explaining their moral and spiritual import. They likewise frequently participated and even abetted the national apostacy. In periods so critical, the function of prophets was highly expedient. Their sublime and zealous discourses tended to stop the spreading contagion, and to restore the true knowledge and observance of the divine laws. Their predictions of futurity were also adapted to many valuable ends, which perhaps have not been sufficiently noticed. That you may duly appreciate them, the following particulars solicit your attention.

1. The credit of pagan idolatry was greatly promoted by pretended oracles and divinations. Many of the votaries of heathen gods professed to derive from their inspiration a knowledge of future contingences. All these idolatrous arts and pretences were severely prohibited in the Mosaic law. "Thou shalt not," says Jehovah to Israel, "do after the abominations of those nations; there shall not be found among you any one, that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer; for all that do these things are an abomination to Jehovah."* But while God interdicted these heathen arts among his own people, he signally triumphed over them by enduing many of his prophets with those very powers, to which the pagan diviners falsely pretended. Thus he destroyed idolatry with its own weapons.

* Deut. xviii. 9, 12.

For the superiority or rather contrast of the Hebrew oracle and prophecies to those of paganism was so conspicuous, as to give the former a glorious victory over the latter. We have formerly specified some circumstances attending the Jewish oracle, which precluded the possibility of deception. But a distinct comparison of these circumstances with those of the heathen oracles will greatly confirm the point now before us. The Jewish high priest consulted the divine oracle only by the direction, and in the presence of the civil magistrate, who distinctly heard the answer given. This circumstance alone must have prevented or detected any priestcraft. The oracle was likewise accessible on every important occasion; whereas the oracles of ancient Greece could be consulted only on a few stated days of one particular month in the year; which gave the priests a fine opportunity of anticipating the questions to be asked, and of fabricating skilful replies. The consultation of these oracles was very expensive to inquirers, and very lucrative to the priests; but that of the Hebrews was totally free from this suspicious and corrupting appendage. The latter was also free from that *awful machinery*, which attended the former, and which gave them such power to terrify and delude the imaginations of those, who consulted them. The response of the divine oracle was always delivered in *audible and unequivocal words*; but the Grecian oracles gave their answers by dreams, by flights of birds, by entrails of beasts, by throwing dice, &c. The oracle of Apollo indeed returned verbal answers, but so ambiguous, as to admit of very different applications. Two of these answers are specified by Herodotus; which I will give you in the words of Dr. Priestly—"When the Lacedemonians inquired of the oracle whether they

should succeed in their attempt to conquer all Arcadia, it was answered, they should not, but that he would give them *Tegea*, which was very fruitful, and which they should measure with a line. On this they had no doubt but that they should gain the possession of it; but being defeated in battle, many of them were made prisoners, and compelled to till the ground for their conquerors; in doing which they used a line to measure it; which was deemed a fulfilment of the oracle. Again, when Croesus consulted the same oracle, on his engaging in a war with Cyrus, he received for answer, that he should overturn a great empire, and that the Persians would not conquer him, until they had a mule for their prince. Being conquered, and losing his empire, he upbraided the oracle for deceiving him, but was answered; that the empire, which he was to overturn, was his own, and that Cyrus, being descended from a Persian father, and a Median mother, was the mule intended by the oracle." How contrary to these delusive responses were the predictions uttered by the oracles and prophets of Jehovah! All the communications of God to Abraham, to Moses, to David, and others, had a plain and certain meaning. The prediction of the angel to Hagar, that her son Ishmael "should be a wild man, that his hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him," is not only perfectly clear, but has been accurately fulfilled in the Arabs, the posterity of Ishmael, from their first existence to this day. Indeed the future destinies of all the surrounding nations were plainly specified by the Hebrew prophets; for instance, the destruction of the Egyptians, the Tyrians, and the Babylonians. Many particulars in the catastrophe of each of these nations are minutely foretold; some of which have been recently ac-

complished ; which renders it impossible that the predictions should have been fabricated after the events. Other prophecies related to things, which were to happen during the life of the prophets ; the exact fulfilment of which confirmed the faith of the people in their divine mission, and gave a sacred force to their excellent instructions and exhortations ; while the accomplishment of distant events in the manner and season predicted gave a new and perpetually increasing evidence to the Jewish religion, and thus contributed to the grand design of that institution. Such a series of prophecy, thus verified in the revolutions of empires, especially in the dreadful punishment of heathen nations for their wicked idolatry, and of the Hebrews themselves for their apostacy from the true God, was admirably fitted to impress that people with comprehensive views of the knowledge, power, and universal dominion of Jehovah, of his infinite superiority to the gods of the heathen, of the vanity, guilt and danger of all idolatrous worship, and of their high obligations both in duty and interest to adhere closely to the principles and practice of their divine religion. While the ministry of the prophets thus contributed to enforce and keep alive the religion of Moses ; we must add

2. That it constantly pointed the public views and hopes to the future kingdom of the Messiah, and thus tended to prepare the Hebrew church and the surrounding world for his appearance. We have observed on former occasions that the Jewish dispensation is a symbolical and preparatory scheme, advancing in clearness and lustre by slow degrees towards perfection. As mankind immediately after the first transgression were at once in a state of infancy and of guilt, some prediction

or promise suited to this two fold state, was necessary both to encourage their repentance, and to direct their conduct. In other words, they needed a prophetic scheme of revelation. Accordingly a hint of the future victorious seed of the woman was then communicated; a hint sufficient to sooth their fears, to revive their hopes, and thus animate their obedience. But the whole plan of redemption was not then unfolded, because it would have confounded their feeble minds; and because the gradual progress of evangelical light, like the advance of natural day from the obscure dawn to meridian splendor, best suited the intellectual eye, and prepared it by gentle degrees for still brighter discoveries. Agreeably that dawn of gospel truth, which glimmered on our first parents, slowly ascended towards perfect day by a long series of prophetic illuminations, fitted to the several periods, in which they were dispensed. Each step in the series prepared mankind for the next; and the whole system of predictions respecting the future Messiah tended to keep alive a general expectation of his coming, to support the faith and hope of good men under the greatest discouragements, and to prepare the world for a due reception of him, when he actually came. It instructed the Jews that their religious economy was designed to be only temporary; that it constantly pointed to, and must in due time be lost or rather consummated in a more perfect dispensation. It connected and harmonized the Old Testament and the New, by showing that one great plan was steadily pursued in both; that the prophecies of the one, and the doctrines of the other centered in the same glorious object; and consequently that both were the offspring of one all comprehending Mind. It tended to remove or prevent those prejudi-

ces, which a poor and suffering Messiah would be apt to create, by showing that these humiliating circumstances of his appointment were expressly foretold by the prophets, and formed an eminent part of the divine scheme. It was also fitted to hold up in a striking view the guilt and danger of rejecting this illustrious Person, and thereby counteracting the great and merciful plan, which the Deity had been unfolding and prosecuting from the first age of the world. In fine, this long scene of prophecy gives a wonderful attestation and solemnity to the divine mission of Christ. It presents him to view as that extraordinary Deliverer, Teacher, and King, to whom all the previous revelations and works of Jehovah were directed, and in whom a thousand minute circumstances and glorious characters pointed out in antient predictions, were exactly fulfilled. This exact fulfilment affords a distinct, accumulated, and most convincing evidence, that Jesus is the promised Savior, and that his religion as taught by himself and his chosen ministers, is true and divine. To make way for this species of evidence, was one design of infinite wisdom in postponing the Messiah's appearance for several thousand years after the fall of man and the first notice of a Savior. So long a delay has appeared to many an unfathomable mystery. But when we consider, that the christian religion was intended to be the last and most perfect revelation of God to man, that the obligation and efficacy of it were designed to be universal; was it not highly expedient, that the evidence of this system should be so various and multiplied, as to suit every human being, to whom it was offered? Was it not important that this evidence should have no defect in it, which might furnish some persons with a plea

for rejecting it? Was it not very proper and advantageous, that such a religion should be attested by a grand apparatus of prophecy, going before it, and conspicuously verified in it? Is there not something peculiarly striking and satisfactory in this testimony? But to give an opening for this, it was requisite that the publication of this system should be long delayed.

In every view then we see the wisdom of God in raising up to the Hebrew church a succession of *Prophets*; whose messages not only instructed the antient Jews, but were fitted to communicate the most valuable, extensive, and lasting benefit to the world.

LECTURE XVII.

Inquiries and objections relative to the Hebrew prophets answered. The manner in which God revealed to them his will.

OUR last lecture was occupied with the antient *Hebrew prophets*. It divided them into two grades viz. those who were divinely inspired with the knowledge of secret and future things, and commissioned to publish them to others; and those in general, who were eminently devoted to sacred studies and exercises. We read of schools or seminaries, composed of persons of the latter description, who are styled *sons of the prophets*. From these pious nurseries God usually chose the subjects of his extraordinary influence, or the inspired messengers of his will. The addresses and predictions of these holy men were of admirable use to explain and keep alive the religion of Moses, and to prepare mankind for the more perfect dispensation of the Messiah. The wonderful fulfilment of so many Old Testament prophecies in Jesus of Nazereth, affords a distinct and most satisfactory evidence, that he is the promised Savior of the world.

We will finish our account of the Jewish prophets by answering some questions, and removing some difficulties, which have been raised on this subject.

I. It is natural to inquire, what qualifications were necessary in this distinguished order of men? Or what was prerequisite to a man's receiving the prophetic inspiration? We answer, the first and leading qualification was a *holy character*. As this is the uniform sentiment of Jewish writers, so it is confirmed by the history and lives of the antient prophets, and by the express testimony of St. Peter, "that holy men of God spake as they

were moved by the Holy Ghost." Though we meet with some instances of wicked men, to whom God, on special occasions imparted his secret counsels, such as the covetous Balaam, and the idolatrous kings, Pharaoh Abimelech, and Nebuchadnezzar ; yet we presume, that none but good men were stately honored with these divine communications ; and especially that none but such were employed as penmen of the sacred writings. The declaration therefore of Peter will doubtless apply to all the prophetic writers of the Old Testament. They were all men of real and exemplary holiness. The importance of personal piety and virtue in the extraordinary ministers of Jehovah will account for his withdrawing the spirit of prophecy from the Hebrew nation in the latter stages of their polity, that is, from Malachi to Christ ; because during this period their religious and moral state was universally corrupt.

The transient vouchsafement of this spirit to bad men, while it answered some special purpose of divine wisdom, admirably displayed the sovereignty of God in using the most unlikely and wicked instruments to serve his own designs, in constraining even his enemies to utter those truths and predictions, which promoted his honor and interest, and sealed their own condemnation and ruin. It magnified his unsearchable wisdom, holiness, and power in compelling the most unhallowed lips to pronounce his pure messages without the least adulteration, yea, with astonishing energy and sublimity. It enforced in the most striking manner the essential distinction between splendid and even miraculous gifts, and sanctifying grace ; between the occasional effusions of a prophetic spirit, and the genuine workings of human depravity. These lessons are forcibly taught by the history of Balaam,

whom we recently mentioned. This noted magician had been allured by Balak, king of Moab, to come to him, with a view to curse Israel, who then lay encamped on his borders. The heathen nations believed that prophets or diviners could, by religious charms or ceremonies, decoy from their enemies their tutelary deities, engage the celestial powers against them, and thus insure their destruction. Thus Homer represents the capture of Troy as depending on the removal from that city of the sacred image of Minerva. The pagans, previously to a military engagement, usually employed a priest to pronounce, at the head of the army, a solemn imprecation against the adverse power. But though Balaam was invited and fully inclined to perform this office against Israel; infinite goodness, power, and wisdom turned the curse into a blessing, by forcing this malignant enemy of his people to announce, in the most lofty strains, their present and future glory, the triumphs of their divine Leader and future Messiah, and the signal destruction of his and their adversaries. We see, in this and similar instances, the singular beauty of the divine conduct; which, by thus inspiring and controlling the minds of sinful men, turned their counsels into foolishness, and made their wrath and wickedness subservient to his praise. But to return; as true piety was the first prerequisite in a stated prophet of Jehovah; so in the next place—

The mind of the prophet must be in a serene and composed frame, in order to its receiving the spirit of inspiration. The Jewish doctors tell us that a mind loaded with fresh guilt, oppressed with sorrow, or disturbed with passion, could not duly receive and exercise this heavenly gift. Accordingly, when David, in his penitential Psalm after the affair of Uriah, prays that the

“ holy spirit might be restored to him,” that God would give him “ joy and gladness and a free spirit ;” the Hebrew commentators understand by these expressions that prophetic spirit, which his guilt and distress of mind had banished, and that peaceful and cheerful frame, which would invite its return. To prove that passion unfitted the mind for the prophetic impulse, they plead the story of Elisha ; who being requested by the three kings, of Judah, Israel, and Edom to inquire of God for them in their distress for water during a military expedition, was transported with pious indignation against the wicked king of Israel ; but being willing to oblige the good king of Judah, called for a minstrel or musician, for the apparent purpose of calming his passion, and thus preparing him for the spirit of inspiration. Accordingly, while the minstrel played, we are told “ the hand of the Lord came upon him.” This intimates one important reason why the prophets and their pupils cultivated sacred music ; and also why those who composed and sung divine hymns are sometimes styled prophets ; viz. because in many cases this heavenly art was not only assisted by, but wonderfully fitted persons for celestial communications. I will just add, as the nature of harmony and of man is still the same, sacred melody is justly esteemed a noble employment, an excellent mean of composing and elevating the pious mind, and of fitting it for that communion with Deity, which all his children are warranted to seek. This train of thought introduces a

II. *Question.* In what manner did God reveal his counsels to the prophets ? To prepare us for a satisfactory answer to this inquiry, I must observe

1. That the infinite Being, the Father of our spirits,

can certainly converse with his rational creatures in such a manner, as to assure them that *He* speaks or holds intercourse with them. To deny this is to make the all-perfect Being more deficient than the weakest of his intelligent offspring.

2. We cannot determine *a priori* what mode of communication in any given instance is most worthy of God, and best suited to the ends of his wisdom and goodness. Yet

3. We can clearly perceive that different modes may be best adapted to different persons, circumstances, and designs, and especially to the different periods of the church and the world. Let us apply these general remarks to the subject before us. The writer to the Hebrews says, that God spake to and by the prophets not only “at sundry times,” but “in divers manners;” that is, he spake by dreams, visions, inspirations, voices, and the ministry of angels.

First, by dreams. We often read that “God came or spake to such a one in a dream.” Natural or common dreams are among the wonders of the human constitution. They seem to indicate the active nature of our minds, and perhaps their capacity of lively perception and feeling without the aid of bodily organs. At the same time they evidently grow out of materials already deposited in our memories, and receive their complexion either from the present temperament of our bodies, or the favorite employment of our waking hours. It is therefore by no means unphilosophical to suppose that the omnipresent spirit may sometimes have peculiar access to the spirits of men, when the gross medium of sense being laid aside, the mind seems peculiarly open to spiritual and divine intercourse. Such communications may have been

eminently proper and expedient in the early ages, when reason was but little cultivated; when a standing external revelation was comparatively very imperfect; when the heathen and even jewish world superstitiously regarded common dreams, as prognostics of future events; and when false prophets and soothsayers pretended from this source to receive and announce the divine will. In such a state of things it was evidently worthy of God to crush these pretenders with their own weapons, by sometimes conveying that supernatural information in dreams, of which they vainly boasted. It was worthy of the Supreme Ruler to assert his exclusive and sovereign empire over men's thoughts, both sleeping and waking, and occasionally to use both as means of publishing and accomplishing his will. This leads us to the

Second mode of divine revelation to the prophets, viz. by *visions*. These, considered as distinct from dreams, denote representations made to their imaginations, when awake. If the force of bodily disease or mental delirium can paint on the waking fancy a lively image of persons and things not present or real; much more can omnipotence produce the same effect; and perfect wisdom and goodness may well produce it for some great and beneficent purpose. Of this kind was St. Peter's vision of a large vessel filled with all kinds of animals, clean and unclean, accompanied with a divine injunction to make a free use of any which he chose.* This vision, with its manifest import, prepared him for the benevolent office of freely conversing with, and preaching to the uncircumcised gentiles, whom before he had viewed as unclean. Such too was probably Paul's vision of the third heavens;† though he himself could not tell whether celestial objects were

* Acts x. 9, 10,

† 2 Cor. xii. 1, 2, 3.

brought down to his imagination, or whether his soul were for a time really caught up from his body to the heavenly regions. By the way, this uncertainty of our apostle, as a learned writer observes, does not accord with the material scheme; for it evidently implies that Paul viewed the soul as capable not only of existing, but of conversing with the celestial world separately from the body. I must add that visions in the style of scripture intend not only images presented to the fancy, but real supernatural exhibitions to the senses. Thus the appearance of an angel to Zacheriah in the temple is called a vision. Finally, this term is indefinitely applied to any kind of supernatural communication. If a well known human voice convey truth to our ears, we have a mental vision or knowledge of the truth imparted, and of the person speaking, even if we see no sensible appearance. The application is easy.

But here an important question arises—How could the prophets certainly distinguish miracles, visions, and dreams from such as were common, enthusiastic or delusive? To this Jewish and Christian writers have given several answers. They tell us that divine manifestations were distinguished by something extraordinary in the splendor of the appearance, in the strength of the representation, or in the impression made on the percipient. They inform us that during this divine intercourse the prophet was in the calm and full possession of his faculties; whereas fanatical or pagan inspirations threw the subject into raving distraction. They also tell us that the matters communicated by divine visions were always weighty and interesting, worthy of God, and highly important to man. But though revelations from God were probably attended with these circumstances, we cannot either from scrip-

ture or reason certainly determine *how* the prophets were assured of their divine original. But we know that as the Deity was able to give them full evidence of this, so he undoubtedly gave it ; otherwise they would not have been obliged to receive and act upon such revelations. Certainly Abraham, for instance, would not have felt himself either warranted or inclined to offer his only son as a sacrifice, had he not received irresistible evidence that this action was commanded by Jehovah. He must have had much stronger assurance of this, than he could have that the action required was in present circumstances evil ; otherwise he never would nor ought to have complied. This patriarch had been previously and fully acquainted with God's peculiar mode of conversing with him ; which precluded the possibility of deception. Similar observations might be made on other divine communications.

But here another great question arises—How could those, to whom the prophets delivered their messages, be assured of their divine authority? We answer, if a professed prophet announced any doctrine, or precept, which contradicted either sound reason, or the standing revelation of God's will, he was to be rejected and punished as an impious impostor, even though he confirmed his message by seeming miracles. The law of Moses expressly dooms to death any pretender to inspiration, who should even perform wonders, if he did them to support idolatry, or to entice the people from the true God.* But if a prophet delivered nothing repugnant to the law of nature or of Moses, his divine mission might be satisfactorily proved to others—First, by his personal and exemplary holiness. This would forbid the supposition

* Deut. xiii, 1, 5.

of his falsely and blasphemously pretending to communications from God—Second, by the testimony of undoubted prophets in his favor. Thus Moses gave open testimony to Joshua, and John the Baptist to our Savior—Third, by evident miracles. These fully authenticated the divine mission of Moses and of several succeeding prophets—Fourth, by sudden and extraordinary judgments on such, as rejected his message. There are several instances of this kind in the sacred history; † and they were awful and miraculous attestations of those prophets in whose behalf, or by whose request they were inflicted—Fifth, by the accomplishment of his predictions. This is laid down in the Jewish law as the grand criterion of a true prophet; and this signature in fact attended all the prophetic writers of the Old Testament. We grant that the prediction of Jonah respecting the destruction of Nineveh in forty days, was not literally verified. The reason was, this prediction, like all other threatnings of evil, was conditional, and was thus understood by the Ninevites. It implied that they should be destroyed, if they persisted in wickedness, or if speedy repentance did not avert the threatened doom. This is the true import of prophetic denunciations, when addressed to the offending party. They leave room for, and contain a rousing call to amendment; but if this be not effected, the predicted punishment will fully take place.

Having attended to the two first methods of divine manifestation to the prophets, viz. by dreams and visions, we will close with briefly noticing the

Third mode, viz. by *inspiration*, or a suggestion of ideas to the understanding, without such representations to the fancy, as the former methods imply. Maimonides, one

† 1 Kings xiii. 1, 6. 2 Kings i. 9, 12.

of the most rational and learned of the Jewish doctors, explains this inspiration to be a divine impulse, enabling and urging the subject of it to utter psalms and hymns, or useful moral precepts, or matters civil, sacred and divine; and that while he is awake, and has the ordinary use and vigor of his senses. Such was the inspiration of Zacharias and Elizabeth, who on a very interesting occasion are said to have “been filled with the Holy Ghost,” and to have uttered the most sublime acknowledgments or predictions.* Such too was the inspiration of the ancient prophets in general, who “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” This sacred impulse was of a calm and gentle nature, and thus was clearly distinguished from the fanatical inspiration of heathen diviners. Virgil in his sixth Eneid represents the Sybil, when the prophetic spirit seized her, as perfectly frantic, as struggling in vain to shake off the deity that inspired her, and as irresistibly forced to utter his dictates.† Lucan describes the Pythian prophetess in the same manner.‡ But the prophets of the true God were only “moved,” that is, calmly influenced by his inspiring spirit. This influence, far from suspending, added vigor and elevation to their own reason and prudence. Hence St. Paul says, “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets;” that is, true divine inspiration is so far subject to the sober reason of its possessor, that he can wait for a proper time to deliver its dictates; he can avoid those unseasonable effusions, which would break in upon the order and beauty of christian assemblies.

This view of the prophetic spirit shows the extreme unfairness, malignity, or ignorance of the most celebrat-

* Luke i. 41, 42, 67. &c.

† Line 47. &c. 77. &c.

‡ Lib. v. line 142—218

ed writers against the Jewish religion. Even men of so much ability and information, as Bolingbroke, Tindal, and Voltaire, have condescended to ridicule the Hebrew prophets by applying to them all the extravagances, in which heathen poets have arrayed their Sybils, their magicians, and dreamers, and thus holding them up as jugglers, idiots, or madmen. But such representations can excite no other emotions in honest and well informed minds, than pity, contempt and abhorrence. They betray great ignorance of antient facts and manners; great inattention to the peculiar reasons, which gave rise to early divine communications; an inveterate hatred of that religious system, which these communications were intended to establish; and a perverse resolution to batter down this system by every engine of sarcastic wit, gross misrepresentation, and cunning sophistry. May Heaven secure us from ever employing or yielding to these unhal-
lowed weapons!

LECTURE XVIII.

Vindication of the character and writings of the Hebrew prophets.

IN our last discourse we undertook to answer some inquiries and objections relative to the *Hebrew Prophets*. After stating their requisite qualifications, we inquired into the manner, in which God revealed to them his will. We showed that he did this in various modes, by dreams, by visions, and by inspiration. Having explained and defended each of these methods, we now proceed to observe that *voices* or *audible words* were another medium of divine communications. This was one of the most excellent and perfect kinds of revelation. In this manner God revealed his law to Moses. He communicated it to him in a distinct, familiar, yet majestic voice. Agreeably God is represented as speaking to Moses “face to face, and mouth to mouth, as a man speaketh to his friend, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, or in visions and dreams,” as he did to other prophets; that is, he revealed himself to this favorite servant in the way of audible, free, and plain conversation. Similar to this was the manner, in which the oracle delivered its decrees, viz. by an articulate voice from the mercy seat. The Jewish rabbies, especially the later ones, frequently mention a lower grade in this species of revelation, which they call *Bath kol*, or *Bet quul*, that is, *the daughter of the voice*, because according to them, when the oracle ceased, this came in its room as its daughter or successor. Dr. Lightfoot, a great proficient in Jewish learning, explains this *Bath kol* by a number of examples quoted from the talmudists. But there is reason to think,

that this pretended miraculous voice was no better than the offspring of human superstition. Dr. Prideaux has confirmed this opinion by citing one instance of this boasted oracle out of many similar stories in the rabbinical writings. The passage he quotes is this. Two rabbies, wishing to see the face of a Babylonish doctor, named Samuel, said to each other, let us consult and follow the Bath kol. Accordingly, travelling near a school, they heard the voice of a boy reading these words of scripture, "and Samuel died." They hence inferred that their friend Samuel at Babylon was dead; which they afterward found to be true. It hence appears that their pretended voice from heaven, which was substituted in the room of the antient oracle, was nothing but human divination, or an unwarrantable application to the subject before them of the first words or passage of scripture, which they happened to hear. This superstitious invention was very similar to the *Sortes Homericæ* among the Greeks, and the *Sortes Virgilianæ* among the Romans. These were much used, especially after the cessation of heathen oracles on the coming of Christ. Their practice was to take as their oracle, or a sure prognostic of some future event, the first words of Homer or Virgil, which met their eye on opening the book; just as the Jews, on the failure of the divine oracle, substituted the first words; especially from the Bible, which met their ears. It is therefore not improbable that the heathens might copy this practice from the Jews, or the Jews from the heathens; and that the christians in after times borrowed a similar custom from both. It was a usage among christians as early as the time of Austin in the fourth century, to employ the scriptures as an instrument of divination. This superstition eminently

prevailed in the west of Christendom, especially in France. When a new bishop was to be consecrated, the Bible was consulted respecting him; and the words, which were first presented to the eye, decided his future conduct and fate. The Normans carried this custom into England, when they conquered that kingdom. Your minds will perhaps be entertained by one or two authentic examples from the English history. On the consecration of William, the second Norman bishop of Norwich, the Bible being opened, presented these words—"not this man, but Barabbas the robber;" by which it was decided that this bishop was not long to continue, and that a thief or robber would soon succeed him. The event corresponded with the decision. For William quickly died, and was succeeded by Herbertus de Lozinga, who was chief simony broker to the king, and had by money purchased of him one abby for his father, another for himself, and had now by the same vile means gained this diocese. At the consecration of this wretch the passage, which first met the eye, was that address of Christ to Judas, when he came to betray him for money—"Friend, wherefore art thou come?" These, and the former words at the ordination of his predecessor, so struck his conscience, as to produce a thorough repentance of his crimes. I have dwelt so long on these foolish and wicked usages of pagans, Jews, and Christians, to impress you with the strong tendency of depraved human nature to gross superstition; with the eager, but impious propensity of mankind to pry into future secrets; and their readiness to pervert the most sacred things to the most unlawful uses, and to employ one of the worst kinds of divination, as a part of their most solemn acts of religion. Stupid ignorace, joined with moral depravi-

ty, will easily account for all the fooleries of the antient world, and even of nominal christians, especially during the dark ages ; while the superior light of knowledge and holiness, which sprung up at the reformation, accounts for the present extinction of these absurdities. At the same time the remarkable coincidence of some of those superstitious divinations with the characters and events concerned may lead us to adore that righteous and universal providence, which controls what we style contingences ; which sometimes prospers and thus confirms men in those arts of delusion, which they have freely chosen ; which makes even the word of God the occasion of misleading and hardening those, who presumptuously abuse it ; and which sometimes overrules such wicked presumption as the mean of salutary correction and repentance. In these and innumerable other instances how just, how wonderful and glorious are the ways of God to men !

Beside the modes of divine revelation already specified, the Jewish writers mention *the ministry of angels*. But this is not properly distinct from the former methods ; for the same scriptures, which tell us that Moses received the law from the mouth of Jehovah, inform us that angels were employed in promulgating it ; that is, these ministers of God's court were his mouth or organ on this solemn occasion.* The same ministring spirits were probably the instrumental causes of those dreams and visions, of those mental inspirations and external voices, by which the divine will was notified to the several prophets. This doctrine of the agency of superior beings in revealing and executing God's pleasure here below is beautifully represented by Jacob's vision of " a ladder reach-

* Acts, vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 2.

ing from earth to heaven, with Jehovah sitting above it, and his angels ascending and descending upon it." While this ladder nobly describes that providence, which extends from heaven to earth, and connects them together; the constant ascent and descent of the angels point out their unceasing activity, and particularly their employment in bringing down divine messages to men, and carrying up to God an account of their doings. It peculiarly suited the character and dignity of Jehovah, as King of the Jews, to converse with them through the medium of his celestial ministers.

Having largely considered the manner of intercourse between God and his antient prophets, I proceed in the next place to vindicate the character and writings of these holy men from some of the most plausible objections of their adversaries.

Some have represented the Hebrew prophets as *public incendiaries*, who perpetually denounced, and frequently brought calamities on their country, merely on the score of religious opinions. This charge has no ground but this, that the prophets constantly testified against idolatry both in the rulers and people. Now idolatry in the Hebrew nation was high treason against their own constitution and King. It directly forfeited their territory and privileges. It was an inlet to every abomination. It defeated the great end, for which that people was selected. It was threatened in their fundamental laws with the most destructive calamities. Of course the prophets, in boldly arresting this evil even at the hazard of their own lives, showed themselves, not the malignant disturbers, but the truest and most disinterested friends of their country; especially as by this conduct they executed the benevolent commission, with which Jehovah had intrusted them; a com-

mission intended, not to destroy, but if possible to save that people by checking those crimes, which were pregnant with ruin.

This introduces a *second objection*, which is, that these prophets, instead of preaching against evident and destructive vices, and inculcating the several branches of moral virtue, employed their main zeal in favor of the peculiar sentiments and rites of the Mosaic law, and against every departure from the national creed and worship. We answer first, this national faith and worship were not only established by Deity, but were necessary to guard and nourish true virtue and piety. Second, the antient Hebrews were strongly tempted and inclined to set aside these barriers, and to adopt the gross polytheism and consequent detestable vices of the surrounding world. Hence third, the prophets of Jehovah were impelled both by piety and patriotism to defend and enforce those religious establishments, on which the worship and honor of the true God and the public virtue and safety depended. Yet fourth, these divine messengers never contented themselves with urging a strict adherence to ceremonial appointments, but constantly enforced moral and universal goodness, as the true import and crown of these ritual observances. They unitedly declared that without love to God and men, without the practice of purity, justice, and mercy, the most zealous and expensive sacrifices would be unmeaning parade and odious hypocrisy. The prophetic writings abound with these rational and noble representations; representations, which confirm the excellence and divine authority of the writers, and brand the objector with gross ignorance or dishonesty.

A *third charge* against the Jewish prophets is, that their predictions of futurity are general and ambiguous, found-

ed on uncertain dreams and visions, or couched in dark and figurative expressions, the application of which is very precarious ; and that this order of men, being devoted to a close study and observation, were qualified, on rational principles, to foretel many great changes in human affairs. We grant that some of their prophecies are covered with a degree of obscurity ; yet many of them are at once remarkably clear, minute, and circumstantial ; and these relating to events, which the most improved human sagacity could not foresee, nor even conjecture ; as we have sufficiently shown on a former occasion. How could human foresight enable several of the prophets to foretel the destruction of Babylon in all its leading circumstances, at a time when this city and empire were in the height of their glory ? However dark some of the dreams or visions may be, which these writers relate ; yet how could mere human wisdom apply them to distant future contingences, which at length took place in exact correspondence with such application ?

But let us descend from these objections against the prophets as a body to some specific charges against individuals. We will notice a few of the most weighty, as representing the whole. It is objected against the moral and prophetic character of Abraham and Moses, that they pretended a divine commission to perform the most unjust and cruel actions. But this objection derives its whole force from two false principles. First that the rights of God are to be measured by those of men ; and second that an action, wrong in ordinary cases, must be so in all. But does it follow that because Abraham had no natural right to sacrifice his son, or Moses to destroy the Canaanites, therefore God had no right to do it ? Or because these actions, performed by these two men, would have

been unjust in common cases, does it follow that God himself could not authorize them in particular circumstances, or that they must be wrong when commanded by him? If the Deity often cuts off large multitudes of men, women, and children, by inanimate causes, by famine, or pestilence; may he not with equal justice employ human instruments in the same work? If this objection therefore have any force against the divine conduct in the cases of Abraham and Moses, or against the character of these antient prophets; it has equal weight against the common proceedings of divine providence.

But as the proud and perverse spirit of infidelity is continually making an outcry against these scripture examples; and as we have formerly vindicated the execution of the Canaanites by Moses and the Hebrews; I will employ your attention a little longer on the command given to Abraham, and his obedience to it. We have already seen that both were consistent with justice. I now add that both were evidently wise and good. For the command was plainly designed to bring the pious disposition of the patriarch to a severe, yet glorious trial, and in this way to mature, to display, and to reward it in the most illustrious manner. Is it not wise and merciful in the Deity to put heroic virtue to the proof by great difficulties, to strengthen and exalt it by great efforts, and to crown its victories with high pleasure and glory? Was not Abraham's virtue thus proved and crowned? Was ever the triumph of the greatest military conqueror half equal to his at that moment, when God by a voice from heaven applauded and blessed him for his pious heroism; when he restored to him that dear son, whom the obedient father had intentionally sacrificed? Was not the anxious trial of three days immensely rewarded

by the noble and lasting felicity, which succeeded? Is not the example of such high duty, and its subsequent reward, an unspeakable and endless blessing to mankind? As therefore this trying command was intended to produce such various and infinite good, it was not only consistent with, but a glorious display of divine benevolence. The prompt obedience of the patriarch was also worthy of a great and good man. He knew and felt that compliance with the will of God, however notified, was the first of human duties. He felt that his duty to his child was nothing, compared with his obligation to his infinite Creator; and that entire submission to him was the only road to personal, domestic, and general happiness.

But it may be asked, how could a religion come from God, which commanded parents to destroy their children? We reply, a religion, which made this an *ordinary* duty, could not be divine. But does it follow that infinite wisdom might not in some extraordinary case, see reasons for such a command?

But how could Abraham know that this command was not a delusion? Beside the answer to a similar question in our last lecture, I will just add that God had before this conversed with him in nine several instances; had given him three distinct and trying injunctions; and had remarkably protected and prospered him in his compliance with each. After so much experience of the divine intercourse, could he not certainly distinguish the presence or voice of Deity; especially as he had three days to deliberate, and satisfy himself on the subject?

But did not Abraham's example in this instance give sanction and currency to the abominable practice of hu-

man sacrifices? We answer, no; on the contrary it was admirably fitted to prevent or abolish this practice. For it was a public document to the world, that human sacrifices could not be acceptable to God even from his most eminent servants; since Abraham, his greatest favorite, was hindered by a voice from heaven from executing his purpose, and an animal victim was miraculously substituted in the place of his son. How could the true God have more signally manifested his abhorrence of the cruel rites of the heathens. What an instance of his wisdom and goodness, thus early to enforce upon mankind that humane and benevolent worship, in which he delights! In every view then the example before us, instead of depreciating, exceedingly recommends the character of our Patriarch, and the religion, which he professed.

Another Hebrew prophet, whose character has been loaded with censure, is king David. The chief objection lies in this, that David, though guilty of the most wicked adultery and murder, is styled a man after God's own heart, is said to have been upright and perfect before him, and is ranked among his inspired prophets. We grant that David's adultery and murder were most aggravated crimes. But if we view them in connexion with his whole life, they furnish no proof either that he was a wicked man, or that it was unworthy of God to honor him with his special and extraordinary favor. The prevailing features of his disposition and conduct, both before and after this scene of transgression, were pious and excellent. His behavior towards Saul, his envious and blood thirsty persecutor, was incomparably noble and virtuous. His zeal and services for his country were fervent and heroic. His regard to God, to his

worship and honor, and to the great interests of religion, was remarkably tender and active. His psalms, which are evidently the genuine effusions of the heart, express the most sublime views and feelings respecting the Deity, his perfections and works, his providence and word; the most correct ideas and ardent desires of moral excellence, the most solemn appeals to Omniscience for his integrity; and the most humbling impressions of his dependence, guilt and unworthiness. If his sin in the affair of Uriah was very great, so likewise were the tokens of repentance, and of divine displeasure, which followed that transgression. On the whole, if we fairly and seriously view the characters and writings of the antient prophets, we shall throw a veil of candor and tenderness over their failings, and improve them as motives to humility and watchfulness over ourselves; we shall admire and emulate their superior virtues; we shall eagerly imbibe the spirit, and obey the instructions, which still live in their inspired compositions; our belief of their divine mission will be fully confirmed by the excellent nature and tendency of their doctrines, and by the accurate fulfilment of that great system of prophecy, which they delivered.

LECTURE XIX.

Enumeration of the various officers of distinction in the Hebrew church.

WE have largely attended to the principal religious orders among the Jews, viz. the priests, the levites, and the prophets. Beside these there were various officers and distinctions of men in the Hebrew church, which merit some degree of attention. A brief consideration of them will throw much light on the Jewish history, and on the sacred writings.

I. There were some persons in that church, who were called by way of eminence *wisemen*, or in the Greek *Sophoi*. Our Savior, speaking of these in the gospel of Matthew, connects them with prophets, and in the parallel text of Luke styles them *apostles*.* Hence we may fairly conclude that these persons were nearly allied to prophets, though of an inferior grade; that is, that they were eminent in divine wisdom or scriptural knowledge, and were providentially sent by God as preachers to the people, and on this account are denominated apostles, or persons divinely sent; though they had not that spirit of inspiration which distinguished the prophets. It deserves notice here that the antient heathen philosophers assumed the same title of *Sophoi* or wise men; but the modesty of Pythagoras changed this proud style into the humble appellation of *Philosophoi*, or *lovers of wisdom*. To these boasters of superior wisdom St. Paul refers, when in one of his epistles he contemptuously demands, “Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” In

* Matt. xxiii. 35. Luke xi. 49.

the same paragraph he declares that with all their pretended wisdom “they knew not God.”*

II. Another religious order among the Hebrews were the *Scribes*. There were several grades of civil trust, to which the sacred history applies this epithet. Thus *Seraiah*, David’s principal secretary of state, and the prime ministers of succeeding kings, are called scribes. The secretary of war is also styled “the principal scribe of the host.” We also read of “the families of the scribes” &c. which probably intend subordinate clerks or common scrivners.† But the ecclesiastical scribes claim our present attention. These were persons trained up in the knowledge of the Jewish law and traditions, and who accordingly taught them in the schools and synagogues, and decided questions by them in the sanhedrims. This body of men are frequently mentioned in the New Testament under the different appellations of scribes, lawyers, doctors of the law, elders, counsellors, rulers, and those, who sat in Moses’ seat; all which titles denote one order, viz. those, who explained and executed the law. This order indeed consisted of several degrees. For all, who were learned in the law and religion of the Jews, were in the days of Christ and his apostles called scribes; but especially the constituted teachers and judges. As the laws both of church and state proceeded from the same divine source, and were expounded by the same officers, we see why lawyers and scribes are used in the gospel as synonymous terms. And as the pharisees were then the most distinguished and numerous sect, and possessed the greatest portion of Jewish learning; the scribes for the most part belonged to this sect, and are therefore very frequently mentioned with the phari-

* 1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 21.

† 2 Sam. viii. 17. 2 Kings, xviii. 18—xxv. 19. 1 Chron. ii. 55. Jer. xxvi. 4.

sees in the gospel history. The evangelist Matthew, comparing our Savior's preaching with that of these Jewish doctors, tells us, that "he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes;" that is, as Dr. Lightfoot comments on the words, our Savior taught the pure word of God; they, the idle traditions of the fathers. He taught the weighty and spiritual doctrines of faith, repentance, renovation, and love; they, outward, carnal, and trivial ceremonies. His preaching was plain and convincing; theirs conceited, intricate, and puzzling.

But here a question arises—if the preaching of the scribes was so corrupt, why does our Savior give the following direction to his disciples?—"The scribes and pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." We answer, Moses' seat here probably means the chair or pulpit, from which they delivered their discourses, and which is called the seat of Moses, because the books of Moses were read and expounded from it, and because these teachers, like Moses, were the constituted instructors and rulers of the people. But when Christ commands his disciples to observe and do whatever these preachers bid them, the command extends to those instructions only, in which the scribes represented and truly copied Moses, or gave the genuine sense of his law. To extend it to *all* their instructions would imply that our Savior charged his disciples to reject both Moses and himself; for the doctrine of these preachers went to the rejection of both; it really subverted both the law and the gospel.

III. Another title of distinction among the Jews was that of *Rabbi*; which is derived from the Hebrew root *rebeb* or *rabbab*, signifying *to be great*. This title was

originally given to persons of high condition in general, particularly to men of rank in the state. It was not under the Old Testament assumed by, nor bestowed on the prophets, or other distinguished characters in the church. But on the decline of sound knowledge and piety, a proud affectation of this and other high sounding names appeared among their spiritual leaders. About the time of Christ's birth the learned Hebrew doctors began to be distinguished by this appellation; and for about eight hundred years this has been their great and only title of distinction; except that such of them, as stately minister in the synagogues, are called *Chacams*, or wise men. Near the middle of the eleventh century their schools in Mesopotamia, where they had enjoyed and exercised their high titles and claims, were destroyed, and themselves expelled by the Mahometan princes; since which they and their disciples have settled chiefly in the west of Christendom, and the pompous names, which they affected in the east, have been lost in the general appellation of rabbi.

The later rabbies inform us that this title was conferred with great formality. When a candidate was by a regular education qualified for this honor, he was placed in a chair somewhat elevated; then were delivered to him a key and a table book; the key, as a symbol of authority to open to others the treasures of his knowledge. This symbol he afterward wore as a badge of his dignity; and when he died, it was buried with him. The table book was an emblem of continued diligence and improvement in his studies. After these ceremonies, the delegates of the sanhedrim imposed their hands upon him, as a token of consecration to his office, and closed the solemnity with proclaiming his title.

We find this title given to John the Baptist by his disciples ;* and to our Savior by Nicodemus, by the votaries of John, and by the admiring multitude.† The learned Vitringa maintains that Christ had taken the degree of rabbi in the Jewish schools, because otherwise he could not have preached publicly in the synagogues and temple. But this reason is erroneous ; for any Jew might preach publicly in the temple or synagogue by the permission of the ruler of it ; and this permission was usually granted to prophets, and workers of miracles, or to the leaders of new sects. Under these characters Jesus and his apostles were admitted to this privilege ; and not on the ground of their having received a rabbinical education. That Jesus had not been thus educated appears, not only from the total silence of the evangelists on this head, but from the astonishment expressed by his hearers at his wisdom and eloquence, especially from their admiring question—“ how knoweth this man letters, having never learned ?”‡ Christ also expressly condemns this title, and forbids his disciples to assume it—“ Be not ye called rabbi ;” that is, do not ye covet nor receive this honorary degree. Banish from your bosoms that vain ambition and pride, that wish to tyrannize over men’s consciences, which distinguish the Jewish rabbies. The extreme vanity of these Hebrew doctors was manifested in various instances, particularly by their high resentment, if any person addressed them without their customary title. A remarkable instance of this may be seen in the following anecdote. “ A certain rabbi sent a letter to another, and forgot to give him his title ; but only saluted him with the familiar appellation of friend. At which he was so much incensed, that he immediately

* John, iii. 26.

† John, i. 38.—iii. 2.—vi. 25.

‡ John, vii. 15.

sent a message to the letter writer, charging him to call him *Anan*, which was his proper name, without giving him the title *rabbi*. We are told in one of their rabbinical books that the Sanhedrim excommunicated certain persons twenty four times for not giving due honor to the rabbies. These arrogant men also claimed absolute dominion over the faith of the people: It was deemed criminal for any person to disbelieve or even question their doctrines. Hence Gamaliel advises the ignorant “to get themselves rabbies, that they may no longer doubt of any thing;” and Eleazar says, he that separates from the school of the rabbies, or teaches any thing which he has not heard from his master, provokes the divine Majesty to depart from Israel.” Maimonides tells us that one who had attained the honor of *rabbi*, was also styled *abba*, or father. Hence our Savior forbids his disciples to give or receive the title of father, as well as *rabbi* and master. He enforces this prohibition by telling them that they have one Father and one Master, whose authority and guidance are supreme and infallible. Agreeably; even the inspired apostles disclaimed all dominion over the consciences of men, and aspired to no honor, but that of faithfully serving Christ and their brethren. Happy had it been for the christian church, if her clergy had uniformly cherished this lowly and benevolent spirit; if none of them had revived the lofty feelings and claims of Jewish rabbies!

We proceed to a

IV. Religious class among the Hebrews, called *Nazarites* from *Nezer* to separate, because they were peculiarly set apart or devoted to God, either by the act of their parents, or by their own. Thus Sampson, Samuel, and John the Baptist were dedicated to God from their

birth.* The only peculiarities we can discover in the mode of life enjoined upon these early and perpetual Nazarites, were an abstinence from wine and strong drink, and from ever shaving their heads. Those who bound themselves for a limited time by a vow of Nazariteship, were to observe these and some other peculiarities during that time; but when the days of their vow were fulfilled, they were to have their hair shaved off at the door of the tabernacle, and burnt under the altar.† This Jewish custom probably gave rise to a practice among the Gentiles of consecrating their hair to the gods; of which Suetonius relates an instance in the life of Nero; who cut off his first beard, put it in a golden box set with jewels, and consecrated it to Jupiter Capitolinus. It appears likewise from Homer, Statius, Censerinus, and others, that the same custom obtained among the early Grecians. It seems that if a Nazarite were at a great distance from the temple, or in a foreign country, when his vow was accomplished, he might shave his head in the place where he was, and offer the prescribed sacrifice at the temple on the first opportunity. Thus it appears that Paul on some special occasion made a vow at Corinth, shaved his head at Cenchrea, and afterward made the usual offering at Jerusalem.‡ This voluntary submission of Paul to the self denying duties of a Nazarite, after the ceremonial law had ceased to be binding, was probably dictated by that tender and prudent condescension, which made him innocently conform to the prejudices of the Jews, and even become all things to all men, that he might win them over to the christian faith. I would further observe that Jehovah, the God of the Jews, commanded their Nazarites to cut off and burn

* Judg. xiii. 5. I Sam. i. 11. Luke i. 15. † Numb. vi.

‡ Acts xviii. 18. xxi. 26. &c.

their hair at his tabernacle, probably with a view to instruct them that their heads and their all must be devoted to Him, and to guard them against the idolatry and superstition of the pagans, who preserved their consecrated hair as a holy relic, or suspended it on a tree as a sacred memorial, or solemnly dedicated it to some river or tutelary deity. In a word, the law of Nazaritism seems to have been partly prudential and partly religious. It was prudential, because the sober and temperate manners, which it required, were eminently propitious to health. Accordingly the Nazarites were celebrated for their fair and blooming aspect. They are said to be “whiter than milk, and more ruddy than rubies.”* It is remarkable that God, having destined Sampson to be a great scourge to the enemies of Israel by his gigantic strength, ordered that from his birth he should abstain from wine, and be educated a strict Nazarite; that in this way nature might contribute her utmost to that extraordinary vigor, which was afterwards completed by miraculous power. That this institution was also of a sacred kind, appears from the following text of the prophet Amos, in which God says, “I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites; † that is, I inspired them with an extraordinary spirit of piety, and thus engaged them to devote themselves to a life of the strictest temperance and sanctity, meditation and prayer; and in token of their moral purity, inward mortification, and constant devotion to religious contemplations, to shun with care every ceremonial defilement, and to neglect the fashionable niceties of cutting and trimming the hair, or of adorning their persons. As these Nazarites were totally restricted from the use of the vine, not only from tast-

* Lament. iv. 7.

† Amos ii. 11.

ing the liquor, but from eating the grapes;* and were also bound to the highest degree of purity, insomuch that they are said to be “purer than snow;”† Dr. Lightfoot hence conjectures two things—First, that the vine was the tree forbidden to Adam in paradise, by eating of which he fell. He tells us that all the Jewish doctors positively agree in this sentiment or tradition. Second, that the extraordinary purity enjoined on the Nazarites, was designed as a visible memorial of man’s primeval innocence, simplicity, and purity.

I will just add that our Savior is styled a Nazarene or Nazarite, from the circumstance of his spending the first and greatest part of his life in Nazareth, an obscure village of Galilee. St. Matthew tells us that his parents “came and dwelt with him in the city of Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene.” But as no express prediction of this kind occurs in the Old Testament prophets, we must conclude either that the passage here referred to is lost, or that Matthew alludes not to the words, but to the sense and spirit of the prophetic writings. Now from these it appears that Christ was to be a true Nazarite, that is, a person uncommonly separated from the world, and devoted to God and religion. And though this name was given him by men on account of the place of his abode, and was employed by the Jews as an epithet of reproach, to stigmatize his low condition and education; yet providence so ordered it, that this title really proclaimed the singular purity and excellence of his character, and fulfilled the spirit of antient prophecy. Besides, the very contempt, which accrued to our Savior from his dwelling at Nazareth, and which was ex-

* Numb: vi. 3, 4.

† Mat. ii. 23.

pressed in the name derived from this source, remarkably fulfilled those numerous predictions, which foretel his outward meanness and obscurity, and those scenes of reproach, contempt, and suffering, to which he would be subjected. Well therefore might the evangelist quote the prophets as saying that Christ should be called a Nazarene ; that is, that he should be loaded with the vilest epithets ; that he should be regarded as a person separated, or an outcast from human society.

I will close this lecture with a *fifth class* of men in the Jewish church, called the *Masorites*. Their employment was to write out copies of the hebrew scriptures ; to teach the true reading of them ; and to comment on the sacred text. Their work is called *masora*, or tradition, from *maser to deliver* ; for the Jews say that when God gave Moses the law from Mount Sinai, he taught him first the true reading of it, and secondly the true interpretation ; and that both these were handed down by oral tradition, till at length they were committed to writing. The former of these, viz. the true reading, is the subject of the Masora ; the latter viz. the true interpretation, was called by two names, viz. the Mishna and Gemara ; the one containing the traditions of the fathers, the other a comment upon them. These two united compose the talmud or cabbala ; whence are derived the Jewish talmudists and cabalists. The latter originally denoted all, who professed to study and expound the ancient traditions ; but the name of Cabalists is now appropriated to those fanciful or mystical commentators, who by changing or transposing the letters of the sacred text, or considering their numeral power, extract spiritual or hidden mysteries from them, very different from their literal import, and the manifest intention of the writers.

When the Masorites first arose is a question much disputed. Dr. Prideaux makes it appear probable that they began their work not long after the Babylonish captivity, when the Hebrew language having ceased to be the vulgar tongue of the Jews, some profession of men was needed to study and preserve the true reading of the Hebrew scriptures. It is further probable that a great number and long succession of Jewish grammarians gradually composed that collection of sacred criticisms, which is now called the Masora; and that this collection was first compiled into one volume about five hundred years after Christ. These Masorites first settled the true reading of the Hebrew text by vowels and accents; then numbered not only the chapters and sections, but the verses, words, and letters; then marked every real or apparent irregularity in any of the letters; and lastly added marginal corrections. The industry of these grammarians was astonishing, and in many respects useful; but not a few of their criticisms were poor and trifling.

This minute attention of learned Jews to the Old Testament writings, for a long succession of ages, furnishes a manifold proof of their genuineness, purity, and divine original. For first, this extraordinary and even superstitious attention evinces a full conviction in the Hebrew nation that these books were authentic and sacred. But this full and permanent conviction, as we have formerly shown, could not have existed, had it not been founded in truth. Second, this exact and scrupulous care to preserve the Old Testament scriptures from alteration must have effectually contributed to their transmission in a pure state through each successive generation. It also gives us full security that the Jews would not on any consideration either contrive or submit to a wilful corruption

of writings, which they held in such profound veneration. Third, the strongest inducement, which the Jews could have to alter these books, arose from their inveterate hatred to christianity. Yet these writings, as they have come down to us, contain numberless prophecies and other passages, which strongly support the christian religion; and it is a certain fact that the Jews have guarded the purity of their scriptures with more zeal and scrupulosity, since the coming of Christ than at any former period. For fourth, their Masora, in which the words and even letters of each book were numbered, was published in one volume, as we hinted above, about the close of the fifth christian century; that is, in the time of the dark ages, when the extreme ignorance of the christians made it most safe and easy for the Jews to have imposed on them a false copy of the Old Testament. At such a period, as Dr. Doddridge well observes, there was something very providential in this exact scrupulosity of the Masorites. Their superstition was made a seasonable guardian to these antient records, and a pledge of their purity to all succeeding ages.

LECTURE XX.

Origin and nature of the different religious sects, which divided the Hebrew nation.

IN our last lecture we continued our survey of the religious orders or distinctions of men among the ancient Jews. We attended to their wisemen, their scribes and rabbies, their nazarites, and lastly to a set of writers called the masorites, who gave and preserved the exact reading of the Hebrew scriptures. We will now inquire into the nature and origin of those *religious sects*, which divided the Jewish nation; especially those which are often mentioned in the sacred writings.

After the return of this people from Babylon, and the reestablishment of their church in Judea by Ezra and Nehemiah, there arose among them two distinguished parties; one of which adhered to the written word, as the only and complete rule of righteousness, and on this ground were called Zadikim, that is, the righteous; the other to the written law superadded many traditional institutions and practices, which they rigidly observed as implying and promoting an eminent degree of holiness, on which account they were styled Chasidim, that is, the pious. These in the septuagint version of the Maccabees are called *ασιδαιοι* or saints, and in our translation Assideans. The former of these two divisions gave birth to the Samaritans, the Sadducees, and the Karraites; the latter to the Pharisees, and the Essenes. We will briefly explain each of these in their order.

I. The *Samaritans* were originally heathens, to whom the king of Assyria gave the cities and lands of the ten tribes, after he had carried the latter into captivity. They

were called Samaritans from the city of Samaria, the capital of that country. On their first settling in it, they observed the idolatrous rites of the several nations, from whom they emigrated. But being infested with lions, which they considered as a punishment for neglecting the former Deity and worship of the land, they sent to the Assyrian monarch for a Jewish priest to instruct them in the antient religion. Having received this instruction, they framed a very motely kind of religion, compounded of heathen and Jewish ceremonies.* On the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple after the Babylonish captivity, the religion of the Samaritans received a new modification. For many of the Jews having taken wives from heathen families, in opposition to the divine law, Nehemiah the governor compelled them immediately to dissolve the forbidden connexion, or to leave the community.† Many, preferring the latter, fled to Samaria, and settled under the protection of its government. The Jews, thus mixing with the Samaritans, effected a change in their religious system. A temple was built in conformity to that at Jerusalem; the book of the law of Moses was introduced, and publicly read; and the people were brought to renounce their false gods, and to embrace the worship of Jehovah according to the rules prescribed in that book. The animosity however between the Jews and Samaritans was not diminished by this circumstance. The Jews viewed the Samaritans as apostates. They hated them first for opposing the rebuilding of their temple and city; secondly for encouraging and cooperating with the abovementioned deserters from their government and religion; thirdly for erecting an altar and temple in opposition to theirs; and fourthly

* 2 Kings xvii. 24 &c. † Neh. xiii. 23, 30.

for giving comfort and protection to every kind of Jewish offenders, who fled from the justice of their country. The hatred produced by these and similar causes, grew to such a height, that the Jews denounced the most bitter anathema against the Samaritans, and for many ages refused them every kind of intercourse. Hence the woman of Samaria was astonished that our Savior, being a Jew, should ask drink of her. Hence too the Jews, when they would express the utmost aversion to Christ, said to him, "thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil;" implying that to be a Samaritan, and to be possessed with a devil, were in their view equally vile.

The distinguishing tenets of the Samaritans, after their reformation from idolatry and conversion to the worship of the true God, consisted in the three following articles. First, they received as sacred the five books of Moses only. They still possess these books in the old Hebrew or Phœnician language. They have also a version of them in their vulgar or Chaldee dialect. This version was early made for the benefit of the common people, who, as well as the vulgar Jews, lost their acquaintance with the Hebrew tongue soon after their captivity. The agreement of this copy with the original is truly wonderful, when we consider the vast space of time since it was taken, the usual errors of transcribers, and the total want of communication, and even rancorous animosity between their respective adherents. As the Samaritans thus differ from the Jews in adhering to the books of Moses, exclusive of the other Old Testament writings; so secondly, they differ from them in rejecting all traditions, and keeping strictly to the written word, without admitting those corrupt glosses, which would explain it away, or substitute human inventions in its room. In

this particular they are far more exact disciples of Moses than the most zealous Jews. Thirdly, they also differ from the Jews respecting their place of worship. The law of Moses required the Hebrews to perform their religious rites in the place, which God should choose; and this place was Jerusalem. But when the Samaritans and apostate Jews had erected a temple and altar on mount Gerizim, they denied that Jerusalem was the place, which God had chosen, and insisted that mount Gerizim was that selected spot, reasoning as the woman of Samaria did to our Savior, that their fathers worshipped in that mountain. They pretend that there Abraham and Jacob built altars and offered sacrifices to Jehovah, and hereby consecrated the place to his worship;* and accordingly that God himself appointed this to be the mount, on which his blessings were to be pronounced on his faithful worshippers, and on which Joshua, by divine command, after passing Jordan, built an altar of twelve stones taken out of that river; which altar they hold to be the same, on which they now sacrifice.† But to establish this part of their argument, they have sacrilegiously corrupted the text in Deuteronomy, which enjoins the Hebrews to set up the altar on mount Ebal; instead of which they have substituted mount Gerizim. We proceed

II. To the *Sadducees*. This sect probably derived its name from *Sadoc*, a scholar of Antigonus, who was president of the Sanhedrim about two hundred and sixty years before Christ; and who taught his pupils that they ought to serve God, not from a mean regard to future reward or punishment, but from pure filial love to Him. Sadoc hence inferred that there was no reward nor punishment after this life. He accordingly began a new sect,

* Gen. xii. 6, 7. xiii. 4. xxxiii. 20. † Dent. xxvii. 12. ii. 7.

which from the name of the founder were called Sadducees; a sect, which nearly coincided with the followers of Epicurus; except that the latter denied the divine agency in creating and governing the world, while the former believed in both. At first perhaps the Sadducees contented themselves with exploding the authority of traditions; but by degrees their doctrine assumed a very libertine and impious form. The New Testament assures us that, in the first age of christianity, they denied the resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels and departed spirits. According to Josephus they admitted but one spiritual being, viz. God; they looked upon death as the final extinction both of soul and body; they maintained that the providence and retributions of Deity were limited to this world; and on this ground only they worshipped and obeyed him. They also denied the doctrine of divine influences in assisting men to good, or restraining them from evil. In short, they agreed with the Samaritans in rejecting all the Old Testament writings except the five books of Moses. They probably rejected the former, because they could not reconcile them with their tenets. Hence our Savior confutes their error respecting a future life and the resurrection by an indirect argument drawn from the writings of Moses, which they received as divine; while he waves those direct and numerous proofs contained in the prophets, whose authority they denied *

If you ask, how could the Sadducees deny the existence of angels, when even the five books of Moses, which they esteemed sacred, frequently relate the appearances of these celestial spirits; we reply, this sect probably understood these angelic appearances to be only transient visions or

* Matt. xxii. Mark xii. Luke xx.

phantoms, exhibited by divine power for occasional purposes, and then dissipated or withdrawn by the same power.

Josephus tells us that this sect was comparatively small, consisting chiefly of men possessing high rank and opulence. Worldly riches and grandeur, by attaching them to this life, and nourishing sensual and dissolute habits, prepared them to embrace doctrines, which flattered their earthly and vitious inclinations, and delivered them from the painful apprehensions of a future retribution. Sadducism therefore among the Jews, like deism among Christians, was the growth of moral depravity. Like modern infidelity and irreligion, it flourished most in that class of society, whose fortune, splendor, and luxury made them peculiarly dislike both the promises and threatnings of a life to come. As these higher orders in the Jewish nation were cut off in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, this whole sect seems to have perished with them; insomuch that no trace of it appears for many following ages. At length however there was some revival or resemblance of it in a

III. Sect, called the *Karraites* from *Kara*, that is, *scripture*; because they adhered to the scriptures only, and rejected the traditions taught by the Rabbies; while those, who followed the latter, were styled *Rabbinists*. As these were the prevailing and popular party, they branded the former as schismatics, heretics, and sadducees. But the fact is, that the Karraites were the most orthodox and pious of all their sects. They agreed with the Sadducees in no other point, but in exploding fabulous traditions, and cleaving to the scriptures alone. They respected the talmud, as a learned human composer, to be soberly used as a help for explaining scripture,

so far as it corresponded with, or tended to enlighten the sacred text. They were formed into a distinct and complete sect about the middle of the eighth century by Anan, a Babylonish Jew ; who with his followers, publicly condemned all traditions, as mere human inventions. This party still exists, and embraces the greatest share of real learning and probity in the nation. It flourishes chiefly in the north of Europe, and in the eastern countries. This sect, as the learned Reland informs us, differs from the other Jews or Rabbinists in their construction of many texts of scripture, and their observance of many rites of worship.

It is worthy of remark, that there are two great divisions among both the Mahometans and Christians, corresponding to this among the Jews. The Mahometans have a sect, called the *Sonnites*, who adhere to the *Sonna* or collection of traditions, concerning the sayings and actions of their prophet, which they regard as a necessary supplement to the Koran. This party embraces the Turkish nation. But the Persians, who are followers of Ali, son in law of Mahomet, reject the *Sonna* as fabulous, and adhere to the Koran only. These two parties hate each other as cordially, as they both agree in hating the christians. The christian world is also divided into two grand sections of Papists and Protestants ; the former of which, like the Jewish Rabbinists have added ecclesiastical tradition to the word of God ; while the latter adhere to the Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice. This regard to scripture, as the only standard of religion, gave birth, support, and triumph to the reformation from popery. This principle has ever distinguished and adorned all consistent dissenters from the church of Rome. I add with grateful exultation, this principle gave existence

and glory to New England. Having described those Jewish sects, who professed an exclusive regard to the written word, we proceed

IV. To the most distinguished party in the Hebrew church, I mean the *Pharisees*. These derived their name from a Hebrew or Chaldee verb, signifying to *separate*; because they professed an uncommon separation from the world, and devotion to God and religion. Agreeably St. Paul in his speech before king Agrippa calls them “*ακρισεσαστη αιρεσις*,” which our translation renders by a double superlative, “the most straitest or strictest sect.” Josephus says that this sect was esteemed more devout than all others, and valued itself on its accurate knowledge and observance of the law, and the customs of the fathers. The rise and date of this sect are uncertain. It probably grew up by degrees to maturity. According to Josephus it made a considerable figure above a hundred years before Christ. The high reputation and influence of this party are strikingly illustrated by the following anecdote. When one of the Jewish kings, Alexander Janneus, lay on his death bed, about eighty years before the christian era, his wife expressed great anxiety on account of the exposed state, in which she and her children would be left, by means of the bitter animosity of the Pharisees against him and his family. Upon which the dying prince earnestly advised her to court the Pharisees, as the sure method of conciliating the mass of the people. He particularly enjoined her, after his death, to give up his body to their disposal, and to assure them that she would thenceforth resign herself to their direction. She followed his counsel, and hereby obtained for her husband a splendid funeral, and for herself a firm establishment in the kingdom.

This sect was directly opposed to that of the Sadducees, in many particulars. For the Pharisees believed in angels and spirits, and a future resurrection. Josephus, who was one of their sect, tells us that their doctrine was, “that every soul is immortal, that those of the good only enter into another body, but those of the bad are tormented with eternal punishment.” When Josephus says that the souls of the good enter into another body, he may mean either their immediate transmigration into different bodies, which was the notion of the Pythagoreans and Platonists, and of some among the Jews, or their receiving another, that is, a more refined body at the resurrection. The former construction seems to be favoured by that question of Christ’s disciples respecting a person blind from his birth. “Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” This plainly implies the preexisting state of the soul, and its passing into a blind body, as a supposed punishment for some antecedent offence. But this passage only proves that the notion of transmigration had infected some of the Jews; but it does not clearly fix it on the whole sect of the Pharisees. Nor does the opinion, which some entertained of our Savior, that he was Elias, or Jeremiah, or John the Baptist, prove that the Pharisees held the transmigration of souls; for this opinion of Christ is not specifically predicated of them; nor does it imply a belief that the soul of Elias or the Baptist had entered into the body of Jesus, but rather that the body of one of these prophets was raised, and reunited to its former spirit. Accordingly St. Luke expresses it thus, “others say that one of the old prophets is risen again.” Herod also expressed a similar belief, when he heard of the fame of Jesus—“It is John the baptist; he is risen from the dead.” It

is therefore most probable that the Pharisees believed in a proper resurrection of the dead; especially as St. Paul, when brought before the Sanhedrim, declared himself a Pharisee, and asserted that he was called in question for maintaining the doctrine of that sect concerning the resurrection of the dead. Now the resurrection, which Paul preached, was a real future revival of those who sleep in the grave. On his openly professing this doctrine, the Pharisees belonging to the council vindicated him against the Saducees.* Thus far then the tenets of the Pharisees appear sound and scriptural. But their fundamental error lay in their attachment to the traditions of the fathers, which they held in equal veneration with the sacred writings; insomuch that their superstitious regard to the former destroyed the true spirit and observance of the latter, and prompted them to substitute trifling ceremonies and external mortifications, such as frequent washings, fastings &c. in the room of genuine virtue and piety. Hence our Savior stigmatizes them as vainglorious “hypocrites” and “whited sepulchres;” because while they were very exact and pompous in their ritual observances, their hearts and secret practices were full of sensuality and covetousness, pride and malignity. Yet on account of their exterior sanctity they looked upon themselves, and were esteemed by the multitude as eminent saints, and high in the favor of Heaven. Hence this sect not only drew the people after it, but at length completely devoured every opposing interest. Excepting the few Karraites abovementioned, the whole Jewish nation from their dispersion to this day have observed the traditions of the Pharisees, as the great rule of their belief and practice; so that the present religion of the

* Acts. xxiii. 6.

Jews is a corruption of the Old Testament system, just as popish superstition is a corruption of christianity. We hence see the true source of that inveterate opposition, which the Pharisees showed to our Savior. For their carnal traditions and propensities having taught them to look for a temporal Messiah, their prejudices against Jesus of Nazareth on account of his low appearance and spiritual doctrine induced them, and still induce their followers to reject him as an impostor.

LECTURE XXI.

Review of preceding lectures.

AS a large number of students is now for the first time introduced to this course of lectures ; it will be proper briefly to unfold to them their nature and importance, and retrace the ground, over which we have travelled. In obedience to the authority of this university, we have spent considerable time in exploring the venerable antiquities of the Jews. As the civil and religious peculiarities of this distinguished people originated from God himself, and were intended to answer the most beneficent purposes both to them and to the world ; so they furnish objects of contemplation highly important, entertaining, and improving. An accurate knowledge of them reflects great light and beauty on many parts of scripture, which cannot be fully understood and appreciated without some acquaintance with the history, the laws and customs of the antient Hebrews. If the antiquities of heathen nations, of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans have deservedly engaged a long succession of critical and learned inquirers ; certainly those of the Jews, which emanated from infinite wisdom, challenge an equal portion of attention ; especially as they afford a clue to the general history of the antient world, and bring into a striking view the grand scheme of divine Providence.

Influenced by these considerations, we have attempted to explain *first* the civil, and *secondly* the religious polity of this chosen nation. We have seen that their civil government was originally a *Theocracy*, that is, a system, of which God was the framer, and in which he was immediate

Sovereign ; a system primarily intended to preserve in our world the knowledge, worship, and obedience of Jehovah, and of course the interests of genuine virtue. We have also seen that this constitution, and the laws which grew out of it, admirably secured temporal liberty and happiness ; that they formed a free and confederate republic, combining the best features of the most perfect governments, which human wisdom in after ages has devised. This happy government continued, till the people, having lost its true spirit, fell under the scourge of anarchy and despotism. But the *religious* institutions of this nation form the most conspicuous trait in their history. As their political laws were chiefly designed as handmaids to religion ; so apostacy from the belief and worship of the one true God was justly made a capital crime or high treason against the state ; and their sacred rites were enforced by temporal rewards and punishments, suited to their gross apprehensions and feelings. As a great variety and abundance of religious ceremonies suited the genius and exigences of that people, and were needful as guards against surrounding idolatry, as memorials of past events, and as types of future gospel blessings ; so the special and leading rites of their worship were admirably fitted to these ends.

We have shown that the ceremony of *circumcision* was peculiarly suited to display, confirm, and perpetuate the religious faith and obedience of the Israelites ; to secure them by an impregnable barrier against pagan idolatry ; and to keep them united in one select and holy fraternity. We have seen that their *weekly sabbath*, by calling them to solemn rest and worship after six days of labor, held up to their very senses a lively image of the six days' work of creation ; of the rest or complacency of Jehovah

on the seventh day ; of his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness exhibited in the formation of the universe, and in their redemption from Egyptian bondage ; and of the future eternal rest and felicity of his faithful worshippers in the heavenly Canaan. Thus it tended to promote that exclusive reverence and worship of the true God, those sound and strong impressions of moral and religious truth, which are the supports of private and national virtue. We have also pointed out the fitness and utility of those various *offerings* and *sacrifices*, in which the ancient Jewish worship abounded. The frequent spectacles of bleeding victims, suffering and atoning for the guilty offerers, pathetically displayed to their senses the purity and justice of God, the evil of transgression, their own desert of death, the necessity of some atonement, and the readiness of Deity to pardon the penitent, through the future sacrifice of a Mediator. We have also explained the manner and shown the expediency of those *visible appearances*, by which Jehovah manifested himself to his antient people, particularly in the tabernacle and temple. We have largely attended to the stated *officers* of the Jewish church, such as the *Priests* and the *Levites* ; and likewise to those occasional ministers of religion, the Old Testament *Prophets*. We have shown the qualifications and important services of these several orders, and vindicated them from the aspersions of modern scepticism and infidelity. We have noticed other religious distinctions and classes of men among the Jews ; particularly their *Wisemen* and *Scribes*, their *Rabbies* and *Nazarites*, together with a set of writers called the *Masorites*, who settled and preserved the true reading of the Hebrew scriptures. Lastly, we have inquired into the nature and origin of those *religious sects*, which divided

that people; particularly the *Samaritans*, the *Sadducees* and the *Pharisees*. The two last are frequently mentioned in the New Testament. The *Sadducees* in many particulars answered to modern freethinkers. They began with exploding tradition and superstition, and with pretending to reform the word of God from corrupt appendages; but they ended in denying the existence of a future state, and accommodating their principles to their worldly and licentious inclinations. The *Pharisees* on the contrary, like the modern votaries of superstition, professed an uncommon deadness to the world, and devotion to religion, but substituted human traditions, trifling ceremonies, and external mortifications in the room of genuine piety and virtue. Hence our Savior stigmatizes them as vain glorious hypocrites and whited sepulchres. We hence see the true source of that inveterate opposition, which both these parties manifested to Jesus Christ and his gospel. The libertine principles of the former, the carnal traditions and bigotted zeal of the latter, with the pride, selfishness, and national prejudices of both, had strongly attached them to a temporal Messiah. These sentiments, feelings, and expectations inspired them with contempt and malignity against Jesus of Nazareth on account of his low appearance and spiritual doctrine. And as the great body of the Jewish nation from their dispersion to this day have closely adhered to the sentiments of the *Pharisees*; hence they have obstinately persisted in their rejection of christianity, and continue still to expect a temporal deliverer.

Having given you this short summary of our preceding lectures, we will finish our account of Jewish sects by describing two other religious bodies who make some figure in sacred or profane history; I mean the *Herodians* and *Essenes*.

The first are several times mentioned by the evangelists. These Herodians derived their name from Herod the great, a king of Judea, and were distinguished from the other Jews by their falling in with his scheme of subjecting himself and his people to the Romans, and adopting many of their heathen customs. The Pharisees held it unlawful to acknowledge or pay tribute to the Roman emperor, because they were forbidden by their law to set a king over them, who was a stranger, and not one of their own nation. But Herod and his followers understood this law to forbid only the voluntary election of a stranger, and esteemed it lawful to submit and pay taxes to him, when force or conquest had made him their master. These two sects therefore, though bitterly opposed to each other, yet being enflamed with still greater enmity to Christ, united their efforts to entangle him with this question—"Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar or not?" If he gave a negative answer, the Herodians would accuse him of treason against the emperor; if in the affirmative, the Pharisees would accuse him to the people as an enemy to their liberties. Christ by his prudent address defeated the malice of both, and at the same time implicitly justified the Herodians in rendering tribute to Cesar. When therefore our Savior in another place cautions his disciples against the leaven or corrupt doctrine of Herod, and his adherents, he must refer, not to their submission to the government, but to their compliance with the idolatrous customs of the Romans. Josephus tells us that Herod, to ingratiate himself with Augustus and his courtiers, had erected a temple to his honor, built a magnificent theatre at Jerusalem, instituted pagan games, placed a golden eagle over the gate of Jehovah's temple, and set up heathen images in

several places of worship. These compliances with idolatry he excused by pleading the will of the emperor, and the necessity of obedience. Those who joined with Herod in these compliances, and thus mixed idolatrous usages with the religion of Jehovah, were the Herodians mentioned in the gospel, and condemned by our Lord.

The *sixth and last sect*, which claims our notice, was that of the *Essenes*; a name probably derived from the Syriac verb *Asa* to heal, because they pretended to cure the moral diseases contracted by irregular passions and indulgences. This body of men grew out of the Pharisees, and carried their strict discipline to the greatest pitch of severity. Three learned writers, Josephus, Philo, and Pliny, have given many curious particulars of this wonderful sect. I will give you a portrait of this religious class from the three authors abovenamed.

Both the opinions and practices of the Essenes were remarkably strict. They maintained the doctrine of absolute predestination. They believed that God influences and disposes all actions and events. While they agreed with the Pharisees in the belief of a future state, they dissented from them with regard to the resurrection of the dead; for they held that the souls of men after death are fixed in everlasting happiness or misery according to their actions here, without any more returning to or inhabiting bodies; that the souls of good men are transmitted to a delightful region, which is never molested either with storms, or snow, or raging heat, but is ever refreshed with gentle gales; while the spirits of the wicked go to a place dark and cold, filled with punishments, which will never cease. The Essenes regarded corporeal and earthly pleasure as mean and sinful. They placed abstinence and the mortification of their passions among

the highest virtues. Hence they generally renounced or refrained from marriage. But to keep alive and propagate their sect, they took into their fraternity other men's children, whom they treated with parental affection, and carefully educated in their own principles and habits. Pliny speaks of them with admiration as the only sort of men in the world, who lived without women, and who were perpetually propagated without any being born among them. He tells us that they were daily recruited by the resort of new comers, whom misfortune, or penitence for past guilt, or the love of serious retirement impelled to take shelter in their pious and benevolent association. This sect held riches in great contempt. They maintained a perfect community of goods. Every one, who joined their institution, gave up all his interest into the public stock; so that no member was either elevated above, or depressed below the level of his brethren; but the property of the whole was equally enjoyed by all. They had stewards chosen to manage their common fund, and to provide for their several necessities. They did not all live together in one city or territory, but were distributed into a number of sodalities, who dwelt in different cities. Each of these sodalities had a procurator, who took care of all travellers of their sect, providing them with every convenience; so that when they journeyed, they carried nothing with them for their support, but made as free use of these hospitable brotherhoods, even though they never saw them before, as we do of our own families or intimate friends. They never bought nor sold any thing among themselves, but every one according to his ability or necessity freely gave or received. Their mode of living was surprisingly temperate and austere. Their houses were mean; their clothes

made of wool without any dye, and never changed, till they were quite unfit for use; their food coarse; and their drink water. They rejected every bodily ornament. Their morals were very exact and pure. Though in all other matters they followed the guidance of their superiors, yet in offices of mutual assistance, and of mercy, they were entrusted with full discretionary power. They governed their passions, particularly their anger, with great justice and moderation; and kept their faith with immoveable steadiness. They despised and triumphed over pain and suffering. They esteemed death itself, when endured in a good cause, better than immortality. They admitted no candidate into their society; till after a probation and discipline of three years; and before his reception to their fellowship, they bound him by solemn oath, first to worship and serve God; secondly to exercise strict justice toward men; and in short, to observe with exactness and perseverance all the rules of the society. Those, whom they convicted of any gross transgression, were expelled from their community. Persons thus expelled often perished by a miserable death; for they felt themselves restrained by their vows to the society from receiving food, except from their own sect; and were therefore forced to feed like the brutes on the herbs of the field, till their bodies were consumed by famine. In their public administration of justice they were exceedingly accurate. They never gave sentence, unless a hundred at least were present; and what was thus decreed was irrevocable. Next to God, they paid the greatest reverence and submission to their rulers, and to the public will. Though they were voluntarily destitute of money, of property, and of servants; though they rejected every kind of merchandize, traffic, and navigation, and every art connect-

ed with or assistant to war ; yet they esteemed themselves the richest, the safest, and the most happy people on earth. In the strict observation of the sabbath they exceeded all the other Jews. For they not only prepared their meal for that day the evening before, but dared not move a vessel out of its place during the sabbath. Their religious strictness also pervaded every day. For rising very early, they dedicated to the duty of prayer the whole time before the sun appeared. They repaired to and portook of their daily meals with as much decorum and religious acknowledgment of their Maker, as if they had been worshipping together in his temple. In a word, according to the abovementioned writers, they were distinguished patterns of the love of virtue, of their neighbour, and of God.

I have dwelt thus long on this religious sect, not only to give you a full view of their extraordinary character, but to obviate the wrong conclusions, which have been drawn from their history both by papists and deists. The papists have eagerly contented that these Esenes, at least that portion whom Philo describes as wholly dedicated to a devout and contemplative life, were christian monks, converted and instituted by St. Mark ; whence they infer the divine institution of a monastic life. But Philo says nothing about christianity in his account of this sect. He represents them not as a new body of men, as the christians then were, but as an order of long standing, as having writings of antient date, as deriving their philosophy by tradition from their forefathers, as being widely dispersed among the Greek and barbarous nations, as rigorously observing, not the first, but the seventh day as their sabbath, and as celebrating their festivals according to the law of Moses. These and other particulars evidently describe, not Christian, but Jew-

ish monks. It is possible however that some of these recluses among the Jews might, on their conversion to christianity, still retain their habits of devout retirement from the world, and thus by degrees give birth to christian monkery. We are able to trace the origin of monastic institutions in the christian church to nearly the middle of the third century. During the persecution of the emperor Decius, Paul, a young gentleman of Egypt, fled into a neighbouring desert and abode there in a cave for ninety years. About twenty years after his retiring, Anthony, a youth of the same province, allured by the religious fame of Paul, sequestered himself in the same desert. Many others, catching the same spirit, resorted to him, and were formed into a body under his direction and government. From this source sprung all the monastic institutions of Christendom. They can claim no patronage nor warrant from the religion of the New Testament; which every where enjoins contentment and diligence in our several worldly callings, and directs us to serve our Maker and contribute to social good by filling these with useful activity; whereas monks of every description desert their proper stations in society, and waste their lives in contemplative and useless indolence.

These observations, while they refute the arguments of papists in favor of their monks, equally silence the cavil of deists, who pretend that christianity is an unsocial, austere institution, which grew out of the Jewish sect above described. But as none of the peculiar doctrines and precepts of the gospel are to be found in those of the Essenes; so none of the peculiarities of the latter are adopted by the former. On the contrary, our Savior and his apostles, by condemning the extreme nicety, superstition, and rigor of the Pharisees, have implicitly and even more

severely condemned the still greater superstitions of the Essenes ; such as their scrupulous and frequent washings, their too rigid observance of the sabbath, their abstaining from meats, which God created for man's use, their severe restrictions of "Touch not, taste not, handle not," their will worship and affected humility in neglecting and afflicting the body, their forbidding marriage, that honorable, necessary, and divine institution ; these and other particulars, especially their denial of a future resurrection, which is the main object of the christian hope, are wholly inconsistent with, and pointedly condemned by the New Testament. Most of these articles are expressly reprobated by St. Paul in his epistle to the Colossians ;* which suggests a probability, that there was a sodality of Essenes at Colosse, and that some of the christians there favored their singularities.

While these remarks hold up christianity as an amiable and beneficent institution, directly opposed to a life of useless rigor and separation from the world ; they suggest to you, my young friends, your future path of duty. You are now sequestered from the world for a season, that you may return to it with enlarged capacities of usefulness. Neither reason nor christianity will permit you, when you quit this literary retirement, to bury yourselves in indolent ease, in learned or even religious privacy. The spirit of the gospel, early and deeply imbibed, will carry you far beyond the Jewish Pharisees and Essenes in real devotion and sanctity, and at the same time render you social, active, and beneficent on the stage of the world.

* Chap. ii. 18, 23.

LECTURE XXII.

Peculiarities of the Hebrew ritual. Subordinate regulations of the Israelites, to distinguish them from the absurd usages of idolaters.

HAVING considered the principal features of the antient Hebrew worship, we shall now contemplate some other parts of that institution, and show their admirable tendency to preserve the Israelites from surrounding idolatry, and to keep alive the principles and practice of the true religion.

Beside the daily worship, the observance of weekly sabbaths, and of three annual feasts, which we formerly noticed, their ritual appropriated a religious service, consisting of animal and vegetable offerings, to the first day of every month, or to every new moon.* As the moon is one of the great and beneficent luminaries of heaven; so she was early esteemed and worshipped as a goddess by the heathen world. It was natural for her worshippers to celebrate her return and renovated splendor at the beginning of each lunar month, with peculiar ceremonies of joy and adoration. Agreeably many pagan writers represent these monthly celebrations as very joyous and magnificent, as accompanied with numerous and costly victims, with the blowing of trumpets, with a great show both of festivity and devotion, and in particular with sacrificing a *goat* to the object of their worship, because the horns of this animal resembled the curved figure of the new moon. As this species of idolatry was very prevalent in the eastern world, and the Hebrews themselves were strongly inclined to it; Jehovah wisely transferred to himself those occasions and rites of adoration,

* Numb. xxviii. 11, 16. x. 10.

which superstition had thus profaned. He directed his people to consecrate every new moon to him, by performing many of the same ceremonies to *his* honor, which idolaters dedicated to this pretended queen of heaven. While in this way he indulged the taste of the Israelites for this monthly and pompous festival, he effectually barred its idolatrous abuse, and led them to acknowledge him as the one true God, of whom the moon in all her revolutions, as well as every other part of visible nature, was but the creature and minister. Agreeably the learned Grotius and Patrick justly observe, that the law, directing this celebration, repeatedly mentions Jehovah as the exclusive object of it, and in particular says that “the goat shall be offered for a sin offering *to the Lord;*” that is, says a Jewish rabbi; this goat was to be offered expressly to Jehovah, to extirpate the religion of those, who worshipped the moon; whereas the same animal, when directed to be offered on other solemnities, is simply styled a goat, or a sin offering, because there was no danger of mistaking the object of their sacrifice; but here this clause was necessary to root out that inveterate idolatry, which had long sacrificed to the moon at this season, as well as to the rising sun. How ready the Jews were to relapse into this idolatrous custom, appears from several passages of Jeremiah, which represent them as making cakes and burning incense to the queen of heaven; yea boldly telling the prophet, that when they did thus, they enjoyed health and plenty, and saw no evil; but that when they left off this practice they wanted all things.* Was it not wise and beneficent in the Mosaic law to crush this prevailing evil, by converting the occasion and rites of this idolatry into a religious solemnity to the true God?

* Jerem. vii. 18.—xliv. 17. &c.

Further, as the ritual thus directed a monthly celebration, so it enjoined an annual service on the beginning of the seventh month—"In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation; it is the the day of blowing the trumpets unto you."* It appears that the month, here styled the seventh, was originally the first, and probably was so from the creation, and that it still continued the beginning of the Jewish *civil* year; though their sacred year was, by divine appointment, computed from their memorable departure from Egypt. The beginning therefore of their seventh month, according to the new or ecclesiastical reckoning, was really the commencement of the antient year, and was therefore fitly celebrated by some peculiar rites of religion. Accordingly, in addition to the common sacrifices of every day, and every new moon, a variety of special offerings is directed for this day. The blowing of trumpets is also enjoined as a memorial.† As all nations made great rejoicings at the beginning of the year, and frequently sounded trumpets as one demonstration of their joy and thanksgiving; God wisely permitted and ordered his own people to observe similar ceremonies on the same occasion, in honor of himself. While the surrounding heathens at the beginning of the new year, worshipped the sun, as the king of heaven, the ruler of the seasons, and the author of their yearly blessings; the Hebrews at this season celebrated Jehovah, as the Creator of the sun, the Director of his annual revolutions, and the sole Dispenser of prosperous days and years. Their blowing of the trumpets was a joyful memorial of the creation of the world, when the first year began its course. It was a thankful commemoration of the goodness of Jehovah in

* Numb. xxix. 1.

† Lev. xxiii. 24.

the year just closed, and a devout recognition of his sole empire over all the heavenly luminaries and motions, and over the operations of nature here below. In a word, this religious service on the first day of the year was intended and fitted to unite their hearts to the true God in gratitude for his past, and humble dependence for his future blessings.

Another peculiarity of the Jewish ritual was the appointment of a *sabbatical year*. The law directs the people to sow and reap their fields six years, but in the seventh year to do neither, but to regard it as a sabbath of rest for the land and for the nation. If any of them asked, what shall we eat the seventh year, since we are neither to sow nor gather in our increase? Jehovah replies, I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.”* Many at first view may think this a very impolitic and severe regulation, as it barred a whole community every seventh year from the useful cultivation and produce of their estates, and thereby seemed to expose them to poverty, famine, and ruin. But this very objection proves the divine authority of this law; for no impostor would have dared to propose so extravagant and fatal a project; and no people in their senses could have been persuaded to adopt it. Or if some bold deceiver or enthusiast had in the first instance wrought up a whole nation to believe that they ought to rest every seventh year, and that the year preceding would miraculously produce a harvest equal to that of three ordinary years; yet the event would certainly cure their infatuation, and blast the pretended authority of the deceiver. Since therefore the Jewish people did embrace this law, and

* Levi xx. i. viii, 20, 21.

others equally hazardous, and steadily adhered to them for many hundred years; we must conclude that they had full evidence of their divine original, and that they actually experienced an extraordinary blessing in observing them. We must in particular conclude that the promise of a miraculous increase every sixth year, was faithfully performed. This, and this only would remove all objections to the statute in question, and induce their persevering compliance with it. This would operate as a standing extraordinary confirmation of the Mosaic religion. We may add that the law before us was adapted to many excellent purposes. It forcibly taught the Israelites that God was the sovereign Proprietor of their land, and they tenants at will under him; that it was his prerogative to say when they should till the soil, and when they should let it rest. While it thus impressed them with his sovereignty and their subjection, it habituated them to a constant dependence on his Providence by showing that his blessing could and would provide for his obedient servants, even without the aid of human industry. It proclaimed to them and the surrounding nations the infinite superiority of the God of Israel to the idols of the heathen; since none of them ever promised or performed such wonders for their votaries. It gave them a sensible pledge of the truth and faithfulness of their covenant God, and of the certain fulfilment of all his promises, however great, on condition of their fidelity to him. Thus it held out the strongest and most encouraging motives to cheerful obedience. It also taught them sympathy and generosity to their poor neighbours and domestic servants; since these, during the sabbatical year, were on the same level with their superiors with regard to sowing and reaping, and were entitled equally with

them to share in the spontaneous fruits of the land ; for during this year the whole country was the common property of the rich and the poor. This year of rest likewise gave leisure to all classes to attend to, and improve in the knowledge, spirit, and practice of religion. Accordingly during this season the law of God was to be solemnly read in a general assembly of the people, consisting of the men, women and children.* This sabbatical year was also fitted to add new force and dignity to the weekly sabbath, and to impress more deeply the history of the creation in six days, the rest of the seventh, and the infinite perfections of the Creator. By affording seasonable rest to the land, it enabled them to leave it in full vigor to posterity, and thus expanded their views to the good of distant ages. Finally, this annual rest from toil was a sensible image of man's primitive state, as contrasted with that labor and hardship, which sin introduced ; and was likewise a striking pledge of that spiritual and eternal rest, which the promised Messiah should procure, and which all the faithful shall ultimately enjoy.

I shall only subjoin, that their seventh year was a year of *release* ; in which creditors were freely to discharge their poor debtors, who had borrowed money for their necessary subsistence, and were unable to pay without obliging themselves to quit their own, for some pagan country. This law did not bar the creditor from receiving his due, if the debtor or his friends could pay it ; but only from legally exacting it. This regulation was wisely intended to preclude such extreme poverty and distress among the Hebrews, as would dishonor their character and religion. It was intended to foster among them a merciful and liberal spirit, a pious sense of their obligation to God for their worldly possessions, a disposition

* Deut. xxxi. 10. 13.

to use them agreeably to his pleasure, and a reliance on his promised blessing to reward their acts of generosity.

Another peculiarity of the Hebrew law was the year of *jubilee*, so called from a particular sound of the trumpet, by which it was proclaimed. This took place every fiftieth year, or after seven sabbaths of years. It was observed like the other sabbatical years, and was also distinguished by this high privilege, that it restored every native Israelite to his original property and freedom. As each Jewish family had received a certain portion of Canaan by lot, and held this estate under God as proprietor; so the divine law allowed this property to be alienated only for a limited time, that is, from one jubilee to another. At the end of every half century estates, which had been sold or mortgaged, reverted to their former owners or their heirs, free of every charge and incumbrance. This was no injury to the purchaser, because the year of jubilee being constitutionally fixed, every one made his contract accordingly. By the English laws indeed, which are generally rational and equal, if lands be granted with this condition, that the grantee shall never alienate them, though the grant is valid, the condition is null; because English liberty involves a right in every man to dispose of his own property. Yet if the king grant lands on this condition, the limitation is binding. Now as God was the king of Israel, as the country and its tenants were his property, he meant by this provision to enforce his rights and their correspondent duties. He likewise intended to keep up the distinction of families and tribes, and to induce a careful attention to their several genealogies; since estates, sold from one family to another, must in due time revert to the former, and of course the evidence of each one's pedigree became a very

interesting object. This clear and permanent distinction of houses and tribes was important in many respects. It was an essential ingredient in their free and well balanced government. It was indispensable to the verification of those prophecies, which respected particular tribes, and especially those, which related to the descent of our Savior. The provision before us had an excellent effect on the reasonable equality and liberty of the several citizens. It prevented both exorbitant wealth and hopeless indigence. As it precluded a lasting accumulation of property in the hands of a few, which might enable them to oppress or subjugate the many; so it protected every family, however poor, from slavery and ruin; since the original property and freedom of each person and household, though sold or forfeited for a time, would at length be restored. For this law gave back liberty, as well as estate, to those, who had lost it. What a glorious and joyful period was this year of jubilee to those Hebrews, who had groaned under poverty and servitude! What patience and courage, what high gratitude, patriotism, and satisfaction must have arisen from the anticipation and experience of its blessings! But how much more joyful is the spiritual jubilee of the gospel, which eminently proclaims the acceptable year of the Lord, which restores to the poor and miserable slaves of sin that divine liberty, that eternal inheritance, which disobedience had forfeited! How welcome that great Deliverer, who comes to preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Doubtless this distinguished Jewish year, as well as their other symbolical institutions, prefigured to the pious He-

brews, and gradually prepared them for the more spiritual and perfect dispensations of the gospel.*

We will now pass from the religious worship of the Israelites to those subordinate regulations, which tended to preserve them a distinct and a holy people. Many of these regulations were directly pointed against customs, which, however innocent in themselves, had been abused by heathen nations to the purposes of superstition and idolatry. Some of these customs were hinted on a former occasion. But it may be useful to bring into one compendious view that part of the Jewish code, which forbids such dangerous practicies.

It was one great artifice of the pagan priests to operate on the weakness and tenderness of men's dispositions. They knew that mankind fear nothing so much as the loss of their fortunes, and of their children. Accordingly the worshippers of the sun or the fire declared, that causing their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, the sun, and thus purifying and dedicating them to this deity, was necessary to insure their lives and prosperity. This ceremony grew up to a most barbarous superstition; insomuch that parents actually burned their children in fire, as an offering to this idol. Hence

* The jubilee of the antient Hebrews is happily moralized, and accommodated to gospel times in the fortieth and one hundred and sixty second hymns of Belknap's Collection. The former begins thus—

Blow ye the trumpet, blow
The gladly solemn sound!
Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bound,
The year of jubilee is come,
Return ye ransom'd sinners home.

The latter begins thus—

Loud let the tuneful trumpet sound,
And spread the joyful tidings round;
Let every soul with transport hear
And hail the Lord's accepted year.

arose that divine prohibition—"Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Moloch."* The wisdom of this guard against so abominable a custom needs no illustration.

It was the doctrine of antient idolaters, that blood was a grateful food to the demons, whom they worshipped. They therefore carefully preserved the blood of their victims in some vessel or trench; and seating themselves around it, partook of the flesh, while the demons, as they fancied, drank the blood; and thus they supposed themselves to have communion at one table with their gods, and to receive their inspiration and blessing. This was one important reason of that law—Ye shall not eat any thing with, or as the original exactly signifies, *at*, or *near*, or *before* the blood; that is, ye shall not imitate the magical rites of the Zabians, who eat and drink at or around the blood of their victims, expecting hereby to allure departed ghosts to converse with them, and impart to them their secrets. Accordingly this law is immediately connected with the prohibition of "using enchantments, and observing times;"† which all expositors refer to the antient customs of the heathen divination.

It was the early usage of idolaters to offer to their gods such things as were most pleasing to their own palates, particularly *honey* and *leavened bread*, from an idea that these things would be particularly grateful to their deities. These sweet and delicious offerings were especially made to the infernal gods and to dead heroes. Hence the true God excluded *honey* and *leaven* from his altar,‡ that his worship and people might be kept pure from sentiments and customs, so gross and debasing.

The Zabians had likewise a magical rite of boiling a kid

* Lev. xviii. 21.

† Lev. xix. 26.

‡ Lev. ii. 11.

in the milk of its dam, and sprinkling the broth on the trees, gardens, and fields, in order to render them more fruitful, and the gods more propitious. Hence that divine prohibition—"Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk."* The action here forbidden carries superstition or magic on its very face, and therefore must have been prohibited on this ground.

Another usage of antient idolaters was to cut off the hair of their heads and beards, and offer it to their gods by laying it on the dead bodies, throwing it into the graves of their deceased friends. They also tore and wounded their flesh on funeral occasions, in order to give pleasure to their deities, and comfort to their departed relatives. They likewise with needles or a hot iron made characters or marks in their bodies, expressing the name, or mystical number, or peculiar symbol of that demon or idol, to whose service and blessing they hereby became devoted. To prevent such idolatries, Jehovah commanded his people—"Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, nor mar the corners of your beards. Ye shall not make any cutting in your flesh for the dead; nor print any mark upon you."†

The early pagans believed that the gods peculiarly inhabited and delighted in *groves* and *high places*. Hence these gradually became the scenes of idolatry, particularly of the impure rites of Venus and Priapus. Hence the Israelites were forbidden to worship in such places, and even to plant groves near the divine altar.‡

It was another idolatrous usage for men to worship Venus in the dress of women, and for women to worship Mars arrayed in the warlike habit of men. As these notions of gods and goddesses of different characters and

* Exod. xxiii. 19.

† Lev. xix. 27, 28.

‡ Deut. xvi. 21:

sexes, and this confounding of the appropriate garments of men and women, implied or gave birth to the grossest superstition and debauchery; the divine law, to prevent these evils, enacted, “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman’s garment; for all who do so are an abomination to Jehovah.”*

The Zabians also attributed the joint increase of their wool and flax to the fortunate conjunction and united influence of the stars. In acknowledgment of this, they made and wore garments compounded of these two materials. To crush this idolatry, God forbids his people to wear any garment mingled of linen and woollen.† These idolaters also sowed barley and grapes together, in order to recommend their vineyards to the joint protection of *Ceres* and *Bacchus*, and thus secure a greater increase. To prevent this superstitious reliance on false gods, and engage their trust in Jehovah only for a plentiful harvest, the Hebrews are forbidden to sow their vineyards with different seed, lest their fruit should be defiled.‡ For a similar reason they are forbidden to “plow with an ox and an ass together,” and also to “let their cattle gender with another kind.”§ As each of these laws is joined with the prohibition of the superstitious mixtures just explained, and as nothing but some purpose of superstition or magic could induce men to unite creatures so different in the same yoke, or in producing so unnatural and monstrous a breed; we may conclude that these precepts refer to some antient and magical rites, intended to represent certain conjunctions of the planets, and to honor certain deities, and thus to procure some ex-

* Deut. xxii. 5.

† Lev. xix. 19.

‡ Deut. xxii. 9.

§ Deut. xxii. 10. Lev. xix. 19.

traordinary blessing. In a word, Jehovah by these statutes meant to guard his people against every thing indecorous, disorderly, and impure ; against every tendency to heathen manners ; against every thing, which might draw them away from worshipping and trusting in him alone, or lead them to an idolatrous dependence on the stars, or dead heroes, or imaginary divinities. In this view the foregoing injunctions, though apparently trivial, were highly worthy of God, and beneficial to man.

LECTURE XXIII.

Consideration of that part of the Hebrew law, which prohibited the use of certain meats, as unclean. Object and tendency of this prohibition.

THE Mosaic law accompanied the Jews not only to their altars, but to their fire sides ; it prescribed rules not only for their sacrifices, but for their diet. It banished from their tables, and even instructed them to abhor several kinds of animal food, which were used, and in some instances highly esteemed by other nations. These restrictions have drawn upon the Hebrew ritual and nation the most pointed ridicule both of pagans and deists. Indeed the greater part of Jewish and Christian writers have not satisfactorily defended or accounted for these restrictions. Some of these authors assert that the animals forbidden to the Jews as unclean were either dangerous, unwholesome, or unpleasant food. We grant that most of them were such ; yet some others, for instance, the hare afforded a delicate and nourishing meat. We must remark however that some meats may be excellent in one region, which are not so in another. Accordingly Hasselquist, a learned modern traveller, tells us that the Egyptians and Arabians have no esteem, and make no use of the animal just named. Others suppose that this distinction of animals into clean and unclean was borrowed from the institutions and manners of the early ages. But we do not find among the antient nations any distinction of meats resembling that, which the law of Moses prescribed. It is true that some distinction of this kind is mentioned even before the flood ; for God directs Noah to take into the ark of every clean beast seven pairs, and only two of those that were not clean. But by unclean

in this passage are probably meant such as nature itself pronounced unfit either for food or sacrifice, such as tygers, serpents, &c; and by clean the mild and useful animals, which were adapted both to the service of man and the worship of God. We add that as the difference of meats, prescribed by the statutes of Moses, was evidently intended to keep the Jews a distinct and holy people, it could not be a mere transcript of antient or existing usages, but must have been strikingly peculiar to that nation. Others have chosen to derive these statutes from the sole pleasure and authority of Jehovah, the king of Israel; who intended hereby to restrain a gross and licentious people, and to discipline them into a constant subjection to himself, by engaging them to remember and regard him even in their daily food, as well as in the solemn exercises of his worship. But, though these restrictions might be useful, as standing remembrances of God's sovereignty, and trials of their obedience; yet they did not emanate from the mere will of Deity, but from his perfect wisdom and goodness. For

1. The express words of the divine law on this subject hold up an important reason for these limitations—
 “I am the Lord your God, who have separated you from other people, that ye should be mine. Ye shall therefore be holy to me, for I the Lord am holy. Ye shall therefore put a difference between clean beasts and unclean. Ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by creeping thing, which I have separated from you as unclean.”* As if Jehovah had said, “I have selected you from, and exalted you far above the ignorant and idolatrous world. Let it be your care to walk worthy of this distinction. Let the quality of your food, as well as the rites of your worship, display

your peculiar and holy character. Let even your manner of eating be so appropriate, so pure, so nicely adjusted by my law, as to convince yourselves and all the world that you are indeed separated from idolaters, and devoted to me alone." It was highly fit and necessary that a people so circumstanced, and so related to God, as the Jews, should constantly wear his name, if I may so speak, on their foreheads; that their common meals should declare what Deity they worshipped; that these should attest their dignified relation to Jehovah. Agreeably Moses tells them—†“The Lord hath chosen you to be a peculiar people unto himself. Ye shall not eat any abominable thing. Ye shall not eat any thing that dieth of itself; ye shall give it to the stranger, or sell it to an alien; for ye are a holy people;” that is, “since God has invested you with singular honor and favor, you ought to reverence yourselves; you ought to disdain the vile food of heathen idolaters; such food you may lawfully give or sell to foreigners; but a due self-respect forbids you to eat it.” It is a remarkable fact that all the animals, granted for food to the Jews, were and still are esteemed and used by the eastern nations; while most of those, which were forbidden to the Hebrews, have been constantly excluded from the tables of the more refined heathens. These statutes therefore continually enforced on the Israelites that singular purity and dignity of character, which suited their profession. They were likewise striking memorials of the transcendent purity and excellence of Israel’s God. By obliging his subjects to abstain from the impure diet of pagan idolaters, he forcibly taught them his own superiority to the heathen deities. By enacting so many laws against every kind of

* Lev. xx. 24, 25, 26. † Deut. xiv. 2, 3, 21.

uncleanness, whether of garments, of bodies, or of meats, he meant to impress on that gross people a constant sense of his own infinite purity, as *the Holy One of Israel* ; he meant to habituate them to regard and honor him as such by the conspicuous purity both of their manners and worship. Not one of the pagan gods so much as pretended to purity of character, or claimed to be worshipped under their title of the *Holy One*. Far from this, even the worship of these gods was frequently performed by impure rites, and the use of vile and filthy animals ;* by which the worshippers proclaimed the foul character of their deities. On the contrary, the clean diet and pure ceremonies of the Hebrews were mirrors, which constantly reflected the immaculate purity of Jehovah. Hence

2. This nice distinction of meats was fitted to teach that puerile nation the rudiments of moral purity or true holiness. Agreeably the prohibition of unclean food is constantly enforced by this admonition—“ Be ye holy, for I am holy ;” which the apostle Peter interprets, not of ceremonial, but of practical universal holiness.† As the Israelites, on their first emerging from the darkness of Egyptian superstition, could not directly view the splendor of the divine holiness ; God was pleased to set before them some images or emblems of it, in the purity of their food and their frequent ritual washings, in order to rouse and carry forward their minds to some just sense of his sanctity and their correspondent duty.

3. This legal distinction of animals into clean and unclean was intended to point out an answerable distinction between the Jews and Gentiles. The law expresses this idea—“ I have separated you from other people ; you

* Isai. lxxv. 3, 4. lxxvi. 17. † I Peter. i. 15, 16.

shall therefore separate clean beasts from unclean, and ye shall be holy"—that is, by this very act of distinguishing your food you declare and confirm your separation from the unclean Gentiles. Accordingly all the Jews have to this day understood the matter in this light. Agreeably when St. Peter had been taught by a vision, that all animals were lawful food to christians, he immediately inferred that the Gentiles and their fellowship were no longer unclean or defiling; which imports that the ancient law respecting unclean beasts prohibited familiar intercourse with heathens. Which leads us to remark

4. This law was designed to bar the Israelites from a dangerous union with Gentiles either by consanguinity, by religion, or by intimate friendship. This statute, above all others, established not only a political and sacred, but a physical separation of the Jews from all other people. It made it next to impossible for the one to mix with the other either in meals, in marriage, or in any familiar connexion. Their opposite customs in the article of diet not only precluded a friendly and comfortable intimacy, but generated mutual contempt and abhorrence. The Jews religiously abhorred the society, manners, and institutions of the Gentiles, because they viewed their own abstinence from forbidden meats as a token of peculiar sanctity, and of course regarded other nations, who wanted this sanctity, as vile and detestable. They considered themselves as secluded by God himself from the profane world by a peculiar worship, government, law, dress, country, and mode of living. Though this separation from other people, on which the law respecting food was founded, created in the Jews a criminal pride and hatred of the Gentiles; yet it forcibly operated as a preservative from heathen idolatry by precluding all fa-

miliarity with idolatrous nations. This distinction of meats was a further guard against idolatry, as it directed the Hebrews to kill for sacrifice and for food animals, which their neighbours worshipped as sacred; while it taught them to reject other animals as unclean, which the heathens appropriated as fit oblations to their deities. Thus among the pagans the swine was sacred to Venus, the owl to Minerva, the hawk to Apollo, the dog to Hecate, the eagle to Jupiter, the horse to the Sun. Some of the antient heathens abstained from fish, because they worshipped their gods under this form. The Egyptians ate neither fish nor birds of prey; and the Phenicians neither pigeons nor doves, because they imagined their goddess had appeared under the form of a dove. The antient Zabians abstained from various animals, because they viewed them as consecrated to the several heavenly bodies, or because they used them in their divinations. The Hebrew Lawgiver struck at the root of these abominable superstitions, by establishing among the Jews a distinction of meats, founded on different principles, a distinction strikingly opposed to surrounding customs, yet wisely accommodated to the genius and habits of the early ages; a distinction, which taught the Israelites to abhor the use of those animals, which idolaters had dedicated to demons or to divination, and to eat or to sacrifice those, which superstition had deified. What admirable wisdom marks the Jewish code in stigmatizing those reptiles, and other creatures, which had been abused to magical purposes. The Zabians had a favorite oblation, which they made to the sun, of seven bats, seven mice, and seven other reptiles. Horace describes Canidia the witch as using in her enchantments the blood of toads, and feathers of owls. How salutary was that law,

which attached uncleanness and infamy to creatures, which furnished the materials and incentives of practices so detestable! We add

5. That animals were employed from the earliest times as figurative or hieroglyphic emblems of moral and intellectual qualities.—“ Thus beasts and birds of prey were naturally symbols of violence and rapine; creatures delighting in dirt and filth, as the dog and swine, were striking representations of an unclean or polluted mind.” Was it unworthy of God to instruct a gross people by these sensible monitors; to recommend to them the virtues of gentleness and purity, of social kindness and usefulness, by the images of these virtues in the animals pronounced clean; and to deter them from the opposite vices by prohibiting those creatures, who exhibited their resemblance?

On the whole, as Mr. Lowman justly observes, “ the food allowed to the chosen nation was of the milder sort, of the most common and domestic animals; creatures of the cleanest feeding, which afforded the most palatable and nourishing meat, and which by a proper care might be had in the greatest plenty and perfection. If the Jews, as a select and holy people, ought to have had any distinction of foods; surely none could have been devised more proper than this. Was not this far better, than to license and encourage the promiscuous hunting and eating of wild beasts and birds of prey, less fit for food, and more difficult to be procured, and hardly consistent with a domestic, agricultural, and pastoral life? Did not the restrictions in question tend to promote that health and ease, that useful cultivation of the soil, that diligence, mildness, and simplicity, that consequent happiness and

prosperity, which were among the chief blessings of the promised land.”

The preceding remarks afford a sufficient general vindication of the statutes before us. A few particular questions however remain, which may claim some attention.

It may be asked, why the divine Legislator made the *parting of the hoof*, and the *chewing of the cud* the distinctive marks of those animals, which might be eaten? We reply first, because it was necessary to furnish the Jews with some general rule in this case, which might be easily understood and observed. Second, because animals distinguished by these marks afford a pleasant and wholesome food. Third, because if God had restricted his people from those animals only, which were evidently poisonous or unsavory, he would appear to regard and would teach them to consult, merely their bodily health and gratification; and thus would lead them to choose and avoid the same food, and to do both on the same principle with other nations; whereas he meant by this article to distinguish them, and to make them religiously distinguish themselves from all other people. To effect this purpose a rule was prescribed, which called their attention, not merely to their health or palates, but to their peculiar and holy profession. Fourth, by this rule God taught them to reject the superstition, so common in the pagan world, of ascribing a mysterious inherent sanctity or impurity to certain animals. Nothing can be more fanciful or more degrading than the sentiments and customs of heathen nations on this subject. Was it not therefore expedient that this superstitious propensity should be restrained in the Hebrews by divine authority; that their estimation and use of the inferior creatures should be visibly regulated, not by mere caprice or idolatrous usage,

but by the wise statute of Jehovah their king ; that he alone, who formed and who owns these animals, should fix the boundary between them ? In a word, those creatures, which have the marks above named, excel most others in natural *cleanliness* and *dignity*, and were therefore fitly selected to represent and enforce the pure and dignified character becoming the people of Jehovah. The same observation will apply to those *birds* and *fishes*, which were licensed by the Hebrew law ; while the unclean or savage nature of those in general, which were interdicted, made them odious even to heathen nations.

This suggests a second question on this subject, why was swine's flesh forbidden to the Jews ? and why do this people still hold it in peculiar abhorrence ? This food is so commonly used, so wholesome and even delicious to many, that not a few regard this prohibition, and the consequent religious abstinence of the Jews, with wonder and contempt. But admitting this kind of meat to be good, yet the general rule, which excluded it from the Hebrew tables, might for the reason just stated be expedient on the whole ; it might be the best general law for that people, though it subjected them to selfdenial in this and a few other instances. Respectable authors likewise assure us that this animal was subject to a contagious disease, which formerly prevailed in Palestine and its vicinity ; and also that the flesh of it produced or inflamed cutaneous distempers in those climates. Besides, this creature exceeds almost all others in natural filthiness, and therefore must have been peculiarly detested by a people habituated by their law to the nicest purity. This abhorrence must have been strengthened by the similar feelings and manners of other nations ; for the ancient Egyptians, Arabs, Phenicians, Ethiopians, and In-

dians avoided this kind of food with unspeakable disgust and contempt. This animal was also rendered peculiarly abominable to the Jews by the circumstance of its being much used in some of the heathen solemnities. The prophet Isaiah speaks of certain idolaters, who “purify themselves in gardens and eat swine’s flesh;” that is, use this food in their religious purgations. Varro tells us that the antient Greek noun for swine, viz. *Thus*, was derived from *thuein*, to sacrifice; for he adds, sacrifices began with this species of animals. Ovid and Horace mention this as one of the most antient and frequent victims. It was much employed in the mysteries of magic. To this the prophet refers, when reproving the abominable practices of the idolatrous Jews, he says—“They remain among the groves, and lodge in the monuments, and eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things in their vessels;” that is, they use the meat and broth of the swine, as a magical sacrament. Athenæus and Juvenal represent this animal as holding a conspicuous place in antient festivals both civil and sacred; and Virgil speaks of it as eminently used in sealing solemn covenants and treaties—“*Armati Jovis ante aram, paterosque tenentes stabant, et cæsâ jungebant fœdera porcâ.*” A swine was often painted on the Roman standards, as a symbol of peace. These pagan customs point out a natural reason of the extreme detestation, with which the Jews have ever regarded this animal; as well as suggest an additional ground for prohibiting its use.

Let not the excessive aversion and horror, with which the Jews still shun this kind of food, attach any ridicule to their antient law, which gives no sanction to this peculiar and eternal hatred.

Let us also be grateful for the liberal constitution of the

gospel, which has abolished the old distinction of meats ; which generously indulges our bodies with every species of salutary and agreeable food ; which teaches us that every creature of God is good ; that to the pure all things are pure ; that nothing, which goeth into the mouth defileth a man ; but that those things only defile him, which come out of the mouth, and proceed from the heart. Let it then be our great concern to have pure hearts, clean hands, and undefiled lips. Let us shun all moral evil with as much solicitude, and horror, as a conscientious Jew would avoid the flesh of a swine. Let us have no more fellowship with the works of darkness, especially with the perpetrators of midnight havock and mischief, than *he* would have with a porcellian or even idolatrous feast. Let all the worthy members and friends of this society be as zealous to purge it from the guilt and stain of that detestable outrage, which this Chapel lately experienced, as the most religious Hebrews were to purify themselves from the foulest legal uncleanness or abomination.

LECTURE XXIV.

Various ceremonies, observed in the Hebrew church respecting purifications and pollutions. Reasons and fitness of their observance.

OUR last lecture explained the fitness and utility of those laws, which regulated the diet of the antient Hebrews; which restrained them not only from those kinds of food, which were evidently unsavory and vile, but from some meats, which many refined pagans and even christians have highly esteemed. We have shown that these nice regulations were intended to enforce on the Israelites a peculiar delicacy and purity of character, and especially to bar them from a dangerous mixture with idolatrous Gentiles; since these statutes taught them to kill for food and for sacrifice animals, which the heathens had deified, and also led them to abhor those, which idolaters had dedicated to demons or to magic.

Similar reasons may be given for those rules in the Mosaic code, which relate to *defilement* and *purification*; which declare certain persons and things unclean, and prescribe the mode of cleansing them. Many of these rules may seem at first view to savor of puerile and rigid superstition; as they pronounce persons defiled, and subject them to severe penance for things, which are merely casual and unavoidable, and imply no moral guilt; as they declare even inanimate substances, as vessels, garments &c. to be polluted only by touching the dead body of the smallest reptile, which the law had made unclean; and as in several cases they devote utensils thus polluted to destruction. For instance, they require earthen vessels, and ovens to be destroyed, if a dead mouse or even

snail has chanced to fall into or upon them. It is natural to ask, was it consistent with divine wisdom and goodness to enact laws so minute and so severe respecting matters so apparently trivial? We will endeavour to solve this difficult question by stating the probable reasons of these statutes, both as they respect persons and things.

The *general reason* seems to have been this. The Hebrews, in common with other nations in the rude ages of the world, required a set of institutions, which were palpable, which continually addressed their senses. The laws now before us were eminently of this description. But the fitness of these regulations will be more satisfactorily perceived, if we consider first, that they were a discipline well suited to civilize a gross people, who had just emerged from the most debasing servitude. By obliging such a people religiously to abstain from using or even touching any thing, which had even the shadow of uncleanness, their wise Lawgiver meant to raise them by degrees from a state of comparative barbarism to so much purity, decòrum, and refinement of manners, as became a nation peculiarly related to Jehovah, and as naturally fitted them for the cultivation of knowledge, of order, and religion. Second, these numerous and peculiar statutes concerning pollutions and purifications were intended to hold up the Israelites as a people separated from the impure gentiles, and consecrated to a pure and holy Divinity. By observing these statutes they remarkably distinguished themselves from other nations by tokens of singular purity. Accordingly the Jewish law made abstinence from every legal defilement the symbol and measure of extraordinary sanctity. Thus the Hebrew nation was bound to abstain from the touch of a dead body, and other pollu-

tions, common to other nations. The Nazarites carried their abstinence higher than the Hebrews in general; the ordinary priests higher than the Nazarites; and the high priest farther than all. Third, the laws in question were fitted to maintain in the Jews an awful reverence of the divine presence and sanctuary, by excluding from them every person in the least polluted, and by making it a very nice, careful, and difficult business to approach them. The presence and glory of Jehovah in his tabernacle would have sunk into contempt, if every person, clean or unclean, might have approached it, with the same facility, as he could enter his own habitation. But the regulations respecting the various kinds of uncleanness and of purgations were so many barriers around the sanctuary of God, and tended to inspire the most personal veneration for it, the most solicitous preparation to approach it acceptably, and the highest esteem of it, as a singular privilege; a privilege enhanced by the labor and difficulty, which preceded its enjoyment. Fourth, most of the things, which the Hebrew ritual pronounces unclean, had some natural impurity in them, and were naturally offensive to all mankind, especially to persons of any refinement. They were viewed even by the antient heathens as disqualifying persons for the sacred rites of their worship. It was therefore peculiarly necessary to the character and honor of the Jews, as a holy nation, that their law should stigmatize these impurities. At the same time fifth, the divine Lawgiver proclaimed the superior sanctity of his nature and worship by branding certain person and things as unclean, which the heathen nations not only allowed, but even dignified and consecrated. We add sixth, the superstition of early idolaters had created an endless multitude of imaginary pollutions

and purgations. Thus the antient Zabians reckoned every thing unclean, which was taken from the human body, as the hair, the nails, and the blood. Hence all barbers were esteemed unclean; and all, who suffered a razor to pass upon their flesh, were obliged to wash themselves in the clear water of a fountain. The early Arabians and modern Turks have also an infinite number of defilements and ceremonies of purifications. The Hindoos, whose religion and manners have been greatly extolled by some infidel writers, as superior to those of Jews or Christians, abound with the most ridiculous and burdensome institutions on the subject of pollutions, abstinences, and expiations. Dr. Priestly, in a recent publication, has accurately compared their institutions with those of Moses, and shown in numerous particulars the contrasted excellence of the latter. Was it not highly useful and even necessary for the Lawgiver of Israel to check this dreadful current of superstition by reducing the list both of defilements and purifications within reasonable bounds, by declaring those things only to be unclean, which were naturally foul or disgusting, or which were fitted to excite a dread of moral impurity, a reverence for the presence of Jehovah, and an abhorrence of the filthy and idolatrous rites of the heathens? For example, the wisdom of the Hebrew ritual in representing the touch of a dead human body, or even of the bone or grave of a man, as peculiarly defiling; the wisdom of this will appear, if we recollect that the worship of dead heroes, and the practice of paying honors to their dead bodies and to their tombs, were very prevalent among the antient pagans. What a check to this idolatry, what a religious abhorrence of it, was created by this law, which attached a pollution of seven days to the touch of a dead

body or a grave, which during this period barred from the sanctuary of Jehovah every person, who had been employed or present at the funeral of a friend, and which enjoined in every case of this kind extraordinary rites of purgations !* These provisions, however trifling or barbarous abstractly considered, were needful guards against a very enticing and abominable superstition. It was equally wise in the Hebrew ritual to represent all *issues of blood*, however involuntary, as polluting, and as unfitting persons to appear in the divine presence ; because blood was much esteemed and used in the heathen celebrations of the dead, and was reckoned a medium of communion between the worshippers and the demons. To crush this idolatry, and to lead the Jews to regard it with detestation, they were not only forbidden the use of blood, but taught to view every discharge or appearance of it in their bodies as a legal defilement.

Among the numerous kinds of personal uncleanness branded by the Mosaic law, that of *leprosy* holds a distinguished place. Lepers were shut out not only from the public worship of God, but from the society of men. Perhaps the causes of this severity cannot at this day be fully investigated. Hippocrates tells us that the ancient leprosy was rather a filthiness than a disease. It was certainly viewed in this light by the Jewish law. Agreeably our Savior is said to *cleanse* lepers, not to *cure* them. The sacred history further represents the leprosy, as a punishment immediately inflicted by God for particular sins ; as in the case of Miriam, Gehazi, and king Uzziah. This circumstance, connected with the extreme foulness of this plague, rendered it a very striking emblem of moral pollution ; and the exclusion of persons infected with it from

* Numb. xix. 11, 22.

the worship and people of God was fitted not only to humble and reform the offenders, but to impress on the public mind the most solemn and useful instructions.

Having considered the case of polluted *persons*, we will briefly notice that of unclean *things*. One design of the Hebrew law in minutely attending to the garments, utensils, and domestic manners of the Israelites, was to form them to a cleanly and decent style of living. As God had exalted them from Egyptian bondage, into his visible family, he justly required them to exchange the sordid habits of slaves for those decent manners, which became his household. He also meant to release them from the vexatious and unbounded superstition of the heathen world by confining his laws respecting uncleanness and purity to those things, which fell within their daily notice and use. By these nice injunctions he protected the honor of his worship, and obliged his people by the singular purity of their manners to imitate and publicly to exhibit the transcendent holiness of their God. Hereby too he effectually guarded the Jews from a familiar and dangerous intercourse with heathens; since the former could not freely use the same beds, vessels, or liquor with the latter, without constant hazard of legal defilement, and thereby incurring the necessity of burdensome purification. This barrier against idolatry was greatly strengthened, if we suppose with a learned writer, that some of the laws respecting vessels were pointed against a certain superstition of those times. He tells us that idolaters believed that if certain reptiles, as mice &c. which they dedicated to their idols, fell into vessels or into water, it was a token that these were grateful to the gods. In opposition to this pagan conceit, the divine law pronounces such vessels unclean. In a word, as the

Hebrews were set apart to be a holy people unto God, they were wisely distinguished by a set of peculiar statutes respecting persons, animals, and things; which statutes were continual monitors of the divine sanctity and their corresponding duty.

This remark naturally leads our attention to the purifying ceremonies enjoined by their ritual. As external filthiness was a striking image of an impure heart; so washing with water, which cleanses the body, fitly represented internal purification from sin. This use of water, as a rite denoting moral cleansing, was one of the most natural, early, and prevailing customs. Thus the patriarch Jacob, when undertaking to reform his family, and prepare them for the solemn worship of Jehovah, says to them—"put away the strange gods that are among you, and be cleansed," that is, as Jewish writers interpret it, wash your bodies with water. The use of this rite is also mentioned in the book of Job, one of the most antient of all writings. This ceremony must have been grateful and refreshing, as well as significant, in the warm and mild countries of the east; and therefore would easily recommend itself to their observance. Accordingly the earliest and best authors, as Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, Virgil, and others, frequently mention the religious use of clear and running water. But superstition very soon corrupted this natural and expressive usage. As Mr. Lowman observes, "idolatry invented a great many other things for the use of purifications, as salt, sulphur, honey, spittle, and many others, mentioned at large by the authors, who have described the pagan lustrations. They had several modes of using water, air, and fire; of using water and fire together, and of mixing of water and blood. Sometimes they used human blood; which was

often done by cutting and wounding themselves. Ignorant superstition, which knows no bounds, continually invented new rites of purification; so that hogs, cats, dogs and lions were used for this purpose by the wisest nations. These ceremonies became at length so common, that they were used to purify and consecrate fields and houses, as well as men; the dead as well as the living; yea they were supposed to be efficacious in the other world for the purgation of departed spirits. Hence probably sprung the popish doctrine of purgatory. Virgil in his sixth *Eneid* has forcibly described the various modes of purifying used by the offenders in the state of the dead. I will give you part of his description in Mr. Dryden's translation—

Not death itself can wholly wash their stains,
But long contracted filth even in the soul remains.
The reliques of inveterate vice they wear,
And spots of sin obscene in every face appear.
For this are various penances enjoin'd,
And some are hung to bleach upon the wind;
Some plung'd in waters, others purg'd in fires,
Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires.

It is one excellence of the Hebrew law, that it clears an antient and most significant rite of that vast rubbish, in which superstition had buried it. It restores and protects the use of pure and living water, as the grand ceremony in all the Jewish purification, except in one extraordinary case, which we shall now explain. This extraordinary purification was appointed to cleanse those who were defiled by touching the dead body of a man. It was performed by sprinkling the unclean person with the ashes of a red heifer mixed with water. Almost every part of this lustration has a remarkable reference or opposition to antient heathen customs. Thus a heifer, rather than a young bullock, seems to be selected, in contempt

of that superstition of the Egyptians, which held cows and female calves to be sacred, and which esteemed the heifer to be dedicated to Isis or the moon. The Hindoos likewise had an extraordinary veneration for cows. Herodotus and Plutarch also tell us that the Egyptians offered male calves to Typhon. The Jews were probably directed to take a *red* heifer, because this color was held in abhorrence by the antient idolaters. It was to be a heifer, upon which never came a yoke; because such a victim was worthy and honorable, and agreed with the antient manner of sacrifices. The heifer was to be burned without the camp, and cedar wood, hysop, and scarlet wool were to be burned along with it. Cedar and hysop were used as cleansers of wounds, as was the plant coccus, which was used for dying scarlet. All the articles therefore bore some relation to the purpose of purification. The ashes made by this burning were to be dissolved in water, and applied to the use specified above. As both water and ashes have been always used for literal cleansing; as symbolical rites, suited the genius of the early ages and the eastern world, and were absolutely necessary for the Jewish people; as many particulars of this purifying ceremony were excellent preservatives from surrounding superstition; as the whole taken together is far more natural, simple, and instructive than the rites of the wisest heathens; as the grand design of this solemn purgation was, to cleanse the pollution incurred by touching a dead body, and thereby to deter the Hebrews from worshipping or holding idolatrous intercourse with the dead; and finally as the whole service tended to enforce moral purity, and to keep them steadfast in the true religion; these considerations sufficiently recommend the ritual before us. In short, the whole

system of legal purifications addressed the same exhortation to the Jews in a figurative style, which the gospel in a plain style addresses to us—“ Having these privileges and promises, cleanse yourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.”

LECTURE XXV.

Tendency of the Hebrew ritual to promote the glory of God ; and the benefits resulting from an observance of its various injunctions.

OUR last lecture considered the several pollutions and purifications of the Hebrew church. We showed that the law respecting both tended to enforce decent manners, a pure heart and conversation, a profound reverence for the presence of Jehovah in his sanctuary, and a steadfast adherence to his religion, in opposition to surrounding idolatry. Indeed all the ceremonies of the Jewish ritual were subservient to one great object, viz. the honor of the true God, who visibly resided among them in the temple. It will therefore be useful to show how admirably every part of the Mosaic law was adapted to this end, and what excellent purposes were answered by this arrangement.

The titles, which this law appropriates to the God of Israel, were fitted to inspire a singular reverence for his character and worship. He is very frequently styled *holy*, and *the Holy One*, by way of eminence. He is likewise often called a *jealous God*. The former title expresses his matchless purity or moral excellence, which places him far above any equal ; the latter denotes that he will not endure a rival ; and both appellations widely distinguish him from the idols of the heathens ; for these, though sometimes called gods, are never styled either holy or jealous. They were not *holy* either in respect of moral purity, or of separation from and superiority to other deities ; for as their characters were polluted and contemptible, so they were united together by a common

nature, worship, and name. Of course they were not *jealous* of a partner or rival. We never read that any gentile god prohibited a multitude of divinities, or was angry at being worshipped in the same temple, or on the same altar with some associate demon. Hence these appropriate titles of the true God were fitted both to command singular veneration from his worshippers and to guard them against associating with him the impure divinities and rites of the heathen.

To heighten this reverence of Jehovah, it was ordained that no one, but the high priest, should enter into the *most holy place*, the interior apartment of the GREAT KING; that no victims should be offered to him, but the most perfect in their kind; that the tabernacle, the ark, the altars, the candlestick, the sacred vessels and ministers should be consecrated to his service with a peculiar and holy ointment; that the priests, and sometimes the whole congregation should be sanctified to him by various washings, oblations, and sprinklings; that none but sacred fire, kindled by God himself, should be used on his altar; that every thing pertaining to his worship should be distinguished from other things by some special use, ceremony, or splendor, and be forever exempted from common purposes; that no one, whether of the priesthood or the people, should have access to the temple or to any sacred rite, while laboring under any kind of uncleanness. To these and many similar statutes we might add several peculiar laws respecting the priests; for instance, those, which barred from the altar and sanctuary ever man, though born in the sacerdotal line, who had any personal deformity or blemish;* those, which assigned to this sacred order, garments of

* Lev. xxi. 16, 23.

superior beauty and splendor ;* those, which directed the first fruits and tithes, by which the priests were supported, to be brought to the temple and solemnly dedicated to Jehovah ; and those, which regulated their mourning on funeral occasions. No priest could attend or mingle in customary funeral rites except on the death of his own parent or child, or brother and sister. The reason is given, “ he shall not defile and profane himself, being a chief man among his people ;”† that is, it does not become a minister of my sanctuary to debase himself by vulgar ceremonies of mourning. It does not become him to defile himself at the graves of the dead, and thereby incur the necessity either of neglecting or polluting the rites of my worship. Agreeably when two of Aaron’s sons were instantly struck dead for offering strange or unconsecrated fire before the Lord ; he and his living sons were forbidden not only to show the usual tokens of sorrow, but even to go out from the door of the tabernacle.‡ The same restriction is laid on every high priest, even on the decease of a father or a mother ;§ that is, no minister of Jehovah was to quit his station in the temple, to indulge his feelings over a departed friend, because this would discover greater affection towards a dead man, than towards the living God. Of the same aspect is that law, which prohibited the priests from drinking wine or strong drink, when going into the tabernacle. The reason assigned is, that they might by a sober and perfect exercise of their reason, “ put a difference between holy and unholy, &c.” that is, treat sacred things in a grave and holy manner, and thus hold them up to the public veneration. To promote this high rev-

* Ex. xxviii. 2, &c.

† Lev. xxi. 1—5.

‡ Lev. ix. 7.

§ Lev. xxi. 10, &c.

erence of sacred things, especially of God and his sanctuary, infinite wisdom saw fit to decorate the tabernacle with extraordinary richness and magnificence, to make nature and art, and divine inspiration conspire in this sacred workmanship ; that the Hebrews, struck with its exterior splendor, might suitably honor that great Being, who resided in it. To promote the same end, the divine Legislator nicely adjusted all the ceremonies of his worship in a manner best suited to inspire awful respect. These instituted ceremonies were all sober and grave. They had nothing in them ludicrous or absurd ; nothing inconsistent with the majesty of God, or the sound reason of man. They were wisely adapted to the genius of the times, and the state of the Hebrews. Even Strabo, a learned heathen, while calumniating Moses, confesses that his law enjoined no ridiculous, fanatical, or indecent rites. Whereas most of the pagan ceremonies were plainly foolish and senseless. As lord Boacon expresses it, “they were perfectly deaf and dumb ; they neither spoke nor even beckoned any instruction.” The Mosaic rites also greatly transcended the pagan in point of *innocence* and *purity*. They in no instance tolerated, much less sanctified either filthiness, cruelty, or profanity. Whereas those of the heathen carried on their very face the image of those foul and barbarous demons, whom they worshiped. Their mysteries could not be endured by the eye either of modesty or humanity. Hence they were carefully concealed from vulgar observation. The *splendor* too of the Jewish rites naturally procured for them a profound veneration. We may add, their *beautiful order* contributed to the same effect. The law strictly provided not only for the observance of certain ceremonies, but for an accurate and decorous manner of

observing them. Nothing pertaining to divine worship was wrapped in obscure hints; nothing was left to blind zeal, to a restless, inventive, and innovating spirit. The law took care of the minutest things. It regulated the precise form and mode, as well as the matter and instruments of worship. Thus it perpetuated a noble and recommending order in the service of Jehovah, and thus precluded that uncertainty and confusion, those new and distracting human inventions, those endless and disgraceful superstitions, which otherwise might have buried the true religion in contempt and ruin.

Having seen how remarkably the Hebrew ritual in all its parts tended to one point, the honor of Jehovah and of his worship, let us now advert to the great benefits, which accrued from this arrangement.

It tended in general to prevent idolatry and to preserve the purity of religion. By creating in the Hebrews a high respect for their God, it tended to preclude that esteem and adoration of false deities, which always originate in contempt of the true and only Divinity. As this contempt is the parent both of idolatry and atheism; so its opposite is the preservative from both. The Mosaic ritual, by impressing on the Israelites a sense of the appropriate and incommunicable excellencies of Jehovah, was fitted to prevent them from dividing these excellencies, and the homage they claimed, among a multitude of deities. By occupying their senses and their pious feelings with august and numerous ceremonies, it tended to wean their affections from the more antient and fashionable rites of heathen superstition. By consecrating certain peculiar ceremonies to the worship of Jehovah, and enjoining a reverential observance of these, and a total abstinence from all others, on penalty of death, it erected an awful bar-

rier against idolatry ; since every one, who despised these institutions, incurred the suspicion of a capital offence ; while those, who sacredly regarded them, proclaimed their adherence to the divine law, and their abhorrence of pagan superstition. In a word, the Hebrew ritual, by cherishing a singular veneration for its sacred rites, tended to perpetuate their existence and purity, and thus to protect and transmit the belief and practice of the true religion.

If we view the matter in a somewhat different light, the same conclusion will force itself on our minds. We shall see how admirably the essentials of true piety, and consequently of sound virtue were enforced by the provisions now described.

The existence of God, in opposition to every species of atheism, was hereby taught in the most impressive manner. The visible presence, the glorious symbol of Deity in the most holy place ; the temple built for his palace ; the priests, who waited at his court ; the numerous sacrifices and oblations, which were presented on his altar ; the solemn appearances of the whole Hebrew church thrice in a year at his sanctuary, added to the monthly, weekly, and daily worship ; the nice preparation and awful reverence, required in these approaches to the divine presence ; these were striking and unceasing monitors of the existence of God. They preached this truth to the senses, and thus engraved it on the hearts of the worshippers.

They also taught the true character, as well as the being of God. The very name of Israel's God, I mean, *Jehovah*, taught his eternal, necessary, independent, and immutable existence. For as all agree in deriving this name from a verb signifying *to be* ; so the original word

is applicable to past, present, and future existence, and seems to import, *I was, I am, I shall be*. Of the same import is the name, which God announced to Moses, when he sent him to Israel, *I am*, and *I am that I am*, or *I am the ὁ ὢν*; that is, *I am the existing Being*; I possess existence in a peculiar manner, uncaused, unchanging, everlasting. As the Mosaic law thus directs the Hebrew worship to Jehovah, the selfexistent Being, so it frequently holds him up as the source of all other beings, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, with all their inhabitants.

Hence it clearly and strongly enforces the divine *unity*, or represents Jehovah as the only true Divinity, and object of worship. The Jewish ritual provided but one symbol of the divine presence, one most holy place, one altar, and one temple, consecrated to one Jehovah; to whom all the priests ministred, and all sacrifices were offered. The whole Hebrew worship was therefore a visible illustration of that prime article of the Mosaic constitution—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Jehovah—thou shalt have no other gods before or beside me." How much superior in this fundamental point is the Jewish code to the best deductions of unassisted reason! The knowledge of one God was in fact lost in the heathen world, and was never effectually recovered by human wisdom even in its highest improvements. Hence originated the monstrous polytheism and demoralizing superstition, which overspread the world. The law of Moses struck at the root of these abominations, and planted in their room the belief of one supreme Being, to whom all other beings, however exalted, are but servants; and therefore have no claim to religious homage even of the lowest kind. This law, far from allowing,

expressly forbids the worship of heroes, supplication or thanksgiving to departed spirits, or to fancied tutelary deities. It carefully limits every part and degree of divine honor to Jehovah. It directs that every occasional, and every stated commemoration of mercies received should contain a thankful acknowledgement, not of any inferior god or protector, but of Jehovah alone. The importance and excellence of the Hebrew ritual in this view will strike us with more force, if we consider that the belief and adoration of *gods many* and *lords many* formed not only the established system of the antient world, but the chief learning and philosophy, which then prevailed. This was the philosophy not only of the Egyptian priests but of Zoroaster, Pythagoras, and other eminent sages. It was therefore a high mark of wisdom and goodness to make the whole Jewish ritual bear against these fatal notions and practices, and to bring the religion of mankind to center in one God and in one worship.

The ritual likewise instructed the people in the *moral perfections* of Jehovah, particularly his infinite holiness and mercy. His transcendent holiness is frequently taught in their sacred writings. It is also strongly represented in all their religious ceremonies. It appears in the exact directions given, to consecrate the temple, to hallow the sanctuary, to set apart a most holy place for the residence of Jehovah; to purify and consecrate the priests, his ministers. The epithet *holy* applied to persons, places, times, and things, that were specially devoted to God; the ritual cleanness and purifications required of all, who appeared before him; the terrible denunciations against all, who should approach him, when legally defiled; these and similar features of the Hebrew institutions were a lively comment on that exclamation of Moses, "Who is

like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness?" At the same time these institutions represented the true God as gracious and merciful, longsuffering and abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. The numerous propitiatory sacrifices and rites of cleansing, while they held up the awful guilt and demerit of sin, the strict purity and justice of God, and the duty of offenders to confess and forsake their iniquities, did likewise encourage the penitent to hope for divine pardon and favor. This hope was elevated into assurance by the visible presence of God among the Hebrews, as their covenanted and almighty Protector. This leads us to add that

The Mosaic ritual taught the important doctrine of a *general and particular providence*. Many of the heathen philosophers, while they acknowledged either one or many deities, denied that these superior powers regarded either the circumstances or actions of men, or showed them any favor or displeasure. The vulgar heathens supposed that the several districts of our globe were ruled by an equal number of local gods, who were limited in their powers, capricious in their humors, mutually opposed in their interests and dispositions, and generally profligate in their characters. Such principles were equally fatal to sound piety and morality. But the Hebrew law represents Jehovah not only as the Creator, but the sole Governor of the universe. While it holds him up as peculiarly related to, and present with his professing people, as visibly residing in their temple; it also represents him as dwelling between the cherubim in heaven, and thence extending his notice and dominion to all creatures and worlds. The religious ceremonial of the Jews in all its parts was an impressive symbol of this

sublime doctrine. The Shechinah, or visible abode of Deity between the figures of the cherubim over the ark, whence he issued his orders to the whole Hebrew nation, was a beautiful emblem of his celestial throne and universal empire; and it was thus understood by the Jewish people. Their daily and weekly, their monthly and yearly solemnities were continual memorials and acknowledgments of the agency of Jehovah in the formation and government of the world, in the regular course and beneficent influence of the heavenly bodies, and in all the blessings, which distinguished the various seasons. How admirably were these celebrations fitted at once to eradicate the worship of the celestial luminaries, or of fancied subordinate dispensers of good and evil; and to confine the homage of the Israelites, to one allpervading, alldisposing Providence! While their ritual thus kept in view the general government of God, it perpetually reminded them of his special patronage afforded to their nation, and of the peculiar blessings, which they derived from this source. It taught them to trust in Jehovah, as their God, for every needed act of his favor, and at the same time to dread every opposite evil from his displeasure, if they provoked it by disobedience. It led them to regard the special presence of Jehovah among them, as a source of peculiar blessings or curses according to their moral behavior. Every offering, which they presented, every festival, which they solemnized, was a forcible admonition of this truth. It expressed and nourished their dependence on God's particular providence, either by gratefully recognizing his past mercies, or by seeking his present and future benediction, or by conciliating his forfeited protection by repentance and expiation.

Thus those great truths, which relate to the existence, character, and government of one allperfect Being; truths, which are the basis of solid piety, virtue, and joy, were clearly unfolded in the writings, and practically displayed in the services of the antient Hebrews. What dignity and importance does this single fact impart to their institutions! May you all know by experience the justness of this remark. May your minds be guarded, ennobled, and comforted by that deep sense of God and of providence, which the religion both of Moses and of Christ so strongly inculcates! May you enjoy the peculiar favor of this providence in your approaching long recess from this university, and through the whole of your future existence!

LECTURE XXVI.

Various arguments in support of the divine origin of the Hebrew ritual; and in reply to the objections made against it.

IN our last lecture we showed how plainly and forcibly the capital principles of true religion, and consequently of morality, were represented and impressed by the Hebrew institutions.

It is important to add that these principles were taught and enforced, not by uncertain, laborious, and abstract reasoning, but by the authority of divine revelation. This is the only sure method of instructing and confirming a whole nation in the true knowledge of God and his will. Both reason and fact assure us that the bulk of mankind, especially in the rude ages, have neither capacity, nor leisure, nor inclination for nice and long disquisitions; and that if left to draw their religion from these sources, they will run into the dreadful evils either of polytheism and superstition, or of irreligion and atheism. It was therefore necessary that religious truth and duty should be confirmed to the chosen people by divine authority. Agreeably Jehovah himself, by a voice from the Shechinah, uttered the ten commands; and delivered them amid such visible and awful ensigns of divine majesty, as convinced the whole nation of their heavenly original. But as these ensigns of Deity greatly terrified the people, and induced their earnest request, that Moses might thenceforward speak with them in God's name; Jehovah, in condescension to their frailty, spake after this to Moses; and he, as God's deputy, announced his will to the congregation. While God thus commissioned

Moses to declare his laws, he attested his commission by a long train of miracles, wrought in the sight of all Israel; miracles so numerous, so sensible, and so great, that none could be ignorant of their reality, or mistake their origin. Indeed the ritual itself was a standing evidence of its own divinity; for while the Shechinah or visible glory, residing in the tabernacle, was a supernatural and ocular proof of the divine presence; the oracle, or voice issuing from it, when compared with the manner of consulting it, the precise and full answers given by it, and the exact fulfilment of these answers, was a constant testimony of divine interposition. These extraordinary revelations and appearances of Jehovah to the Hebrews were necessary and powerful means of establishing their faith in the Mosaic institutions, and of inspiring such sacred reverence for them, as might guard them against the enticing oracles and ceremonies of the heathen.

This remark fully obviates a natural and plausible objection to the Jewish ritual. It seems at first view unworthy of God to attest in so extraordinary a manner a system of mere ceremonies. But if, as we have shown, these ceremonies were needful barriers against idolatry, and enforcements of rational piety; and if, in order to these ends, it was necessary to sanction and recommend them by the highest authority; then the wisdom and goodness of this procedure are sufficiently vindicated. On the same grounds we see the fitness of making these institutions unchangeable, or of forbidding under the severest penalties the least addition to, or abridgment of them. This was necessary to close the door against those superstitious innovations, which would otherwise have crept in, and gradually corrupted the true religion.

It may still be asked, was it wise to load the Jewish

institution with so many ceremonies, and to enjoin and press them in a manner so solemn? Did not this tend to exalt them to an equal rank with moral duties? Was there not danger that the Israelites would be so dazzled and engrossed by the former, as to overlook the latter; yea, that they would substitute these shadows for the substance, and even rest in them as an atonement and license for moral disobedience? We answer,

1. As the genius and circumstances of that people required a religion arrayed in sensible and striking ceremonies, so it was necessary that these rites should be very numerous and diversified; that they should reach every case, to which the religion of their neighbours extended. As the heathens had idolatrous ceremonies on every occasion, it was expedient that the institutions of the Hebrews should keep pace with theirs; that the Israelites might have no necessity nor pretence for borrowing pagan rites, and that they might in every case be fortified against them. We have seen, for example, how important the provisions of their law were, with respect to mourning or honoring the dead, which among other nations had been perverted to idolatry and divination. If the Jews had not been furnished with rites of their own on this occasion, and on numberless others; they would either have invented superstitious ceremonies for themselves, or have eagerly copied those of their neighbours.

2. The Hebrew ritual, far from leading men to rest in outward ceremonies, strikingly represented and enforced a virtuous temper and practice. Every part of it expressed and required inward affections, corresponding to the external actions. The whole apparatus of the Jewish temple and priesthood, oblations and sacrifices, all the offerings in the way of thanksgiving, confession, and atone-

ment, strongly inculcated a solemn and reverential, a penitent and thankful heart. The numerous washings and purgations forcibly taught the necessity of a pure heart and life. Every rite is in its own nature significant of some spiritual or moral truth. The sacred rites of the Jews were as easily understood as any civil ceremonies are, when used towards fellow men. Ritual or symbolical actions were very common, intelligible, and impressive in the early ages. Agreeably the ceremonies in question were evident signs of good moral dispositions. This further appears

3. From the exposition given of these rites by the law itself, and by prophets, its authorized interpreters. The law itself expressly, and frequently enjoins inward and practical holiness. This is the language of the great Lawgiver—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." "And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love and serve him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." This prevailing love, and fear, and service of God comprehend all the social, as well as divine virtues. They include an affectionate and studious imitation of God in his perfect justice, truth, and goodness. Agreeably Moses, having represented Jehovah to the Israelites as a Being of infinite benevolence, who "executeth judgment for the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger," adds, "love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." It is remarkable that Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, where he solemnly recites and enforces his laws on his beloved people just before his death, constantly holds up love to God and its moral fruits, as the main spirit and

perfection of his institutions, as the great end even of their peculiar ceremonies. He tells them that the leading rite of circumcision was intended not only to distinguish the natural seed of Abraham but to enforce internal purification—"Circumcise therefore," says he, "the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiffnecked." "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, that thou mayest live."* The prophets interpreted the ritual in the same manner. Thus the prophet Jeremy addresses his countryman—"Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your hearts."† The prophets also very often inculcate inward purity, as the true and main import of the ceremonial washings. Thus David says, "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God." "I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altars, O Lord." So the prophet Isaiah exhorts, "Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." And then "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow." So the prophet Jeremy, "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from all wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." The ritual, as explained by the law and the prophets, enjoined upon offenders not only a sin offering or ceremonial expiation, but a penitent confession to God, and, in case of injury, restitution to men.‡ This confession included hearty sorrow, and an effectual purpose of forsaking sin and returning to God.§ Accordingly the Old Testament writings express that repent-

* Deut. vi. 4, 5.—x. 12, 18, 19, 16.—xxx. 6.

† Jer. iv. 4.

‡ Numb. v. 5—7.

§ Levit. xxvi. 40, &c. Deut. iv. 29.

ance, which is connected with divine pardon and favor, in such language as this, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him." "Repent and cast away from you all your transgressions, and make you a new heart and a new spirit." "Turn ye even to me with all your heart; and rend your heart and not your garments."* Agreeably David observes that the ritual itself taught the superior value of inward repentance. "Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." As the Hebrew law thus states true piety and virtue to be the meaning and end of its ceremonial institutions; so

4. It expressly and constantly prefers moral to ritual obedience. It declares that God desires mercy rather than sacrifice; that what he requires of us is to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God; that Jehovah will look with complacency to the man, who is poor, and of a contrite spirit; that where this inward spirit and its substantial fruits are wanting, the most strict and splendid observance of ceremonial duties is unacceptable, yea an abomination in his sight. These lessons were so clearly taught and understood in the Hebrew church, that the scribes in our Savior's day, with all their zeal for rites and forms, were obliged to acknowledge that the love of God and our neighbour were the great precepts of their law; were more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.† We add

5. The Mosaic institutions contain moral, as well as ritual commands. The ten commandments are a summary of moral duty. These were audibly pronounced by

* Isai. lv. 7. Ezek. xviii. 31. Joel, ii. 12, 13. † Mark, xii. 32, &c:

a voice from heaven. They were engraven on tables of stone by the finger of God. These tables were deposited in a rich ark or chest, which was covered with a lid of pure gold, called the mercy seat. Over this stood two cherubim ; and between these resided the cloud of glory, or visible emblem of Deity. This ark was fixed in the most holy place, and became the throne of Jehovah, the seat of his royal presence. Did not these pre-eminent marks of honor, put on the ten commands, point them out as the most excellent part of the ritual, as the basis and perfection of the whole ? Did they not inculcate true holiness, as the leading principle and end of all the Hebrew ceremonies ? These remarks sufficiently show that the Jewish law did not place religion in bare external rites, but instructed its votaries to regard these, as the handmaids of moral goodness.

But it may be further objected, that this law was very defective in its sanctions ; since it held out temporal blessings and calamities, as the only recompense of obedience or of transgression. This difficulty is removed by the following considerations.

1. As the Hebrew law consisted of two parts, viz. ceremonial and moral ; and as the former was, by way of distinction, the law of the Israelites, while the latter was the original and common law of our nature ; so it was fit that each should have appropriate sanctions. Agreeably the ritual or peculiar law of the Jews was enforced by the distinct sanction of temporal rewards and punishments ; while the moral or universal law of man was left to stand on its primitive footing ; that is, on the sanction of a future retribution. Hence

2. There was no need of incorporating with the Jewish ritual a new and express revelation of a future state ;

because such a state had already been notified to the world by nature and reason, assisted by early revelation and tradition, and had also been eminently discovered to the Hebrews by special communications made to their pious ancestors. Agreeably the belief of the soul's immortality, and of future rewards and punishments was interwoven not only with the writings, but with the whole idolatrous system of the antient heathens. On this principle they deified the souls of their eminent deceased friends and benefactors. On the same principle they consulted the dead. The same general belief appears to have been early and constantly entertained by the Hebrews. Saul's effort to obtain counsel from the spirit of departed Samuel was founded on this belief. The Jewish law proceeds on this principle in forbidding necromancy, and consulting the dead. Several Old Testament writers, particularly Job, David, Solomon, and Daniel, express their assurance of a future retribution.* There was therefore no necessity of confirming this received doctrine to the Israelites, especially in their ritual law—For

3. As this law was ceremonious and temporary, it was fitly enforced by temporal rewards. As it was given chiefly in pursuance of the peculiar covenant made with Abraham and his seed, a covenant, which insured to them the land of Canaan, and great worldly prosperity in it; we plainly see that sanctions best suited to this covenant were temporal blessings or judgments in the country, which Jehovah had thus granted them.

4. If the rewards and punishments of a future life had been annexed to the Hebrew ritual, this would naturally have led the Jews into a superstitious or exclusive regard to ceremonial duties, as if these alone could expiate mor-

* Job xix. 25—27. Psalm xvi. 9—11. Eccl. xi. 9—12, 14. Dan. xii. 3, 4.

al guilt, and procure everlasting happiness. But by limiting the effect of merely ritual obedience or transgression to temporal or political good and evil, the divine Lawgiver instructed them to expect final pardon and blessedness, as the result, not of ceremonial observances, but of inward and moral obedience. Thus the great distinction between outward rites and true saving religion was forcibly impressed. The former at best could insure only worldly prosperity ; while the latter was connected with eternal life.

5. As the peculiarities of the ceremonial law were chiefly intended as a barrier against idolatry, so temporal sanctions were best adapted to this end ; as they assured the obedient Israelites of all those blessings from the true God, which their heathen neighbours expected from their imaginary deities ; and as they threatened and inflicted on those, who deserted or corrupted the worship of Jehovah, the same calamities, which idolaters apprehended from, or ascribed to the displeasure of their gods. These sanctions, faithfully executed, had the strongest tendency to crush idolatry, and to bind the Hebrews to the true religion, by giving them an experimental conviction of the power and disposition of their God to reward or punish them in the most speedy and sensible manner. If the Hebrew Lawgiver had opposed a future or distant retribution only to that idolatry, which was supported by the expectation and fancied experience of present good and evil ; he would have erected a very unsuitable and feeble barrier against paganism, and in favor of the true religion. This leads us to add

6. That a great writer, the late bishop Warburton, in a very learned work, called *the Divine Legation of Moses*, has undertaken to demonstrate the profound wisdom

and divine origin of the Hebrew constitution from the total omission of future rewards and punishments in that system. He builds his conclusion on the following premises ; viz. that the doctrine of a future retribution is necessary to the support and well being both of civil and religious society ; that the wisest lawgivers and nations of antiquity introduced this doctrine, as the grand basis and enforcement, both of their religion and laws ; that they universally and justly believed that no religion and no community could subsist without it, unless protected by an extraordinary providence ; and yet that Moses, the wise lawgiver of the Jews, established a civil and a religious polity, which flourished for ages without the sanction of a future state ; from all which he infers that Moses must have been conscious of a divine mission, when he framed and published such a constitution, and that this system must have been supported by a peculiar providence. How far this demonstration is wellfounded and decisive will richly deserve our future inquiry. In the mean time we can demonstrate the divine legation of Moses by a process far more simple and sure than that of this author. For example, would this wise lawgiver have promised the Israelites a treple harvest from their lands on every year preceding the seventh or sabbatical year ? Would he have obliged all the males to leave their families and country undefended thrice every year ? Would he have suspended his whole system on the contingency of the family of Aaron never wanting an adult male heir, free from every disqualifying blemish, to inherit and support the priesthood ? Would he have pronounced so many specific temporal blessings and curses, as the certain consequence of obedience or disobedience to his laws ? Would he have ventured on these unexampled measures,

if he had not been sure of an extraordinary providence to carry them into effect? If such a providence had not seconded his institutions, would they not have sunk into disgrace, or have involved the nation in ruin? We cannot therefore account either for the origin or success of this singular constitution without the special interposition of Deity. Sound philosophy, as well as authentic history, compels us to admit that the Hebrews were really governed by a peculiar Providence, which protected, rewarded or punished them in a sensible and extraordinary manner.

LECTURE XXVII.

The numerous rites and ceremonies of the Hebrew ritual pointing out, and gradually unfolding, the more perfect dispensation of the gospel.

BEFORE we dismiss the Jewish ritual, it will be proper to consider it more distinctly as a preparatory and typical system, which prefigured and gradually introduced the more perfect dispensation of the gospel. We have formerly shown that the Old Testament contained a prophetic revelation of the Messiah, or a series of predictions intended to keep alive, and to shed increasing light on the great promise, made to our first parents and to Abraham, of the future seed of the woman, who was to bruise the head of the serpent, and in whom all nations should be blessed. As the Hebrew economy thus verbally foretold the Savior of mankind, and hereby prepared the world for his appearance ; we have reason to believe that it likewise symbolically pointed to, and terminated in him ; in other words, that the Jewish ceremonies were a temporary, intermediate, and emblematical scheme, adapted to the same general use with the prophecies. Many reasons concur to establish this opinion. It is confirmed by the general manner of divine proceeding, which is to instruct mankind by slow degrees, suited to their gradual advance from infancy to manhood. As the doctrine of the Messiah not only dawned on the early ages, but shone with far greater lustre on the latter periods of the Jewish church ; as it unfolded itself with still greater clearness in the discourses of Christ, and with perfect fulness in the subsequent ministry of his apostles ; so we argue from analogy that the legal rites of the Jews

obscurely hinted the same truths, which the evangelical economy has fully revealed. This renders the plan of divine conduct harmonious and comprehensive. This mode of procedure was also wisely suited to the Hebrew nation; for while it gratified the taste and exercised the devotion of the vulgar with striking external ceremonies, it engaged the respectful and studious attention of strong and contemplative minds to the secret and high import of these ordinances. It also laid a foundation for that admirable correspondence between the law and the gospel, and that transcendent superiority of the latter, on which the proof and excellence of christianity so greatly depend. We have formerly seen that the Hebrew rites were sensible images or emblems of historic facts, moral duties, and celestial things; that their solemn festivals visibly represented great national events; their washings internal purity; their Most Holy place with the cloud of glory residing in it, the presence and splendor of Jehovah in heaven. It is therefore congruous to believe that many of their symbols had likewise a prophetic allusion to the coming, office, and sufferings of Christ. For as bishop Sherlock justly argues, "Since Abraham and his posterity were chosen not merely for their own sakes, but to be instruments of the promised universal blessing to mankind; since the temporal covenant with that family was subservient to the spiritual and everlasting covenant, which respected the Messiah, and the whole race of man; it is highly probable that the laws of the Jewish dispensation were intentionally fitted to this great design, were figures of good things to come." Agreeably they have been thus understood both by learned Jews and Christians. Thus Philo, an eminent Hebrew writer, says that the Jewish high priest was an "image of the

sinless and divine Logos." Irenæus, a christian father, calls the law of Moses "a prophecy of future things." Indeed almost the whole body of christians from the beginning to this day have viewed the subject in this light. They have been led into this opinion not only by the reasons just mentioned, but by the obvious import of the ritual itself, and the application made of it in the New Testament. The agreement between the legal and evangelical dispensations is too exact and manifold to have been the offspring of chance. It must therefore have been the contrivance of Deity. The gospel itself frequently sanctions this idea by expounding the Jewish law in an evangelical sense.

We grant that many expositors have injured scripture and dishonored themselves by allegorizing every scrap of the Hebrew law into a mystical sense, and thus substituting their own fanatical or conceited fancies for divine authority. It is ridiculous to imagine that every little or obscure circumstance in the Jewish code must certainly point out some evangelical mystery. We have no warrant to apply in this manner any part of the Old Testament, any further than such application is justified by the express authority or general analogy of scripture. Taking this for our guide, we will now unfold the excellency of the Hebrew ritual, as a typical dispensation.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews largely traces the mutual correspondence between the Mosaic and Christian institution, with a view to recommend the latter, as the perfection of the former. He firstly shows the personal preeminence of Christ above Moses, and even above angels.* He next displays the superiority of Christ to Moses in his *official capacity*; the latter being a faith-

* Heb, chap. i. and ii.

ful servant in the house of God, the former the builder and sovereign proprietor of the house.* The law of Moses promised the rest of Canaan, and hinted a future rest in heaven. This heavenly rest is clearly revealed and promised by Christ.† As the Jews were exceedingly attached to their priesthood and sacrifices, as well as to Moses, their prophet; the apostle proceeds to exhibit the priestly office and dignity of Jesus. He shows that Christ, like Aaron, was called by God to this office; that he was made High Priest of a nobler order than Aaron, viz. of the antient patriarchal order, the order of Melchizedec, who was both priest and king, who was superior to Abraham, since he received tithes from him, and gave him his blessing.‡ This order of priesthood was catholic and permanent, not local and temporary like that of Aaron.§ The apostle goes on to remark that the Jewish temple and sanctuary, Shechinah and priesthood, offerings and sacrifices were figures for *the time then present*, of the future good things in the days of the Messiah; that they were imperfect shadows of a perfect substance; that they had no efficacy to purge the soul from real or moral guilt, but only pointed to, and were consummated in the glorious person, sacrifice, and redemption of Christ.|| In short this whole epistle, and many other passages of the New Testament evidently hold up the Mosaic ritual as a designed, though imperfect type of the christian economy. In particular

1. They represent the Shechinah, or visible symbol of Jehovah, dwelling in the sanctuary, as an emblem of the person and office of Christ. As the Shechinah was a sensible token of the extraordinary and gracious presence of God; as hereby he visibly tabernacled among

* Chap. iii. † Chap. iv. ‡ Chap. v. vi. § Chap. vii. || Chap. viii. 9, 10.

the Hebrews, so that they beheld his glory, and had near access to his mercy seat; so both prophets and apostles represent God as coming down to, and dwelling with men in the person of his Son. They speak of the human nature of Christ, as the visible temple or tabernacle, in which the Godhead resided. On this account Isaiah styles the future Messiah *Immanuel*; and Matthew expressly applies this prophecy to Jesus as the Savior. They give him the name *Immanuel*, because in his person and mediation God dwells with us in a visible and gracious manner, as he resided with the Jews in the sanctuary. The same prophet in another place thus describes the visible glory of the God of Israel—"I saw Jehovah sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; and one cried to another, and said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." Now this glory of Jehovah, which the prophet saw, is by the apostle John expressly applied to Christ.* The prophets also describe the future appearance of the Messiah in the same or equivalent words, by which they express the visible glory of Deity in the temple. Thus Haggai speaks—"The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former."† That is, when the Messiah should come into the temple, the divine glory would appear in him, and would fill the sanctuary more illustriously, than it did the temple of old. Hence says the evangelist John—"the Logos was made flesh, and tabernacled among us; and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father."‡

* Chap. xii. 43.

† Chap. ii. 7—9.

‡ Chap. i. 14.

Hence too the apostle to the Hebrews speaks of Christ, as “the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of his person,” that is, the true Shechinah, the perfect symbol or representative of Deity. Accordingly, as the angels or cherubim were represented in the Jewish sanctuary, as servants or attendants round the divine presence; so the same apostle describes the angels, as worshipping the Son of God, and as ministring spirits before his throne, sent forth by him to minister to the heirs of salvation.* The prophet Zechariah too, in allusion to the Shechinah, speaks of the man, whose name is the Branch, as building the temple of the Lord, as bearing the glory, as sitting and ruling on his throne.” The prophet Malachi too says in the name of Jehovah, “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant” &c. Thus we are abundantly authorised to consider the glory of Jehovah in the most holy place, over the mercy seat, as a prophetic emblem of the Messiah, who is God with us, or the Deity appearing in human nature, as in his temple.

2. The religious institutions of the Hebrews had also an evangelical reference. Their priesthood pointed to Christ, the great High Priest of christians. Their sacrifices and sin offerings prefigured that grand oblation, that perfect atonement for sin, which the gospel high priest was to offer by his death on the cross. Their washings and sprinklings typified the real purification of sinners by the blood and spirit of Christ. The solemn intercession made by the Jewish high priest in the most holy place, and the blessings procured by it for the peo-

* Chap. i. 3. 6. 8. 14.

ple, represented the far more powerful and lasting intercession of Jesus in heaven, and the far richer and more durable benefits which it draws down on his church. Even the weakness or inefficacy of the Hebrew ritual to expiate moral guilt was well fitted to prepare and lead forward the Jews to a more perfect dispensation. For while the moral precepts of their law held up a perfect rule of duty, and condemned every transgression; while their rites and sacrifices constantly proclaimed their guilt and desert of punishment, and the insufficiency of external ceremonies to cancel this guilt, or to remove the defilement of sin; while their whole religious system displayed the awful justice, purity, and majesty of God, and the necessity of some great Mediator and Sanctifier to restore them to his favor and image; was not their law in these views an excellent preparative for the gospel? Did it not properly serve as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ; to preserve in their minds a deep sense of their need of the promised Mediator, an earnest desire and hope of his coming, an eager expectation of the more perfect, spiritual, consoling discoveries and blessings of his religion? We grant that the bulk of that people, especially in more ealy periods, caught but a faint glimpse of those truths, which were wrapped up in their law, and which the clear light of the gospel has now drawn out of obscurity into open day. Yet the dark hints afforded them of these truths were of great use to them, and are still beneficial to us. While pious and studious minds in that nation doubtless made considerable discoveries of these truths; the Hebrews in general might easily understand the moral and typical import of sacrifices, and thus be led to expect

a better priest and atonement, a more pure and exalted state of the church, in the days of the Messiah. This expectation would naturally confirm their attachment to a system, which thus promised and led on to a better order of things; and would also prepare them for a welcome reception of the new dispensation.

When the promised Savior appeared, the body of the Jews, in consequence of deep rooted errors, were strongly prejudiced against him. They could not endure a religion, which abolished the peculiarities of their law, and which granted the same privileges to the Gentiles, as to themselves. But the apostles confuted these prejudices by their own scriptures, by showing them that their boasted law confessed its own weakness, predicted its own death, and paid homage to Jesus, as its grand scope and consummation; by showing them that, according to their own covenant, the promised seed of Abraham was to be a blessing to all nations, and of course was to unite both Jews and Gentiles into one catholic church; that the ritual of Moses being intended and adjusted as a temporary barrier to one people, could not possibly answer for a universal religion, and consequently that a more simple and spiritual worship was now indispensable, and was accordingly typified and foretold by the law and the prophets. Thus the law, properly understood, was a mighty instrument of converting the Jews to the faith of Jesus, in whom it was illustriously fulfilled; and the religion of Moses still furnishes invincible evidence to the religion of Christ. We grant that this is not the first evidence to convince a Gentile unbeliever. To the Jews indeed the Old Testament prophecies and types were the first proof of christianity; but to the Gentiles they were the last. The Jews believed in Christ, because

foretold and prefigured by their law; the Gentiles believed in the divine authority of the Old Testament, because it was so exactly fulfilled in the New. Both Jews and Gentiles were led into a more full understanding and a more confirmed belief of the peculiar and sublime doctrines of christianity, when they saw these doctrines represented by, and adding light and perfection to the antient institutions of Jehovah.

On the whole, the view we have now taken of the Mosaic economy, compared with the representations we have formerly given, exhibits a new and diversified proof of its heavenly original. It holds up this institution, not only as minutely and admirably levelled against the idolatry of antient times; as not only pointing out by significant emblems all the remarkable events, doctrines, and moral precepts of the Jewish dispensation; but as typifying with wonderful accuracy a distant, spiritual, and perfect religion. What an amazing reach and comprehension of divine wisdom do these circumstances unfold! How glorious that wisdom, which, while it indulged a rude people with carnal ordinances, rendered these very ordinances a pattern of the most sublime and celestial truths; which gave to these rites a plain moral import, easily understood and felt by the multitude, and at the same time a secondary and typical meaning, which could not be fully perceived till the coming of the Messiah; which annexed to a temporary law the proper and powerful sanction of temporal rewards and punishments, while it made these secret, but striking emblems of the spiritual and eternal rewards of the gospel! If the spiritual truths of christianity had not been thus prefigured by the law, the mutual dependence and connexion of the two systems, as parts of one great and perfect whole, would

have been precluded, or at best could not have been ascertained; one main use of Judaism, as a preparatory scheme, and one essential proof of the gospel, would have been defeated. On the other hand, if these christian doctrines had been *plainly* revealed under the Jewish dispensation, the distinction between the two religions would have been confounded; the Jews would have despised and shaken off their comparatively mean and burdensome ceremonies long before the appointed season for their extinction; and thus the purpose of God to train them by a long previous discipline would have been frustrated. How wonderfully then was the divine wisdom manifested in making the Hebrew law a real, but covert intimation of the gospel; and I may add, in rendering this typical import more clear and impressive, as the new dispensation approached! *This* arrangement was proper and necessary on many accounts. I will mention one weighty reason for it, which perhaps has been too much overlooked. As the primary intention of the Mosaic ritual was to protect the true religion against idolatry, and as the idolatrous propensities of the Jews were completely and finally cured after the Babylonish captivity; it follows that the *prime* use of their ceremonies was now in great measure superseded. Of course their *secondary* use, or their reference to the approaching Messiah, was, with great wisdom, brought more fully into view by the later Jewish prophets. We see then the stamp of consummate intelligence and goodness on every part, on every intention of this antient constitution.

LECTURE XXVIII.

A comparative view of the character and institutions of the Hindoos, with those of the Hebrews.

TO give these lectures a grateful variety, and to place the excellence of the Hebrew institutions in a new and stronger light, we will shift the scene from *Palestine* to *Hindustan*. We will inspect the prominent opinions and customs of the latter country, and compare them with those of the former. I am induced to this comparison by the curious accounts, which are given of the Hindoos; by the increasing light thrown on their character by modern research, especially by the labors of the excellent Sir William Jones, and the Asiatic Society, over which he presided; and finally by the efforts of some recent writers to give the religion of this people a precedence both of date and genuine worth to that of the Jews.

Before we quit the ritual laws of the Hebrews, it may be proper and useful to compare them with the institutions of some other antient nations. This comparison will place the excellence of the former in a new and very impressive light.

The character and institutions of the *Hindoos* are highly celebrated by many modern writers. Mr. *Langles*, a French translator of one of their books, styles the founders of their religion “venerable institutors, who delivered precepts of the soundest morality, and a system of metaphysics truly sublime. In their religion,” he says, “we distinguish the morals, the doctrines, and the ceremonies of the Egyptians and Jews, of the Chinese, the Greeks, the Romans, and even the Christians.” Ac-

According to him the Jews and Christians have done nothing but ape the Hindoos. The five Vedas of the latter, he tells us, "are the prototype of the five books of Moses, who has only copied Egyptian works, originally from India." Other authors have given similar or equally flattering accounts of the Hindoo institutions, with a view to sink the reputation, or to discredit the divine original of the Mosaic religion. It is therefore important to examine the ground, on which these writers build their assertions.

The Vedas are the first and most sacred books of the Hindoos, dictated immediately, as they pretend, by the Supreme Being. The original of these books having fallen into the hands of a curious Englishman, we may hope soon to read them in our own language. Another writing, called the *Institutions of Menu*, next in authority to the Vedas, and faithfully transcribing their principal contents, has been translated by Sir William Jones. This book is thus characterized by that great and good man—"It is a system of despotism and priestcraft, both indeed limited by law, but artfully constructed to give mutual support. It is filled with strange conceits in metaphysics and natural philosophy, with idle superstitions, and with a scheme of theology most obscurely figurative, and consequently liable to dangerous misconception. It abounds with minute and childish formalities, with ceremonies generally absurd, and often ridiculous. The punishments are partial and fanciful; for some crimes dreadfully cruel, for others reprehensively slight; and the very morals, though rigid enough on the whole, are in some instances, as in the case of light oaths, and pious perjuries, unaccountably relaxed. Nevertheless," he adds, "a spirit of sublime devotion, of benevolence to mankind, and of

amiable tenderness to all sentient creatures, prevades the whole work.”*

That you may be able to judge for yourselves on the merits of this system, I will present to you some of its leading features, taken from unquestionable sources.

It is allowed on all sides that the antiquity of the Hindoo nation and religion is very great. But the most approved and even oldest accounts do not give that people a date prior to that of the Mosaic deluge. Their religious institutions were therefore posterior to that event. Sir William Jones dates the Vedas about one hundred years before Moses, and the institutions of Menu about three hundred years later. Though the original Hindoo system has undergone several changes and improvements, it has constantly retained the same general principles. As it appears to have the same early date with that of the Egyptians, from which the Greeks and other western nations in a great degree borrowed their systems; so there exists a striking agreement in many particulars between the opinions and customs, especially the religions of these several nations. These points of resemblance among the antient nations probably took their rise from sources, which existed very early, that is, before the confusion of Babel, and the consequent dispersion of mankind. Accordingly, well informed writers tell us that the names and figures of the twelve signs of the zodiac are nearly the same among the Hindoos, as with us, who borrowed them from Egypt through Greece; that each of these signs with them is divided into thirty degrees; that they in common with the Egyptians divided time into weeks, and named each day of the week after the same planet; that their Bramins had much the same office and power with the Druids in Europe; that some of

* Dissertations relating to Asia, preface p. 18.

their temples, and all their pagodas have the same form with the Egyptian pyramids, which were also probably intended for some religious use ; and finally, that they had the same gods and sacred rites, and gave their deities nearly the same attributes and even names with the Egyptians and Greeks. But though these circumstances prove the very high antiquity of the Hindoo religion, at least of its first rudiments ; it is easy to show that the Jewish system was not copied from it, nor in the least indebted to it. We grant that in some instances there is a remarkable coincidence between the two religions. For example, the Hindoo writings hold up one Supreme Being, and on some occasions describe him in a manner truly rational and sublime. They represent him as “ One, whom the mind alone can comprehend, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists from eternity, the soul of all beings, whom no being can comprehend ;” and they say that “ goodness is the very essence of God.” But their most exalted conceptions of Deity fall far short of those delivered by Moses. For they deny the divine foreknowledge of the actions of free agents ; while Moses introduces Jehovah distinctly foretelling such actions and their consequences even in distant ages. They also represent the eternal One, as hindered by two mighty opposers for the space of five thousand years in his attempt to create the universe ; while the Hebrew scriptures constantly describe God as omnipotent, and as readily speaking the world into existence. The Hindoo system bears some resemblance to the Mosaic in the account, which it gives of the chaos ; of the Spirit of God moving upon it ; of the tree of life in paradise ; of Adam and Eve ; of the serpent ; of the creation of the world in six days ; of the formation of

the man and woman on the sixth day, and of all other creatures for their use; of the fall of the first human pair, and their deliverance by a superior and compassionate being; of the longevity of mankind in the first ages; of a universal deluge, and the escape of eight persons in a bark or vessel; of the excellent character of Noah, his intoxication in a certain instance, the deportment of his three sons on that occasion, the curse he afterward pronounced on one of them, and his blessing on the others; of the punishment inflicted on the proud and impious Babelbuilders, &c. These resemblances to the Old Testament history, together with the evident allusions to the story of Abraham, of Moses, and of Job, not only prove the great antiquity of the Hindoo books, but give strong collateral support to the Mosaic history. The Hindoo code also contains some peculiar laws and customs of the Hebrews, such as were never received by the western nations; particularly that of a man taking the widow of his brother, in order to keep up his family.

But amid these points of agreement the two systems differ so widely in their leading doctrines and prescriptions, as fully to confute the pretence, that both originated from one source, or that Moses borrowed his religion from the Hindoos. In the following statement of this difference I am greatly indebted to Dr. Priestly, who has carefully consulted and quoted the best authorities.

The Hindoo doctrine of the creation is, that God produced other beings wholly from his own substance; into which they will in due time be absorbed; and that these creations and absorptions will succeed each other without end. The same general sentiment was adopted by many Greek philosophers, and by the Persian magi, and is still maintained, as Sir William Jones tells us, by learned

Musselmen, and by the best poets in India. How different from this, how incomparably more sublime is the Mosaic account of the creation! According to the Hindoos the material universe consists of fourteen spheres, seven below, and six above that of the earth. "The seven inferior worlds are inhabited by an infinite variety of monstrous serpents. The sphere next above the earth, called *Bobur*, is the vault of the visible heavens, in which the sun, moon, and stars are placed. The next, called *Sweigeb*, is the first paradise, the general abode of such, as merit a removal from our earth. The third, *Mabur*, is assigned to those, who by the dint of prayer have risen to extraordinary sanctity. The fourth, *Funney*, is also the habitation of pious and virtuous souls, who cannot ascend to a higher sphere without some uncommon merit or attainments. The fifth, *Juppey*, is the reward of those, who have all their lives performed some wonderful act of penance and mortification, or who have died martyrs for their religion. The highest sphere, called *Suttee*, is the residence of *Birmah*, the vicegerent of the eternal One, and his particular favorites; for instance, of those men, who have never uttered a falsehood during their whole lives, and of those women, who have voluntarily burned themselves with their husbands." The metaphysics of this people are equally curious with their physical system; they are so refined, as to be unintelligible. I will give you the following specimen from the institutes of Menu—"From the supreme soul the Creator drew forth mind, existing substantially, though immaterial; and before mind, he produced consciousness; and before them both he produced the great principles of the soul, or first expansion of the divine idea, and all vital forms endued with the three qualities of goodness, passion, and dark-

ness, and the five perceptions of sense, and the five organs of sensation.”

Is there any thing like this sublime jargon in the books of Moses? No, his writings contain no philosophical and metaphysical refinements or obscurities, but a plain and popular system of religious faith, duty, and hope, fitted to make men pious, virtuous, and happy.

Dr. Priestly justly remarks that the Hindoo account of the origin of the universe, however wild and confused, is far preferable to that of the learned Greeks; for according to the former the world had a creator; but according to the latter it had none, because the matter and laws, from which it was educed, were self-existent and eternal, and the present harmonious system of material, animated, and intelligent beings was the natural result of this matter and these laws. Thus the wisest of the Grecian philosophers, instead of amending or improving on the plain doctrine of Moses, were pushed by the proud speculations of unassisted reason into the greatest absurdities; insomuch that in the days and writings of Homer and Hesiod we find no trace of a self-existing, intelligent Creator. Their gods possessed human passions and vices; even their Jupiter excelled only in strength, and was himself subject to almighty fate. Does this gross and demoralizing system deserve a comparison with that of the Old and New Testament?

But several learned authors, particularly Messrs. Langles, Holwell, and Dow, insist that the Hindoos are not chargeable with this stupid polytheism; “that their learned Bramins with one voice deny inferior divinities; and that one infinite Being is the object of universal adoration.” That this people acknowledge one Supreme Being we readily grant. But they likewise expressly

hold that "there sprung from this Supreme Being, as emanations of his divinity, an infinite number of subaltern deities, of which every part of the visible world was the seat and temple; and that each element is under the guidance of some being peculiar to it." The characters of these inferior gods were conceived to be so different, and in many instances so depraved, that the most absurd, impure, or dreadful ceremonies were thought necessary to please them. This people, says La Croze, have many millions of inferior divinities. They pray, says Mr. Lord, to different deities, according to their different occasions. To attain a happy marriage they pray to *Hurmout*, on taking a journey to *Gunnes*, in sickness to *Begenaut*. Soldiers pray to *Bilnabem*, the wretched to *Syer*, the fortunate to *Nycasser*, &c. The Hindoos conceive all parts of nature, even rocks and stones, to be animated by secret divinities. Hence they have in their pagodas a round stone, which they worship as a god. The votaries of Lama adore rocks and mountains. Mr. Sannerat says, that besides gods they have *saints*, whose pictures they place in their temples, and that they pray to them, as well as to their gods. These accounts are taken, not only from travellers, but from the sacred books of the Hindoos. These books mention various orders of demigods and genii. They recommend the worship of the sun. They abundantly insist on the worship due to the names of deceased ancestors. They direct the magistrates, when they conquer a country, to pay homage to the *Devotab* or chief god of that country, and to give a large present to the Bramins of that province. This people likewise express great veneration for the images of their gods, from an idea that after consecration these images are inhabited by

the deities, whom they represent ; which is precisely the ground, on which pagan idolators bow down to carved wood and stone.

In this respect the foundation and whole structure of the Hebrew religion were directly opposed to those of the Hindoos, Egyptians, and the whole surrounding world. We have formerly shown, that the great object of the Mosaic institutions was to preserve the belief and worship of the one true God, in the midst of prevailing idolatry. How could a people so rude and so prone to idolatry, as the antient Jews, have discovered and adhered to the sublime doctrine of one infinite Maker and Governor of the universe ; how could their propensity to idol worship have been radically cured ; how could this despised nation have been the sole instrument, under Moses and Christ, of upholding and propagating the true religion from early times to this day ; unless they were really favored with supernatural interposition ? Surely no natural cause can account for such extraordinary effects.

As Moses was born and educated in Egypt, and his countrymen had been habituated and greatly attached to her civil and religious customs ; he would be most likely to borrow his institutions from that country. Let us then advert a few moments to the religion of the Egyptians, as delineated by Jablonski in his excellent work intitled *Pantheon Egyptiorum* ; a work which gives the most favorable account of this religion, that ever has been exhibited.

According to this writer, “ the knowledge and worship of the Supreme Being was long retained by the Egyptians. They had also an idea of a chaos of inert matter. In a course of time however the worship of the Supreme

Being was neglected, and the regards of the people were confined to visible objects, especially the heavenly bodies, as having the most sensible influence on the earth. They accordingly worshipped the sun and the moon, the stars and the five planets. These planets with the sun and moon were the seven great gods of Egypt, and when they are called *eight*, the Supreme Being was included with them. The erection of obelisks and pyramids probably had some relation to the worship of the sun. They had also a mystical name of the sun, viz. *On*, answering to the celebrated *Oum* of the Hindoos. Hence we read in Genesis of the *priest of On*, whose daughter Joseph married. The Egyptians had likewise a city of that name, dedicated to the sun, and called by the Greeks *Heliopolis*. In time however, the worship of the stars and planets became confined to the priests, who applied their knowledge of them to purposes of divination. The speculations of these priests, and other men of learning, respecting the various positions, qualities, and powers of the sun and moon, at length introduced a variety of names for these luminaries, expressive of these different properties and relations; which names in time were considered and worshipped as so many deities. This new species of worship commenced in the fourth century after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. About this time the sun was generally worshipped by the Egyptians and neighbouring nations under the symbolical names of Osiris, Baal, Moloch, Chemash, &c. As the regulator of time, he was called *Osiris*; as king of the heavens, *Remphath*; in the winter solstice he was *Serapis*; in the summer solstice *Horus*; in the vernal equinox, *Amun*; in his full strength, *Semo*, and *Hercules*. When the sun was worshipped as *Osiris*, the moon ob-

tained the name of *Isis*. The new moon was the goddess *Bubastis*, and the full moon *Buti*.

The river Nile being naturally regarded as the patron and savior of Egypt, was an early and distinguished object of worship, to which temples, priests, and ceremonies were appropriated. Before this river entered Egypt, it was called *Siris*, which Mr. Bruce says signifies a dog; and thence the name *Sirius*, or the *dog star*.

Beside the worship of beneficent deities, the Egyptians, in common with all heathen nations, paid divine honors to a malignant being, called *Typhon*, whom they considered as the great author of evil. But the most distinguishing and ridiculous part of the Egyptian system was the worship of animals. This worship probably originated from a supposed resemblance or expression of the divine attributes, which these animals exhibited. In common with the Hindoos, the Egyptians had a singular veneration for the *cow*. But in later times they have paid much greater homage to three bulls, one called *Mnevis* at Heliopolis, representing the sun; another called *Apis* at Memphis, to denote the moon; and the third, styled *Onuphis* at Hermunthi, the symbol of the Nile. Beside useful animals, they worshipped lions, crocodiles, and serpents, as living images of some of their gods. They also paid divine honors to several plants, especially to onions and garlick.

Thus was the knowledge of the one true God lost in this nation, celebrated for human and divine wisdom; a nation regarded as the fountain of science to the Greeks and Romans. Will any fair inquirer after truth say that Moses copied his institutions from the Egyptian model? Is there any likeness between the one and the other? Does the herd of Egyptian deities bear any resemblance

to the God of the Hebrews? Are any of the impure rites or superstitious customs of Egypt enjoined or even tolerated in the Old Testament? Are they not constantly held up to the detestation of the Israelites? Whence then did Moses acquire a religious system so transcendently superior, so perfectly contrasted to that of the learned people, among whom he was brought up? Let common sense and candor reply.

LECTURE XXIX.

Arguments to prove, that the institutions of the Hebrews were not derived from the Hindoos, or from any other human source.

WE will now resume the subject of our last lecture, with a view still further to satisfy you that the Hebrew institutions were not derived from the Hindoo system, nor indeed from any human source.

One of the chief characteristics of the Hindoo religion is the sacred and hereditary distinction of classes. The institutes of Menu represent Brahma or the supreme Being, as originally producing four grades of men, viz. the *Bramins* from his mouth, the *Chatirya* from his arms, the *Vaissya* from his thighs, and the *Sudra* from his feet. "To the Bramins he assigned the duties of reading and teaching the Veda, of sacrificing, and assisting others to sacrifice. To defend the people, to read the Veda, and to sacrifice, are the duties of the Chatirya. To keep herds of cattle, to sacrifice, to read the scripture, to carry on trade, and to cultivate the land, are prescribed to the third order. To the Sudra, or lowest degree, is assigned the one duty of serving the higher classes." These four casts are widely distinguished by their outward appearance. Their dress, and even their walking staves are different. The three higher orders are called *twice born*, but the fourth only *once born*, that is, they have no second birth from the *Gayatri*, which is a form of prayer from the Vedas, not permitted to the Sudras. These four tribes never intermarry, eat, drink, nor in any way associate with one another, except when they worship at a certain temple. The prerogatives of the Bramins, and the respect they receive, are unexampled in history. They

are denominated from *Bramah*, the divine founder of their religion. The prosperity of the state, and even of the world is supposed to depend on them. They are honored as mighty divinities. The greatest merit consists in showing them favor, and the greatest crime in doing them an injury. To lie for their service is declared allowable. But however holy these Bramins are, they are not deemed impeachable. Yet offences committed by them are thought far more venial, and are doomed to much lighter punishments, than the same crimes in other men; and whatever they do, their lives and limbs, their freedom, and even their property, continue inviolable. Their highest punishment is simple exile. On the contrary, the poor Sudra is depressed in the same proportion as the Bramin is elevated. The former was made for servitude. He is restrained by law from collecting wealth, and chained down to extreme and perpetual ignorance. His life is valued at no higher a rate than that of a dog. A Bramin must never read the Veda in his presence, nor give him spiritual counsel or comfort. If he be found reading any of the sacred books, the magistrate is to heat some bitter oil, and pour it into his mouth. If he listen to such reading, then heated oil is poured into his ear, and its orifice stopped up with it. Other heathen nations had similar restrictions. The Egyptian priests, and many Grecian philosophers concealed their knowledge from the vulgar in dark hints, mysterious expressions, and romantic fables. So the European Druids threw a veil of mystery over their sacred treasure.

How different were the institutions of Moses! He made no permanent distinction of grades, except an hereditary priesthood; and this order of men, as we formerly showed, were legally precluded from the possession of

much wealth or political power. They were subject to the same civil authority and criminal laws with the lowest of the people. Instead of being enjoined to keep the multitude in ignorance, they were required at stated seasons to dispense to them religious instruction, and all the people were solemnly charged, and earnestly exhorted daily to study the divine law for themselves, and teach it to their children.* Each of their kings was commanded to write a copy of the law with his own hand; that being thoroughly acquainted with it, he might be qualified to administer and enforce it.

This leads us to notice another remarkable difference between the two systems. According to that of the Hindoos, kings are a species of gods. They have a divine origin. They are composed of particles drawn from the substance of their superior deities. They are powerful divinities in human shape. They possess uncontrollable sovereignty. Whereas, according to the original constitution of the Hebrews, God alone was their king; and in subordination to him, a counsel of elders, and a popular assembly governed the nation.

Another striking difference regards the estimation and treatment of *women*. The female sex is stigmatized in the Hindoo writings and laws as faithless, false, violent, fickle, vain, and impure. The evidence of women in their courts of justice is little regarded. The woman is placed under the absolute dominion of the man. According to the institutes of Menu “a man both day and night must keep his wife in subjection. A wife must always rise before her husband, but never eat with him. She must constantly revere him as a god, however devoid of good qualities he may be, or however enamoured of another woman. In order to insure a mansion in heaven

* Deut. iv. 6.

equal to his, she must consent to be burned alive with his corpse. At any rate she must on no account marry again. This practice is said to be fit only for cattle. Women, who are thus undervalued and enslaved, may well be expected to be very low and ignorant beings. Accordingly very few females of this country can either read or write.

How unspeakably more just and generous is the scripture doctrine on this head ! According to this the man and woman possess one nature, and in the main a perfect equality. They are formed to be mutual helpers and confidential friends. They inherit the same high privileges, duties, and prospects. There is nothing in the doctrines, laws, or narratives of the Bible, which sinks the natural disposition or moral character of females below the standard of the other sex.

With respect to the *devotion* of the Hindoos, even Sir William Jones pronounces it sublime. We grant there is something refined and noble in its professed object, which is to detach the soul from every thing corporeal, and unite it to its great original. This union with God here, acquired by intense adoration, leads, as they think, to a final absorption into his essence hereafter. But unfortunately this high state of union with God is supposed to be produced, not by real piety or virtue, but by the efficacy of certain outward ceremonies ; and it terminates in a stupid or affected insensibility to the proper duties and enjoyments of the present life. What this people call *prayer* is only the frequent repetition of certain words, especially of the mystical name *Oum*, which operates as a charm in producing what they call the *second birth*. With respect to the use of this word, and others of peculiar efficacy, the following curious circumstances

are prescribed in their institutes. Treating of the duties of the Bramin, they say, “If he have sitten on the grass of *cusa*, with the points towards the east, and be purified by rubbing that holy grass on both his hands, and farther prepared by three suppressions of breath, each equal in time to five short vowels, he may then fitly pronounce *oum*. Brama milked out from the three Vedas these three letters, together with three mysterious words, *bhur*, *bhuvah*, *swer*, or earth, sky, heaven. A priest who shall pronounce both morning and evening that syllable, preceded by the three words, shall attain the sanctity, which the Veda confers. And a thrice born man, who shall a thousand times repeat those three, shall be released in a month even from a great offence. Whoever shall repeat day by day for three years that sacred text, shall hereafter approach the divine essence, and assume an ethereal form.” A curious traveller gives this general account of the worship of the Hindoos. “Lights being set up in all the temples, and the usual music of drums and pipes sounding, I saw in one temple a priest dance before the idol naked, flourishing a drawn sword, and performing lascivious gestures. Indeed the greatest part of their worship consists in nothing but music, songs, dances, not only pleasant, but wanton, and in waiting on their idols, viz. presenting them things to eat, washing them, perfuming them, &c.”

We may add, much of the religion of this people consists in oblations to inferior deities, and to the manes of their ancestors; and many trivial and superstitious ceremonies accompany these offerings, and likewise the reading and touching of the Vedas. For instance, in making oblations to the manes, the institutes require the Bramins “not to drop a tear, on no account to be angry, to say

nothing false, not to touch the tables with his foot, nor even to shake the dishes ; for it is added, a tear sends the messes to the restless ghosts, anger to the foes, falsehood to the dogs, contact with the foot to the demons, agitation to sinners." The institutes also direct the Bramin "to begin and end a lecture on the Veda with pronouncing to himself the syllable *Om* ; for unless this syllable precede, his learning will slip away from him ; and unless it follow, nothing will be long retained."

Is there any thing like these contemptible puerilities in the institutions of Moses ? He prescribed certain ceremonies in worshipping, to preserve order, to suit the Jewish taste, to preclude whimsical or idolatrous rites, to guard and perpetuate the worship of the true God, to assist the sublime devotion of the Hebrew temple ; a temple, in which were sung the excellent songs of David. These songs contained the most pure and fervent sentiments of the human heart, addressed not to inferior gods or to dead ancestors, but to a Being of infinite knowledge and power, holiness and mercy.

A great part of the Hindoo religion, and indeed of all the systems of antient paganism, consists in unnatural austerities. The people in question carry such mortifications to a singular length. Their restrictions with respect to diet are exceedingly fanciful and burdensome. For instance, their code prohibits the use of a spirit distilled from rice for this whimsical reason—"since the spirit of rice is distilled from *mala*, or the filthy refuse of the grain ; and since *mala* is also the name for sin ; let none but the sudra drink that spirit." Wine too was thought by the eastern nations to have proceeded from some evil genius, and was therefore forbidden. This prohibition was copied by Mahomet. How much more just and liberal is

Moses, who only forbids wine to the priests during their attendance in the sanctuary, and to those who for a voluntary time subjected themselves to the law of the Nazarites. On ordinary occasions the priests, equally with the people, were indulged in a temperate and thankful use of that salutary liquid. The pious Psalmist justly blesses God for this cordial, which maketh glad the heart of man ; and Christianity expressly allows its ministers a little wine for the purposes of health. The institutes of Menu abound with similar regulations. They forbid priests to eat flesh meat, and clarified butter, till they have been first touched with some holy texts well recited, because they are the food of gods. The genuine Hindoos abhor the killing, and much more the eating of any thing, which had life. They reckon it abominable for a man to wish to enlarge his own flesh with the flesh of another creature. Their laws enact the following penalty for killing and eating any animal—"As many hairs as grow on the beast, so many similar deaths shall the slayer of it in this world endure in the next." The restrictions of other antient nations respecting food, especially of the Egyptians, savored of like superstition. According to Herodotus, Plutarch, and Juvenal, the Egyptians abstained from sea salt and fish, because they considered the sea as the excrement of Typhon, the malevolent deity. They also abhorred the use of onions and beans, and of wool in garments ; for which Plutarch accounts in the following manner. "Having a prejudice against *matter* in general, they had a stronger against *excrementitious matter*, and every thing that promoted it. Hair and wool they viewed as excrements ; and the eating of onions and beans, beside being too nutritious, and thereby increasing the matter, and especially the fat of the body,

which they regarded as excrementitious, was the occasion, they thought, of offensive excrements." How different, how unspeakably more rational are the Mosaic restrictions in the article of diet! In these we see nothing arbitrary, puerile or unaccountable, as we showed in a former lecture; but the rules now referred to wear a complexion totally opposite.

Similar remarks might be made on the other austerities recited by Dr. Priestley. For example, *pilgrimages* to distant rivers for the purpose of purifying the soul by bathing in their waters; the *dreadful methods used for mortifying the body*, such as living in forests upon raw herbs and roots, standing whole days on tiptoe, exposing the flesh to hot fires, heavy showers, and pinching frosts, living solitary and silent, without external heat, and without a mansion, renouncing every earthly connection and enjoyment, completely subduing all the passions and senses, and wholly occupied in the contemplation of God and of truth. Among the numerous *fasts* of this nation there is one of a singular purifying efficacy, consisting in abstinence from food for twelve days together in honor of the moon. On the eleventh day the worshipper eats nothing, but drinks the urine of a cow. At length he reaches the highest stage of purity, and lives on nothing but air. This people esteem *fire* as one of the greatest purifiers. Accordingly they have a festival called the *feast of fire*, which continues eighteen days; in which the devotees walk over burning coals covering a space of forty feet in length; they walk faster or slower according to the ardor of their devotion. The most extravagant, yet not uncommon act of their religion, is devoting themselves to a certain and painful death by casting themselves under the chariot wheels of

their idols, when moving in procession, or women's voluntarily burning themselves alive with the dead bodies of their husbands. In short, the Hindoo religion, though celebrated by most travellers for its singular mildness, was originally as cruel as any other. Like all other old systems of paganism, it enjoined human sacrifices, as appears from the Vedas. But the religion of the Old Testament, though stigmatized by infidels as odious and sanguinary, has no trace of the cruel austerities abovenamed. In particular it condemns those barbarous rites, and especially the practice of human sacrifices, as the greatest of those abominations, for which God destroyed the Canaanites.

Another striking feature of the Hindoo religion, is its system of penances, or atonements for particular offences. By the law of Moses a person was unclean, who had touched a dead body. But with this people the person, who only hears that a relation is dead in a distant country, is reckoned unclean. A severe penance of five days is enjoined on the offender, who drinks water in a vessel, in which there has been spiritous liquor; but for drinking that liquor itself he is doomed to drink more spirit in flame, or to drink till his death the urine of a cow. The effect of rightly pronouncing certain sacred words is peculiarly great in the business of expiation. This effect extends even to the dead, whose manes are supposed to feed upon, and receive benefit from the oblations of the living. Hence the law of Moses, to counteract these prevailing superstitions, forbids all sacrifices or religious honors to the dead. It also forbids the vain hope of expiating real crimes, or of cleansing the soul from moral defilement by any outward ceremonies. It requires in such cases hearty repentance and amendment.

Another distinguishing trait in the religion of the Hin-

doos, is their extreme veneration for the *cow*, and the great use they make of this animal in their sacred rites. It is impossible to trace this superstition to any sure or satisfactory source. Mr. Holwell, a learned writer on the antiquities of this people, accounts for their extraordinary reverence for this animal from the following circumstance. The Hindoos say that fallen spirits are doomed to transmigrate into eighty seven different bodies, which are so many ascending stages of purgation, preparatory to their entering human bodies. They likewise hold that the body of the cow is the highest of these previous stages. This idea naturally attaches to this creature a preeminent virtue and dignity. This solution would account for the fact, if a proportional respect were paid to the animal or form, which immediately preceded the cow in the climax of purification. But this is very far from being the case. It is therefore more probable that the framers of the Hindoo, and also of the Egyptian system, selected this mild and useful creature, as a suitable emblem of some deity or divine attribute, and thus laid the foundation for regarding her with sacred veneration. I shall recite a very few instances of this veneration, and of religious penance founded upon it; and if the recital be offensive to every sober and delicate mind, how much more disgusting must be the *practice* of them; and what a perverted judgment and taste must those have, who can prefer these customs to the institutions of Moses!

For various kinds of theft the sacred code of this people dooms the offender to make atonement by “swallowing the five pure things produced from a cow, viz. milk, curds, butter, urine, and dung.” One of their grand penances consists in eating for a whole day a composition of the above ingredients, and then fasting entire-

ly for a day and a night. The ashes of cowdung are esteemed peculiarly holy; with these they sprinkle their foreheads, shoulders, and breasts every morning; these they daily offer to their gods; with these the priests cover their faces and bodies; and this precious dust they scatter over their idols, and distribute among the eager multitude. In the courts of several princes certain persons are appointed to present these ashes diluted with a little water, and laid on the leaves of the Indian figtree. Whenever the king of Calicut goes to pay his devotion in the pagod, all the way, in which he passes, is purified with excrements fresh from the cow. In Malabar this matter, diluted with water, is sprinkled on the forehead, as a preservative against misfortune; which ceremony is performed on a great annual festival; and the process used in preparing and applying this composition is very curious and whimsical. If a cow dies, it is reckoned a mark of God's anger, and a warning to the owner, that when he dies, he will be consigned to the lowest region of punishment. The penances enjoined for killing this animal are awfully severe. He who kills a cow without malice, must drink for the first month barley corns boiled soft in water; his head must be shaved entirely and covered with the hide of the slain cow. For the next two months he may eat at every fourth meal, a moderate quantity of wild grains, bathed in the urine of cows, without any salt. All day he must wait on the herd, and stand quaffing the dust raised by their hoofs. At night, having servilely attended, and stroked, and saluted them, he must sit near to guard them. He must stand while they stand, follow them when they move, and lie down by them when they lie down. By following these rules for three months he will atone for his guilt. This penance being

performed, he must give ten cows and a bull, or if his stock be not so large, must deliver all he possesses, to such as best know the Veda." For killing a cow with malice the offender must in all cases suffer death.

There is nothing in the Jewish laws, which bears any likeness to the foolish superstitions just recited. On a certain extraordinary occasion indeed, the ashes of a red heifer, dissolved in water, were directed to be used for the purpose of purification. But both the preparation and the declared intention of this purgation, as we showed in a former lecture, were remarkably different from, and even opposed to heathen customs, particularly those of the Hindoos. The Hebrew law likewise kept the people pure from that idolatrous veneration for *water* and *fire*, which characterizes several other antient nations, especially the Persians and Hindoos. The Israelites indeed had a sacred fire constantly burning on the altar, because there was constant use for it ; but the common element of fire was never viewed by them as an object of reverence. They were also enjoined the frequent use of water for the purposes of health and cleanliness, and as a symbol of moral purity ; but they did not, like the Hindoos, regard water as directly a cleanser and sanctifier of the soul. Nor did they, like this people, make religious pilgrimages to distant rivers or places, fancied to be holy. They resorted indeed to one city and house of worship on their public festivals, for the noble purpose of preserving their religious and national unity, and not from a superstitious regard to one particular spot ; for their place of worship varied with circumstances ; at first it was moveable ; it was afterward fixed in Jerusalem, because that was the center and capital of their country.

There is also a striking contrast between the **Hindoo**

and Jewish rites in point of *decency* and *purity*. The former, like those of other antient heathens, are in a great measure composed of obscenity and debauchery. These impure ceremonies of the pagan religions would naturally give a tincture of lewdness to the sentiments, manners, and writings of the early ages. Agreeably the compositions even of the polished Greeks and Romans have admitted ideas and expressions, which shock the chaste and delicate feelings of modern times. The Hindoo writings are probably far more censurable in this particular, since Mr. Langles, a fervent admirer and defender of their system, has declined translating certain passages in one of their celebrated books, because he says, "they are so gross, that it is not possible to give them a decent coloring." The Jewish law, on the contrary, inculcates the greatest purity of mind and of manners. It forbids, under severe penalties, every instance of uncleanness, especially in their religious celebrations. "Thou shalt not, says their lawgiver, bring the hire of a harlot into the house of the Lord thy God. There shall be no harlot of the daughters of Israel, nor a Sodomite of the sons of Israel." There are indeed expressions in the Hebrew scriptures, which do not perfectly agree with the modern standard of decency; but this arose, not from an impure source, but from antient simplicity, which adopted the undisguised language of nature and truth; a simplicity, which far from implying or intentionally promoting loose feelings and manners, indicated such purity and rectitude of mind, as felt no shame or alarm in those phrases, which modern licentiousness has rendered unsafe and polluting. Another remarkable contrast between the Jewish and all other antient religions respects the belief and use of *charms*, or certain fanciful ceremonies intend-

ed to engage the assistance of superior beings on particular occasions. This faith in charms is prevalent among the Hindoos; it is professed by their learned Bramins, and authorized by their sacred books. They have spells for almost every purpose, for curing diseases, protecting their magistrates, repelling dangers and enemies, and even casting out demons. Mr. Richardson gives a curious account of the process, by which they expel the demon called *Daroudi Nesoch*. This demon, it seems, sometimes gets possession of the crown of the head in the form of a *fly*. The patient is directed to wash the part effected, which will drive the fiend between the eyebrows. By another washing he is driven to the back of the head, thence in regular succession to the ear, the nose, the mouth, and the chin; and at length to the left foot; from which, after a number of similar attacks, he is forced to retire under that foot, and then is completely driven away, and retires towards the north.

This people likewise in common with other early nations, abound in superstitious observances relating to particular *times* and *circumstances*. Ignorant of the true causes of events, they of course resorted to imaginary ones, particularly to the fancied agency of invisible beings; who peculiarly interposed on certain occasions. Hence the observation of certain magical rites on these occasions was deemed very essential. Let us, for example, compare the different methods for securing a long and happy life, which are prescribed by the sacred books of the Hindoos, and by those of the Hebrews. The prescriptions of the former stand thus—"Let not a man, who wishes to enjoy long life, stand upon ashes, bones, or potsherds, nor upon seeds of cotton, nor upon husks of grain." The latter gives these directions—"What man is he

that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it; for the eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry; but the face of Jehovah is against them, that do evil." To secure the future prosperity of a newborn infant, the relations assemble on the tenth day; the Bramin carefully examines the planets; and if they are found propitious, he gives it a name; otherwise the ceremony is deferred. The superstitious observances respecting the Bramins are the most numerous and extravagant. I will recite but one, as a specimen of the whole. "If a Bramin seek long life, he must eat with his face to the east; if exalted fame, to the south; if prosperity, to the west; if truth, to the north." The good or bad prognostics of this people are equally ridiculous. In the laws of the Hebrews every thing of this kind is treated with the utmost contempt and abhorrence. Could this arise from any superiority of the Jews in point of mental energy, of general knowledge and refinement? This cannot be pretended by any person of information.

We will close this comparison with a few reflections.

1. The Hindoo system wears on its very face internal marks of falsehood, arising from the gross absurdities of its doctrines and institutions. But the religion of Moses, by its contrasted wisdom and excellence, exhibits equal evidence of its heavenly original.

2. The former never pretended to the sanction of miracles; the latter not only pretended to this sanction, but by this evidence it gained, and has supported its credit for many ages.

3. It is universally agreed, that the nations of the

world in their earliest periods were free from that polytheism and idolatry, which were afterwards introduced. Yet in those early ages their natural sources of knowledge, resulting from time and study, observation and experience, must have been far smaller, than in subsequent periods. Whence it follows, that mankind must have derived their first and purest notions of religion from early revelation, or consequent tradition; and that in after ages they gradually corrupted this original faith by erroneous philosophy and consequent superstition.

4. It is a notorious fact, that those heathen nations, who have pushed their inquiries the farthest in philosophy, metaphysics, and religion, as the Egyptians and Hindoos, the Greeks and Romans, have departed most widely from the pure faith and worship of the one true God; insomuch that Dr. Priestley is correct in asserting, that the religion of the North American indians, and even of the African negroes, is preferable to that of those civilized nations. Hence

5. All history, antient and modern, fully proves this great truth, that the knowledge, worship, and obedience of one allperfect Being must have originated from a supernatural source. This alone can account for the rise and continual preservation of the true religion in the Hebrew nation. This alone will account for that pure and excellent faith, worship, and manners, which distinguish western Christians from eastern Hindoos. Let us then gratefully own and improve the divine gift of christianity.

END OF LECTURES ON JEWISH ANTIQUITIES.



LECTURES
ON
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.



LECTURES ON ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.



LECTURE I.

WE shall now commence a series of lectures on *Ecclesiastical History*. Indeed the view, which some of us have taken of *Jewish Antiquities*, may be referred to the head of Church History, understood in its largest extent. For the Jews and their pious progenitors, from Adam down to the christian era, constituted the antient church, or worshippers of Jehovah. The whole current of authentic sacred history from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ is intimately connected with and derived from the Jews. This single circumstance renders their antiquities a most interesting object of attention. A comprehensive acquaintance with ecclesiastical, and in some degree with civil history is important, both as a key and a support to divine revelation. For as many doctrines of the Bible consist in, or are founded upon historic facts; so credible history is the channel, which conveys to us the proof of these facts. A candid mind, well informed in christian antiquities, must be fully satisfied of the truth of those miracles, and the fulfilment of those prophecies, by which the divine claims of our religion are attested. Such historic information must convince us that christianity, unsupported by these extraordinary credentials, could not have triumphed over the numerous and mighty difficulties, which

opposed its progress. We may add, that as the christian dispensation stands on the Jewish, as its basis ; an historical acquaintance with each directly tends to the elucidation and establishment of both. In a word, the study of sacred history must be interesting and improving to the *philosopher*, by giving him a practical display of the human mind ; to the *man of piety and goodness*, by setting before him the wonders of Providence in favor of the church, and the bright examples of virtue and religion, by which she has been adorned ; to the *theological student and instructor*, by enabling them to distinguish the genuine and simple truths of revelation from those absurd and superstitious inventions, by which they were gradually corrupted and disgraced ; in fine it may be highly useful to *all*, by nourishing the faith and love of primitive christianity, that best gift of heaven to men, and by exciting a fervent esteem and imitation of those christian worthies, who recommended the gospel by their lives, and sealed it with their blood.

As the christian church was founded by Christ, we must trace her origin to the important era of his birth. As her early complexion and circumstances, together with the expediency and utility of her establishment, are intimately connected with the general state of the world at that period ; I will give you a concise account of the political, religious, and literary character of the age, in which our Savior appeared. This account will at once throw light on the christian history, and happily connect it, as a part of the same whole, with that of the antient Hebrews and pagans, which has been the subject of former lectures.

At the time of Christ's birth, the Roman empire embraced and united the civilized world. The remotest

nations were governed either by prefects sent from Rome, or by their own kings and laws in subordination to her supreme authority. The Roman senate and people, though retaining some shadow of antient dignity and freedom, were under the absolute power of the emperor Augustus. While this subjection of a large portion of mankind to the will of one despot was a source of grievous calamities; it also produced some eminent advantages. It united many nations in fraternal and confidential intercourse. It opened an easy and safe communication between the most distant countries. A connexion with the Romans softened and humanized many people, who before were barbarians. It diffused among them in some degree the kind beams of learning and philosophy. The Augustan age was also eminently the *age of peace*. These circumstances were highly favorable to the introduction and rapid progress of christianity. Its ministers could safely travel and preach in every country. The union, civilization, and tranquillity of so great a portion of mankind were so many channels for the speedy conveyance of sacred truth. Such a period had never been seen before. Had the Messiah been born in some preceding age, when the world was divided into little, savage, and jarring tribes or kingdoms; his religion must have been confined to his native territory. But as he appeared in a province of the Roman empire, and in the period of her greatest quiet, dominion, and prosperity; his missionaries had the fairest and widest field of action, that was ever presented. Accordingly they traversed this field with unexampled speed and success; insomuch that within about thirty years after Christ's ascension, St. Paul assures us, "the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven." The time of our Savior's

advent was also peculiarly favorable on account of the flourishing state of learning in the Augustan age, the taste for writing and reading books, and the prevalence of the Greek language, which was widely diffused through the civilized world, and afforded an excellent vehicle both for spreading and perpetuating the facts and doctrines of christianity.

While the civil and literary character of the world thus invited the appearance of its great Instructor; its moral and religious state rendered his coming indispensable. All history, sacred and profane, bears witness to the extreme degeneracy of mankind at the period before us. The purity of the patriarchal state, the strictness of republican virtue, the antient simplicity of rural and pastoral life, were now lost in the ravages of ambition and avarice, of unbounded luxury and oppression on the part of the great, and of debauching servitude, venality, and licentiousness on the part of the multitude. The Roman government, justly represented in prophecy by "a bear," had leaped upon the unoffending inhabitants of distant villages, and was greedily devouring and rioting in the spoils of mankind. In this state of things the grossest vices were pursued as innocent pleasures; and crimes, at which decency and humanity revolt, were openly avowed. The best writers of those times, as Horace, Tacitus, Juvenal, give a dreadful portrait of their moral character. The last author, after detailing the wickedness of that period, says,

"No age can go beyond us; future times

"Can add no further to the present crimes."

Such were the features of the Gentile world. Of the Jews, we need only cite the account given by Josephus, their own eminent historian—"Had the Romans delay-

ed calling these abandoned wretches to account, their city would either have been deluged by water, or swallowed by an earthquake, or destroyed like Sodom, by thunder and lightning; the Jews if possible, being more abandoned; for their notorious profligacy the whole race was extirpated.”

It is true that both Jews and heathens still retained the forms of religion. The former still adhered to the faith and worship of the one true God, and professed a high veneration for the institutions of Moses. But they had greatly corrupted the religion of their ancestors by absurd glosses, superstitious customs, and impure morals. The Pharisees, their most popular and powerful sect, had almost buried the divine law under a load of human traditions. The Sadducees, who were the freethinkers of the age, had sapped the foundations of virtue by denying a future existence and retribution. The multitude, under the influence of such blind, clashing, and depraved leaders, were sunk into woful ignorance and degeneracy. They really imagined that a strict and zealous performance of external rites would atone for allowed and abandoned wickedness. As to the Gentile nations, their established religious opinions and ceremonies had very little efficacy either to restrain vice, or to nourish virtue. For their adored gods and goddesses were in general models and patrons of criminal passions and indulgences. Their votaries could feel no obligation nor motive to be more decent and pure than their deities; they could feel no shame or remorse for imitating their example; they would rather place their security, happiness, and glory in resembling, and in this way pleasing their fancied protectors. If you ask, how could rational beings help perceiving the absurdity and immoral tendency of these religious sys-

tems? We answer, beside the astonishing influence of education, of habit, of antiquity, of civil policy and power, of private gratifications and interest, the subtle priests of paganism employed the grand machinery of oracles and divination, of miracles and prodigies, to impose on vulgar credulity; and even those sagacious and independent minds, who saw and despised the fallacy of these pretensions, were obliged to suppress or disguise their sentiments, lest they should incur the imputation and punishment of blasphemers and atheists.

But could not the learned philosophers and virtuous sages of those times correct these evils? We reply, though the genius and improvements of some eminent persons in Greece and Rome demand our admiration; though some of their speculative, and many of their practical instructions were noble and excellent; and though a few of them enforced their moral lessons by their exemplary lives; yet none had a weight of character and influence, or a fund of wisdom, resolution, and perseverance, equal to the arduous work of a general reformation. Their systems were clouded with so much ignorance and uncertainty, debased by such absurd and perplexing subtilities, involved in so much dispute and contradiction, and for the most part tinged with such demoralizing sentiments, as almost deprived them of any salutary tendency, and in many instances gave them a very pernicious effect. The philosophy of Epicurus was very prevalent at the time of Christ's birth. Epicurus, the founder of this system, maintained that *pleasure* was the chief end of man; that virtue was estimable, only as a handmaid to this; that present gratification was the sole object of a wise man, as he has no grounds to believe either in a providence or a future retribution. Though Epicurus himself by pleas-

ure intended chiefly mental and virtuous enjoyment; yet his doctrine, as generally understood and practised, was extremely hostile to strict morality, as well as to piety, and equally propitious to unbounded sensual indulgence. The principles of the *Stoics* were likewise unfavorable to virtue by giving her a rigid and inhuman aspect, and by rendering her sufficient for her own support and reward, without the sanctions of a supreme moral Governor and Judge. The *Academics*, a very numerous and wealthy sect at the period before us, asserted the impossibility of ascertaining moral and religious truth, or of determining with full satisfaction, whether there be a God or a future state, or whether virtue be the duty and happiness of man. To this sect *Cicero* gave the preference; as plainly appears from his *Questiones Academicæ*, in which he details and ingeniously consults the several doctrines of Grecian philosophy. While in his several writings he selects and adopts whatever was valuable in these various systems, and while some of his works contain excellent summaries of jurisprudence and ethics; he was able to advance no higher than uncertain or probable conjecture with regard to the fundamental principles of religion. His learned and elegant productions may therefore be ranked among the best proofs both of the strength and weakness of unassisted reason, and of the peculiar need, in which the world then stood, of a divine instructor, to elucidate and enforce the *true and certain principles* of religion and morals. If this divine teacher had sooner appeared, the necessity of his interposition would not have been so feelingly acknowledged. Had he visited mankind, before the primitive religion of man or the patriarchal and Jewish revelations had fully tried and lost their force, or the best experiments of civil policy,

learned refinement, and human philosophy had exhausted their resources ; it would have been said, that these were sufficient. He therefore waited, till the political, scientific, and moral state of the world demanded his coming ; and I may add, till the series of antient prophecy, and the general expectation of some remarkable deliverer, had prepared mankind for his reception. Do not these circumstances recommend Jesus Christ, the founder of the christian church, to our grateful esteem, as the Messenger of infinite wisdom and benevolence ?

LECTURE II.

IN our last discourse we began a series of Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, or the history of the christian religion and its professors from its origin to this day. As the christian church was founded by Christ, and derives its name from him ; it was proper to date our inquiries from the age of his birth, and to give a summary view of the peculiar state of the world at that period, which rendered the coming of a new and divine Instructor eminently seasonable and important. Had Jesus appeared, as the founder of a new institution, at an improper time, or a season different from that prefixed by the prophets ; this circumstance alone would have blasted both his character and enterprise. But we have shown that he came at the time, which exactly corresponded with antient prediction and general expectation ; at a time, when the civil and literary, the moral and religious complexion of mankind invited and earnestly called for his appearance. These circumstances recommend him to every honest mind as the true Messiah, the destined Reformer and Savior of the world.

The era of Christ's birth probably coincides with the seven hundred and forty eighth year of Rome. There is however much difficulty in accurately fixing the date of his nativity. Dionysius of Scythia, a Roman priest, in the reign of the emperor Justinian, began, about the twenty seventh year of the sixth century, to use the birth of Christ as an epoch. Before that time the Romans reckoned from the building of Rome, or from the Consuls ; the Greeks by their Olympiads ; and the eastern nations from different eras. Dionysius having introduc-

ed this new chronological standard, *Bede*, a celebrated English author, adopted it in his writings, and gave it a general currency among christians, especially in the western parts of Christendom. Hence originated the common christian era, which is supposed by writers of the most exact information to be dated about five years later than the birth of our Savior. But this mistake or uncertainty is of no importance, as we are assured of the main fact, on which our religion and salvation depend. Four sacred writers have given us the memoirs of his birth and descent, and of the leading actions and circumstances of his life. Though these form a most interesting part of the christian history, yet as we have been conversant with them from our childhood, they do not require a particular detail. I shall therefore only touch on a few passages in these memoirs, which have a peculiar connexion with the design of these lectures, or which call for our special and critical attention. Two of the sacred historians give a very circumstantial account of the extraordinary manner of Christ's birth, or his miraculous descent from the virgin Mary; and one of them expressly applies to this event that antient prediction of Isaiah, "Behold a virgin shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The opposers of christianity insist, that this prophecy, as it stands in the seventh chapter of Isaiah, evidently relates to a young woman in the time of king Ahaz, and was intended to comfort him, when terrified by the invasion of two confederate princes; by assuring him that a virgin soon to be married, would speedily bring forth a son, who should be a pledge of the approaching deliverance of his country, and the destruction of her invaders. But the application of this prediction to the birth of Jesus is sufficiently vindicated,

by these two considerations. First by the magnificent introduction of this prophecy ; “ Jehovah himself will give you a sign, that is, a prodigy worthy of himself ;” *behold a virgin shall conceive, &c.* If this intended no more than a common birth, it was wholly unworthy of so solemn a preface. Second by the abundant consolation, which this future and extraordinary event was fitted to inspire ; for it assured the distressed king and people of Judah, that notwithstanding their present danger, their family and nation should subsist for many ages, and at length be honored and blessed by the miraculous birth of a child, whose name is Immanuel. In short, this uncommon circumstance of our Savior’s nativity is not only plainly foretold by the prophets, and recorded by the evangelists, but it eminently accords with the singular purity and dignity both of his person and office.

Another particular in the history of Christ, which requires elucidation, is the striking difference between Matthew and Luke in giving his genealogy, or the line of his ancestors. But this difference is easily accommodated by remarking first, that as Matthew wrote his gospel for the Jewish converts, so he followed their established usage by commencing his genealogy with Abraham, the father of the Hebrews ; whereas Luke being a Gentile convert, and writing for Christians at large, carries up his pedigree to Adam, the father of all mankind. Second, Matthew sets down our Lord’s *political* or *royal* descent, which gave him a right to the Jewish throne, and therefore begins his deduction from Abraham, to whom the first promise of the kingdom was made. But Luke means to point out his *natural* descent, as a partaker of humanity, and therefore traces it up to the first Head or

Fountain of human nature. Third, as it had been frequently foretold that the Messiah should be the seed of David ; as the royal line of this prince, by Solomon became extinct upon Jeconiah's captivity and want of issue, and was thence transferred into the line of Nathan, another of David's sons ; as Joseph and Mary both descended from this latter stock, the one from the regal, the other from a different branch of it ; so one evangelist has vouched the regal pedigree of Jesus in the line of his reputed and legal father, the other his natural descent from David by his real mother. Of course the diversity of these accounts, instead of presenting any real difficulty, unfolds a new beauty in the gospel history ; since these genealogies united, fully substantiate the claims of Jesus, as the promised Messiah and King of the Jews.

Another striking particular in the story of Christ respects the *place* of his nativity. As antient prophecy had marked out *Bethlehem* for the scene of this event ; so Luke informs us that the fulfillment of this prediction was instrumentally affected by Augustus Cesar, who issued a decree that "all the world," that is, the whole Roman empire, "should be taxed," or that all his subjects, with their several ages, employments, and estates, should be accurately surveyed and enrolled, for the purpose of equal taxation. It had been an early usage for the citizens of Rome to be thus numbered and registered every fifth year by certain officers called *censors*. The emperor Augustus was the first, who extended this law to the Roman provinces. History informs us that all these provinces were thus surveyed three several times during his reign. The second of these surveys will near-

ly correspond with the true era of Christ's birth. By virtue of this imperial edict, Joseph and Mary, who were both of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, resorted to Bethlehem, the chief or parent city of their tribe, there to have their names and possessions recorded. Their visit to this place for a political purpose, by the requisition of a heathen emperor, was overruled by divine providence, to verify in the person of Jesus one essential mark of the promised Savior, by fixing his birth in the predicted city of David ! One difficulty however occurs in this history of Luke ; for he tells us that " this taxing " was first made, when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." Now it appears from unquestionable authority that Cyrenius was not governor of Syria until ten or twelve years after the birth of Jesus, and that a taxing or assessment was made in Judea at the commencement of his administration. But this difficulty admits of an easy and two-fold solution. It is solved by distinguishing between the *survey* and *enrollment* of citizens, which took place at the time of Christ's nativity, and the *actual levy of taxes* accordingly, which was executed eleven years after. It is also removed, as Dr. Lardner critically remarks, by the word *first*, as used by the evangelist—" this taxing was *first* made &c." This expression necessarily implies more than one census or taxation. Now Josephus speaks of one, which took place about the time of Christ's birth. This may be the instance contemplated by Luke, whose words may be thus translated—" this was the first assessment of Cyrenius, governor of Syria." The same man, who afterward governed this province, might be concerned in the first, as well as second enrollment ; and the title of governor, by which he was afterward distinguish-

ed, might be naturally used to point out the agent in both. Thus in popular language we say, that such a book or such a transaction was the work of President Adams, though the book or action existed long before the author was President.

Another question suggested by the history of Jesus is, why the birth, the life, and death of so august a personage were debased by so much poverty and suffering; especially when the prophets had described the future Messiah as a most glorious and triumphant Prince? We answer, this mean and suffering condition of the Savior forcibly inculcated the spiritual, humble, and heavenly nature of his kingdom; it showed that his religion and his church were to triumph, not by worldly policy, riches, or might, but by the force of truth, and the power of God. Besides, the Founder of the christian church was to be a teacher and example of holiness, and a sacrifice for sin, as well as an illustrious King. As a teacher of pure virtue, he must share the common fate of prophets and reformers, that is, must be hated, vilified, and persecuted, and seal his doctrine by suffering for it. As a pattern, he must display an example of perfect goodness in humble or common life, and of heroic virtue amid the severest trials. As a sacrifice for sin, he must submit to a painful and ignominious, yet meritorious death. This path of virtuous humiliation was the destined road to that splendid triumph, to that universal and everlasting empire, which he was finally to enjoy. This triumph he has already exhibited in the wide propagation and blessed effects of his gospel. It will be displayed with far greater lustre, when his kingdom shall visibly embrace and bless the whole world, and especially, when sin and death shall be wholly subdued under his feet.

Another inquiry suggested by the gospel history is this—Why did Jesus spend thirty years in obscure life, before he entered on the high office, to which he was born? The probable answer is, because it was an established rule among the Jews for the ministers of the temple to be initiated into their sacred office at the age of thirty years. Agreeably to this law, John the Baptist, our Savior's forerunner, commenced his public ministry at the same age. On the same general principle our Lord was consecrated to his office by baptism with water, which was followed with the sacred unction of the Holy Spirit, visibly descending upon him. This baptism and this unction corresponded with that washing with water, and that anointing with oil by which the Jewish high priest was initiated. It was fit that this great Priest, Prophet, and King should be inaugurated by ceremonies equally solemn, and by gifts of the Spirit far more plentiful and sublime, than those of his antient types and predecessors. On similar grounds he chose *twelve* apostles, in allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel; and *seventy* other missionaries, in allusion to the Sanhedrim, or Jewish council, consisting of seventy senators. By the first appointment he intimated that he was now supreme Lawgiver and High Priest of all the Hebrew tribes; and by the second, that the power of their Sanhedrim was superseded by his superior and divine authority. As his gospel was designed for a universal and perpetual dispensation, it was highly expedient that a select number of men should be educated in his family, and be constant witnesses of his doctrine, example, and miracles; that they should be qualified to attest with certainty his death and resurrection, and thus be able to propagate his reli-

gion to the most distant countries and ages. Such a select company were the apostles. It was fit that these prime ministers of his kingdom should be taken from the low and unlearned classes of mankind ; otherwise their success would be imputed to natural causes, and thus the evidence and glory of christianity would be greatly eclipsed. It seems at first view very surprising, that Jesus, whose eye penetrated the hearts, the most disguised characters of men, should admit *Judas Iscariot* into this domestic and confidential circle, and above all that he should appoint this mercenary and perfidious wretch the steward and treasurer of his family. Yet this part of our Lord's conduct was the result of profound and even divine wisdom ; it answered the most important and glorious ends. It showed that Jesus was willing to throw open his most secret actions, discourses, and views, not merely to his devoted friends, but to a sagacious and hardened enemy. Did ever conscious rectitude appear so dignified, as when Jesus for a long course of time freely submitted his private and public conduct to so acute and treacherous a companion ? As Judas was keeper of the common purse, he must know better than any other disciple, how his master applied its contents ; whether he devoted them to views of personal interest, popularity, or power. If he had ever discovered the least fault or even suspicious trait in the character of Jesus, he would certainly have disclosed it, especially when his own reputation and life were depending ; he would not have publicly confessed that he had betrayed innocent blood, and have sunk down into insupportable anguish and despair. The full and dying testimony of this determined traitor was therefore one of the strongest attestations to the match-

less excellence of our Savior's character, and to the truth of his pretensions; and our Lord's selection and treatment of him reflect peculiar lustre on his discernment, innocence, and dignity.

[This is the last lecture delivered by the Reverend author in this establishment. From the foregoing specimen it will be regretted, that he did not live to finish his intended course upon this highly interesting subject.]



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