



MINERVA attending JOSEPHUS, who is
 concerning TRUTH. At his feet are the Emblems of Strength & Valour. On the Pedestal of
 Ignorance is a Base of Adam & Eve. Ignorance is represented stumbling on

his WORKS according to the Law
 man Emperor Vespasian
 while Noah the Man

THE WHOLE GENUINE AND COMPLETE
WORKS
OF
FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS,

THE LEARNED AND AUTHENTIC
JEWISH HISTORIAN

AND
CELEBRATED WARRIOR.

CONTAINING NEW AND ELEGANT EDITIONS OF HIS WHOLE WORKS, viz.

- I. His History of the ANTIQUITIES of the JEWS in TWENTY BOOKS; Including all their various memorable TRANSACTIONS, and authentic OCCURRENCES, &c. from the CREATION of the WORLD.
- II. The WARS of the JEWS with the ROMANS from their Commencement to the final Destruction of JERUSALEM by TITUS, in the Reign of VESPASIAN. In Seven Books.
- III. The Two Books of JOSEPHUS in DEFENCE of the JEWISH ANTIQUITIES, against APION.
- IV. His DISCOURSE on the MARTYRDOM of the MACCABEES.
- V. The EMBASSY of PHILO from the JEWS of ALEXANDRIA to the Emperor CAIUS CALIGULA.
- VI. The LIFE of FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, written by Himself.
- VII. The TESTIMONIES of JOSEPHUS, concerning Our Blessed SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, St. JOHN the BAPTIST, &c. clearly vindicated.

THE WHOLE NEWLY TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE GREEK AND HEBREW LANGUAGES,

AND
DILIGENTLY REVISED, CORRECTED, AND COMPARED WITH OTHER TRANSLATIONS,

AND THE
Writings of Contemporary Authors of different Nations; tending to prove the Authenticity of these Works.
TO WHICH IS ADDED, TO RENDER THIS EDITION AS COMPLETE AS POSSIBLE,

A CONTINUATION

OF THE
HISTORY OF THE JEWS,

From the Death of JOSEPHUS to the Present Time, including a Period of more than 1700 Years.

CONTAINING
An Account of their Dispersion into the various Parts of EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA, and AMERICA, their different Persecutions, Transactions, various Occurrences, and present State, throughout the WORLD:
And Including a great Variety of other Interesting and Authentic Particulars; collected from former Valuable Works, recording all the principal Transactions of the Jews, since the Time of JOSEPHUS.

TOGETHER WITH
NOTES,—EXPLANATORY, HISTORICAL, BIOGRAPHICAL, CLASSICAL, CRITICAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL;
AND COMPLETE MARGINAL REFERENCES.

ALSO
C O P I O U S I N D E X E S

Of the COUNTRIES, CITIES, TOWNS, VILLAGES, RIVERS, MOUNTAINS, LAKES, &c. where the principal Transactions took Place; and every other striking Matter relative to the Subject will be here Recorded.
Likewise Tables of the JEWISH COINS, WEIGHTS, MEASURES, &c. used in the Time of the AUTHOR.
With a great Variety of other interesting and authentic Particulars never given in any FORMER EDITIONS.

By **THOMAS BRADSHAW, D.D.**

Late of EMANUEL-COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; Lecturer of PAISWICK, near GLOUCESTER; Master of the Grammar-School at PAISWICK;
Chaplain of PENTONVILLE-CHAPEL; and Afternoon-Preacher of ALLHALLOWS-BARKING, GREAT TOWER-STREET, LONDON.

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THE **XVI G. 5**
TRANSLATORS
P R E F A C E
TO THE
READERS.

THE WRITINGS of FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS have always been esteemed by the PIOUS and LEARNED, for their uniform tendency to *elucidate the History of the Old Testament* in many obscure passages; to *corroborate*, by concurring *testimony*, its general *Veracity*; and consequently to increase the *Evidence* of that *Religion* we profess, as the *Disciples* of and *Believers* in JESUS CHRIST.

Nothing can more fully ascertain the value of **THESE WORKS**, than their being so particularly useful in promoting the inquiries of Unbelievers, as they are happily calculated to convince them of their dangerous errors; to which we may add, that hereby a number of modern Sceptics have been brought to acknowledge the **TRUTH** of the **SCRIPTURES**; which the *Antiquities* of the *Jews*, as related by *Josephus*, abundantly demonstrate and confirm; whence it may be inferred, that the works in question have made more **Converts** to the doctrines of the *Old and New Testament* than the united labours of all other Writers.

Our Author has this pre-eminence of all other Historians, in that his writings abound with more *singular and well-authenticated occurrences* than those of any other, whether *anterior, cotemporary, or posterior*; they are also *replete with information*, not only of *Sacred History*, but may serve as a complete *compendium of Universal Knowledge*.—He is as *entertaining* as he is *useful*; and amply verifies the remark made long ago by one who understood human nature well, *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*: “That writer has answered every desirable purpose, who has given his readers an agreeable mixture of utility and delight.”

If we advert to the importance of the subjects communicated in the following sheets, it must be confessed, that they exceed those of other histories, which are confined within the narrow limits of human actions; whilst these represent the various and astonishing exertions of **ALMIGHTY POWER**; the marvellous *interpositions* of **DIVINE PROVIDENCE**; all of them tending to excite our admiration of the **GOODNESS** of **GOD**. Here are exhibited the various *vicissitudes* of *human affairs*, the *foundation of some kingdoms* established on the ruins of others; the **WORSHIP** of the **ONE, TRUE, and LIVING GOD**, demonstrated to be the *Religion* of **NATURE** as well as of **REVELATION**; the folly and wickedness of embracing Idolatry instead of the true Religion; and of relying on an arm of flesh, and not on the living God. Throughout the whole of these works, the practice of **VIRTUE** is recommended by *Example* as well as *Precept*, and proved to be the only way to *Prosperity* and *Honour*, whether it relates to the conduct

conduct of *Individuals*, or to that of *Kingdoms* and *States*; and that all her ways are pleasant, and all her paths peace.

The present Edition of these Valuable Writings, by means of Types of peculiar construction, and other Œconomical Measures, will be comprized on the most Cheap and Moderate Scale, in order that the Readers may have the whole at about Half the usual Price, and not be deprived of any part of the genuine History. Tautology is consequently avoided as much as possible; Conciseness is studied, so as not to injure the original meaning; Prolixity is also guarded against, that the Patience of the Readers may not be exhausted, nor their Pockets picked by useless Repeitions, which serve only to increase the Quantity of Paper, Print, and Expence to Purchasers. We have also carefully avoided the errors of other Editors and Translators, who have, purposely to extend their Publications to Unreasonable Bounds, introduced unnecessary Divisions and Subdivisions in Chapters, long-winded Heads of Contents, longer frequently than the Chapters themselves, long Letters and tedious uninteresting Speeches, interpolated by Publishers for interested purposes, and which are by no means to be considered as the Works of Josephus; Blank Paper and Loose Print at the beginning of the Books, which is only losing considerable Space that might be better employed; all which Causes of Complaint, that have been so much objected to, we have cautiously endeavoured to avoid. We have also so contrived our Marginal Notes, that we have an opportunity of using to advantage a considerable Space which others have lost through their Mismanagement; so that by these means, and in consequence of our New Improvements, we have an opportunity of comprising an extraordinary Quantity of Interesting Matter in the limits of Our Work, in order to render the whole still more complete, and more acceptable to Readers in general.

Former Translations and their respective editions have been consulted: and it is presumed that the Present Edition will meet the particular esteem of a discerning Public, on account of the pains which have been taken to render the work worthy their particular notice and preference.

Former Editions of this Kind have been extended to useless and unreasonable bounds; but this WORK, though comprized in only FORTY Numbers, will contain more Letter-Press than others which are swelled out to the enormous Compass of Sixty or more Numbers; and though other Publishers have urged the singular Utility and Convenience of Printing them in Folio, it must be evident, upon a comparative View, that this QUARTO Size is infinitely more CONVENIENT than the Folio; and that, by giving TWENTY PAGES of Letter-Press in QUARTO, closely printed, more Reading must be contained therein than can possibly be in Twelve Pages in Folio LOOSELY PRINTED, where a very considerable distance is introduced between the Lines, in order to swell it out to an unreasonable Compass. Such a Mode of Printing must considerably augment the Price, which we consider, in Works of this Important Nature, as a gross Violation of that Justice due to the Public; as such Publications should be brought into the narrowest Compass, that the Poor, as well as the Rich, may have an opportunity of deriving Information in Points contained in these Works, and which respect their Best Interests.

It is thought necessary to observe, that besides Twenty Pages of Letter-Press, every Number of this Work shall include one elegant Engraving, and sometimes two, three, or more, which is more than was ever given, or proposed to be given, in any other Work of this kind; and by the extra Number of Pages we shall be enabled to give more, in Quantity, than can be comprized in those which contain only Twelve Pages, printed with great Distances between the Lines, in order to increase the Quantity of Numbers, and subject the Purchasers to an additional Expence. New Types have been cast on purpose for this Work, by the celebrated Mr. FRY, in order to prevent the smallest Degree of a worn-out appearance, which is the Case with all other Publications of the Kind.

T. BRADSHAW.

Great Tower-Street, London.

THE
P. R. E. F. A. C. E
OF
FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS
TO HIS
H. I. S. T. O. R. Y
OF THE
ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS.

WITHOUT dwelling on the motives by which Historians are generally induced to transmit to posterity their records of past events, I will venture to assert, that the work which I have entered upon will appear worthy the attention of the world, as it comprehends an history of the antiquities, policy, and government of our nation, faithfully translated from the Hebrew writings.

When I began the History of the WARS, it was my chief intention, in that work, to explain the origin and antiquities of the Jews, the vicissitudes of fortune they underwent, and to delineate the character of their legislator; but, as I proceeded, I found the ANTIQUITIES a subject too copious to be treated in connection with any other: I therefore determined to detach it from the History of the Wars, and direct my attention to the Antiquities, previous to the wars and other succeeding events. Yet (as is frequently the case with those who engage in arduous pursuits) I was discouraged to persevere, as the work proved laborious, and my progress seemed retarded in proportion to its prolixity. Some, however, from a laudable desire of acquiring knowledge, encouraged me to proceed, and especially EPAPHRODITUS,* a man who had a propensity to literature in general, and to history in particular; and had himself held very considerable employments, experienced many changes of fortune, and manifested throughout the whole an integrity and magnanimity rarely to be equalled, and never excelled.

* *Epaphroditus* was master of requests to the emperor Nero: he was condemned to die by the emperor Domitian, because he had assisted Nero in killing himself.

I was thus prevailed on by the persuasion of so zealous a patron, and disdaining an ignominious sloth to the prosecution of a laudable undertaking, I resumed my task with a determination of completing it with all convenient speed. Besides, when I reflected that King PTOLEMY II. * (a sovereign who greatly favoured learning, and was desirous of obtaining literary information, even at immense charge) procured a Greek translation of our code of laws, constitution, and government; and that ELEAZAR our high priest, a man inferior to none of his predecessors in knowledge or virtue, could not deny to that prince the participation of the instruction and entertainment to be derived from such a work, as he knew it was the custom of our ancestors not to conceal that which might be useful to mankind in general; I held it my incumbent duty to imitate the liberality of our high priest—and the more so, as I am persuaded there are now many persons as much attached to literature, and as anxiously desirous of obtaining knowledge, as that prince was in his day.

We are assured that King Ptolemy did not obtain all our writings; those which related to the Law only were presented to him by the interpreters at Alexandria; whereas the subjects comprised in the sacred writings are innumerable, since they contain the history of near four thousand years; a history replete with surprising events respecting the various fortunes of war, the glorious achievements of heroes, and the extraordinary revolutions of states and kingdoms.

It is my earnest wish that by the authenticity of the Mosaic writings my works may be proved; conscious that nothing will be found therein derogatory to the dignity of the Supreme Being, or repugnant to his gracious designs towards men; but that, on the other hand, they will appear a display of his perfections, and a comment on his benevolence; as well as demonstrate, that all things are disposed in exact conformity to the laws of universal nature, to principles of the sublimest rectitude, and to the purest dictates of unerring truth.

Moses has amply discussed these important points: where it is requisite, his language is plain and explicit; in other parts, it abounds with allegorical figures, to investigate which requires the aid of philosophical disquisition. But dismissing this subject for the present, I shall apply myself to the work I have undertaken, and begin with the creation of the world; after making a few necessary observations, by way of introduction to the whole.

FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS.

* King of Egypt, and son of PTOLEMY I. surnamed LAGUS, and who, though only a foldier in Alexander's army, at his death got the kingdom to himself.

EXPLANATION OF THE FRONTISPIECE.

The PLATE in the foreground represents MINERVA, the GODDESS of WISDOM, attending JOSEPHUS, who, seated on a ROCK, is composing his WORKS* according to the LIGHT of unerring TRUTH, which she reflects from the MIRROR on his WRITINGS. At the Feet of JOSEPHUS are A LION, EAGLE, COAT OF MAIL, &c. &c. as EMBLEMS of STRENGTH and VALOUR. On the PEDESTAL of the ROMAN EMPERORS VESPASIAN, TITUS, and DOMITIAN, is a BASSO RELIEVO of ADAM and EVE driven out of Paradise, and the TABLES of the JEWISH LAWS, with the LAMB OF GOD, to whom they allude. IGNORANCE is introduced stumbling on DEATH, while NOAH's ARK, the RAINBOW, DOVE and OLIVE BRANCH, &c. point out the MOSAIC HISTORY; and the SETTING SUN, together with the ROMAN ARMY BURNING THE CITY OF JERUSALEM, refer to the FINAL DESTRUCTION of the JEWISH EMPIRE.

The ORNAMENT includes some IMPLEMENTS of WAR, and also EMBLEMATIC ALLUSIONS to the GOSPEL of OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, concerning whom the WORKS of JOSEPHUS give such ample and impartial TESTIMONY.

* For the TITLES of his VARIOUS WORKS, see the Title-page of this NEW EDITION.

FLAVIUS

FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS:

HIS HISTORY OF THE

ANTIQUITIES

OF THE

J E W S.

B O O K I.

Containing the TRANSACTIONS of 2230 YEARS, from the CREATION of the WORLD, to the DEATH of ISAAC the PATRIARCH.

INTRODUCTION.*

THOSE historians, who have borne an active part in the actions which they record, consider themselves as under peculiar obligations, from that very circumstance, to bear evidence to all such matters as fell within their cognizance: they are, moreover, induced to take up the pen from a generous desire of transmitting to posterity such actions as, for the general good of mankind, ought to be universally published, and not be suffered to lie buried in a disgraceful obscurity or oblivion. Under the influence of the above considerations, I have undertaken my present task, for, as I was privy to every transaction in the war between our people the Jews, and the Romans, I deem it my duty to publish to the world a true state of all that passed during the above period, and to expose the falsehoods and misrepresentations which have been introduced into the relations of other writers upon the subject.

The Author's design. It has been part of my design to trace the origin of the Jews, and to treat of their various fortunes, and of their excellent legislator, by whom they were trained up in the practice of such exemplary virtue and piety; and also to relate the incidents of the various wars in which they were engaged for so many ages, particularly of the last, which they were compelled, however averse to it they were, to maintain against the Romans. I was led to this resolution by the reflection that our ancestors had always manifested the greatest readiness to communicate such matters to the natives of the neighbouring countries; and that the Greeks themselves had repeatedly expressed an affectionate inquisitiveness relative to the history of our nation.

A suitable disposition in the reader enjoined.

In the perusal of this history, there is one circumstance more particularly deserving the reader's attention; which is, that they who resign themselves to the will, and obey the ordinances of the Almighty, prosper even beyond belief in all their undertakings, and enjoy, besides, the promise of ecstatic and eternal bliss in a life to come; whereas the ungodly, on the other hand, are defeated in all their designs, how feasible soever they may appear, and are plunged

* The Editor, in arranging the introductory matters to the different parts of this Work, has carefully attended to the original Versions in the Hebrew and Greek, for it was first written in the former language by order of *Vespasian*, and then translated into the latter. He has therefore, in producing this Edition, endeavoured to dispose of the division of Books, Chapters, Contents, &c. ac-

cording to the Author's original intention, and in the most economical manner, in order to bring the whole into the most moderate compass possible, carefully avoiding all interpolations of former Translators and Editors, who have used such means merely to extend their Editions to an unreasonable length and unnecessary expence.

into endless misery and woe. Let the reader, therefore, conform himself, in all things, to the divine will, and maturely reflect on what Moses, our legislator, has said respecting the nature of God, and the correspondence which subsists among all the works of his hands; observing, at the same time, how free the narrative of our great lawgiver is from those fictions which abound in the relations of other writers. Yet, when the distance of time in which he wrote is considered, it will appear plain, that he might have imposed upon us whatever fables he had pleased, without any danger of detection; as our history commences above two thousand years prior to the fabulous narrations of the ancient poets: neither have the heathens themselves the audacity to trace so far back the origin of their false gods, the boasted actions of their heroes, or the codes of their legislators. But as the authenticity of the narrative depends, in a great degree, on the authority of what Moses, in his wisdom thought fit to deliver, it will be necessary to premise something concerning Moses himself, in order to prevent all cavils; as my readers will naturally be surprised to find so many philosophical digressions in a work which, in the title, promises nothing more than a plain narration of historical facts.

Honourable
testimony of
Moses.

It must be observed, that this excellent person contends, that every man, who would live virtuously himself, or promulge laws for the regulation of the lives of others, must, in the first place, sedulously apply himself to obtain all possible intelligence as to the nature of the Divine Being, and, as far as the weakness of his condition will permit, to form himself on that perfect model. Without this application, no legislator can support the character he assumes; neither can he profit others by his writings, unless he convinces them, in the first place, that God is the Father and Lord of every thing that has existence; that nothing is concealed from his knowledge; and that he rewardeth the godly man, and severely punisheth those who wander from the right path. These were the doctrines which Moses taught the people committed to his care. He did not, like other legislators, begin with enacting laws for the preservation of their rights and properties, nor with regulating the forms of stipulations, contracts, and the like; but his first care was, to give them a just idea of the power of God in the creation of the world, and of the superior excellence of man over all other earthly beings: and having possessed their minds with a due reverence of the Almighty, he found them likewise susceptible of every other laudable impression. But the lawgivers of the heathens, who were guided solely by the fabulous traditions handed down to them, have, with the utmost freedom, imputed to their gods such lewdness as would disgrace the most lascivious of men, and thus, by these examples, have they authorized and incited mankind to the commission of every species of wickedness imaginable. Our legislator, on the contrary, having, in the first place, represented to us that God is the very essence of holiness and purity, proceeds to demonstrate, that every man is bound to exert his utmost endeavours to render himself a partaker, in some degree at least, of the sanctity of that Divine Original; denouncing, finally, a rigid sentence against the unbelievers, and such as will not admit these truths.

I presume that every reader, who examines this work by the foregoing standard, will find each part thereof perfectly consonant with reason, and with the goodness and majesty of the Divine Being. It will be seen that I have varied my mode of treating on the different matters mentioned by our great legislator; slightly touching only upon some, illustrating others by apt illusions, and, with respect to such passages as were most worthy of a thorough investigation, I have rendered the sense of them as perspicuous as language will admit.

C H A P. I.

The World created in six Days, with the distinct Operations of each Day. The seventh Day, a Sabbath. Formation of Adam and Eve, and the Etymology of their Names. The Garden of Eden planted, and inhabited. Of the forbidden Fruit. The Serpent tempts Eve. The Fall of Adam and Eve, and the Curse pronounced in consequence of that Event.

Creation of
the world.
Gen. i.

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;* but the earth was overspread with an impenetrable darkness. The Spirit of God, by his omnipotent Fiat, commanded that there should be light,

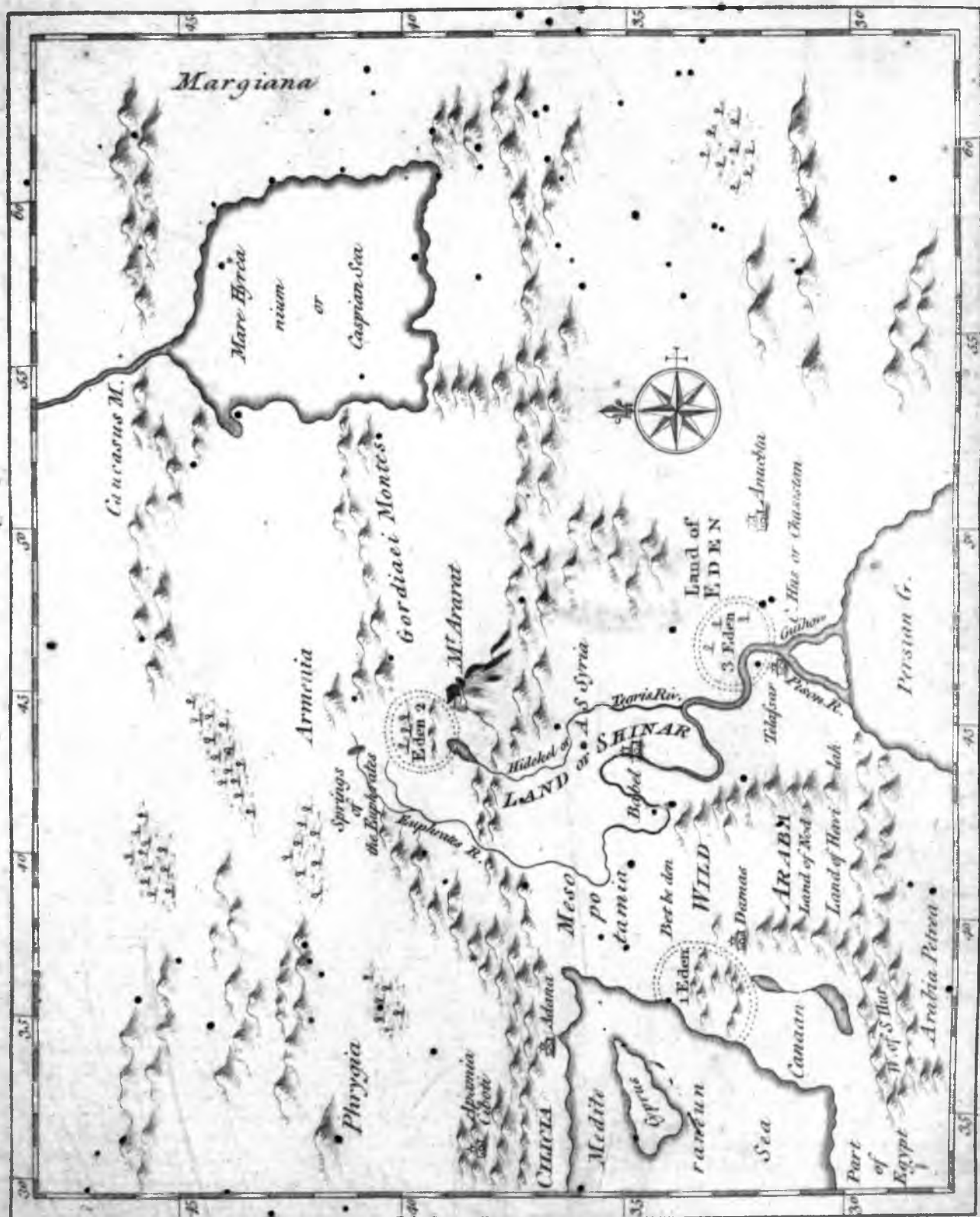
and, upon its appearance, having viewed the mass, he divided the light from the darkness; styling the darkness night, and the light day. The earlier hours of the day he called morning, and the conclusion of it, the time after the departure of the day, evening: and this was the division of the first day. Moses emphatically terms it *one* or *a* day, and not the first day.

The second day was employed in the construction of the firmament, or heaven, which was placed high above the rest of the works of creation, being separated from the grosser particles of the earth, and surrounded with a crystalline atmosphere; and the air was impregnated with that

* Though the Jews, by *the heaven and earth*, understood the universe, as appears from Acts xvii. 24. yet it is evident that Moses, in the subsequent part of his account, confines himself to describe

only the creation of the solar system, or this visible world; and though he here asserts, that God is the creator of all things, yet it is used as a preface, not as an explanation of the remaining part.

A MAP of the FIRST AGE of the WORLD.



N^o 1. Situation of the Garden of Eden according to Berosus, Herodotus, and Le Clere.

N^o 2. Situation of the same place, according to Reland, Dru, Calmet, and Sanson.

N^o 3. Situation of the Paradise according to the System of Tully, Richard, Will, Hot & Poth.

due proportion of humidity, which produces those refreshing showers by which the earth is enabled to "bring forth her fruits in due season."

On the third day God fixed the earth, which had hitherto floated, and encompassed it with the sea; and on the same day the various species of plants, with their seeds, were produced.

The sun, the moon, and the other planets, with the stars, were formed on the fourth day; being intended both to embellish the firmament in which they were placed, and also, by the regularity of their motions and courses, to mark out to the inhabitants of the world the progression of time, and the revolving seasons.

On the fifth day God created the fish, and feathered fowl; and sent them forth in couples, having endowed them with the faculty of propagation; that every creature, according to its species, might increase and multiply upon the face of the earth.

The work of the sixth day consisted in the formation of various species of quadrupeds, male and female*; and on this day God also created the most noble of all his works, MAN. Thus, in the words of Moses, "In six days God made the world, and all that is therein."

The sabbath appointed.

The Almighty, having thus accomplished the grand undertaking, ceased from his labours, and rested† on the seventh day. Hence it is that we distinguish this day by the title of Sabbath, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies Rest, and a prohibition of every kind of worldly occupation.

Origin of mankind.

After recounting these particulars, Moses expatiates upon the works and offices of nature, beginning with the creation of man: "God," says he, formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life; so that he became a living soul." He adds, that this man was named *Adam*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *red*; that pure and rich kind of earth, from which he was formed, being of that colour in its original state.

By the command of God, all living creatures, male and female, passed in review before Adam, who gave to each a name, according to their respective species and natures, by which they have ever since been distinguished.

Woman formed.

The solitude in which Adam had hitherto lived being considered as, in some measure, a diminution of his happiness, God was pleased to provide a suitable companion for him in the person of Eve, who was formed from one of the ribs of Adam, taken from his side during a deep sleep; and he no sooner saw

her, than he acknowledged the consanguinity, and gratefully received her as an amiable partner, bountifully granted to him for his comfort and help, styling her "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh". The common Hebrew term for a woman is *Iffa*, but this woman, being the first, was styled *Eva*, signifying the *Mother of all living*.

It is further related by Moses, that God planted a garden, afterwards called Paradise, in the eastern part of the earth, filled with every species of salutary vegetables and fruit trees; the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil among the rest.

Paradise.

The care of cultivating this garden was entrusted to Adam and Eve. A large river, which divided itself into four branches, ran through, and surrounded it. The first of these branches, styled, in the Hebrew tongue, *Pison*, signifying fulness or inundation, and by the Greeks, *Ganges*, directs its course through India, and loses itself finally in the sea: the second, called, in our tongue, *Phora*, meaning dispersion, or a flower; and the third, which we call *Diglath*, or narrow and rapid, are both called *Euphrates* by the Greeks, and they empty themselves into the Red Sea‡: the fourth branch shapes its course through Egypt, and is called by us *Gihon*, which means, to come from the east; but the Greeks term it the Nile.

The four rivers of Paradise.

The bountiful parent of universal nature permitted Adam and Eve to eat of every fruit in the garden, except that of the tree of knowledge, which they were prohibited from tasting, upon pain of death. Hitherto a perfect harmony had subsisted among all the creatures; and the serpent appeared to be particularly familiar with Adam and Eve; but, being envious of the happiness they enjoyed, while they continued in their obedience to the commands of God; and knowing the misery they would bring upon themselves by a disregard of the divine injunction, tempted the woman to taste of the fruit; by representing to her, that, upon eating of it, she would be endued with a miraculous power of distinguishing between good and evil, would attain to an equal portion of happiness with her Creator; and by tasting the fruit, both herself and her husband would immediately become more exalted and godlike beings. Thus was the woman prevailed upon to violate the command of God; and the flavour of the fruit proved so grateful to her, that she solicited her husband also to eat of it, who immediately yielded to her persuasion. The virtue of the fruit beginning now

The tree of knowledge.

The temptation.

* The animals are in the sacred text divided into three classes; 1. *Behemah*, beasts of burthen, which includes the cattle, and all tame animals; 2. *Hiho arets*, the beasts of the earth, under which term are comprehended all wild beasts; and, 3. *Remiz*, which signifies reptiles or creeping things.

† The rest here implied is not that which is caused by fatigue, but a voluntary cessation from creating.

‡ By the Red Sea the Arabian Gulf is not intended, but the whole of the South Sea, which includes the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf that extends to the East Indies.

§ Eve gazed so long upon the fruit, that its beautiful hue and its miraculous effect so heated her passions, that she ventured to pluck the fruit, and ate her own death. Not satisfied with the ruin of herself, she offers the fatal fruit to her husband, who, listening more

The fall, and
his awful ef-
fects.

to operate upon them, they perceived that they were naked*, and made themselves coverings of fig-leaves, woven together, to conceal their shame; no doubt considering this discovery of their wants, the certain effect of disobedience, as an increase of their happiness.

Some time afterwards, Adam, perceiving the Almighty walking in the garden, was struck with a consciousness of his guilt, and attempted, for the first time, to conceal himself. But God, ordering him to draw near, demanded, why he, who had hitherto so eagerly sought all opportunities of presenting himself before his Creator, should now avoid him? Adam was incapable of replying; and the

Trial and con-
viction of the
offenders.

Almighty thus proceeded: "I had made every necessary provision for the ease and happiness of your life, nor had I left you even a single wish to be gratified; neither could your enjoyments have been interrupted by the infirmities of old age; but as you have dared to break through the restrictions I had laid on you, and are unable, through guilt, to offer any plea in defence of your conduct, I will shorten the number of your days."

Adam endeavoured to extenuate his offence in the best manner he could, and, after using some arguments to palliate his crime, cast the whole blame upon his wife; but instantly became confounded, mute, and motionless.

The woman, on her part, sought to exculpate herself, by alledging that the serpent had seduced her from the obedience which she owed to the divine command. God, therefore, to punish Adam for

Sentence and
curse denoun-
ced.

listening to the insinuations of his wife, pronounced a curse on the ground; declaring that, in future, it should produce nothing but what should be extorted from it by labour and the sweat of man's brow; neither should its produce be always answerable to his expectation and assiduity. The sentence denounced against Eve, in consequence of her complying with the suggestions of the serpent, and afterwards drawing Adam into the same snare, was, "in sorrow to bring forth children;" and, as the just punishment of the malice and wiles of the serpent, God deprived him of the gift of speech, put poison under his tongue, condemned him to the loss of his feet, and to crawl upon his belly in future; he also branded him as the avowed enemy of mankind; further predicting, that Eve should tread upon his head,

to the clamours of affection than to the still small voice of reason, received it from her, choosing rather to die with her than to live without her.

* Their eyes were opened, but alas! only to behold their folly and impiety: as they now perceived their nakedness, and the wretched degradation of their nature. By the expression, *they knew that they were naked*, some interpreters understand their being stripped of that robe of glory with which God had adorned their bodies, as a badge of their innocence and immortality. But the

that being the source of all our miseries, and the part in which he is most susceptible of a mortal wound. Immediately after the denunciation, of these penalties, the Almighty dismissed our first parents from the garden of Eden, as no longer worthy to inhabit that region of pure and uncorrupted bliss, and appointed angels to prevent their return thither any more for ever.

Adam and Eve
expelled from
Paradise.

C H A P. II.

The History of Cain and Abel. God calls Cain to an Account for murdering his Brother. The Invention of Weights and Measures discovered by Cain, who builds the first City. Jubal the Inventor of Music. Tubal-cain the first Artificer in Brass and Iron-Work. Death of Adam. Seth and his Sons apply themselves to the Study of Astronomy. The Pillars of Seth.

EVE bore two sons, which were her first children: the eldest was named Cain, which means *Possession* or *Acquisition*; and the second was called Abel, signifying *Affliction*, or *Sorrow*. The tempers and dispositions of these brothers were as different as their occupations. Abel, whose profession was that of a shepherd, led a virtuous and godly life: whereas Cain, who was a husbandman, and the first inventor of tillage, abandoned himself to all kinds of wickedness. He was influenced by avaricious and interested motives alone; and proceeded so far in his wickedness as, on the following account, to put his own brother to death, and thereby became the perpetrator of the first murder. They had mutually agreed to offer a sacrifice to God: Cain's oblation consisted of the fruits of the earth; but Abel offered up the milk and firstlings of his flock. The latter sacrifice was solely the production of nature, and gave the most satisfaction to the Almighty; whereas the other appeared to be rather an offering extorted by avarice, industry, and force, than a testimony of the good-will of the sacrificer. The preference thus manifested for Abel, gave such high offence to his brother, that he privately slew him, and concealed his body†. When God, who knew what had passed, inquired of Cain, where his brother was, he betrayed great confusion, and replied, with much he-

Birth of Cain
and Abel.

Cain murders
Abel.

term *nakedness* is often used in Scripture to signify the turpitude of vice; and this seems the true import of it here; for after Adam had made himself an apron to cover his body, he told his Maker that he was naked; that is, he was convinced that he was divested of his purity and innocence, the true ornament of his nature.

† St. John gives a much better reason for the murder of Abel by his brother Cain: "Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." St. John iii. 12. Besides, Cain did not look to the great Antitype, which Abel, by faith, did; see Heb. xi. 4.

utation,

situation, that he had not seen him for some time past, and was much surprised at the circumstance. Being questioned more closely, he answered, with great insolence, that he was "not his brother's keeper, nor was he of his council." God now charged him home with the murder of his brother, and he was compelled to acknowledge the fact. Upon his submission, however, God was pleased to remit the punishment of "blood for blood;" but pronounced

His punishment.

a curse on him and his descendants, to the seventh generation, and banished him, together with his wife, to a distant part of the earth. This sentence filled him with terror, lest, in wandering through the world, in search of a settlement, any accident should befall him; but, to preserve him from every danger to which he might chance to be exposed, either from man or beast, God set a distinguishing mark on him, as a token of protection, and then dismissed him from his presence, to wander about the earth.

Wickedness of Cain.

Cain accordingly departed with his wife; and, after travelling through various countries, they fixed their residence at Nais (by some called Naid, and by others Nod), and here they had many children; but, instead of being reformed and benefited by his afflictions, and the chastisement of his Creator, he became more dissolute than before, abandoning himself, without reserve, to every species of lust and violence. He enriched himself by continual depredations on the property of others, and, selecting for his associates the most profligate of the human species, shewed himself capable of giving pernicious instructions and examples even to these adepts in villainy. By the introduction of weights and measures, he destroyed the honest simplicity and plain dealing of former times, and substituted policy, craft, and fraud, in the place of the ancient candour and generosity. It was he who, influenced by ambition and avarice, first violated the general rights of mankind, by dividing and inclosing the land in separate portions. And he also founded the first city, which having surrounded with walls, and fortified by a rampart, he called Enos, or Enoch, after the name of his eldest son, obliging his family and dependents to dwell therein.

Enoch, the first city.

Cain's progeny.

These were the descendants of Cain: Enos begat Jared: Jared begat Mahalaleel; Mahalaleel begat Methuselah; and Methuselah begat Lamech, whose two wives, Zillah and Adah, bore him seventy-seven children. By the latter of these wives he had Jabal, who was the first man that dwelt in tents, and employed himself in the occupations of a pastoral life. Another of his sons, by the same wife, was named Jubal; a great proficient in the science of music, and to whom we are indebted for the invention of the psaltery, and the harp.

Jubal invents music.

His wife Zillah bore him Tubal-cain, a renowned warrior, and who first discovered the art of working in brass and iron: he had a daughter, whose name was Naamah.

Lamech, who had always strictly observed the progress of divine justice, conscious that his own family was involved in that dreadful judgment, which had been denounced against the whole race of Cain, on account of the murder of Abel, made his wives acquainted with the particulars of that event. During the life of Adam the accursed race of Cain increased daily in atrocious wickedness; not only imitating, but even surpassing the most pestiferous examples of former times. War and rapine were their chief delight; and, if any of them chanced to be free from the guilt of homicide, they were equally addicted to avarice, pride, and other vices and outrages.

Adam, who had now attained his two hundred and thirtieth year, applied himself very assiduously to people the earth. He survived this period seven hundred years, and left several children, one of whom was named Seth. It would take up too much time, and would answer no purpose, to particularize the offspring of Adam*; and I shall, therefore, confine myself to the mention of Seth alone. He was educated by his father with great care; and no sooner became capable of distinguishing between good and evil, than he applied himself wholly to the practice of virtue. He became eminent for his qualifications; and his children closely copied the example of their excellent father. They lived in the utmost harmony and happiness, both amongst themselves, and with the rest of mankind. They contemplated the power of the Divine Being, as manifested in his various operations, and were the first persons who studied the motions and influences of the heavenly bodies. Having been forewarned by Adam of an universal deluge and conflagration, they erected two pillars, one of brick, and the other of stone, which they were of opinion would, one or the other of them, be proof against every attack either of fire or water. They engraved upon these pillars their discoveries and inventions, lest, in a series of ages, the knowledge of the science itself should become extinct. Their precaution was not vain; for, to this day, namely, of Josephus, the stone pillar is to be seen in Syria†.

Seth's virtuous character.

Two pillars raised by his children.

C H A P. III.

The Wickedness of the World, and the Judgment of the Almighty upon it. The general Flood. Construction of the Ark, for the Preservation of Noah and his Family. The ten several Generations from Adam to

* An old tradition says, that the number of Adam's children was 33 sons, and 23 daughters.

† What is here said of Seth, and his virtuous posterity, is exactly suitable with the other dispensations of Providence in the first ages. the

the Flood. Commencement and Progress of the Flood. Noah goes out of the Ark, and performs Sacrifices. The Prayer of Noah. Answer and Charge of God to him. The Term of his Life.

MANKIND lived for seven generations according to the principles of virtue, and in the love and fear of the Almighty; but they afterwards disregarded the duties of religion and moral rectitude, and so far degenerated from the manners of their predecessors, as to study to excel in vice with double the avidity that they had before shewn to emulate each other in the practice of virtue. The abominable impiety which now prevailed, called down the wrath of heaven upon the human race; and the virtuous and pious part of the men (called by Moses the sons of God) intermarrying with profane women, a perverse and disobedient generation was produced; who, being confident of their strength, and hardened by their crimes, may with some propriety be compared to the giants in the Greek fables, who are represented to have confounded and destroyed right and justice by an undue exertion of superior strength and power, and to have rendered themselves odious by their repeated enormities.

Noah, who retained his integrity, was shocked to behold the general depravity, and laboured to effect a reformation by persuasion, argument, and by exerting his authority; but finding, at length, that his endeavours to reclaim this incorrigibly obstinate race would not prevail, and apprehending violence and barbarity in return for his good-will, more especially as they seemed devoted to the most impious courses, he removed with his family and all his people, from this land of wickedness, and the excesses of its abandoned inhabitants. The virtue and integrity of this holy man gained him the favour of God; but the general corruption of the age had increased to such a shocking pitch of extravagance, that the Lord determined to extirpate the present race of mankind, and in their stead to supply a more virtuous generation, limiting the term of their lives to one hundred and twenty years.

Duration of human life limited.

Lineage of Noah.

Noah was descended in a right line from Adam, and was the tenth in succession, being the son of Lamech, Lamech of Methuselah, Methuselah of Enoch, Enoch of Jared, Jared of Mahalaleel (who had several brothers) Mahalaleel of Cain, Cain of Enos, Enos of Seth, Seth being the son of Adam. God signified to Noah his intention to destroy the world by a flood, and commanded him to form an ark of three hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and thirty in height; and that this ark should contain four stories, and be constructed sufficiently firm and compact to resist the wind, and also the attack of the most violent surge, or boisterous storm. In obedience to the command of the Almighty, Noah, having con-

structed the ark, entered it with his wife and sons and their wives, taking with him male and female, in pairs, of every creature living; and seven couples of some kinds, for the preservation of the several species, having previously supplied the ark with proper food, and every thing necessary for their accommodation. Noah having duly complied with the instructions given him, the Almighty caused an universal deluge to overspread the earth, which swallowed up and destroyed all living creatures, except those appointed to be preserved in the ark.

It was in the second month when the deluge happened, which month the Macedonians called Dios, and the Hebrews Marfaune, according to the Egyptian manner of dividing the year. Nisan, which signifies Xanthicus, is called the first month by Moses, on account of its being the month in which he brought the Israelites out of Egypt; and this computation he invariably observes in matters which relate to the divine worship: but in regard to fairs, trade, and other civil matters, he admits the calculation of time as it was delivered to him by tradition. At the time of the general inundation, Noah was aged six hundred years: according to Moses, the first rain towards drowning the world, fell on the twenty-seventh day of the before-mentioned month, in the year of the world 2256*; and this corresponds with the holy scriptures, wherein the most particular accounts are given of the births and decease of the most remarkable men of the early ages of the world.

Adam was two hundred and thirty years old when he begat Seth, and at the age of nine hundred and thirty he died. Our great progenitor, after living 930 years, resigned his breath into the hands of his Creator, having seen his issue in the ninth generation. Besides the griefs he bore for his own personal transgression, he had the mortification to see an early rupture in his family, which ended in unnatural murder: he was witness to that universal corruption which provoked the Almighty to destroy mankind by a deluge. Seth begat Enoch at one hundred and five, and he died at nine hundred and five; leaving a son named Cainan, who lived to the age of nine hundred and ten years. Cainan was succeeded by a son, whom he begat at one hundred and seventy years old, named Mahalaleel, who died at eight hundred and ninety-five, leaving his son Jared to succeed him, whom he begat at one hundred and sixty-two, and who died at nine hundred and sixty-nine. When he was one hundred and sixty-two, his son Enoch was born, and having attained his three hundred and sixty-fifth year,

Time of the flood.

Age and Death of Adam.

Seth's descendants.

* At the time of the flood, the year commenced about the autumnal equinox.

"he went to God, and was no more seent." In the hundred and sixty-fifth year of Enoch's age, he had a son born, called Methuselah; and at one hundred and eighty-seven, he had another son, named Lamech, in whose favour he resigned the government which he had possessed for the space of nine hundred and sixty-nine years. When Lamech had held his commillion seven hundred and seven years, he transferred it to his son Noah, who was born when his father was one hundred and eighty-two years old, and Noah continued in the administration nine hundred and fifty years. Admitting Noah's age to have been six hundred years at the time of the flood, and adding the ages of the several persons above-mentioned, the amount will appear to correspond exactly with the number of years above specified, as the period when the deluge took place. But it is our business more particularly to consider the birth, than the death of these men, who lived till they had propagated many generations.

Beginning of
the general
deluge.

The appointed time being arrived, God commanded the waters to pour from the clouds, and for the space of forty days a very violent and incessant rain fell upon the earth, the most elevated parts of which were covered to the depth of fifteen cubits. At the end of the forty days the waters began to decrease, and in about one hundred and fifty days more, on the twenty-seventh of the seventh month, the ark ceased to float, being left aground upon a mountain in Armenia. When Noah discovered this circumstance, he looked from a window, and perceiving that the water had sunk beneath some parts of the earth, he congratulated himself in the pleasing reflection, that the most melancholy part of the dreadful scene was past.

Raven and
dove sent out.

The water continuing gradually to decrease, Noah turned out a raven, which returned to the ark; whence he concluded that he could not safely venture abroad, and therefore deferred taking any measures towards a discovery for seven days longer, when he sent out a dove, which soon afterwards came back, her feathers being discoloured with slime and dirt, bringing an olive branch in her mouth; and this he considered as a certain token that the flood had nearly subsided; and that no further danger was to be apprehended. In seven days after this, Noah turned all the creatures abroad, and then going forth himself, with his family, his first business was to offer sacrifice to his Creator, after which he joined in rejoicing with his several relations. The spot on which the ark was left was called, by the

Noah quits
the ark, and
offers sacrifice
to God.

† This is beautifully expressed by St. Paul, who, speaking of the happy translation of Enoch, says, "Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Heb. xii. 5.

No. 1.

Armenians, Apobaterion, or the place of a descent*.

The authors of pagan history have severally spoken of the deluge and the ark; and Berosus, the Chaldean, writes hereupon to the following purpose:

Testimonies
of heathen
writers concerning the
ark.

"They say that there are some remains of this vessel still to be seen on the mountains of the Cordyæanes in Armenia, and that the inhabitants of the adjacent country scrape the pitch from the planks, prizing it as a rarity, and carrying it about them as an amulet, or charm against the accidents of life." Hieronymus, the Egyptian, speaks of this matter in his Phœnician Antiquities, and it is also taken notice of by many other writers. Nicholas of Damascus, writes to the following effect in his history: "In the province of Minyas, in Armenia, there is an high mountain, called Baris, whither, as tradition relates, great numbers of people fled for refuge at the time of the general deluge. There is also a tradition, that a vessel, with a man in it, stuck upon the above mountain, and that part of the timber remained there a long time. Probably this is the man whom Moses has mentioned."

Under the persuasion that God had pronounced a sentence of destruction against the human race, Noah was dreadfully apprehensive that the judgment would be repeated, and even that an inundation of the universe would take place annually; he therefore offered sacrifices, and humbled himself in prayer, before the Lord, beseeching the Almighty, "to continue the world in its original order; to chastise the wicked, and shew favour to the unoffending, and not to act in wrath against the whole race for the vices of some individuals, whereby those who had survived the devastation, would be involved in greater misery than those who had met their fate in the waters which had overwhelmed the world; and would besides labour under the distressing idea of having been preserved from one calamity to become sharers in another dismal event, similar to that of which they had already been melancholy witnesses." He fervently supplicated the Creator "to hear his prayers, receive his sacrifice, and, removing his indignation from mankind, permit them again to cultivate and enjoy the fruits of the earth, and to restore to them those blessings and comforts of life, which they had experienced before the flood." He moreover prayed for long life to himself and his descendents, and that such children as should be born to him in future, might not perish, till they had numbered the days of their forefathers.

The righteousness and piety of Noah was so acceptable to God, that his petition was not wholly

* This is the proper meaning of the Armenian name of this city. This place of descent is a lasting monument of Noah's preservation; and in this place a city was built, that it might not be forgotten in future ages.

D

rejected;

rejected: the Almighty said to him, that "he was not himself the author of the judgment, but that the atrocious and complicated vices of mankind had called down the vengeance of heaven; that he gave not life with an intention of taking it away again, for that it would have been better not to have created man, than to have given him existence, under that condition: "but (said God) though my wrath has been provoked by the violation of the reverence due to me, I will prove to you that I am neither inexorable or too severe: your mediation has, in some degree, prevailed upon me not to inflict so heavy a punishment again upon future sinners; therefore, be not alarmed at the contention of the elements, for however storms and tempests may prevail, be assured that the world will be in no danger of a second inundation. I strictly enjoin you, however, not to stain your hands with human blood, and to inflict the severest punishment upon the perpetrators of murder. Saving the human species, every creature, whether living upon the earth, swimming in the waters, or flying in the air, are now left to your disposal, and under your command, excepting only the blood, wherein the life of the animal is placed: and as a token of my covenant, that the arrows of my wrath shall not strike mankind again in the same terrible manner, and that the world shall be no more destroyed by water, I will fix my bow in the skies." The rainbow was considered as the emblem and token of the bow of the Creator*.

For three hundred and fifty years after the flood, Noah lived in the full enjoyment of ease and security, so that the whole of his life was comprised in the space of nine hundred and fifty years. To compare the time allotted to the existence of the antediluvians, with the contracted limits to which the days of the present generation are confined, will afford no reasonable arguments against the authenticity of the traditions before us; for it does not follow, because the lives of the present inhabitants of the earth are confined to a short period, that our forefathers must have been under the same predicament. In the early ages, man lived in the observance of duty and reverence to Almighty God, who was pleased to allow him a great length of days, to which the simplicity in their manner of living may be supposed to have conducted in a great measure. Providence also found it necessary, for the promotion of virtue, and for cultivating the study and improvement of astronomy and geometry, to give a long date to the life of man; for (agreeable to the computation of the great year) no less a space of time than six hundred years was required for making accurate experiments in those sciences.

* There is no doubt but the rainbow appeared in the clouds long before the flood, as it arises from natural causes; and what is here meant by fixing a bow in the clouds, is the appointing it to answer a

CHAP. IV.

Shem, Japhet, and Ham, the three Sons of Noah, settle in Sennaar. Transactions of Nimrod, Grandson to Noah. Design of the Tower of Babel, frustrated by the Confusion of Tongues.

SHEM, Japhet, and Ham, the three sons of Noah, were born about an hundred years previous to the general deluge; and they were the first who ventured to reside in the plains; the dread of a second flood having induced men hitherto to confine their abode to the mountains. They called the place, in which they first established themselves, Shinar. But, in order the more effectually to people the earth, to maintain peace and harmony among mankind, and that each man might have a more free and undisturbed possession of his property, and enjoy the fruits of the earth in greater plenty, God was pleased to command them to separate themselves, and to settle in different parts. But such was the ignorance and obstinacy of these people, that they totally disregarded the divine injunction, and remained in the same place where they at first planted themselves, till God made them sensible of their fault in the punishment which he inflicted on them. In a course of time they became numerous and powerful, and the Almighty once more admonished them to disperse; but they nevertheless persisted in their contumacy, not only forgetting from whom they derived all the blessings they enjoyed, but arrogating to themselves the credit of their successes; and, what was still worse, impiously construing the advice which had been given them, to separate themselves, into a latent design, first to divide and weaken their force, and then to reduce them to a state of ignominious subjection, for the more easily exterminating them in a disunited than in a conjunctive situation.

The settlement of Noah's sons

The person who chiefly instigated the people to this audacious contempt of the command of God, was Nimrod, the nephew of Ham, one of the sons of Noah; a very brave man, but so extravagantly vain, that he would frequently boast that he owed his present dignity to his own courage and conduct alone, independent of any providential blessing from the Almighty. Thus he endeavoured to obtain an unlimited power over the people; being fully persuaded that they might easily be induced to apostatize from their duty to God, if they should previously confer on him the chief command. And lest their dread of a second deluge should deter them from entering into his views, he informed

Nimrod's pride and tyranny.

particular purpose. It was now pointed out to all future generations as a monument of God's covenant with Noah, and his engagement that the world should no more undergo an universal deluge.

them,

them, that he had discovered an expedient to prevent any danger of a similar accident in future. This expedient was, to erect a tower of such a height, that the waters might not be able to reach the top of it: and this project he was further induced to try, from motives of revenge for the loss of those who perished in the general inundation.

The tower of Babel. This haughty boast of Nimrod flattered the vanity of the multitude to that degree, that they began to consider a continuance in their duty to God as derogatory to their newly assumed consequence. They, therefore, applied themselves to the work with the utmost alacrity. Immenſe as the undertaking was, yet, from the prodigious number of hands employed therein, the work was carried on with an expedition ſcarcely to be conceived. The circumference of the edifice, from the vaſt thickneſs of the walls, appeared, to a perſon near at hand, to take off conſiderably from the height of it. It was conſtructed with burnt brick, and cemented with a ſubſtance reſembling pitch, that might reſiſt the waters. The extreme folly of theſe people was highly deſerving of puniſhment; particularly when we conſider the example they had before their eyes of the late deſtruction of their anceſtors, in one univerſal deluge. But God choſe rather to confound the language of mankind, as a puniſhment for their tranſgreſſions, than to extinguiſh the whole race a ſecond time. The ſpot on which this tower was erected, is, to this day, ſtyled Babylon; the word Babel, in the Hebrew language, ſignifies *confuſion*.*

The Sibyl's account of it.

The Sibyl mentions the erection of this tower, and the conſequent confuſion of tongues, in the following terms: "When all mankind ſpoke the ſame language, the people aſſembled, and raiſed a tower of ſuch an amazing height, that they ſeemed to have formed the deſign of ſcaling heaven from the top thereof. But the gods letting looſe the winds thereon, threw it to the ground; and, as a further mark of their diſpleaſure, inflicted on the builders an utter oblivion of their native tongue; ſubſtituting in the ſtead thereof a new, and unknown language, wherein no one of them could underſtand another." With reſpect to Sennaar, Heſtæus makes this obſervation: "The prieſts of Jupiter the conqueror, who ſurvived the general deſtruction, having preſerved the holy veſſels and ornaments, repaired with them to Babylon."

Diſperſion of the nations.

In conſequence of this confuſion of languages, mankind were obliged to diſperſe themſelves throughout the earth, ſome fixing their reſidence on the ſea-coaſts, others in parts more inland: all according to the lot which God, in his wiſdom and goodneſs, had been pleaſed to aſſign them. Men acquired, in proceſs of time, ſome knowledge of the ſcience of Navigation, ſo much,

at leaſt, as enabled them to conſtruct boats, and to transport themſelves to places ſeparated from the continent, by which means every place was ſtocked with inhabitants, who gave titles to the places in which they ſettled, many of which ſtill retain the names of their founders: but ſome have loſt their original appellations, while thoſe of others are diſguiſed, under Greek derivations, to render them more familiar and intelligible to the neighbouring people. In ſucceeding ages, when the Greeks became poſſeſſed of thoſe countries, they claimed to themſelves the credit of being the firſt founders and poſſeſſors thereof; impoſing upon them, at their pleaſure, not only names, but new laws, cuſtoms, and manners..

CHAP. V.

The Names of Nations derived from their reſpective founders. Liſt of the Deſcendents of Noah, ending with Jacob, and of the places inhabited by them.

THE children of the ſons of Noah, in order to perpetuate their memory, gave their own names to whatever places they either founded, or acquired the poſſeſſion of. Thus Japhet, the ſon of Noah, had ſeven ſons, who ſettled in that part of Aſia which extends from the mountains Taurus and Amanus to the river Tanais in Europe, and Gades. Gomer was the founder of the Gomerites, ſtyled at this time, by the Greeks, Galatians, or Gauls. The Magogians, called by the Greeks Scythians, derive their origin from Magog. From Madæus came the Madæans, or Medes; and from Javan the Ionians, and the whole race of the Greeks. Thobel founded the nation of the Thobelians, now termed Iberians, or Spaniards. The Meſchinians, or Cappadocians, as they were afterwards ſtyled, were founded by Meſches; yet there is ſome reaſon to think that they originally inhabited the town of Mazaca, from the reſemblance of the ancient name, by which they were diſtinguiſhed, to that of the town in queſtion. Thires was the founder of the Thiræans, ſtyled afterwards by the Greeks, Thracians. Theſe are the nations of which the ſeven ſons of Japhet were the founders, and to which they gave their names.

Europe peo-
pled by the
poſterity of
Japhet.

Gomer had three ſons; Aſchanaxes, Riphates, and Thygrammes. From the firſt came the Aſchanaxians, or Rheginians of the Greeks; the ſecond was the founder of the Riphatæans, now ſtyled Paphlagonians; and the Thygrammæans, whom the Greeks have named Phrygians, derive their origin from the laſt.

Gomer.

Javan alſo had three ſons: Alifaſ, the founder of

* It is aſſerted by Moſes Choronenſis, a famous hiſtorian of Armenia, that the tower of Babel was overthrown by a terrible ſtorm, and the language of the builders was confounded in a mira-

culous manner by that ſame Divine Being, againſt whoſe providence Nimrod exalted himſelf.

Descendants
of Javan.

the Alismans; now called Æolians; Tharsus, from whom came the Tharsians, since named Cilicians, as appears by the preference given to the city of Tarsus beyond all others, changing only the first letter Θ into a T. The third son of Javan was Cethimos, from whom the island, which we now call Cyprus, was originally named Cethyma. For this reason the Jews give the title of Cethim to islands and all places on the sea coast; and in the island of Cyprus there is a town, which those whom a fondness for sound has blindly attached to the Greek tongue, style Citium; between which and Chethim there is some degree of resemblance.

Progeny of
Ham.

The posterity of Ham fixed their residence in Syria, near the mountains of Amanus and Libanus, extending their possessions as far as the sea coast; and they gave whatever names they thought proper to the various places under their government; but most of those names are lost to us at this day, through the corruptions and alterations which they have undergone. The Æthiopians, however, still retain the name which they derive from Chus, one of the sons of Ham, and are to this present time styled Chusians, throughout Asia. The same has happened with respect to the Mesreans, also; the whole kingdom of Egypt still preserving the name of Mesrim, and the natives that of Mesreans. The Libyans were originally denominated Phutians, from Phutes, who governed in that country; and several Greek historians make mention of a river in Mauritania of this name, and of a country which is situated on its banks, named Phute; but the name of Libya is derived from Lybys, one of the sons of Mesraim.

The kingdom of the Canaanites was founded by Canaan, the fourth son of Ham: the land which they inhabited now bears the name of Judæa. All the sons of Ham had children; and Chus, the eldest, had six sons: Sabas, who founded the Sabæans; Evilus, the founder of the Evilæans, or Getulians, as they are at this day termed; Sabathes, from whom came the Sabathanians, or Aethiopianians of the Greeks; Ramus, who founded the Ramæans; and Nimrod, who remained with the Babylonians, usurped the government, and rendered his authority absolute.

Philistines.

The whole tract of land between Gaza and Egypt, was peopled by the eight sons of Mesraim. Philistin, one of the eight, gave his name to the country which he peopled, or to that division of it, at least, which is called Palestine by the Greeks. Labin, also founded a colony; which he named Libya. Of the six remaining sons of Mesraim, viz. Ludim, Ananim, Nedem, Phetrolim, Cheslem, and Chepthorim, scarce any particulars have been transmitted to us, save their names; the cities and colonies founded by them, having been destroyed in the Æthiopic war†.

† It appears from hence, that the Ethiopic war, here mentioned, was so dreadful in its consequences, as to occasion the removal or subjugation of six or seven nations of the posterity of Mesraim, together with the cities they inhabited. We may reasonably suppose

Canaanites.

Canaan was the father of eleven sons. Of these, Sidon built a city in Phœnicia, to which the Greeks have given his name; Amath founded Amathe, a place still existing, and called Amathine by the inhabitants: but the Macedonians, in compliment to one of their kings, changed the name of it to Epiphania; Aradæus possessed the island of Aradus; and Arucæus built the town of Arce, on mount Libanus. The scripture mentions nothing relative to the other seven, Euaus, Chetæus, Jebusæus, Edæus, Siræus, Samaræus, and Gargasæus, except their names; the Hebrews having utterly destroyed all their possessions, on the following account.

When the earth had in part recovered itself from the effects of the flood, Noah re-applied himself to the cultivation of the ground, the planting of vines, and gathering and pressing the grapes when ripe; and thus he revived the use of wine. On a certain day, after having offered sacrifice to God of the first-fruits of his vineyard, he drank to that excess of the liquor, that he became totally insensible, and lay upon the ground fast asleep; exposing his nakedness, in the most shameless manner, to the view of every one passing by. His youngest son, having discovered him in this situation, brought his brothers to the spot, to deride their father; but they, being impressed with a due sense of filial duty, concealed his shame, by throwing a covering over him. When Noah became sensible of what had passed, he blessed Shem and Japhet for their pious conduct, but vented a bitter imprecation on the posterity of Ham; nor did the malediction fail of its effect; but it is to be observed, that Noah exempted Ham, in his own person, from his curse, in consideration of his near relationship.

Shem, the eldest of Noah's children, had five sons, who inhabited the whole tract of Asia, extending from the Euphrates to the Indian sea. From Elam were derived the Elamites, from whom came the Persians. Assur was the founder of Nineveh, where the Assyrians, as a rich and powerful people, first settled. From Arphaxad the Arphaxadæans, or modern Chaldæans, derive their origin. Aram was the founder of the Aramæans, or Syrians of the Greeks; and from Lud came the Luddians, or Lydians.

Aram had four sons, of whom Uz founded Trachonitis and Damascus, situated between Palestine and Cælo-Syria; Hull peopled Armenia; Gether was the leader of the Bactrians; and Mesas of the Mesæans, whose country is styled, at this time, after the name of the camp of Spafinus. Having now given an account of the progeny of Shem, we shall next advert to that of the Jews, or Hebrews.

that Josephus would not have recorded this circumstance, had he not been possessed of ancient records to justify what he advanced; though those records are now lost, by some means or other, the particulars of which we are not informed of.

A MAP of the COLONIES of the DESCENDANTS of HAM.



Origin of the
Hebrews.

The Jews derive the name of Hebrews from Heber*, the son of Salas, who was the son of Arphaxad. Heber had two sons, Juſta and Phalec. The latter was born at that period when the diviſion of the land took place; Phalec ſignifying, in the Hebrew tongue, *Partition*. Juſta, the eldeſt ſon of Heber, had thirteen children, whoſe names were Elmodad, Saleph, Aærmoth, Eiraes, Adoram, Uzal, Declas, Ebal, Abimael, Sabcus, Ophir, Euilath, and Jobab. Theſe inhabited all the extent of land lying between the river Cophene, in India, and the neighbouring part of Syria.

Phalec was the ſon of Heber, and Ragaſ the ſon of Phalec. Ragaſ begat Serug; Serug begat Nahor; and Nahor begat Thares, the father of Abram, the tenth generation from Noah. Abram was born two hundred and ninety-two years after the flood. Thares was ſeventy years old when he begat Abram; Nahor one hundred and twenty when he had Thares; Serug was about one hundred and thirty-two at the birth of Nahor; Ragaſ had attained his one hundred and thirty-fourth year when Serug was born, and Phalec was much about the ſame age when he had Ragaſ; Heber had reached his one hundred and thirty-fourth year, when he begat Phalec; Salas was one hundred and thirty at the birth of Heber; and Arphaxad was one hundred and thirty-five years old when he had Salas; and Arphaxad, who was the ſon of Shem, and the grandſon of Noah, was born in the ſecond year† after the deluge.

Nahor and
Haran.

Nahor and Haran were the two brothers of Abram; of whom the latter died at Ur, in Chaldæa; at which place a ſepulchral monument, erected to his memory, is yet to be ſeen. He left a ſon, named Lot, and two daughters, Sarah and Melcha: Nahor eſpouſed the latter, and Abram took Sarah.

Thares, the father of Abram, was ſo much affected by the loſs of his ſon Haran, that he quitted his reſidence in Chaldæa, and repaired, with his whole family, to Charran, in Meſopotamia, where he died, and was interred in the one hundred and fiſth year of his age. The term of man's life was now abbreviated, and God was pleaſed, ſoon afterwards, to reduce it to the narrow compaſs of one hundred and twenty years, which was the exact age of Moſes.

Melcha, the wife of Nahor, bore him eight ſons, whoſe names were Uz, Baux, Camuel, Chazad, Azaus, Pheldas, Jadelphas, and Bethuel. Theſe were the only legitimate ſons of Nahor; but, by his concubine, Ruma, he had four others, named Tubæus, Gabam, Tavaus, and Machas. Bethuel had a ſon and a daughter, whoſe names were Laban and Rebecca.

C H A P. VI.

Abram, the Founder of the Jewish Nation, having no legitimate Iſſue, adopts Lot, his Brother's Son; departs from Chaldæa, and ſettles in Canaan, where he inſtructs the People in the Nature and Attributes of the Supreme Being.

AS Abram had no legitimate offspring, he adopted Lot, his brother Haran's ſon, and the brother of his wife Sarah. He departed from Chaldæa, in the ſeventy-fiſth year of his age, and, taking with him his family, and the whole of his effects, journeyed into the land of Canaan, according to the divine command, where he fixed his reſidence, and there died. He was equally famed for wiſdom and eloquence; and as he poſſeſſed, in an eminent degree, the abilities, ſo neither did he want the reſolution, to attack the unbridled licentiousneſs of the times; and, by dint of authority, as well as argument, he was enabled to eradicate the falſe notions which men had fallen into reſpecting religion, and to reduce unbelievers to a proper ſenſe of their duty to God. Abram was the firſt perſon who ventured to enforce the doctrine, that all things in heaven and earth had been formed by one Almighty Creator, to whom alone we are indebted for all the enjoyments of this life. He maintained that theſe truths were apparent, from the marvellous regularity which is obſervable throughout all the works of creation; inſomuch that, did not an over-ruſing providence interpoſe, to keep the wheel conſtantly in motion, the whole frame of the univerſe would inevitably fall into irreparable diſorder; and, conſequently, that our ſole dependence, in all matters either of profit or pleaſure, muſt reſt on the benevolence of the firſt Mover, to whom alone, without arrogating any merit to ourſelves, we are bound to render all honour and praiſe.

His endeavours to eſtabliſh this doctrine in Chaldæa and Meſopotamia, incenſed the people ſo highly againſt him, that he retired, by the command of God, from Chaldæa, and ſettled in Canaan, where he erected an altar, and ſacrificed thereon. There is a paſſage in Beroſus, in which the Patriarch Abram is mentioned, though not by name. "In the tenth generation," ſays he, "ſubſequent to the deluge, there dwelt in Chaldæa, a man renowned for his wiſdom and juſtice, and for his obſervations of the heavenly bodies." Hecataeus has been ſtill more explicit, in an hiſtorical treatiſe written expreſſly on the ſubject of his tranſactions. Mention is alſo made of him by Nicolaus of Damascus, in the fourth book of his hiſtory. "Abraham," ſays he, "held the ſupreme command in Damascus, though he was not

* Joſephus here poſitively decides as to the name of the founder of the Jewish nation, or rather the perſon from whom they derived the title of Hebrews.

† In this place, we rectify an error in the original work, which mentions the birth of Arphaxad to have happened in the twelfth year.

a native of the place; and he came thither, with a numerous train, from a country named Chaldaea, which lies beyond Babylon. In a short time, the people rising in rebellion against him, he retired with his family, to Canaan, now called Judæa, where he fixed his residence, and had many children, of whom there will be occasion to speak farther in a subsequent part of the work." The name of Abram is still held in great reverence at Damascus; and there is a village in the neighbourhood of that city, which, to this day, is called the *dwelling place of Abram*.

C H A P. VII. .

On occasion of a Famine, which arises in Canaan, Abram, accompanied by Sarai, departs into Egypt, where he remains for a Time, and then returns to Canaan.

DURING this period a dreadful famine arose in Canaan; and Abram, having learnt that Egypt * enjoyed great plenty at the time, determined to go thither; being partly induced thereto by this report of the fruitful state of the country, and partly by a desire of conversing with the Egyptian priests on the subject of their religious tenets, which appeared to be founded on the invariable principles of nature and reason: he was likewise ardently desirous to discover the truth, and well disposed to coincide in whatever arguments might tend to elucidate and establish it.

As Abram had been previously acquainted with the unbounded lasciviousness of the Egyptians, he was apprehensive of the consequences of taking Sarai with him, who was very beautiful, and therefore proposed to her that she should pass for his sister, with which, perceiving the necessity of the case, she complied. Upon his arrival in Egypt, matters fell out just in the manner he had foreseen; for the fame of Sarai's beauty being spread abroad, Pharaoh was inflamed with a violent desire of seeing and possessing this miracle of a woman. But God was pleased to punish his lewd designs, by a plague and a revolt of his subjects, both which broke out at the same time. In this emergency Pharaoh applied to the priests, to know what sin had involved him in the present calamity, and in what manner he might expiate his offence. When the priests had sacrificed, they returned him answer, that his present misfortunes arose from the baseness of his intentions against the wife of a stranger.

The king, being greatly alarmed at this reply, immediately requested Sarai to inform him of the

circumstances of the history of herself and Abram, without disguise; and she accordingly acknowledged the deception. Pharaoh, therefore, apologized to Abram for his conduct; declaring, that he had considered the woman as his sister, and not as his wife, and had sought an alliance with her, without the least intention of offering her any personal injury or affront. He afterwards presented Abram with a considerable sum of money, and granted him a permission to associate himself with the most learned men residing in the land of Egypt; by which indulgence, his abilities and virtues became daily more conspicuous, and, consequently, more esteemed. From this freedom of intercourse, Abram was enabled to discover the ceaseless differences which subsisted among them, respecting rites, ceremonies, and tenets; their factions and animosities; and their mutual contempt and hatred of one another. From this view of their conduct, he hesitated not to characterize them as a people acting in contradiction to themselves, as well as to each other; and whose notions and opinions were destitute of every kind of foundation or truth. During his residence in this country, he became equally famed for the solidity of his judgment, and for the powers of his elocution. He also initiated them in the study of astronomy and arithmetic, with which sciences the people of Egypt were totally unacquainted, till Abram transplanted them thither from Chaldaea, and from Egypt they passed into Greece.

When Abram returned to Canaan, having learnt that his shepherds and those of Lot had disagreed, relative to the boundaries of the lands of their respective masters, he proposed a division of them. Abram permitted Lot to make choice of whatever part of them he best approved, contenting himself with the remainder, and fixed his abode in the city of Hebron, which had been founded seven years before that of Tanais, in Egypt. The spot which Lot chose for his residence, was situated on the banks of the river Jordan, a small distance only from Sodom, which was at that period a flourishing city; but was afterwards so utterly destroyed, in consequence of the wickedness of the inhabitants, that there is not, at the present time, the least trace of it to be perceived. The particulars of this extraordinary event shall be related in their proper place.

During the time in which the Assyrians held the whole empire of Asia in subjection, Sodom and its dependencies were governed by five kings, viz. Ballas, Barfas, Senabar, Symobar, and the king of the Balinians; and each of these was invested with absolute power in his own district. In those days the Assyrians marched a numerous and well disciplined army, divided into four bodies,

Returns to Canaan, and divides the land with Lot.

The Assyrians conquer the people of Sodom, and take Lot prisoner.

* The best historians represent this country as exceedingly fertile in grain, and, on that account capable of furnishing other kingdoms with abundance of that useful article, and likewise with various other

necessaries of life: it may be therefore presumed, that agriculture was improved there by art; since no country can be a plentiful one, where this beneficial art is not promoted and encouraged.

against

against the people of Sodom, whom, after a severe and bloody contest, they utterly defeated; and from this time the kings of Sodom became tributaries to the Assyrians, and so continued for the space of twelve years. In the thirteenth year, they refused to pay the tribute imposed upon them; in consequence of which, the Assyrians, under the command of Amraphel, Arioch, Chodolmôr and Thabel, advanced against them a second time; ravaged Syria, subdued the race of the giants, and, entering the land of Sodom, pitched their camp in the valley among the brimstone-pits, many of which were then to be seen in that neighbourhood; but the valley, since the destruction of the city of Sodom, has been converted into a lake, called Asphaltitis. A great slaughter of the Sodomites ensued, and numbers were taken prisoners; among the latter was Lot, who had come to the assistance of his countrymen, in repelling the invasion of the Assyrians.

C H A P. VIII.

Abram routs the Assyrians, and rescues Lot and the other Prisoners out of their Hands. Melchisedech entertains Abram. God promises a Son to Abram. Sarah brings Hagar to Abram's Bed. Hagar withdraws herself from Abram's Dwelling, and is comforted by an Angel. The Birth of Ishmael. Isaac is promised to Abram. Institution of the Ceremony of Circumcision.

Abram defeats the Assyrians. **I**MMEDIATELY upon intelligence being communicated to Abram, that the Sodomites had been defeated, and great numbers of his friends and neighbours killed and made prisoners, and that his nephew Lot was among the latter; he hastened in pursuit of the Assyrians, and on the fifth night of his journey he surprised them near Dan, which is one of the heads of the river Jordan, and finding them in a state of the utmost confusion, some being intoxicated, others asleep, or unprovided with arms, and the whole incapable of making either a timely retreat or successful resistance, he availed himself of the general consternation, and falling upon them in their quarters, put a great number to death by the sword, and the next day pursued the rest as far as Choba of Damascus. Abram had barely three hundred and eighteen of his own domestics, besides three auxiliary friends, when he so effectually routed this numerous army: and this may serve to prove, that victory does not so much depend on the number, as on the resolution and valour of the combatants. The

few who escaped, retreated from the observation of the public, from a sense of shame at their own dastardly behaviour. Thus was liberty restored to Lot and the other prisoners, while Abram returned to his people with the tidings of victory and peace.

In his way home, Abram was met, at a place called the Valley Royal, by the king of Sodom, who congratulated him on his victory: and he was there received by Melchisedech, king of Solyma, which is now called Jerusalem. Melchisedech signifies a righteous king, which appellation was worthily applied to this prince, who by the voice of the public had been elected to serve at the altar, in the character of a priest to the Most High God. Melchisedech accommodated Abram and his followers with various refreshments, and otherwise behaved towards them with singular benevolence: while they sat at table, he greatly extolled Abram for his noble achievements, and, with thanksgivings worthy his sacred character, glorified the Almighty for the blessing of the victory. On the other hand, Abram presented Melchisedech * with one tenth part of the spoils he had obtained, which the king graciously accepted.

Melchisedech entertains Abram.

Abram also offered a portion of the booty to the king of Sodom, but he excused himself from complying with the generous proposal, saying, a return of his subjects, who had been made prisoners by the Assyrians, and afterwards rescued by Abram, was all he could reasonably expect, desiring him to dispose of every thing else as his judgment might direct. Abram, however, declared, that he would make no private advantage of the spoil, such a portion of which he only required, as would be sufficient to supply his soldiers and followers with provisions, and afford a proper recompence to Enner, Mambres, and Eshcol, the three friends who had supported him in, and shared the hazard of the battle.

Abram's liberality.

The sincerity and disinterested conduct of Abram were so much approved by the Lord, that he informed him they should be properly rewarded. "Almighty God," said the righteous Abram, "how will thy rewards avail me, since I have no heir to inherit the bounties you may bestow?" Now the Lord assured him, that he should have a son, and be blessed likewise with a posterity as numerous as the stars of the heavens. Upon these words a sacrifice was offered by Abram, agreeable to the direction of the Creator. This sacrifice consisted of an heifer, a goat, and a ram, being each three years old, besides a turtle dove and a pigeon; the birds remained intire, but the other animals were divided † in halves, according to the command of God. While preparations were making at the altar, for the performance of the sacrifice, and the

Isaac is promised.

* This Melchisedech, being the priest of God, Abraham, agreeably to the custom of the times, presented to him a tenth part of the spoils taken from the enemy: see Gen. xxviii. 22. Heb. vii. 1. and seq. These tythes were applied to pious uses, such as the maintenance of religion, the relief of the poor, &c.

† The antient mode of forming alliances in marriage was, by separating the devoted animals into two parts, and placing them upon two altars; after which, the contracting parties walked between the two altars, thereby signifying, that if either of them violated the covenant, he or she should, like the victims, be cut asunder.

birds

birds of prey were hovering about, in expectation of the blood of the creatures, a voice from heaven foretold, that the posterity of Abram should fall into bondage in Egypt, and remain in subjection to their oppressive enemies for the space of four hundred years; at the expiration of which period they should spread themselves over the whole country of the Canaanites, extending from Egypt to Sodom, and subject the cities, and whole extent of territory, to their dominion.

At this time, Abram dwelt not far from Hebron, at a place called the Oak of Ogye, where he lamented the circumstance of his wife's barrenness, and the consequent failure of issue, but still offering up daily supplications that a male child might be born to him. These entreaties induced the Lord to repeat his promise, respecting a son, and the other blessings decreed to him on removing from Mesopotamia.

By the immediate direction of heaven, Sarai caused an Egyptian servant in the family, named Hagar, to go to her husband's bed, hoping that, by this expedient, he might have a male child by her, which she intended to adopt as her own: this circumstance occurred accordingly; whereupon Hagar, under the supposition that the child would surely succeed to the government, became extremely presuming and arrogant to her mistress. This ingratitude determined Abram to resign her up to the management of his wife Sarai, whom he authorized to chastise her at discretion; which mortified Hagar to that degree, that she quitted Abram's house, and set out in search of some other settlement, earnestly supplicating the protection of heaven in her miserable condition. As she passed through a desert, she was assisted in her flight by an angel, who ordered her to return from whence she came; telling her, that this affliction had befallen her in consequence of her pride and ingratitude, and that, upon a reformation of conduct, she would experience kinder usage for the future; enjoining her, moreover, in the strictest manner, not to neglect this admonition, but to return instantly; and assuring her, in case she obeyed, that she should live to be the mother of a child, who, in process of time, should obtain the dominion of that country. She accordingly returned to her mistress, and, having humbled herself, obtained her pardon, soon after which she was delivered of a son, who was named Ishmael, signifying, in Hebrew, *prevailed upon*; God having attended to, and granted the prayers of the mother.

Abram had attained his eighty-sixth year when Ishmael was born; and, at the age of ninety-nine, God appeared to him, and acquainted him, that his wife Sarai should be delivered of a son, whom he should name Isaac; fore-

telling, also, that many powerful monarchs and nations should derive their origin from him, and should conquer the whole land of Canaan, extending from Sidon to Egypt. God commanded, in order to make a distinction between the race of Abraham, and the people of other nations, with whom all cohabitation was strictly prohibited, that all his posterity should be circumcised on the eighth day after their birth. Abram having inquired of God the future condition of Ishmael, received for answer, that he should live to a great age, and should be the founder of many mighty nations*; whereupon Abram returned thanks to the Almighty, and, in compliance with the divine injunction, was immediately circumcised, together with Ishmael, who was then in his thirteenth year, and the rest of the males of his family.

Circumcision
instituted.

CHAPTER IX.

The execrable Crimes of the Sodomites punished by the Judgment of God in the Destruction of their City.

AT this time the people of Sodom became so extravagantly vain by the great wealth and plenty which they enjoyed, as totally to fail in reverence to God, and respect to their fellow-creatures. Inhospitability to strangers, ingratitude towards those who had bestowed benefits upon them, and unnatural lusts towards each other, incensed the Almighty against them to so high a degree, that he determined to punish their abominable crimes by laying waste their whole country, and pronouncing that the parts inhabited by them should no longer produce fruit or plants for the use and benefit of mankind.

Wickedness
of Sodom.

The sentence against the Sodomites being passed, while Abram was sitting under an oak of Mambré near the entrance of his tent, he perceived three angels coming towards him, and from their appearance, he judged them to be travellers. He rose to meet them, and, after the customary salutes, invited them to partake of the best refreshment and entertainment his habitation would afford. His proffered civility was accepted, and directions were given for dressing a calf and baking a cake; which being made ready, were placed before the strangers under the oak, and they gave thanks to their host, and appeared to feed upon what had been provided for them. While the meat remained before them, they inquired of Abram respecting Sarai his wife, and were answered, that she was in the tent. They now arose as preparing to depart, observing that they

Three angels
visit Abram
under an oak.

* This gracious promise is thus expressed in Genesis xvii. 6. "And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." The kings here alluded to are those of the Jews, Ishmaelites, Midianites, Saracens, Arabians,

Babylonians, Egyptians, Africans, Spaniards, and lastly, the great King of the Christian world, in whom all the families of the earth, or great numbers out of them, were to be blessed.

should

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should in a short time see Abraham again, and that in the interim his wife would become a mother. Sarah was now called in, and she smiled at hearing it said, that she should have a child, she being ninety, and her husband an hundred years of age. The angels now threw off their disguise, confessed whom they were, and mentioned the commissions with which they were charged; saying, two of them were employed to execute the destruction of Sodom, and that the third was intrusted with the tidings, that a son should be born unto Abraham. The judgment pronounced against the people, occasioned Abraham to offer up earnest prayers to God, that he would be pleased to spare the innocent from becoming partakers of the punishment denounced against the guilty: and the Almighty said, in reply, that if ten righteous men could be found amongst the citizens, for the sake of those ten he would spare all the others*. Upon this declaration, Abraham declined offering any thing farther in behalf of the people.

Hospitality of Lot. The two angels went to Sodom, and being observed by Lot, he invited them to take up their residence in his house. Lot was naturally benevolent towards strangers, and equal to Abraham for piety and good-nature. Some abandoned ruffians observed the angels to go into Lot's house, and as they were of graceful appearance, they conceived a design of attempting some violence upon their persons, and endeavoured to force into the house, in order to gratify their brutal appetites. Every argument that could be suggested in recommendation of continence and hospitality, was enforced by Lot, who even offered to give up his own daughters instead of the strangers; but this proposal they would not listen to. Highly incensed at their outrageous conduct, and the horrid complexion of their guilt, the Lord struck them with instant and total blindness on the spot, so that they could not discover the way to enter Lot's house, and the sentence of exemplary perdition was, at the same time, pronounced against the whole people, for their abominable wickedness.

Lot's escape. Lot, being forewarned, escaped the calamity by a timely retreat from the town, taking with him his wife, and two maiden daughters. The two persons with whom these maidens were contracted to be joined in marriage, were intreated to accompany the family of Lot,

but they ridiculed the threatened vengeance of heaven, and remained in the city. The wrath of God was now discharged against this impious race in a general conflagration, which consumed the city and the whole number of its inhabitants, as well as those of the surrounding country, laying the whole in a state of irreparable devastation. The wife of Lot went out of the town with her husband, but, either from a motive of tenderness or curiosity, she violated the strict command of God in looking behind her, and she was in consequence turned into a pillar of salt. I have seen the pillar, and can safely assert that it still remains†.

Destruction of Sodom, by fire from Heaven.

After this judgment, Lot and his daughters sought refuge in the country called Zoar (which in the Hebrew language signifies *small*), this being the only place which escaped the fury of the devouring flames; but while they remained here, their lives were rendered uneasy and irksome from a deficiency of provisions, and the want of social intercourse. In their solitude, the daughters considered their small family as the only surviving part of the human species, and therefore imagined themselves, in so pressing an exigency, to be justifiable in any means they should adopt for the conservation of the human race. On this consideration, they went privately to bed to their father, when he was insensible of their being his children; and the consequence was, that they both proved with child by him, and each bringing forth a son, that of the eldest was called Moab (which signifies, in Hebrew, *of my father*) and that of the younger, Ammon (or, *of my race, or kin*). One of these was the father of the Moabites, a powerful nation yet existing; as the other was of the Ammonites, both of which were inhabitants of Cælo-Syria. Thus have we given a full account of the manner of Lot's escape from the dreadful conflagration of Sodom, and of what afterwards came to pass.

Lot retires to Zoar.

• C H A P. X.

Particulars of the Transactions between Abraham and Abimelech. An Account of Ishmael, the Son of Abraham; his Dismissal, and Succour from an Angel. His Posterity, called Arabians.

* There is hardly any instance in history of fervent and importunate supplication equal to this recorded of the Father of the Faithful, in the book of Genesis. It affords a wonderful proof of the condescension of the Almighty, in hearkening to the petitions of his people; and is an encouragement for all men to pray, and not to faint.

† Clement of Rome, cotemporary with Josephus, likewise reports, that he had seen this pillar; and Irenæus, in the next century, declares the same. I will not attempt a philosophical demonstration of this miraculous event, which has been, and continues to be, a subject of much profane wit and ridicule to those who would be thought wise above that which is written. Though I will not attempt an explicit demonstration of the fact, I will yet assert, that

No. 2.

it is within the line of probability, and may be proved from natural causes. Is it at all improbable that Lot's wife, by her lingering and looking back, might be overtaken by that nitro-sulphureous shower which laid waste the city of Sodom? and as the lake remains to this day, and is called Asphaltitis, why might not her body be incruited with the particles which composed the tempest, and she be preserved in that shape, as a monument of almighty vengeance to all succeeding generations, of the danger of neglecting God's commands? But, after all, could not the Almighty as easily effect this transformation, as strike the Sodomites with blindness, or destroy their city with fire and brimstone?

F

Abraham

ABRAM withdrew to Gerar, in Palestine, accompanied by Sarah, who still passed for his sister, for he entertained the same apprehensions of danger from Abimelech, who reigned over the country, as he had some time since had of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. It afterwards happened, that Abimelech conceived a passion for her, and endeavoured to seduce her, but was prevented from pursuing his design, by a violent fit of sickness, with which God was pleased to afflict him, as a punishment for his lasciviousness. The disorder rose to that height, that his life was despaired of; and God warned him, in a dream, to offer no violence to Sarah, she being the wife, and not the sister, of the stranger. Hereupon he communicated to his friends all the circumstances of his passion for Sarah, his dream, and every thing that had passed; declaring, that he considered his present sickness as a just mark of God's displeasure on this occasion.

He therefore, by advice of his friends, sent for Abraham, to whom he gave the most positive assurances, that the honour of his wife was still unviolated; appealing to God and her own conscience for the truth of his declaration; and moreover protesting, that, had he imagined Sarah to have been his wife, he would not have offered her the least insult: and conjuring him to overlook what had passed, and to intercede with the Almighty in his behalf. He farther acquainted him, that should he be inclined to continue in Palestine, he should be amply provided for: or, if he rather chose to depart, that he should be furnished with guides, carriages, and every other convenience for his journey homewards.

Abraham, in some measure, justified his conduct in styling Sarah his sister, she being the daughter of his brother, and, therefore, of the same blood with himself; alledging, moreover, that he looked upon this deception as necessary to his safety in his travels. He also observed, that he could not consider himself as the cause of Abimelech's sickness: and, finally, expressing a sincere regard and affection for him, declared his willingness to continue in his dominions. The king, thereupon, generously presented Abraham with a large tract of land, and a considerable sum of money; and concluded a solemn league and covenant with him, which was ratified at the well of Bersabe, or the *Well* or *Pit of swearing a Covenant*, which name it continued to bear at the time of writing this account.

Birth of Isaac. Sarah, soon afterwards, bore to Abraham a son, as the angel had foretold, and they named him Isaac, which, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *Laughter*; alluding to the circumstance of Sarah's smiling, when the angel announced to her the purpose of God to grant her a son; the judging

it an improbability to bear a child at so advanced a period of life, herself being then ninety, and Abraham one hundred years old. The child was circumcised on the eighth day, which is the time still observed by the Jews for the celebration of that ceremony. But as Ishmael, the son of Abraham by his concubine Hagar, was not circumcised till the thirteenth year, the Arabians, who are descended from him, defer performing the rite till the child attains that age.

During the infancy of Ishmael, Sarah manifested as much tenderness for him as if he had been her own child; and he was brought up and educated with all possible care, as the presumptive heir of the family; but, after the birth of Isaac, Sarah became apprehensive of the consequences of bringing up the two children together; as Ishmael, who was so much older than his brother, might be tempted to deprive him of the inheritance, in case of the death of Abraham. She, therefore, used all her influence with Abraham, to prevail upon him to send away both the mother and the child to some distant country. Abraham at first rejected the proposal with horror; but, at length, being warned of God to comply with what his wife required of him, he dismissed Hagar and her son, who was still of too tender an age to provide for himself, to seek a settlement elsewhere; giving them, at their departure, a portion of bread and water for their subsistence*.

Hagar and Ishmael banished.

Their small stock of provisions was soon consumed, and the child's strength was so much exhausted, that Hagar laid him down at the foot of a fir tree, and retired to a distance, in order to avoid the sight of his last agonies. In this distressing emergency, she was accosted by an angel, who directed her to a neighbouring fountain, and strictly enjoined her to pay the utmost attention to her charge, with whose safety and happiness her own was connected in the highest degree. This animating declaration reviving her courage, she pursued her journey, and, at length, fortunately met with a company of shepherds, from whom she experienced great kindness in her necessity, and an ample supply of all her wants.

Visited by an angel.

When Ishmael had attained to man's estate, he married a woman of Egypt, of which country his mother was also a native. This woman bore him twelve sons, who inhabited the whole extent of country lying between the Euphrates and the Red Sea; and which is called Nabathæa. From these persons are derived the different tribes of the Arabians, who are greatly celebrated in history for their valour, and the dignity of their descent from Abraham.

* The behaviour of Abraham towards his son Ishmael has, by the contemners of revelation, been represented as cruel to the last degree; but it should be considered, that as Sarah had observed Ishmael insulting her son Isaac, she was therefore desirous that Ishmael

and his mother should no longer continue in the family; there was, besides, a particular design of Providence in causing this separation to be made.

C H / A P. XI.

God commands Abraham to offer up his beloved Son Isaac. The exemplary Faith and Obedience of Abraham and Isaac, with the Blessing consequent thereon.

ISAAC was the only legitimate son of Abraham, born to him in an advanced period of his life, and, on both these accounts, particularly dear to him. But the tenderness of the parent was amply repaid and justified by the excellent qualities of the child. Abraham was now therefore no longer solicitous for life, or the enjoyments of this world, but was cheerfully disposed to resign his pretensions to his heir, and his very being into the hands of God, from whom he derived it. The Almighty, however, was pleased to make a farther trial of his faith and obedience; and therefore, after recapitulating the various blessings which he had conferred upon him, commanded him, as a proof of his gratitude, to offer up his son Isaac, upon a mountain of Moriah. Abraham, who had always paid the most explicit obedience to the will of God, did not hesitate one moment to promise an exact conformity to the present injunction*.

Without communicating his intention, either to his wife, or to any of his family, lest they should oppose it, he departed from his own dwelling, with his son Isaac and two servants, taking with him an ass laden with articles for the sacrifice. On the third day they arrived within sight of the destined place; and Abraham, leaving his servants below in the valley, ascended the mountain, accompanied only by Isaac, who was now in the twenty-fifth year of his age. It was on this mountain that David afterwards erected a temple. Isaac, observing that his father had made all the necessary preparations for a sacrifice, yet perceiving no victim near at hand, he questioned him on the subject. Abraham answered, "That God, in whose power it was to relieve the wants of the necessitous, and to deprive the opulent of their store, as he found it most conducive to the happiness of those who put their trust in him, would, doubtless, provide a victim, in case he should vouchsafe to accept of an oblation."

The wood being laid, and all things in readiness, Abraham addressed Isaac in these terms: "My beloved son, thou art the child of my prayers, and, from the time of thy birth, I have spared neither cost nor pains in thy nurture and education. My utmost wish has been, that you might attain a maturity of manhood and reason, and that, whenever it should please God to take me to himself, I might leave thee

Abraham's pathetic address to his son.

in possession of my authority and dominions; but, since the Almighty, who first bestowed thee on me, has thought proper to recall the gift, submit thyself, I pray thee, my dear son, with a pious firmness, to the fate which awaits thee. It is to God that thou art to be offered up; to that God who now commands me to relinquish thee to him, in proof of my gratitude for the numerous blessings he hath showered upon us, throughout the course of our lives. Death is the common portion of all mankind; and, certainly, thou canst not fall more gloriously, than by the hand of thine own father, an oblation to the God and Father of the universe, who prefers rather to receive thy soul into endless bliss, on the wing of prayer and ejaculation, than suffer thee to become the victim of disease, war, passion, or any other of the various casualties to which mankind are hourly exposed. Reflect maturely on what I have said, and thou wilt perceive, that, in the heavenly station to which thou art now summoned, thou may'st afford thy aged father unfailing support, and that, in the room of thee, my son, I shall have God himself for my protector."

Isaac manifested a firmness and resignation, on the occasion, worthy of his birth; declaring that, if he should hesitate to surrender up his life, at the requisition of God and his father, from whom he derived it, he should be undeserving of that existence which he had hitherto enjoyed; nay, that he would readily have yielded it up, at the command even of his father alone.

Isaac's meek submission.

He then advanced to the altar, and, uncovering his throat, waited in patient expectation of the event; but, at the very instant that Abraham raised his arm to strike the blow, the Almighty called aloud to him from heaven, and prevented his design. God commanded him to stay his hand, and to spare the life of his son; declaring that it was not from any pleasure that he took in human sacrifices, nor from an intention of constituting a father the murderer of that very child which he himself bestowed on him, that he had enjoined him to this action; but solely to try how far a sense of his duty to the Almighty might operate upon him, in opposition to the dictates of affection and nature; that, finding his piety superior to all temptations, he confirmed to him his several former promises, accepted of his intended sacrifice, and engaged that his providence should never forsake either him or his posterity; that he would bless his son, Isaac, with length of days, and a numerous and illustrious offspring, who should establish their authority over many nations, and should subdue the land of Canaan

Exemplary faith and obedience of Abraham.

* Some have objected, relative to this event, how Abraham could be satisfied that this command came from God, when it appears inconsistent with the very nature of the Divine Being, and subversive of moral rectitude. But this objection will vanish, if we reflect that Abraham did really know that the command came from God,

who, having given life, may take it away whenever he pleases, either by a natural disease, or any other instrument he thinks proper. Abraham also knew that God could again restore Isaac in a more extraordinary manner.

by the sword; rendering themselves the envy and admiration of surrounding nations by the abundance of their wealth, and the fame of their glorious deeds.

When God had finished speaking, a ram most unexpectedly appeared, at a small distance from the spot, and seemed to present itself as a voluntary victim and substitute. The father and son, in a transport of surprize and rapture, now exchanged their mutual endearments; fervently praising God for his gracious promises and unbounded goodness: and thereupon offered up a sacrifice on the spot. When they had performed this duty, they returned home, where they passed a life of ease and happiness, with all the complacency of an applauding conscience, and an approving God, who, according to his promise, prospered them in all their undertakings.

Soon after this event Sarah died, in the hundred and twenty-seventh year of her age, and was buried in Hebron. The Canaanites pressed Abraham to accept of a sepulchre for her interment; but he declined the offer, chusing rather to purchase a field, belonging to an inhabitant of Hebron, named Ephraim, for which he paid four hundred shekels of silver, and applied it to the above-mentioned purpose; and several monuments, erected in honour of himself and his posterity, remained there during many centuries.

C H A P. XII. *

Progeny of Abraham, by his Wife Keturah. The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca.

SOME time after the death of Sarah, Abraham married a second wife, named Keturah, by whom he had six sons. These persons settled in different parts, and possessed themselves of the country of the Troglodytes, beyond Egypt, and that part of Arabia Felix bordering upon the Red Sea.

Isaac being now about forty years of age, his father formed the design of marrying him to Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of his brother Nahor. On this business he dispatched one of his most trusty servants; first binding him, by an oath, to a faithful discharge of his commission; which ceremony he performed, by putting his hand under his master's thigh, according to the form used in that country on similar occasions*. The messenger then departed, being invested with full powers to conclude the business in question, furnished also with rare and costly presents, and all necessaries for his journey. Mesopotamia,

through which his route lay, is, on account of the badness of the roads in winter, and the great scarcity of water in the summer, a most inconvenient country for travellers. Having surmounted these difficulties, he arrived, at length, at Charran; upon entering the suburbs of which city, he met a number of virgins, who were going to the well for water.

He, thereupon, offered up a prayer, requesting that, if God approved of the proposed alliance, he might meet with Rebecca in that company; and that he might be enabled to discover her, by the circumstance of her giving him water to drink, when all the others should deny his request. On his arrival at the well, he addressed himself to each of the virgins separately, and begged them to oblige him with a draught of water. One replied, that she had taken too much trouble to get it, to part with it so easily; another, that she did not draw water for every one who might apply to her for it; some making one excuse, and some another, but all refused to comply with his request, save one single virgin, who sharply reproved her companions for their incivility to a stranger, and courteously offered him her pitcher to allay his thirst. This was so auspicious a commencement, that the messenger, after some general compliments on her person and benevolence of temper, desired to be informed to what family she belonged, wishing that her parents might live to see her happily settled in the marriage state, with an affectionate and virtuous husband, and a numerous and obedient progeny.

To this, without the least hesitation, Rebecca replied: "The name of my father was Bethuel; but he died long ago, and left my mother and me, together with all his substance, to the care of my brother, whose name is Laban; and I am called Rebecca." The messenger was delighted with what he had heard and seen; being fully convinced that God favoured the design on which he came thither. He, therefore, presented Rebecca with a small chain, and some other ornaments for her person, such as commonly attract, in a considerable degree, the attention of women of her age; requesting her acceptance of them as a mark of his esteem for her singular excellencies, and of his gratitude for the particular obligation she had conferred on him. He then desired that, as it grew late, and would be unsafe travelling further, he might be permitted, for that night, to reside at the house of her relations; hoping that they would receive a guest, who would not put them to any manner of charge for his entertainment. The virgin replied, "That he appeared to have conceived a proper idea of the humanity of her relations,

Prayer of Eleazar, Abraham's servant, & his success.

* From this circumstance it appears plain, as far as we can judge without the assistance of records, that the only security for the performance of a contract, was a solemn oath and a sacrifice; for at that time they could have no written conveyances: it is proper, how-

ever, to mention here, that a conscientious regard was in ancient times paid to oaths; and they who broke them were considered not only as unworthy of a place in human society, but as infamous persons.

but that she wished him to have a better opinion of their generosity, as he should be lodged at their dwelling without any expence; but that she would first ask her brother's permission to introduce him." This was immediately granted, and the servants of Laban were ordered to take care of the stranger's camels, while he sat down to table with the master of the house. When supper was ended, the guest addressed himself to the mother and son in these terms: "I am sent to you," said he, "by Abraham the son of Thares, and your kinsman; for Nahor," directing his discourse to the woman, "the father of your late husband, was the brother of Abraham, by the same father and mother. I am a domestic servant of Abraham, who has commissioned me to propose a marriage between this virgin, and his only legitimate son and heir. From a predilection for those of his own blood, he has rejected offers of alliance with many of the most powerful families in the country where he resides. Do not, I conjure you, withhold your consent to my proposal, since God himself evidently interposes in behalf of it, and has directed me, in a miraculous manner, both to this virgin and your dwelling. When I entered a town, I saw a number of maidens, who were going to the well for water, and I offered up a secret prayer to heaven, that I might find the virgin whom I sought among them, which happened according to my prayer: thus you may perceive, that a proposed match has already obtained the approbation of heaven, and wants but the sanction of your authority to confirm it." This marriage was so eligible in itself, and so plainly conformable to the will of God, that Rebecca was delivered into the care of the messenger, who conducted her to the house of Isaac, to whom the whole possessions of Abraham had now devolved; the children that Keturah bore to Abraham having taken up their residence in other countries.

Marriage of
Isaac and
Rebecca.

Not long after the marriage of Isaac, Abraham departed this life, in the hundred and seventy-fifth year of his age. This man was equally renowned for his piety and virtue, and had rendered himself acceptable both to God and man. He was interred at Hebron, in the same sepulchre with his wife Sarah, Isaac and Ishmael taking upon themselves the care of his funeral.

Death of
Abraham.

CHAP. XIII.

The Birth of Esau and Jacob. A Famine in the Land of Canaan obliges Isaac to retire to Egypt. His Death drawing nigh, he sends Esau into the Fields, to procure him some Venison. Jacob personates Esau, and he surreptitiously obtains from his Father the Blessing intended for his Brother.

IN a short time after the death of Abraham, the wife of Isaac became pregnant, and increased so much in size, that her husband, being greatly alarmed at the circumstance, besought the Almighty to reveal to him the cause thereof. The purport of the answer he received,

No. 2.

was, that she should be delivered of twins, from whom two mighty nations should proceed; and that the younger of the two should, in process of time, eclipse the glory of the elder. This prediction was in due time verified; for Rebecca brought forth twins, the elder of whom was covered with hair from head to foot and as they came into the world, the younger was observed to be holding the other by the heel. The first-born was the favourite of his father, and was named Esau, or Seir, which signifies in the Hebrew language *Hair*; but Jacob, the younger, became the darling child of his mother.

The land of Canaan was at this time afflicted with a terrible famine, and Egypt then enjoyed the greatest abundance; Isaac was inclined to go thither; but God diverted him from his design, and he repaired to Gerar. Upon his first arrival at that place, he was received by king Abimelech with every appearance of respect and friendship, in remembrance of the ancient alliance which had subsisted between him and Abraham. But this kindness could not be expected to be of long continuance with a man who sacrificed every consideration to his envy. He perceived that Isaac enjoyed a larger portion of God's favour than himself, and therefore dismissed him from his court. Isaac, penetrating into the cause of this change of disposition in Abimelech, withdrew to a place called the Valley, at a small distance from Gerar. As his men were employed in digging for water at this place, the king's shepherds came to the spot, and prevented them from proceeding. They then repaired to another part, where they once more began to dig, but were interrupted as before. At length, he obtained the king's permission to dig, and the place where he first found water he named Rooboth, which signifies *large* or *spacious*. Of the other two places, where he had been disappointed, he called one Escon, signifying *contention*; and the other Sitenna, which being interpreted, means *enmity*.

Abimelech, conscious of his own insincerity, observed, with a jealous eye, the increasing power and reputation of Isaac, who he was apprehensive, might, on a comparison of his late unkind conduct with the favourable reception he had at first given him, be induced to revenge the insult; he was, moreover, unwilling to provoke the enmity of a man of Isaac's temper and character. He, accordingly, taking with him one of the chief officers of his court, repaired to the spot where Isaac resided, and proposed to him a renewal of the former league which had subsisted between them; with which Isaac, recollecting the ancient friendship which his father and the king had mutually entertained, readily complied; and thus all disagreement between them ceased.

Isaac renews
the treaty
with Abimelech.

At the age of forty, Esau, who was the favourite of his father, married two wives; Adah, the daughter of Elon, and Alibama, the daughter of Esbion; both persons of distinguished rank and high reputation in the land of Canaan. He contracted these marriages, without consulting his father Isaac on the subject; nor would he have been able to procure his consent thereto,

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thereto, Isaac being fully determined not to form any alliance whatever with the Canaanites. As the matter, however, was irremediable, Isaac judged it better to pass the whole over in silence, than to proceed to the extremity of compelling his son to dismiss the women.

Esau sent to get venison for his father.

Isaac, being now arrived at a very advanced age, and having, in part, at least, if not totally, lost his sight, called to him his son Esau; and, after premising what he was about to say, with some reflections on his age and infirmities; grievously lamenting his incapacity to serve God, as he had formerly been accustomed to do; and ordering Esau to go into the fields, and endeavour to procure him some savoury food for his supper; he promised, at his return, to bestow his blessing on him, and to recommend him to the protection of Almighty God. "The period of my own existence," says he, "draws near; and, as the hour is uncertain, I cannot employ the short time I have to live, in a more proper manner, than in offering up prayers to God for thy welfare and happiness."

Rebecca instructs Jacob to procure the blessing.

Esau having retired, to execute his father's commands, Rebecca, who had overheard the conversation between them, contrived to transfer to Jacob, for whom she had more affection than for his brother, the blessing which was intended for Esau. She, therefore, ordered Jacob to kill a kid, and have it prepared for supper. Jacob obeyed, being constantly observant of the orders of his mother; and, when supper was ready, he set it before his father, having taken the precaution to spread the skin of the kid over his hands and arms, that he might appear to his father to be hairy, the brothers resembling each other, in other respects, so strongly, that it was impossible to distinguish one from the other: he was, however, in great agitation, lest he should be detected in the imposture, and thereby draw upon himself a curse, instead of a blessing.

Jacob deceives both Isaac and Esau.

Isaac, noting some particularity in his son's voice, bade him draw near, and finding his hands to be covered with hair, he observed, that "the voice was Jacob's voice, but the hands were the hands of Esau;" and without farther hesitation, began to eat of the victuals set before him. The repast being finished, he offered up a prayer to heaven in these words: "Eternal God, from whom all created beings derive their origin! Thou hast showered down on my father, myself, and our offspring, a profusion of the

comforts of this life, and hast promised us the enjoyment of still greater blessings to come: make good, O Lord, thy gracious promises, and disdain not the application of thy servant on account of his infirmities, which render him still more sensible of his dependence on thee for his support: Preserve, I pray thee, this child from all evil; grant him length of days and all happiness: bless him with the possession of every worldly enjoyment which thou, in thy wisdom, shall deem conducive to his welfare; render him the dread of his enemies, and an honour and comfort to his family and friends †."

No sooner had Isaac concluded his prayer, than Esau entered the room, being just returned from the chase; which circumstance discovered to Isaac the deception: but he thought proper to be silent on the matter. When the particulars of what had passed came to the knowledge of Esau, he requested of his father to bestow a blessing on him, as he had already conferred one on his brother. But Isaac excused himself; declaring, that he was restricted both from withdrawing and from making a second grant of the benediction he had conferred on Jacob. Esau was so much affected with the disappointment, that he could not refrain from tears; and his father, to comfort him as far as lay in his power, assured him, that he and his posterity should excel in hunting, and in the profession of arms: concluding, nevertheless, that he must be subject to his younger brother ‡.

Jacob, conscious of the injury his brother had sustained from him, was violently apprehensive of his resentment; and Rebecca, who was actuated by the same fears, in order to avert the danger, prevailed on Isaac to send Jacob into Mesopotamia, to take a wife from among her kindred, residing in that country.

Esau, perceiving that he had highly disobliged his father by forming an alliance with a Canaanitish family, which people were his professed enemies, now took to wife Basemath, the daughter of Ishmael, for whom he entertained a stronger affection, than for any of his other wives.

Flies to avoid Esau's resentment.

C H A P. XIV.

Jacob is sent into Mesopotamia, to contract a Marriage with Rachel, the Daughter of Laban. His Vision. He engages to serve Laban, on certain Conditions, and is deceived by him.

* It appears that this was no common blessing that Isaac meant for Esau, but a solemn dying benediction, such as pious parents in those days were wont to bestow upon their children, and which were held sacred, and indeed were often prophetic of their future fortunes in the world, as in the case of Jacob, *Gen. xlix. 1.* But the difference between him and Jacob was, that God had given Jacob a prophetic view of his intended dispensations to his descendants and their children; but it is plain that Isaac, in this place before us, had called Esau without having received any particular revelation about him, for he designed to tell him what God never intended should belong to him.

† The supper caught by hunters was designed as a festival which was always usual on a sacrifice; and Isaac hoped and believed that the prayers used on those occasions would obtain blessings from the Almighty on the head of his son.

‡ Both Jacob and his mother Rebecca were highly blameable for practising this deception, nor can it easily be determined which was most so. The providence of God must be taken into the account; but never can be alledged as an excuse for the double dealing of either the mother or the son; but, though he disapproved of the act, he over-ruled it to bring about his own designs.

Jacob sent into
Mesopotamia.

AT the solicitation of Rebecca, Isaac sent Jacob into Mesopotamia, to treat of a match with the daughter of Laban, Rebecca's brother. It happened that a mortal enmity subsisted at this time between that family and the Canaanites; and, as the route which Jacob was to pursue lay through the land of Canaan, he durst not trust himself in any of their houses, but reposed, during the night, in the open air; a stone, or a hillock serving him for a pillow. On a certain night, as he lay thus at rest, he had the following vision.

His vision.

He imagined that he saw a ladder placed on the earth, the top of which reached to the skies; and that a number of figures, resembling, in form, the human race, but far exceeding them in size, and in the lustre of their appearance, were continually passing and repassing up and down the rounds thereof; the Almighty appearing in person at the top, and speaking to him in these words: "You, Jacob, who are descended from Isaac and Abraham, men deservedly famous for their faith and virtue, instead of desponding of my care and protection, under any degree of affliction whatever, ought rather to submit cheerfully to your present troubles, with a firm reliance on me to extricate you from your difficulties. Place your trust in me, and be assured that you shall experience happier days. It was I who brought Abraham out of Mesopotamia hither, when he was driven from his possessions by those of his own family; it was I who showered down blessings on your father, through the whole course of his life; and I am determined, if you will render yourself deserving of my favour, to transfer to you those blessings which I formerly conferred on your ancestors. The business which is the object of your present journey shall succeed to your wish; you shall become the father of dutiful children, and your progeny shall be without number. To them and their posterity will I give this land, as an inheritance; and they shall plant colonies throughout the whole earth, and the islands, as far as the sun extends its influence. Let nothing, therefore, discourage you; but place an implicit confidence in my protection, not only on the present occasion, but in all cases in future."

This vision filled Jacob with rapture; and he anointed the stone on which he had reposed; vowing, at the same time, if God should ever permit him to return home, to erect an altar on the spot, and to offer sacrifice thereon. This vow he afterwards performed; dedicating to God the tenth of all his substance, for an oblation. And as a farther memorial of what had befallen him there, he named the place Bethel, or the *House of God*.

He then continued his journey, and, after a tedious passage, arrived at Charran, where he found several shepherds, and other young persons, of both sexes, assembled about a well, and drawing water. He accosted them, and begged a draught of water, to quench his thirst; and thus, by degrees, entered into discourse with them; inquiring whether they knew Laban, and whether he lived in the neighbourhood? They all answered in the affirmative, adding, that his daughter

and they were accustomed to feed their sheep together, and that they were surprised she had not joined them yet. The virgin herself came to the spot, in the midst of this conversation, and was acquainted by her companions with the inquiries which Jacob had made, concerning her father. She immediately, with an eager simplicity, began to question him relative to the place from whence he came, and the business which had brought him thither; making him an offer, at the same time, of her services.

Jacob meets
Rachel, who
courteously
receives him.

Jacob, charmed with her courteous behaviour, but much more so with the beauties of her person, instantly conceived a violent passion for her, and addressed himself to her in these terms: "A firm friendship," said he, "has subsisted between our families, if you, fair virgin, are actually the daughter of Laban, a long time previous to the birth of either of us; Abraham, Haran, and Nahor, being the sons of Thares, and Bethuel, your grandfather, the son of Nahor. Isaac, my father, was born to Abraham by Sarah, the daughter of Haran. Moreover, my mother, Rebecca, is the sister of your father, Laban, by the same parents: thus you see, that we stand related to each other in the degree of cousin-germans; and the object of my present journey is, to renew the ancient family league and compact."

The virgin now recollected with how much affection she had often heard her father speak of Rebecca, and she was so overjoyed with the idea of the pleasure which he would derive from the circumstance of Jacob's arrival, with tidings of that excellent woman, that she burst into tears of joy and affection, and, after having saluted the youth, said, "Thou bringest the most welcome news imaginable both to my father and to the whole family. He, good man, was never so happy as when expatiating on the virtues of thy mother; and I am positive, he would not exchange the felicity which thy tidings will give him, for any other blessing under the sun. Therefore, let us hasten to him without any farther delay." She then introduced him to Laban, who, as well as the rest of the family, expressed the utmost joy on his unexpected arrival.

Rachel con-
ducts Jacob to
her father, and
his family,
who behave
kindly to him.

He had been with the family but a few days, when Laban thought proper to compliment him upon the pleasure he professed that he enjoyed in his conversation; at the same time expressing some surprize, that he should have quitted his father and mother at a period when, from their extreme age, his presence must have been most necessary to them; concluding with an assurance, that he would render him every service in his power. Jacob, to satisfy his curiosity, gave him the following short abstract of the history of his family. "My mother, Rebecca," said he, "bore twin sons, Esau and myself. My father, being blind, was led, by the contrivance of my mother, to confer on me the blessing he had meant for my brother. Esau, therefore, considers me as a person who has supplanted him in his just claim, both to his father's blessing, and the inheritance which God had assigned him, and he determined, in consequence, to take away my life.

To

To avoid the danger which threatened me, and in compliance with the injunction of my mother, I have fled to thee for protection, as to the nearest relation she has living; and it is on thee, next under God, that I depend for my safety." Laban gave him the stronger assurances of his favour, not only in consideration of his own good qualities, but also, as being the son of his sister: saying, he should ever entertain the sincerest affection for her, whatever the distance might be that should separate them; adding, that, for the present, he would give him the superintendency of his flocks and shepherds, and that, whenever he should think proper to return home, he might depend on a gratification suitable to his merit.

Jacob agrees to
serve Laban
seven years for
Rachel.

Jacob, who was desirous of continuing in the family on any terms, consented to Laban's proposal, on condition that he might have Rachel in marriage, as the reward of his services; declaring that he loved her to excess, not only on account of her own rare merit, but also, as having been the providential instrument of his introduction to the family. Laban instantly ratified the condition, with earnest expressions of joy; protesting that he should prefer him before all men living for a son-in-law; but gave him to understand, at the same time, that he must wait awhile for the execution of the agreement, as it would not be without great unwillingness that he should suffer his daughter to go so far from him, as to the land of Canaan; having, to say the truth, almost repented, at times, the sending his sister thither. To prove the disinterestedness of his views, Jacob engaged to wait, and contracted to serve his intended father-in-law for the term of seven years*.

Laban's de-
ceit.

Precisely on the concluding day of the above term, Laban prepared the nuptial feast, and, having previously intoxicated Jacob, late at night, and in the dark, secretly conducted to his bed the bleary-eyed eldest sister, instead of the younger. Jacob having discovered the imposition, expostulated with him on this breach of faith: but Laban attempted to vindicate his conduct, on the plea of necessity; alledging, that the custom of the country would not permit the younger sister to be married before the elder, and solemnly protesting that he was totally uninfluenced by any malicious motive on this occasion: "But, the disappointment you have now experienced," said he, "need not be any obstacle to your marrying Rachel at a future time; for, if you will engage yourself to me for another term of seven years, at the expiration thereof she shall be delivered to you, unveiled, and in the face of day; and thus you will be guarded against every danger of a second deception." Jacob, who was guided solely by

the dictates of his passion, yielded to this proposition also: and, having completed the term of his contract, received Rachel for his wife.

Rachel given
in marriage to
Jacob.

Laban had given to his daughters two maidens, who were to attend them, not altogether in the capacity of menial servants, though they were, nevertheless, to be subservient to their commands: Zilpah attended on Leah, and Bilhah on Rachel. As Rachel evidently possessed a greater share of Jacob's affection than her sister Leah, the latter was greatly afflicted on that account, yet she still entertained hopes that, by bringing him children, she might, at length, win him to herself. This, accordingly, happened: for having borne to him a son, whom she named Reuben, or *divine mercy*, this circumstance influenced him to favour her, and she had afterwards three other sons, who were called Simeon, signifying *God is favourable*; Levi, or the *support of society*; and Judah, or *thanksgiving*.

Rachel was very apprehensive, lest the fruitfulness of her sister should, in part, abate Jacob's attachment to herself, and, therefore, contrived to deceive him, by substituting her woman, Bilhah, in her place; and by her Jacob had a son, named Dan, or the *judgment of God*; and she was some time afterwards delivered of Naphtali, signifying *artificial*; alluding to the circumstances of Rachel's craft, in her contention with her sister for children. Leah afterwards adopted her sister's arts, and introduced Zilpah to Jacob, who bore him two sons, one of which was named Gad, signifying *by chance*; and the other Aser, or *beautifying*, because they obtained honour by the transaction.

On a certain day, as the two sisters were sitting together, Reuben, Leah's eldest son, brought some mandrake apples to his mother. Rachel was eagerly desirous to partake of them, but was refused by the other, who peevishly told her, that it was unreasonable to think of depriving her of her husband and her apples also; but Rachel, to soothe her, offered to relinquish Jacob to her for that night. The proposal was accepted; and Leah, afterwards, bore other children; as Issachar, which signified *born for hire*; Zebulon, or a *pledge of love*; and a daughter, named Dinah. A considerable time elapsed before Rachel became pregnant, but, at length, she was delivered of a son, who was named Joseph, signifying an *addition*.

Jacob had now served his father-in-law, in the station of a superintendent over his shepherds and herdsmen, full twenty years: he, therefore, began to entertain thoughts of returning home, and of conducting his wives thither with him. But, it was necessary to act with caution; as he was conscious that Laban would throw every obstacle in the way of his design. He determined, however,

Jacob resolves
to return
home.

* It was not the custom of those countries for fathers to give dowry with their daughters, but to receive it from their sons-in-law, *Gen. xxxiv. 12. 1 Sam. xviii. 23, 25, 27*. Thus as Jacob had no money to purchase a wife, he offers his service for seven years instead of it.

† In the text, *Gen. xxx. 31*, we read, "Leah was hated," i. e. less beloved, according to the Hebrew idiom, *Mal. i. 2, 3. Luke xiv. 26*.

And this instance furnishes a good argument against bigamy in general; for it is morally impossible for a man to share his affections so equally between his wives, but that he must love the one better than the other. Hence says Andromache in Euripides: "It is not right for one man to possess two wives; but if they would live well, they should love but one."

to adopt no resolution, till he should first have consulted his wives on the subject, and have learned how they were disposed to the measure. Finding them well inclined to accompany him, he departed immediately, with his two wives, their attendants and children; and taking with him one half of the flocks. Rachel secreted the idols which her father had been accustomed to worship: not from any respect she bore them, for her husband had convinced her of the folly of such adoration; but she imagined that, in case her father should overtake them in their flight, these images might prove the means of effecting a reconciliation between Laban and her husband.

Laban pursues
and overtakes
him:

No sooner did Laban become acquainted, on the following day, with Jacob's secret departure, and all the attendant circumstances, than he assembled a strong party of able followers, and went in pursuit of him. In the evening of the seventh day, he overtook Jacob and his company, as they were sitting on a hillock, to rest themselves after the fatigue of the day's journey: but, it being late, Laban and his party laid themselves down to repose. During the night, God appeared to Laban in a dream, and strictly enjoined him rather to accommodate matters than offer the least violence to his fugitive children; cautioning him, moreover, not to despise them on the inferiority of their numbers, as, in that case, he would himself fight on their side.

Reproves
Jacob:

Early the next morning, Laban sent for Jacob, who came to him with the confidence of a man who is sensible of no crime. Having first related to him his dream, Laban began to reproach him, for leaving him in a clandestine manner, and for taking away his effects after the great intimacy which had subsisted between them.

Who vindicates himself.

Jacob replied, in vindication of himself, "That it was natural for a man, who had been so long absent from his native country, to wish to return thither; that, with respect to the charge of robbery and injustice, he was disposed to appeal to the decision of any other person rather than Laban himself; that he thought himself intitled rather to his acknowledgments for the care he had taken to improve his estate, than to his reproaches for having reserved to himself so small a pittance out of it; and that, in the case of his taking his wives with him at his departure, both he and they had acted solely in conformity to their conjugal duty." Thus much he said in vindication of himself; and then adverted to the conduct of Laban, on whom he retorted his own reproaches; complaining, and expressing great surprise, that having served his father-in-law with unimpeached fidelity, for the long term of twenty years, he should now be treated as the worst of foes.

Jacob certainly had sufficient cause to complain of

* It was not only in order to reconcile Esau to him that he sent these messengers to his brother, but also to apprise him that he brought his substance with him from Haran, and that he was not going into Canaan to do him any injury: whereas had he returned home without Esau's knowledge, Esau might have thought that Ja-

the usage he had received from Laban, who, observing that God manifested a strong predilection for Jacob, repeatedly imposed upon his credulity by fair speeches and promises; engaging, at one time, to bestow on him all the white cattle which should be produced in the course of the year; and at another, all the black; and when, at the expiration of the twelve-month, he found that the share promised to Jacob amounted to the greater part of the cattle produced in the time, he refused to fulfil his engagement till the following year; being pre-determined to pay no more regard to his stipulation, at the end of that period, than he had done on former occasions, if his interest should require it. But to return:

Rachel had secreted the idols in her saddle, and pretended to have a disorder incidental to her sex upon her. Laban, therefore, to whom Jacob had given free permission to make a thorough search for the images, passed her by, not imagining that, in her condition, she would suffer any thing sacred to be so near her person. Laban, thereupon, entered into a covenant with Jacob; forgave his daughters all that had passed, and promised that, for the future, they should hold the same place in his affection they had ever possessed; all which he confirmed with the solemnity of an oath. This ceremony was performed on a mountain, on which they erected a pillar, resembling an altar, and they stiled it, and all the adjacent country, Galaud, or the *Hill of Witnesses*. After the ratification of the league between them, they feasted together, and then separated; Laban returning to his home, and Jacob continuing his way to the land of Canaan.

Reconciliation
between
Laban and Ja-
cob, confirmed
by a covenant
of friendship.

C H A P. XV.

Interview between Jacob and Esau, which terminates amicably.

AS Jacob pursued his journey to the land of Canaan, he had several visions, all tending to give him hopes of future success; and the place where the Almighty was pleased to grant him these revelations, he named the *Field of God*. But he still bore in mind the ancient resentment of Esau; and, therefore, privately exerted all his endeavours to discover how his brother stood disposed to him; sending, moreover, several messengers* to find out his residence, and to address him, in his name, to the following effect: "That perceiving he had drawn upon himself the resentment of his brother, he retired from his own country; but, confident that his long absence must have obliterated all remembrance of past disagreements, he was now on his return home, with his wives, children, and treasures; proposing to himself, as the first wish of his

cob had got the greatest part of his substance from his father; and when he came at Isaac's death to take away with him to Edom what his father had to leave him, he might have looked upon Jacob as having defrauded him of his right.

heart, to share the wealth God had so profusely bestowed on him, in common with his brother."

This measure afforded Esau such heart-felt satisfaction, that he instantly began his journey, at the head of four hundred men, to meet him on the road. When Jacob learnt that Esau was approaching at the head of so numerous a party, he was somewhat confounded; but, quickly recovering himself, determined, with the divine assistance, to repel any attack that might be made on him. He formed his men into two bodies; ordering the first to advance, and the other to keep at such a distance, as to be able to second the first, in any advantage which they might obtain, or to support them, in case they should be repulsed. Having made these preparations, he sent some of his people before, with presents to his brother, of different species of animals, some for use, others for curiosity. These he ordered to march at a distance from each other, that they might appear more numerous than they in reality were; and he particularly enjoined the persons who conducted them, to shew the utmost deference and respect to Esau; trusting hereby to dispel any rancour which might yet remain in his brother's mind. The whole day was spent in adjusting the disposition of the troops, and at night they marched.

After they had crossed the torrent of Jabac, Jacob being at a small distance behind, an angel laid his hands on him; and Jacob wrestling with the angel*, overcame him; whereupon he heard a voice, speaking to him in these words: "Thou mayest with reason boast of the advantage thou hast obtained over me; for it is not a common adversary, but an angel of the Lord whom thou hast foiled. This shall serve thee for a token, that thy posterity shall never become extinct, and that in all thy contests thou shalt prove victorious." The angel, thereupon, gave him the title of Israel, which in the Hebrew signifies *struggling*. Jacob then prayed for a revelation of his future fortune, and when he perceived that it was an angel who spake to him, he urged him to be explicit; and this being complied with, the angel disappeared. The joy which Jacob felt on this occasion was such, that he named the spot, whereon the incident happened, Phaul, signifying the *face of God*. In this contest, one of the sinews of his thigh was strained, upon which account he would never afterwards eat of that part of any animal; in which the Jews follow his example to this day.

Jacob being informed that Esau was approaching, ordered his wives and their attendants to walk at a distance from his troops, that, in case his brother should think proper to attack him, they might see the engagement without sharing the danger. But when Jacob perceived that Esau drew near with looks of complacency and peace, he ran towards him, and threw himself at his feet. Esau raised him up, embraced

Jacob's fears dispelled by an affectionate salutation with Esau.

him, and with many questions respecting the women and children, earnestly pressed him to accompany him to his father's house. Jacob, however, declined the invitation; alledging, that his horses and cattle were too much tired to continue the journey; and Esau thereupon departed to his habitation at Seir; which was so named on account of the *hairiness* of his person.

C H A P. XVI.

The Rape of Dinah. Slaughter of the Sichemites.

JACOB repaired to the place called the Tabernacles, and from thence went to Sichem, in the land of Canaan. It chanced that the inhabitants were engaged in the celebration of a festival; and Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob, went thither, to gratify her curiosity, and observe the customs of the women of the country. Sichem, the son of king Emmor, conceiving a passion for her, carried her off, and violated her. Being still greatly enamoured of the damsel, he asked the consent of his father to marry her; and he not only readily yielded thereto, but went in person to Jacob, to obtain his compliance. Jacob was greatly perplexed what answer to give the king; seeing that his conscience forbade him to marry his daughter to a person of a different religion from himself; yet neither could he, with propriety, reject the application of a person of the petitioner's distinguished rank. After some deliberation, however, he determined to request a short time to consider of the matter; and the king quitted him, in full confidence of succeeding in his views.

History of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob.

When the sons of Jacob became acquainted with the indignity that had been offered to their sister, and the proposal made by Emmor, they were so much confounded, that they could not determine what measures to adopt; but Simeon and Levi, the brothers of Dinah by the same mother, concerted a design, which, without the privity of their father, they executed in the following manner.

Embracing the opportunity of the next festival at Sichem, they, at a late hour of the night, entered the city, overpowered the guards, whom drowsiness and ebriety had rendered an easy conquest, and killed all the males they could find, among whom were the king and his son; sparing the women alone; after the completion of this enterprize, they conducted Dinah back to their father's house. The barbarity of this action struck Jacob with the utmost horror, and highly incensed him against his sons; but God comforted him in a dream, bidding him take courage and cleanse his tents, and to perform the sacrifice

Simeon and Levi avenge the injury done to their sister.

* An angel in the form of a man; the same that he had seen at Bethel, as we are told in *Hyss* xii. 4. It was an angel who represented the Almighty, and is therefore called God, *Gen.* xxxii. 28, 30. Hence some have taken him for the eternal Logos, or Son of

God. This angel laid hold on him, and entered with him into a wrestling match, according to the custom of those countries, in order to teach him, by this symbolical representation, how easy it is for God to make the weakest an over-match for the most mighty.

which

which he vowed, in consequence of the vision while on his journey into Mesopotamia.

While Jacob was employed in the execution of this command, he accidentally discovered the gods of Laban, which Rachel, unknown to him, had buried under an oak. He then went to Beth-el, where he had the vision, and there performed sacrifice. From thence he repaired to Ephrata, at which place Rachel died in child-birth, and was buried; being the only person of the family who was not interred at Hebron. He was greatly affected by this incident; but, the child surviving, he named him Benjamin, from the great grief he gave his mother*.

Jacob had twelve sons and one daughter. Of these, eight were legitimate; six being by Leah; and two by Rachel; of the four illegitimate children, two were born to him by Zilpah, and the same number by Bilhah. Their names have been already given in a preceding chapter.

* This is an error. In Gen. xxxv. 18. the reading is, "She called his name Ben-oni (son of sorrow); but Jacob called him Benjamin" (son of my right hand, or strength). And it is ob-

From Ephrata Jacob went to Hebron, in the land of Canaan, at which place Isaac then dwelt; but they resided together for a short time only. Rebecca died some time previous to Jacob's arrival, and Isaac did not long survive her. He was interred by Esau and Jacob in the family sepulchre in Hebron, where his wife also had been laid. Isaac, by his virtuous conduct, rendered himself acceptable in the sight of God, and, next to Abraham, appeared to be the peculiar favourite of heaven. He passed through life in the uniform and exemplary practice of piety and virtue, and died in the hundred and eighty-fifth year of his age.

After the death of Isaac, the two brothers, Esau and Jacob, shared their possessions between them; and Esau, having yielded to his brother the city of Hebron, withdrew himself to Seir, where he fixed his residence. The whole country of Idumæa belonged to him, and he named it, after himself, Edom.

served, that both names were verified in the fates of his posterity, no tribe being more valorous, yet none so subject to sorrowful disasters, as the tribe of Benjamin.

B O O K II.

Including Various TRANSACTIONS from the YEAR of the WORLD 2230, to 2454.

C H A P. I.

Joseph's Dreams. He becomes the Envy of his Brethren, who conspire against his Life.

JACOB was one of the happiest of mankind: being particularly favoured by the divine providence and protection, he not only surpassed all his neighbours in wealth and power, but was also blessed with a numerous progeny, who were equally renowned for their industry, valour, and prudence; and whose very sufferings and afflictions it pleased God to render advantageous to them, by making them the happy instruments of extricating our ancestors from the bondage of the Egyptians.

Joseph, whom Rachel bore to Jacob, was the favourite of his father, as well on account of his mental, as personal qualifications*. The predilection, which his father constantly manifested for him, excited the jealousy and ill-will of the rest of his brethren; and these disgusts received additional force, from the circumstance of certain dreams, which Joseph communicated to his brethren, at different times, all appear-

ing to prognosticate his future felicity, power, and pre-eminence.

Having been sent by his father, to assist his brethren in reaping, he had a dream, which differed widely from those fantastic creations of the brain, to which the appellation of Dreams is usually given. He made his brothers acquainted with the particulars of this vision, and desired them to solve it. "I dreamt," said he, "that I saw my own sheaf of wheat standing erect, and those of all my brethren hastening, and prostrating themselves before it." This dream might have been expounded without much difficulty, as it plainly portended the great power which Joseph was to acquire over the rest of his brethren. But they pretended an incapacity to explain the meaning of it; praying earnestly, however, for heaven to avert the omen, and conceiving a still greater hatred against Joseph, than before.

A second vision, which he had, was of a still more extraordinary kind than the former. He imagined that he saw the sun, moon, and eleven stars, descend-

* We read, Gen. xxxvii. 2. that "the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives." His mo-

ther being dead, he was brought up amongst the sons of the handmaids: probably because they were thought less likely to use him ill.

ing from the skies, and doing him reverence. Still unconscious of the evil designs of his brethren, Joseph also communicated this vision to his father, in their hearing, and expressed an earnest desire to be acquainted with the tendency of it. Jacob was greatly pleased with this dream †; considering it as a preface of the future happiness and glory of his son Joseph, and of the honour which, in process of time, he should receive both from his father and brothers. The sun and moon he expounded to mean the father and mother; it being the office of the one to increase and nourish, and of the other to give form and strength; and he supposed the eleven stars to signify the eleven brethren, who also derived their knowledge and virtue from above.

Envy and wicked plot of Joseph's brethren against him.

This was, doubtless, a rational interpretation of the dream in question, but it gave great offence to the brethren of Joseph, who, on the contrary, ought to have rejoiced in the prospect of their brother's promised happiness, instead of envying so near a relation those advantages and benefits which they would not have regretted the possession of to a stranger. But to that height had their inveteracy against him now arisen, that nothing less than his life would satisfy them: and this was the method they took to effect their purpose. No sooner was the harvest over, than they removed, with their flocks, to Sichem, which place is remarkable for the excellency of its pasture; but without giving their father the least intimation of their departure. When they had been gone some time, and no intelligence being received by Jacob of the place to which they had retired, he dispatched Joseph to obtain all possible information concerning them, and bring him an account immediately of their situation, and the state of the flocks.

CHAP. II.

The Conspiracy of Joseph's Brethren: his Life is preserved through the Intercession and Proposal of Reuben, and he is sold to Arabian Merchants.

Joseph's brethren conspire against him.

JOSEPH, in obedience to his father's commands, went in search of his brethren, and upon his arrival among them, they rejoiced exceedingly; and, considering him as an enemy whom God had delivered into their power, were desirous of putting their sanguinary purpose into immediate execution. But Reuben exerted his utmost powers of persuasion, by endeavouring to

prevail upon them to shew favour to Joseph; representing to them how hateful they would render themselves both in the sight of God and man, by sacrificing their brother to the desperate and unnatural enmity they had conceived against him. He used many arguments to discourage the assassination; but finding that neither religion, reason, nor humanity would prevail with his brethren, and that they were inflexibly determined against Joseph, he suggested a way to mitigate the rigour of the sentence they had pronounced. Addressing himself to them, he said, "Since you are inexorably determined upon the destruction of the youth, do not aggravate your crime by shedding his blood: cast him into some adjacent pit, and leave him there to perish; by which means the crime itself will be lessened in some degree, and you will evade the severity of reproach." This qualifying proposal being assented to, Reuben tied a cord round the body of Joseph, and having carefully lowered him into a dry well, departed in search of his sheep.

Soon after this, a company of Arabian merchants* appeared, who were Ishmaelites, and were on their way from Galaad, conveying spices and other articles, the produce of Syria, into Egypt. In order to dispose of Joseph so that they might never see him again, and yet not stain their hands with his blood, Judas proposed selling him to these merchants; which being agreed to, he was taken up from the well, and the merchants paid twenty pieces of silver for him, and took him away. He was at this time seventeen years old.

Joseph sold to the Ishmaelites.

The care of Reuben now was, to form such excuses to his father, as might prevent the suspicion of unfair practices in his brethren. Some time was employed in debates upon this matter; and it was, at length, resolved to take the travelling coat which had been stripped from Joseph, and, after tearing it and staining it with goat's blood, to produce it to Jacob, as an evidence that his child had been destroyed by some voracious animal. With this pretence, they went to their father, and shewed him the coat, in a torn and bloody condition; said they had not seen him, and were apprehensive he had fallen a prey to some wild beast. Jacob, who had before received some slight intimation of his son's misfortune, entertained a hope that he might have been taken prisoner, or, that he was detained by a still more favourable accident: but upon seeing the bloody coat, he instantly knew it to be Joseph's, and concluding him to have been devoured, clothed himself in sackcloth, and gave way to the most passionate lamentations and inconsolable sorrow for his supposed death.

† Dreaming has by many been considered as the living active state of the soul during sleep; and we find from many passages in the sacred scripture, that while people were asleep, God often revealed future events to them, either in a way of mercy, or upon some extraordinary occasion. A visible representation was here made to Joseph, that one day he would be superior to his brethren; but all

the effect it had on them was, to procure and increase their hatred to him, as appears by the sequel.

* In the language of the present times, it is called a *caravan*; merchants not daring, even to this day, to travel alone, or in small numbers, in those eastern countries, through the deserts, for fear of robbery or of wild beasts.

C H A P. III.

Joseph is sold into Egypt. His exemplary Continence, when tempted to Lewdness by the Wife of Potiphar, who, at her Instigation, throws him into Prison.

Joseph in Egypt. THE merchants who had purchased Joseph, proceeded to Egypt, and there sold him to Potiphar, an officer of distinguished rank in the service of king Pharaoh, by whom he was not treated as a menial servant, but, on the contrary, with every instance of liberality and kindness: he was allowed opportunities for cultivating the study of literature, and, in a short time, was advanced to be superintendent of Potiphar's house. This change of fortune had no effect upon the steady integrity of Joseph, the propriety and prudence of whose conduct afforded an instance that true virtue will not yield to the temptations and circumstances of life.

His mistress tempts him to commit lewdness. He was remarkable for personal attractions; and the wife of his master soon distinguished his superior qualifications, and became violently enamoured of him. Presuming on the inferiority of Joseph's situation, she imagined that a motive of ambition would incite him to a ready acceptance of her offer, but entertained not the least idea of the inflexible dignity of his mind. She signified her intention to prostitute herself, by intimations too palpable to be misconceived: but upon the first hint, he rejected her invitation, and advised her utterly to suppress her unruly desires of what she could not possibly obtain; urging, that he could not return affront and treachery for the kindness and generosity he had experienced from his master. He said, he would cheerfully obey her lawful commands, and should think himself highly honoured by them; but that he could not condescend to perform a guilty action. She was greatly disappointed by this refusal, which, however, served but more to inflame the passion she had conceived, and was determined to gratify; and for effecting this, she suggested the following stratagem: A festival was holden, whereon it was usual for the women of rank to assemble; she counterfeited indisposition, and remained in her chamber, where she procured Joseph to be introduced to her, and behaved to him with singular complacency and tenderness.

Joseph flies from the adulterers. She accompanied her lascivious conversation with tears, prayers, and menaces; but all were ineffectual to seduce him from his duty; and, conscious that no punishment could be adequate to his demerits, should he yield to the solicitations of this base woman, he resolved to brave every danger, rather than to comply there-

with. Neither did he omit to represent to her the duties she owed to herself, her husband, and the world*. He urged many arguments, to bring her back to a sense of decency and reason: but this was only adding fuel to flame; for, perceiving that she could effect nothing by intreaty, she had recourse to violence, and, seizing hold of his garment, endeavoured to force him to a compliance with her libidinous desires. But his indignation against this shameless woman rose to such a height, that, breaking from her, he hastily quitted the chamber, and left his garment in her hand. For a short interval, her mind was violently agitated, between the indignity of the repulse, and the apprehension of a discovery; but she quickly determined to shelter herself from every dangerous consequence, by accusing Joseph: thus, at once providing for her own security, and gratifying her malice. She, accordingly, confined herself closely to her chamber, affecting to be in great trouble and affliction. Just at this juncture, her husband came into the chamber, and, observing the disorder and confusion which was visible in her face, earnestly requested her to acquaint him with the cause thereof.

She made a most plausible speech accusing this innocent young man, which, together with the tears and passionate gestures with which it was accompanied, so effectually imposed on the credulity of Potiphar, that, without making any manner of inquiry into the foundation of the charge against Joseph, he ordered him to be confined in the common prison, which was appropriated to the reception of the most notorious criminals.

C H A P. IV.

In consequence of a groundless Accusation, Joseph is lodged in Prison. Circumstances attending him during his Confinement. His Interpretation of several Dreams.

Pious Conduct of Joseph in prison. JOSEPH patiently submitted to his severe treatment, appearing neither solicitous to vindicate his own conduct, nor to destroy the credibility of the charge alledged against him; but, satisfied with his innocence, cherished the comfortable hope that the power of the supreme Being would enable him to rise superior to the rage of his malicious enemies; and the providence of God was shewn towards him in the following instance: the gaoler became so prejudiced in his favour, by the gracefulness of his person, his pleasing address, candour, diligence, and integrity, that he freed him of his irons, and shewed him other marks of favour

* Joseph does not reproach this shameless woman (as he justly might have done) with want of modesty, with indelicacy, and adultery; but nobly and piously urges the heinousness of the crime, calling it "a great wickedness, and sin against God;" and, in his

expostulation with her, collects together all the aggravating circumstances that would attend his complying with her unlawful desires.

was it at all probable that they should, he being very young at the time of their separation, and now greatly altered in his person*. Perceiving that he was in no danger of being discovered by his brethren, Joseph determined to make trial of them. He therefore, not only refused to supply them with corn, but also accused them of being spies. "My friends," said he, "instead of brothers, as you pretend to be, you are no other than a band of conspirators, of different countries. It is not probable that you, who plainly appear to be possessed of such extraordinary qualifications, should all be the sons of a private individual, when scarcely any sovereign on earth can boast of such a progeny." The motive which influenced Joseph to this conduct was, that he might thereby draw from his brethren some information of what had passed in the family since his departure, and whether his brother Benjamin was still at home; being very apprehensive lest they should have treated him in a manner similar to what he experienced from them in his own person.

Their fearful apprehensions; and Reuben's eloquent speech. The brethren were greatly alarmed with the prospect of their danger, and clearly perceived, that the design of their long journey was effectually defeated. Reuben, however, took courage, and in the name of the rest, addressed Joseph in these words: "We do not come hither," said he, "either with the view of penetrating into mysteries of state, or of attempting any thing against the safety of the king, or the tranquillity of his government. It was merely the scarcity of bread which compelled us to resort hither; or, should I rather say, that your humanity, in throwing open your market to strangers, as well as natives, has invited us. The very resemblance which we bear to each other in our countenances, bespeaks us, as we in reality are, the sons of one man. Our father is, by birth, an Hebrew, and he is named Jacob. He had twelve sons by four wives, and, whilst they all lived, every thing prospered with us; but from the time that one of the number, named Joseph, was taken away from us, our misfortunes have continually accumulated. Our father still repines at that loss, and his inconsolable sorrows afflict us equally with the untimely fate of our beloved brother. Our design in coming hither was, with your permission, to buy corn; and, during our absence from home, the care of our reverend father is intrusted to our younger brother, Benjamin. Should you have any doubts of the truth of what I have now advanced, you have only to dispatch a messenger to our father, to be satisfied that I have not uttered a falsehood."

Joseph, perceiving by this discourse that his father and Benjamin were safe and in health, ordered his

brethren into close confinement, till he should be at leisure to examine them with greater strictness. At the expiration of three days, he commanded them to be again brought before him; and, upon their entrance, addressed them thus: "You have assured me," said he, "that you entertain no designs against the state, and that you are all brethren, and the sons of Jacob? In confirmation of the truth of what you have asserted, you shall leave one of your brethren with me, as an hostage, and the rest shall carry home to your father the corn you purchase; after which you shall return hither, with your youngest brother, whom, you say, you have left at home; and this shall be the indispensable test of the rectitude of your intentions. In the mean time, give yourselves no concern about the hostage you leave with me, as he shall experience every indulgence during your absence." This speech afflicted them in the highest degree, and, considering themselves to be on the very verge of ruin, they lamented their misfortune, and repeatedly observed to each other, that it was an effect of the divine vengeance, which pursued them for the barbarity of their conduct towards their unhappy brother. Reuben reproached them with the folly and inefficacy of their late repentance; frankly telling them, that they had no other remedy than patience, under the judgment which they had drawn upon themselves by their wickedness. Thus they conversed together, in the persuasion that no one present understood their language. The bitter reflections which Reuben cast on them so powerfully awakened their feelings, that Joseph, who observed the violent agitation of their minds, was obliged to retire, lest his emotions should discover him. After a short absence, he returned to them, took Simeon† for an hostage, and gave the rest a licence to purchase whatever corn they might want; but he secretly instructed one of his servants to put the money they should pay for it into each man's baggage; which order was accordingly executed.

On their return into Canaan, they acquainted Jacob with all the particulars of their adventures in Egypt; concluding with an urgent request to their father, to permit Benjamin to go with them at their return to that kingdom, in order to vouch for the truth of their former declarations, and to procure the releasement of Simeon. Jacob was not at all satisfied with their conduct in leaving Simeon behind them; but he would not give the least ear to the proposal of sending Benjamin thither with them, although Reuben offered to pledge the lives of his own children for the safe return of his brother. They were reduced, by this refusal, to a terrible dilemma; to which the discovery of their money in their sacks

Joseph requires Benjamin to be sent, and retains Simeon as a pledge.

* The dress and manners of the Egyptian court were undoubtedly adopted by Joseph the favourite of Pharaoh; so that, in addition to his years, (twenty years having now elapsed since they sold him to the Ishmaelites,) there were sufficient circumstances to disguise

him from the knowledge of his brethren, who appeared in the dress, and spoke the language of Canaan.

† Simeon is selected from his brethren as an hostage, because he was a principal active in this cruel and unnatural behaviour against Joseph, greatly

greatly contributed. But, their provisions being nearly exhausted, Jacob, at times, seemed to be partly inclined to permit his son, Benjamin, to accompany the rest of his brethren, being convinced that they must never think of returning to Egypt, unless they complied with the terms which had been prescribed to them, at their departure from thence. Their wants still increasing, the brothers were very urgent upon their father to comply with what had been proposed to him; but Jacob still refused to listen to them, till at length, Judas, a man of a resolute temper, and great freedom of speech, adopted another method to engage his father to yield his consent to what they required of him. "In my opinion," said he to Jacob, "you express too great a degree of solicitude for the safety of Benjamin. Whether he goes with us, or continues at home, he must still submit to whatever God shall ordain. Yet you seem inclined to suffer us all to perish, for want of food, which must inevitably happen, if we should forfeit the favour of Pharaoh, through an ill-founded fear of what may happen to our brother. But would you not blame yourself severely, should the Egyptians put Simeon to death in the mean time? Place an intire confidence in the power of the Almighty, and rest assured, that I will either conduct our brother back in safety, or perish in the attempt."

Joseph's brethren, with Benjamin, sent again into Egypt.

Jacob, at length, suffered himself to be persuaded, and delivered the child into their care; furnishing them with a double portion of money, that they might pay for the corn they had purchased in the former journey, and with presents of balm, myrrh, turpentine, honey, and other productions of the land of Canaan, for the use of the officer with whom they were to treat for the grain they intended to buy. Thus provided, they began their journey; leaving Jacob in the utmost anxiety for the safe return of his beloved children, and being themselves very apprehensive lest this separation should so far affect their father, as to be the cause of his death.

They are favourably received.

Immediately on their arrival in Egypt, they waited on Joseph; not without some fear, that the circumstance of their discovering the money in their sacks would be imputed to them as a fraud. When they mentioned the matter, however, to Joseph's steward, he utterly disavowed all knowledge of the transaction. They now, therefore, began to take courage, more especially when they saw their brother Simeon had obtained his liberty. Joseph inquired after the health of his father, and other particulars: and his apprehensions for Benjamin being now removed, he asked him whether he was the younger brother, whom they had before mentioned to him; to which they replied

in the affirmative. He thereupon exclaimed, "God's providence is constantly over all his works;" and withdrew, with tears in his eyes, to indulge the impulse of nature. The same evening he invited them to sup with him, and placed them at the table in the same order in which they were accustomed to sit at their father's house, conducting himself towards them with all imaginable courtesy; but the portion allotted to Benjamin was double that of either of his brethren*.

Joseph gave orders, after the repast was finished, that their corn should be measured, and that each man's money should be put into his sack, as before; secretly instructing his steward, to convey a certain silver cup, which he used at his meals, into that particular sack which belonged to Benjamin. His intention in this was, to try whether, in case Benjamin should be detained for the pretended theft, the rest would remain with him, for the purpose of obtaining his release; or whether they would not rather abandon him to his fate, and return to their father. The orders given on this occasion were punctually executed.

Stratagem to detain Benjamin.

The next morning, by break of day, they began their journey, totally unconscious of the design which was in agitation against them, and pleasing themselves with the reflection, that they had both Simeon and Benjamin in their company, whom, they trusted, they should deliver up safe to their father, according to their promise. They had not proceeded far, before they found themselves suddenly surrounded by a party of horse, accompanied by the servant who had been commissioned, to secure the cup in Benjamin's baggage. This unexpected event incensed them to a high degree, and they exclaimed bitterly against the people who had so recently treated them with the most remarkable honour and hospitality. The Egyptians, on the other hand, reproached them, in terms equally severe, with the baseness of returning injuries for the numerous civilities and benefits they had received, and threatened them with a speedy punishment, adequate to their demerits; telling them, that howsoever secretly they might imagine they had perpetrated this crime, there was an all-seeing eye above, from which it was not possible to conceal their iniquity. In this manner the Egyptians continued to reproach them, but the servant was more vociferous and insulting than the rest; inasmuch that the unfortunate brethren concluded that he was little less than insane. They urged the improbability of their committing a crime of that nature, since, uninfluenced by any considerations but those of honour and justice, they had, with the strictest fidelity, restored the money which they had paid for the corn, and afterwards found put into

The brethren stop on their journey, and accused of theft.

* This has been laughed at by Deists and Infidels; but they do not consider that it was the custom of the ancients to distinguish those whom they meant to honour, by an increase of provision, and many changes of raiment. If these gentlemen will give themselves
No. 2.

the trouble to read Homer in the original, or, what perhaps may be more easy to them, Mr. Pope's Versification of it, they will find this circumstance frequently alluded to, particularly in Agamemnon's Address to Idomenus.

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their sacks. "But," said they, "the most effectual way to evince our innocence or guilt, will be to search our baggage, to which we are ready to submit with the utmost confidence; and should any of us be found to have committed this action, we are all willing to suffer whatever punishment he may be deemed to have deserved."

The Egyptians, accordingly, began to examine each man's baggage; declaring, however, that no one but the person in whose custody the cup should actually be found, should meet with the least molestation†. They had now examined all the baggages, save that of Benjamin, without effect, and the brethren were felicitating themselves on the prospect of being quickly rid of these troublesome people, when, upon opening his sack, the cup instantly appeared. This unexpected discovery plunged them into inconceivable

Their discovery, and return to Egypt.

anguish; they burst into tears, tore their garments, and used the most extravagant gestures, declaring that themselves and their brother were inevitably ruined by this accident; and, with the most poignant lamentations, deplored their incapacity to fulfil the promise they had made to their father, on leaving him, to convey Benjamin home in safety.

Benjamin was conducted in chains before Joseph, his brethren accompanying him. Joseph received them with an assumed sternness, and reproached them in terms similar to these: "Is it thus, ye basest of men, that, regardless of the hospitable treatment you have received, and contemning the anger of an offended Deity, you give the most sensible affront to your patron and benefactor?" The rest of the brethren earnestly requested that their lives might be accepted, in lieu of that of the unfortunate Benjamin. They repeatedly observed to each other, how much the situation of Joseph, if actually dead, was to be envied, in comparison with theirs; or, if he was still living, how much it redounded to his honour, that the vengeance of God should thus be exerted against them, in consequence of their cruelty to him. They also reproached themselves with being the authors both of the present as well as the former sorrows of their unhappy father; Reuben continually recalling to their minds the guilt of their brother's murder. Joseph, pretending to deliberate for some time, on the course he should take, told them, at length, that, as he neither thought himself justified in punishing the innocent indiscriminately with the guilty, nor in releasing the culpable at the instance of those who bore no part in the perpetration of the crime, they

were at liberty to return home when they pleased, and that he should content himself with detaining Benjamin, to receive the punishment due to his offence.

This speech threw them into the utmost consternation; but Judas, a man of courage and abilities, and who alone had been able to prevail on his father to part with Benjamin, resolved to defy every danger in the attempt to save him, and, accordingly, addressed himself to Joseph in these words: "We do not pretend to deny, most excellent governor, that the crime charged upon our brother is of a heinous nature, and merits a severe punishment. It is certain that the guilt of the action can be imputed to one only of our number, and he chances to be the youngest; yet we are all willing to yield up our lives for the preservation of his."

Judas, and the rest of his brethren, then threw themselves at Joseph's feet, to solicit him in behalf of their brother Benjamin. The passions of tenderness and brotherly affection now became so powerful in the breast of Joseph, that he could no longer support the character he had assumed*, but ordered his attendants to retire, that he might discover himself to his brethren without witnesses; and being alone with them, he addressed them in these words: "I am infinitely happy," said he, "to see you thus tenderly affected towards your brother; as, I must confess, I could not refrain from entertaining some doubts of your regard for him, when I reflected on certain circumstances of your former conduct, with respect to myself. In the whole of my late behaviour towards you, I proposed only to put your affection to the test; and, from the event, I am convinced that, by whatever motives you were actuated in all your proceedings relative to me, yet the providence of God has wonderfully interposed therein, making those actions the means of procuring for us the happiness which we at this time enjoy, and the prospect of greater blessings in future."

Joseph makes himself known to his brethren.

"But, as I now find my father to be in such a situation as I could rather have wished, than expected; and that you have all that affection in your tempers, which is the true characteristic of brethren; all past injuries are forgotten, and I should rather return you my thanks, as the agents of Divine Providence, for our common benefit, than recall to your remembrance any transactions of ancient date, which might, perhaps, at the time, appear to have an evil tendency. I desire that you will forget all these matters, and not render yourselves uneasy by

† Various reasons are given by commentators for Joseph's making use of this stratagem to detain his brethren; but perhaps he intended no more than to find a judicious pretence for stopping Benjamin, being ignorant of the peremptory charge which Jacob had given with regard to this favourite child.

* We are told in the former part of the narration, that Joseph found great difficulty to conceal himself so long; that he was obliged now and then to withdraw, in order to give vent to his

tears; and after that, composing himself, he returned. But now his tender passions are wrought up to such a pitch, by this last scene, especially by the moving speech which Judah makes him, that he can contain himself no longer; nature bursts through all restraint, and forces the discovery, even in spite of himself, and the regard he had to those who were present: for it is observed, *he could not refrain himself, before all them that stood by him.* Gen. xlv. 1.

the recollection of former ill designs, which never took effect; since it has pleased the Almighty thus to bring good out of evil.

“Return, therefore, to your father, with the happy tidings of the unexpected blessings which God hath conferred on you. Hasten your departure, lest his very sorrows and fears should bring any ill accident upon him; which would utterly destroy all the comfort I propose to myself in seeing him once again, and in participating with him the blessings which I now enjoy. Begone, therefore, and return with all possible dispatch; and do not neglect to bring with you, your wives, children, and all your kindred: as, at this time in particular, when there are yet five years of the famine unexpired, I should be very unwilling that my dearest friends should remain at so great a distance from me.” Joseph then tenderly embraced his brethren, who, with many tears, acknowledged and lamented their base practices against so worthy a brother. He afterwards entertained them at supper.

On their departure homewards, the king ordered several waggons laden with corn, gold, and silver, and various other presents to be sent to their father; to which Joseph added many others from himself; some being intended for the father, others for the brothers themselves, but the most valuable portion was destined for Benjamin.

CHAP. VI.

Jacob, having learnt the splendid Condition of his Son Joseph, in Egypt, repairs thither, accompanied by his whole Family.

Jacob repairs to Egypt.

WHEN the sons of Jacob returned to their father, they acquainted him that Joseph was still living, and enjoying great authority and magnificence, and holding, next to Pharaoh, the most distinguished rank in the Egyptian dominions. Jacob readily credited what was told; and these extraordinary incidents furnished him with many reflections on the infinity of God's grace and kindness to him; and without any further delay, he began his journey to Egypt*.

Jacob, seeking the divine direction, is favoured with a vision.

When Jacob arrived at the *Well of the Oath*, he offered an oblation to God; yet fearing, lest the plenteous state of Egypt should seduce his sons to settle there, and thus divert them from returning again to Canaan, the country which God had promised him for an inheritance. He was also partly apprehensive, lest God should inflict some calamity on him and his followers, as a punishment for undertaking the pre-

sent journey, without first imploring his advice and direction; or, lest he should die before his arrival in Egypt†. In the midst of these reflections, he fell into a profound sleep, during which the Almighty appeared to him in a vision, and called him twice by his name. Jacob demanded, who it was that called him? and the Lord answered him thus: “Hast thou, then, forgotten thy God, Jacob? the God of thy forefathers, who never rejected the prayer either of them or their posterity, in the time of their need; that God who placed thee at the head of thy family, contrary to the inclination of thy father; and, when thou didst retire into Mesopotamia, being at that time unmarried, blessed thee with an advantageous match, and brought thee back to thine own country, full of riches, and with a numerous progeny; that God, who hath been the perpetual protector and guardian of thy family, and hath preferred thy son Joseph to a station in Egypt next in honour to that of the king? I am now come to be thy guide on the way, and to intimate to thee that thou shalt finish thy life in the arms of thy son Joseph; that thy descendants shall be powerful and renowned for many ages, and shall, at length, possess the land which I have promised them.” This vision gave Jacob fresh courage, and he continued his journey with his family, consisting of seventy persons.

When Jacob and his company had travelled a part of the way, Judas was dispatched to give notice of their approach to Joseph, who immediately set out to meet his father, and they accordingly met at a place called Heliopolis. The joy of this interview was such, that both father and son almost sunk under mutual transport. Joseph afterwards, accompanied by five of his brethren, hastened away to acquaint the king with his father's arrival, desiring the rest of the company to continue their journey at a moderate pace.

Pharaoh expressed great satisfaction on receiving the news, and inquired of Joseph what profession his profession his chiefy followed; who replied, that they had been wholly accustomed to a pastoral life. He answered thus for two reasons: first, that they might, by this means, be kept together, and thereby be enabled to give the necessary attendance to their father; and, secondly, to obviate all cause of jealousy between them and the Egyptians, by any interference of the former in the employments to which the latter devoted their time. Jacob was introduced to the king, and met with a very gracious reception. Pharaoh, asking him his age, and receiving for answer, that he was in his hundred and thirtieth year, manifested some surprize at the circumstance; which being noticed by Jacob, he acquainted the king, that his ancestors usually lived to a much later period. Jacob and

Affecting interview between Jacob and Joseph.

Pharaoh's kindness to them.

* This narrative of Josephus is beautiful; but cannot be compared with the inexpressible elegance and native simplicity we meet with in that of the sacred Historian, recorded in Genesis.

† Upon several accounts, Jacob might be afraid to go into Egypt, especially with his whole family: Abraham had been injured there,

Gen. xii. 15. It had been foretold, that his seed should be afflicted by the Egyptians, xv. 13. and Isaac had been warned not to go into Egypt, xxvi. 2. Add to this, the Egyptians were people of very different manners and religion from those of the Hebrews, xliii. 32.

his family had a residence assigned them by the king, at Heliopolis, where the royal flocks were constantly kept.

Dreadful increase of the famine.

At this time, the famine in Egypt became daily more grievous. The waters of the Nile, that source of fertility to the country, were dried up; nor had they any rain, to supply the defect. The bulk of the people were, in consequence, involved in the utmost misery imaginable; being, through want of foresight, totally destitute of sustenance, which could not be obtained but for ready money; and, when that failed, they were obliged to barter their lands, cattle, slaves, and what other effects they had, in exchange for corn. Thus the possessions of the whole community came, by degrees, into the hands of the king; and the wretched people submitted to every inconvenience and misery, to preserve themselves from starving. The priests were the only class of people, throughout the kingdom, who, in the general calamity, retained the possession of their property and freedom*.

Joseph's happy policy.

In consequence of the Nile's having resumed its ancient state, and the refreshing showers again descending, to fertilize the soil, the famine began gradually to abate, and the face of the country once more put on its wonted appearance. Joseph, hereupon, made a progress through all the principal towns and cities of the kingdom, and, summoning the inhabitants together, re-instituted them in the possession of their lands, which they had sold to the king, on a condition that they should pay a fifth part of the produce thereof for the use of their sovereign; strictly enjoining them to be equally sedulous in the improvement of the ground, and, of course, in promoting his majesty's interest, as if the whole of the land was their own property. This unexpected restitution rejoiced the people to that degree, that they with the utmost alacrity set about repairing the damage which their lands had so lately sustained. This truly magnanimous act of justice, which had been suggested to the king by Joseph, greatly increased his reputation and influence, both with the sovereign and the people: and, from this time, the above fifth part was, by an act of the state, settled upon the crown in perpetuity.

CHAP. VII.

Jacob dies in the Arms of his Children. The Death of Joseph.

* The priests of Egypt were composed of the nobles: they were the king's counsellors and principal agents. They were well skilled in astronomy, and occupied the chief offices in the state. Joseph did not purchase their estates, because of the greatness of their authority, and the sacredness of their person and property: they were consequently under no necessity of disposing of their lands during the

JACOB having resided seventeen years *Death of Jacob.* in Egypt, and arrived to the age of an hundred and forty-seven years, resigned his breath while in the embraces of his children, invoking heaven to bestow health and plenty upon them, and to prosper them in all their undertakings. Before his decease, he predicted that their issue should acquire the dominion of a part of the land of Canaan, and this was verified by the events which will be related hereafter. He highly applauded the virtuous conduct of Joseph, in generously returning offices of friendship for the iniquity which had been manifested towards him; and, in fine, he expressed a more tender consideration even for his enemies, than was usual for most others to entertain for their dearest friends. He particularly enjoined them to admit Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasses, as sharers with them in the division of the land of Canaan. Jacob experienced the particular blessings of heaven, which were bestowed upon him as a reward for his uniform practice of virtue, and a due reverence to his Creator, whereby he rendered himself equally eminent with the most distinguished of his ancestors. Having expressed a desire that his remains might be deposited in Hebron, Joseph obtained the king's permission, and caused the body to be removed to that place, where the funeral was solemnized with great magnificence.

The ceremony being over, the brothers were greatly alarmed, dreading that, as they had been deprived of their only mediator in their deceased father, Joseph might execute a just and severe revenge for the injuries he had sustained, and on this consideration, for their personal safety, they judged it improper to return; but Joseph removed all their scruples, and bestowed upon them valuable and large possessions, and in every instance behaved to them with generous respect and brotherly affection. Joseph departed this life at the age of one hundred and ten years†. He was a man of rigid virtue and great prudence, and he exercised the power intrusted to him with such judgment, modesty, and forbearance, as to acquire the veneration of all ranks of people; and his character was so perfectly established, and free from every injurious imputation, that even the aspersions of Potiphar's wife were discredited. He was advanced to the most exalted offices in the government; and the superiority of his qualifications and unimpeached integrity secured him from envy and reproach, while his penetration and address in business gave him the singular advantage of easily conquering

Joseph comforts his brethren.

His death and excellent character.

famine, especially as the king distributed among them a sufficiency of provisions for the use of themselves and families.

† The bones of Joseph were not carried out of Egypt till the miraculous departure of the Israelites from thence, though the remains of the other Patriarchs were interred in Hebron.

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such difficulties as others would not have attempted to overcome. The rest of the brethren remained in Egypt, enjoying the greatest happiness; and after their decease, their bodies were conveyed to Hebron, and there buried. The remains of Joseph were the last removed; as he had directed, they were conveyed into Canaan, at the period when the Hebrews evacuated the country.

We shall first shew the occasion and manner of these people quitting Egypt, and then proceed to the relation of their history and adventures.

C H A P. VIII.

The wretched Condition of the Hebrews in Egypt, for the Term of four hundred Years. Moses is born. The wonderful Interposition of Providence in his Preservation, by the means of Pharaoh's Daughter.

Envious conduct of the Egyptians towards the Hebrews.

THE Egyptians are habitually a peevish, indolent nation, equally addicted to the indulgence of pleasure and the accumulation of wealth, by whatever base means it could be obtained. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that they should cast an eye of envy on the Hebrews, who, they perceived, were in direct contradiction to their genius, an active and laborious people, abounding in numbers and wealth: a people, in short, whose prosperity they could not behold without regret; being apprehensive, moreover, that they might in time, from the increase of their riches and numbers, become dangerous neighbours*. The government of the kingdom having passed into other hands, and the ancient services which Joseph had rendered the state being totally forgotten, the Israelites were no longer considered in the light of friends, but of slaves; the Egyptians racking their inventions to discover new modes of harassing and oppressing them.

Severe bondage of the Israelites.

In the prosecution of this design, they employed them in draining rivers, and directing their course into new channels; walling of towns, throwing up banks to repel inundations, and forming dykes; nay, even in erecting useless and fantastic pyramids; forcing them to acquire the knowledge of various painful and pernicious occupations, and condemning them to a life of continual labour. Such was the bondage to which they were subjected for nearly four hundred years; the Egyptians endeavouring, by the hardships which they caused them to endure, totally to extirpate them; while the Hebrews, on the other hand, submitted to their misfortunes with a resignation truly exemplary.

* It is very likely that Josephus here uses the liberty of other historians, and discovers an unwarrantable partiality to his countrymen, and unjust sentiments of the Egyptians: Moses, on the contrary, pays them no compliments, but says, that the Israelites were a perverse and stubborn generation.

While matters were in this state, a report was spread, which raised the rancour of the Egyptians against them to a greater height than before; insomuch that they now determined utterly to destroy them from the face of the earth. A certain scribe, a man particularly famous for his knowledge in future events, predicted to the king that a Hebrew child would be born nearly about that period, who, if he lived to attain the age of manhood, would be a scourge to the people of Egypt, highly advance the glory of his own nation, and would acquire immortal fame by his virtue and bravery. This intelligence gave such an alarm to the king, that, by the advice of the scribe, he commanded the Egyptian midwives diligently to attend the delivery of every Hebrew woman; preserving each female infant, and casting every male into the river. He intrusted the execution of this order to the Egyptian women, as being least likely to neglect the strict performance of it from any motive of pity; and enjoined them, upon pain of death to themselves and their families, not to secrete any child, or, in the least respect, to deviate from this command†. This decree was inhuman to an extreme: first, as it deprived so many parents of their children; secondly, as it rendered the parents themselves accessories to the destruction of their own offspring; and, lastly, as it tended to the utter extinction of the whole race of Hebrews. Their situation now seemed desperate; but the providence of God will ever be superior to all human cunning and violence; for this child, of whom the scribe had foretold, was born, and secretly and safely nurtured, in spite of all the methods put in practice to destroy him, and lived to verify the predictions concerning him. All this was effected in the following manner.

Prediction concerning Moïse.

Pharaoh's cruel decree.

There was an Hebrew, named Amram, a man of high rank, and great reputation, whom this decree affected in a particular manner; both as it tended to the extermination of the Jewish people, and also as it particularly regarded his own family, his wife being at that time pregnant. In this emergency he prayed to God, that he would commiserate the present wretched condition of a people who had never deviated from his worship: that he would be their director and preserver; and that he would, at a proper season, extricate them from a calamity which threatened nothing less than the utter extirpation of the whole race. The Almighty listened to his prayer, and appearing to him in a dream, told him, that as he had not forgotten the piety of his ancestors, neither would he neglect to reward him also according to his merits; encouraging him to hope for a favourable change. When Amram awaked, he commu-

Amram's prayer answered by a vision.

† Had this inhuman edict been intrusted to the hands of the Hebrew midwives, it certainly had failed of its effect; Pharaoh, therefore, in this instance, added the wisdom of the serpent to his own malignity, in the issuing this barbarous decree.

nicated his dream to his wife Jochabel, and they were greatly embarrassed, not knowing what construction to put upon this extraordinary vision. Soon after this the time of Jochabel's pregnancy expired, and she was delivered with little pain, and in so short a time, that the child came into the world before the Egyptian midwives could be called to her assistance: this circumstance occasioned them to put more confidence in what had been foretold to Amram in his dream.

The child having been kept for three months in the most secret manner, Amram became apprehensive lest a disappointment of the prediction, and the destruction of father, mother, and infant, should be the consequence of a discovery, and therefore resolved to leave the disposal of events intirely to the direction of Providence. He revolved in his mind the difficulty and danger of a longer concealment, suggesting that if the child should be secreted from observation, yet many difficulties and infinite hazard must attend himself and his family; but he entertained not the least doubt of the veracity of the Almighty, nor of his power to preserve them from the dangers which appeared to hang over them at that period. They accordingly determined to expose the child. For this purpose they

framed a kind of basket of bulrushes* twisted together, and having pitched the joints, to keep out the water, put the child into it, and set it afloat; offering up, at the same time, the most fervent prayers to God to interpose his providence for the preservation of the infant. The daughter of Jochabel, named Mariam, was ordered by her mother to walk on the opposite bank of the river, and to observe what became of the child. The following instance may serve to convince mankind, that it is in vain for human wisdom to oppose the will and pleasure of the supreme Being; and that such persons as, from motives either of advantage or security, contrive the ruin of others, with whatever subtilty their designs may be concerted, will find their malicious intentions finally defeated: while those, on the other hand, who calmly and patiently submit to the divine will, shall be extricated from their troubles, and sometimes by supernatural means.

It chanced that Thermuthis, the king's daughter, was, at this juncture, taking the air by the river's side, and perceiving something floating at a distance, she ordered a swimmer to go into the water and bring it on shore; when the princess found it was a child which her attendant was bringing to her, she was highly delighted with the circumstance. She instantly directed that some women should be immediately sought for, to suckle the infant. Several were ac-

cordingly brought and tried, but without effect, as the babe shewed the utmost aversion to take the breast. Mariam, who came to the spot at the time, apparently from mere curiosity, observed to the princess, that the method then taken would answer no purpose; "For," said she, "the child being of one country and the nurse of another, it is not likely that the milk of the stranger should be either wholesome or palatable to him; but, if any Hebrew woman could be procured, he may, perhaps, receive her milk with readiness and satisfaction." This proposal appeared so reasonable to the princess, that she ordered Mariam to endeavour to find such a nurse without delay. She returned, in a short time, with the mother of the child, who was totally unknown to the princess and all present; and no sooner did Jochabel offer the infant the breast, than he began to suck with the utmost eagerness; which being remarked by the king's daughter, she desired her to take charge of the infant. Thus, as a special instance of God's favour to Moses, he was saved from impending death; and was nurtured and educated by those very persons who had devoted the whole race of the Hebrews to destruction on his account alone †.

The child was named Mo-Yses, with reference to the circumstance of his preservation; Mo, in the Egyptian language, denoting *water*, and Yses signifying *preserved* ‡. This child became, in process of time, beyond dispute, the most accomplished person throughout the kingdom, as the Almighty had predicted to Amram. He was descended, in the sixth generation, from Abraham; his father Amram being the son of Caath, the son of Levi, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham. As he grew up, he manifested a maturity of understanding far superior to his years. His childish amusements partook of seriousness, and were of such a nature as even to convey instruction, all his actions being accompanied with such a grace, as gave the world a specimen of what might be expected from him in future. At three years of age, the beauty of his person created universal admiration, and rendered him pleasing to men of the most cynical and morose disposition.

Thermuthis, from a principle of pure affection to the child, and being herself unmarried, determined to adopt him. She introduced him to her father, whom she addressed, on the occasion, in these words, "This infant is of the sweetest and most tractable disposition that can be imagined. I have brought him up myself, and am indebted to the bounty of the Nile for the precious gift. It is my intention to adopt him; and I now present him to you as a successor to your

Extraordi-
nary endow-
ments of
Moses.

Who is adop-
ed by Ther-
muthis.

* It is most probable that what is here rendered bulrushes, were the flags of the tree papyrus, of which the Egyptians made their paper; and Clemens Alexandrinus confirms this assertion.

† Profane writers assert, that Thermuthis being married, and

having no issue, she pretended pregnancy, and that she was delivered of a male child, who was this Moses.

‡ This etymology of Moses is confuted by Scaliger, in his notes upon the fragment of Berosus, p. 48.

throne." The king received the child from her hands with an affectionate tenderness, and fondling him, to gratify his daughter's humour, took the crown from his own head, and placed it on that of the child, who, handling it in a wanton, careless manner, let it fall to the ground, after which he trampled on it.

Prediction
concerning
Moses.

This incident was considered, by those present, as a bad omen, both to the king and the state; insomuch that the scribe, formerly mentioned, declared aloud, that the boy ought to be destroyed; for this, said he, addressing himself to the king, "is the child, who, I predicted to you, would bring destruction upon Egypt; and he has, in the present instance, partly verified the prophecy, by the contempt he has manifested for your government, in thus trading your crown under his feet. This is he, in short, from whose death alone you can hope for the peaceful enjoyment of your authority; and, by adopting my advice, you will deprive the Hebrews of all hope, and will remove every future cause of apprehension in the Egyptians." The king, however, gave no heed to this warning, but suffered his daughter to remove the child, without the least opposition: a further instance of the eminent favour with which the Almighty constantly distinguished Moses. The liberal education which the princess bestowed on him, created an expectation in the Hebrews that he would, in the course of time, effect their deliverance; while the Egyptians, on the other hand, were equally apprehensive of mischief from the same cause: but, as they had no prospect of a successor to the throne worthy of that dignity, the barbarous design, which had been concerted against Moses, was suffered to drop.

C H A P. IX.

The Exploits of Moses in the War against the Ethiopians.*

The Ethiopian war.

SUCH was the education which Moses received; and as he approached to manhood, he gave repeated proofs of his conduct and courage, and of the eminence which it might be expected he would acquire in future by his military achievements. He particularly distinguished himself for his skill in the science of war on the following occasion.

The Ethiopians had made an incursion upon the territories of Egypt, and laid waste a considerable tract of the country. This action highly incensed the Egyptians, who raised a numerous army, with

* We do not find, in the sacred records, this part of the history of Moses, which makes him general of the Egyptians against the Ethiopians; it is, however, cited by Irenæus, who writes, that "When Moses was nourished in the king's palace, he was appointed general of the army against the Ethiopians, whom he conquered; and that he married the king's daughter, because, out of affection for him, she delivered up the city into his hands."

the view of taking ample vengeance for the insult and injury. A battle ensued, and the Egyptians were defeated; a certain number were killed in the action, and the rest shamefully repulsed, and driven back to their own home. The Ethiopians pursued their advantage so closely, that they over-ran the whole country as far as Memphis, and from thence to the sea; burning and destroying every thing wherever they came, without opposition on the part of the inhabitants. In this dilemma, the Egyptians applied themselves to their priests and oracles for advice. The answer they received was, that they must solicit the assistance of a certain Hebrew to extricate them from their difficulties. The king thereupon acquainted his daughter, that he proposed to send another army against the Ethiopians, and that he was very desirous that Moses should take upon himself the command of his forces. The princess readily engaged to exert all her influence to induce him to comply with the king's desire; but she previously bound her father, by a solemn oath, strictly to prohibit every attempt against his personal safety; at the same time reproaching the priests with the baseness of imploring the aid of a person whose destruction they had so lately meditated and advised.

Thermuthis and the king found little difficulty in prevailing on Moses to accept of this commission, and his compliance gave infinite satisfaction to those invested with the sacred function of both nations. The joy of the Egyptians arose, first, from the hopes of subduing their enemies under his conduct; and, next, from the prospect of being able, after having obtained the ends for which he was advanced to the above post, to effect the destruction of Moses. The Hebrews, on the other hand, were happy in the idea, that, under the direction of so expert a leader, they might probably, in a course of time, be enabled to throw off the yoke of the Egyptians. Moses deliberated on the properest method to attack the enemy unexpectedly in their quarters. The passage through the interior part of the country was much infested with serpents, both of the flying and creeping kinds, and all remarkably fierce and venomous. This route was generally considered as being too dangerous to risque the march of an army through it. Moses, for this very reason, preferred it to the other road along the banks of the Nile, and the event justified his choice. To provide against the dangers of this perilous passage, he adopted the following stratagem. The Ibis† is a mortal enemy to all kinds of serpents, who constantly fly from its presence with the utmost precipitation. Though this bird is destructive of those reptiles, it is gentle and

Moses appointed commander of the Egyptian forces.

† This bird approaches to the stork kind, and is by some confounded very erroneously with the hamatopus or red-legged heron. It is all over of a fine shining black; its beak is long, somewhat hooked, and all over of a fine red, as are also its legs, which are as long as those of the bittern; its neck is as long as that of the common heron.

inoffensive to all other creatures. The method which Moses adopted, to preserve his troops from the attacks of these venomous animals, was, to carry with him a number of the above mentioned birds, confined in cages made of bulrushes, or of the flags of papyrus before mentioned.

He obtains a complete victory over the Ethiopians.

When Moses had arrived at that part of the country which is infested by the above-mentioned noxious animals, he turned the birds loose, and the serpents dispersed, as from a natural enemy. He now hastened in pursuit of the Ethiopians, whom he surprised and defeated; and having effectually cut off a retreat into Egypt, such as escaped the fury of the battle were under a necessity of returning home. After this he besieged and laid waste several towns and cities, and committed great slaughter upon the people.

This victory revived the drooping courage of the Egyptians; while the Ethiopians, on the other hand, were reduced to despair, having no prospect but death or slavery. They were at length compelled to retire to Saba, the capital of Ethiopia, to which city Cambyfes afterwards gave the name of Meroe, in compliment to his sister. Moses laid siege to this place, although nature and art seemed to have combined to render it impregnable: it being situated at the conflux of the rivers Astaphus and Astabora with the Nile: it is likewise seated on an island, encompassed with a strong wall, and defended by ramparts and other works, from the attacks of an enemy and the inundations of the Nile.

Moses was much dissatisfied with his present state of inactivity, the enemy keeping close within their walls: but, in the interim, an incident happened of a very extraordinary nature. On a certain day, Tharbis, the daughter of the king of Ethiopia, observing Moses, sword in hand, conducting himself with great bravery under the walls of the town, was so charmed with his behaviour, that she fell passionately in love with him. Her affection increasing, she opened her mind on the subject to some of her most intimate friends, and commissioned them to make an offer to Moses of her hand. He accepted the proposal, on condition that the city should be surrendered previous to the celebration of the nuptials; this agreement was ratified with an oath, and, almost in the same instant, carried into execution. A great slaughter was made of the Ethiopians; and, after the solemnization of the marriage, the Egyptians returned home crowned with victory.

Moses marries an Ethiopian princess. See Numb. xiii. 1.

C H A P. X.

The Ingratitude of the Egyptians towards Moses, who flies to Midian.

THE only return which those ungrateful people made for all the benefits they had received from the preserver of their nation was, to carry their envy and hatred of him to such extremity as to lay snares for his life. They were apprehensive lest the great reputation he had acquired by his military achievements, might inspire him with the design of rendering himself independent, and therefore accused him to the king of having murdered a native of the realm*. The king was but too well inclined to listen to the calumny, from a jealousy of his fame for valour and wisdom, and from the insinuations of the priests and scribes, who never ceased their importunities till they had prevailed on that prince to become a party in the combination against him. In short, Moses was doomed to death; and it was by a particular interposition of Providence that he was enabled to escape, in the very moment that his enemies had fixed on for the execution of their design.

The Egyptians seek to destroy Moses.

Being accused of murder, he flees from Egypt, and comes to Midian.

Having learnt that the roads were way-laid, he directed his flight through a desert, naturally concluding that no one would think of tracing him thither. Throughout his whole journey he could not procure any kind of food. About noon he arrived within a small distance of Midian, a city on the coast of the Red Sea, which was so named from one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah. Being come within sight of the city, he sat himself down by the side of a fountain. As he sat there, an incident happened, which took its rise, in some measure, from a custom of the country; and it afforded him an opportunity, not only of signalising his courage and regard for justice, but also of advancing his fortune. Such is the scarcity of water in that country, that each shepherd strives to be first at the fountain in the morning, before it be drawn dry. At this time there came to the fountain seven virgin sisters, the daughters of Raguel, a priest, held in much estimation in that part of the country.

In the country of the Troglodytes, the women are employed in attending the flocks; and the daughters of Raguel, or Jethro, having brought their father's sheep to the well, and drawn a sufficiency of water, emptied it into troughs, the better to divide it amongst them†. In the interim, certain shepherds

* We are told in scripture (Exod. ii. 11, 12.) that "Moses spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren—and he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." So strongly was Moses animated with an abhorrence of oppression, and such ardent love he breathed to his country, that he could not suffer this outrage to pass unpunished. The scripture intimates, that he intended by this action to rouse the dormant spirit of liberty in his countrymen, and prepare them for accepting that general deliverance from thralldom

he was about to offer them in the name of God. Refer to Acts vii. for a full account of him.

† As in those countries there is a great scarcity of water, and but few wells, the shepherds were apt to strive who should get first possession of the wells, lest others coming before should not leave water enough for their cattle. And therefore to prevent quarrels, it was a law in some places, that the shepherds should wait for one another, and water their flocks all together. See Gen. xxix. 8.

came to the spot, and obliged the virgins to retire, intending themselves to make use of the water which had been drawn. The brutality of this behaviour enraged Moses, who espoused the cause of the virgins, and compelled the shepherds to relinquish their design. The daughters of Raguel expressed a due sense of the obligation which the stranger had conferred upon them; and, on their return to their father's house, acquainted him with all the particulars which had passed: unanimously requesting, that he would make some return for the kindness which had been shewn them. Raguel was charmed with the grateful disposition of his daughters, and ordered them to bring the stranger to his house, that he might reward him according to his merit. Moses being introduced to him, he assured him, that he would give him speedy conviction, that he had not conferred an obligation on a person destitute of gratitude. He afterwards received him into his family, adopted him, bestowing one of his daughters on him in marriage; and appointed him to the superintendency of all his cattle, which in those days, when pasturage was the general source of wealth, was esteemed an honourable station.

Raguel adopts Moses, and sets him over his flocks.

C H A P. XI.

God appears to Moses in the burning Bush. The Rod of Moses converted into a Serpent.

Divine appearance to Moses.

MOSES was now established in the house of his father-in-law, Jethro, or Raguel, and had the intire management of his flocks. Mount Sinai was famous for its excellent pasture, and exceeded all the mountains of the country in height. A tradition prevailed among the neighbouring people, that this mountain was the residence of the Almighty; and, in this persuasion, they constantly forbore either to feed their sheep, or even to walk thereon. It chanced that Moses drove his sheep hither on a certain day, and, while he was employed in attending them, a phenomenon* of a very extraordinary nature appeared to him: he perceived a fire burning in a bush, the flames of which were remarkably fierce, yet neither the leaves, flowers, nor branches received the least damage. This sight greatly surpris'd Moses; but his astonishment was raised to the highest pitch, when he heard a voice from the midst of the bush, calling him by name, and addressing him in these words: "How durst thou presume to set foot on this spot, where no mortal ever trod before, solely on account of the universal reverence in which this place has ever been held? Retire; and be contented with the privilege you have enjoyed, in consequence of your own virtues, and of those of your ancestors; nor dare to pursue your curiosity any

The burning bush.

* St. Stephen, *Acts* vii. 30. calls this Appearance, and the same person is called, *ver.* 4. *the Lord*. He was either the Messiah, the angel or messenger of the covenant, *Mal.* iii. 1. and thought to be the same who is called Michael the prince of the angels, *Dan.* x. 21.

farther." The voice also predicted to him, that he should acquire great reputation; and ordered him to return to Egypt, where he should obtain an unlimited command over the nation of the Hebrews, and should finally deliver them from their present bondage; "For," said the voice, "they shall inherit the lands which Abraham possessed: and to your wisdom they shall be indebted for the acquisition of all those blessings. But do not fail, when you shall have conducted the Hebrews out of Egypt, immediately to offer up a sacrifice on this very spot."

When the voice had done speaking, Moses, in the utmost amazement, replied in the following terms: "I know thee, Lord, and, after the example of all my ancestors, have constantly adored thy power. It were madness, therefore, in the extreme, to hesitate to obey thy mandates. Yet how shall I, without abilities, and in an obscure station, be enabled to prevail on such a multitude, first, to abandon their present settlement; and, secondly, to follow me, intirely, under an uncertainty, whithersoever I shall be pleased to conduct them? Nay, admitting that my interest with them should be sufficient to induce them to constitute me their leader, who shall compel Pharaoh to permit them to depart; seeing that the revenues of Egypt would be so much diminished by the loss of their labour?" The voice again ordered him to make himself easy, promising that he should want for no assistance of which he should stand in need. But effectually to remove every doubt which he might still entertain, the voice commanded him to cast the rod which he held in his hand on the ground. This being done, the rod was instantly converted into a serpent, twining itself in folds, and threatening an attack: and in a short time it returned to its former shape. Moses was then ordered to put his hand into his bosom, which he did, and, upon drawing it out again, it appeared to be as white as chalk, presently resuming its native colour. He was further commanded to throw a small quantity of fair water on the ground, where it appeared to have acquired the quality of blood. As Moses expressed the utmost astonishment at the sight of these supernatural operations, God assured him that he would confer on him the power of working the like miracles, in order to evince to the Hebrews, that he was invested with a commission from the Deity, to take upon him the office of their leader.

The Lord then commanded Moses to return immediately to Egypt, and, for the greater dispatch, to continue his journey night and day. Moses could no longer, after what he had heard and seen, have any doubts remaining of God's power and justice; he, nevertheless, requested that he might retain the faculty of working miracles, when he should arrive in Egypt; and that God would condescend to communicate to him the name of that awful Being, of whose infinite power he had so lately

Moses pleads his insufficiency.

He is ordered to return to Egypt.

with *Rev.* xii. 7. Or it was a created angel representing Jehovah, and acting in his name. Bishop Patrick takes it to have been the appearance of the Shechinah, or Jehovah himself accompanied with a glorious retinue of angels as his ministers.

received such convincing proofs; in order that he might be enabled, on all occasions, to invoke him by his proper appellation. The Almighty was pleased to grant this request: but the name was, till then, never heard by any man, and I am withheld from mentioning it by a reverential awe*. The gift of performing miracles, at all times, was also conferred on Moses, who was now convinced that he should live to be an eye-witness of the happy deliverance of the Hebrews, and of the confusion of their enemies the Egyptians.

CHAP. XII.

Upon the News of Pharaoh's Death, Moses and Aaron return to Egypt.

Departure of
Moses from
Midian to
Egypt.

Moses having received intelligence of the death of the king of Egypt †, who had compelled him to abandon that country, requested permission of Raguel to return thither to his friends and relations. His request being complied with, he began his journey, accompanied by his wife Zipporah, the daughter of Raguel, and the two children he had by her, Gershom and Eleazar. Gershom, being interpreted, signifies a *Foreigner*; and by Eleazar is signified, *the Help of God*; because it was through the intervention of Providence that Moses was preserved from the snares laid for him by the Egyptians.

When he had approached nearly to the borders of Egypt, he was met by his brother Aaron, to whom he communicated the wonderful occurrences upon the mount, and the revelations, instructions, and ordinances which God had delivered to him. Having made some farther progress in his journey, great numbers of the most considerable among the Hebrews came forth to give him welcome. After some conversation, Moses was convinced that the power of words was not alone sufficient to obtain his point; and therefore, in support of his commission and authority, he had recourse to miracles, appealing to the evidence of their senses in regard to the wonders he performed; which they beheld with astonishment, and considered as an indisputable token that God would relieve and provide for the safety of his people.

Moses re-
counts his ser-
vices in the
Ethiopian
war.

Moses having so far prevailed upon the Hebrews, as to obtain a promise of obedience to him, repaired to the new King, mentioned the toils he had sustained, and the dangers he had encountered in conduct-

ing the war of the Egyptians against the Ethiopians; in the prosecution of which he had constantly observed as unremitting an attention for the advantage of the party to which he was attached, as he could have manifested in behalf of his own countrymen; and he remarked, that the rewards he had received were inadequate to his services. He circumstantially related what the Almighty had communicated to him in his vision upon Mount Sinai; adding that, to induce a confidence in his promises, the Deity had given him tokens by miracles and revelations; finally, importuning Pharaoh not to betray a disbelief of God by opposing his divine pleasure.

Pharaoh treated the above relation with contempt, scorn, and ridicule; whereupon Moses endeavoured to force conviction upon him by repeating, in his sight, those miracles which he had performed upon Mount Sinai: but this provoked Pharaoh to a violence of anger and opprobrious language. "Contemptible runagate," said he, "for the safety of your person you made a scandalous retreat from Egypt, and now return to delude the people by the exhibition of your magical sleights; and have the effrontery to assume as much consequence, as if you were the only man conversant in the divine mystery; so extravagant is your vanity, that you imagine yourself an object worthy public adoration: but, notwithstanding this ostentation, be informed, that my priests can rival your utmost dexterity." The priests being now called, were directed to throw down their rods, which were instantly changed into serpents. "I am not unacquainted with the address of the Egyptians," said Moses, "nor do I hold them in contempt, therefore this circumstance does not affect me: but I may with confidence declare, that their magic is as much inferior to the works I perform, as human things are to those of divine origin: and I shall immediately convince you that I mean not, under the semblance of truth, to impose illusions upon the populace; but that I act under the authority of an omnipotent Being, who will punish the obstinacy of those who shall wilfully shut their eyes against such demonstrative evidence." Thus saying, he threw his rod also upon the ground, which instantly assumed the appearance of a serpent, and swallowed up those of the magicians, one after another; after which it returned to its former shape ‡.

His relation
despised by
Pharaoh.

Moses's rod
devours the
serpents of the
magicians.

This miracle, instead of convincing the king, served only to incense him still more. He, accordingly, reproved Moses, and issued fresh orders to the officers appointed to overlook the Hebrews at their work, not only to keep them constantly em-

* The Jews, to this day, seldom or ever mention the name JEHOVAH, or, I AM, even upon the most solemn occasions. Would to God that Christians refrained from taking this name in vain; as there is a dreadful curse denounced against all those who wantonly and lightly profane it.

† That is, within the space of forty years, during which Moses abode in the land of Midian, Acts vii. 23. Exod. vii. 7. Bishop Usher takes this king to have been Rameses, and places his death in

the year of the world 2494. His successor was Amenophis, who was drowned in the Red sea about nineteen years after.

‡ This was a sufficient demonstration, that the power, by which Moses was influenced, greatly exceeded that of the Egyptian priests. By this Pharaoh would have been convinced, had it not been for the artful insinuations of the magicians; and a promise from them, that they would shortly perform greater miracles than Moses.

ployed,

ployed, but also to make an addition to their ordinary tasks; they were, in consequence, deprived of their former indulgence, in having the straw they used in making bricks brought to them, and were compelled to fetch it during the night, that their day-labour might not be interrupted. But neither the king's displeasure, nor the murmurings of his own people, who were very urgent with him to desist from all further application in their behalf, could prevail on Moses to recede from the plan he had adopted, to effect their deliverance. He, therefore, again waited on Pharaoh, to request that he would permit the Hebrews to go to mount Sinai, there to offer up an oblation to the Almighty, as they had been commanded.

C H A P. XIII.

The ten Plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, in consequence of the Obstinacy of Pharaoh.

THE king did not pay the least regard to the intercession of Moses, and this obduracy proved the source of many miseries to the Egyptians.

Plagues of Egypt.

1. The Nile waters turned to blood.

The first miracle which Moses wrought for the punishment of the Egyptians was, by converting the waters of the Nile, which were their only drink, into blood; and this alteration was not in point of colour only, but all those of the natives who were necessitated to drink of it were afflicted with a violent cholic, while to the Hebrews it was perfectly wholesome. The king, being apprehensive of the total destruction of his subjects, consented, at length, that the Hebrews should depart: but, no sooner was this plague removed, than he immediately recalled his promise.

2. Of frogs. This ingratitude and duplicity so highly provoked the Almighty, that he quickly visited the land with a second judgment: causing frogs to be produced in every quarter, in such numbers, that the whole earth was covered with them, and the waters of the river became stagnant and corrupted*. The bed-chambers and tables were infested by these animals; no place was free from them; and the inconvenience was heightened by the noisome stench which they occasioned. Pharaoh, hereupon, again sent for Moses, and acquainted him that he might retire, with the Hebrews, whenever he should think proper. This permission was no sooner granted, than the frogs totally disappeared, and all things returned to their former state.

But Pharaoh again refused to fulfil his promise, on the plea of its having been extorted from him by fear,

* This plague was well adapted to subvert the superstitions of Egypt; frogs being the instruments of their abominations, and the representatives of those impious demons whom they invoked by their incantations.

† Many countries have been partially visited with locusts, supposed to resemble those in the east. Different parts of England

and, consequently, that he was under no obligation to comply with the terms thereof. This breach of faith, so derogatory to the character of a monarch, was succeeded by a farther manifestation of the vengeance of the Almighty. The natives were infected with a terrible and uncommon disease: being covered with lice, which ate into their bodies, and gave them the most excruciating pain: neither could any remedy be found for this disorder, baths, ointments, and all other applications proving equally inefficacious. Pharaoh, therefore, once more consented that the Hebrews should retire; but, when he perceived that God had freed his subjects from the above calamity, he declared that they must leave their wives and children in his hands, as pledges for their return.

This circumstance displeased the Almighty more than all the rest of that prince's conduct: as it seemed to denote a design of deceiving Providence, and an opinion that it was not God, but his servant Moses, who had inflicted these punishments on the Egyptians, for their injurious and oppressive treatment of the Hebrews. The whole country was therefore filled with numberless swarms of flies and insects, many of them of such species as the inhabitants were totally unacquainted with. They lay on the ground in such abundance as to put a stop to all tillage; and so venomous were they, that multitudes of the people were destroyed by them; some being suddenly taken off, while others fell a prey to lingering diseases, which were generated from the putrefaction of these insects; which for a time also suspended the pursuit of agriculture, for what they did not destroy was killed by a distemper that was baneful to the cattle. But even this was not sufficient to induce Pharaoh to desist from his opposition to the will of God; he would not suffer the Israelites to go but on the terms of their leaving some of their women, and all the children behind them.

The next judgment which the Lord inflicted on the Egyptians, in consequence of the incorrigible obstinacy of their sovereign, was a kind of inward ulcer, of which vast numbers of the people died. Pharaoh still persisting in his contempt of the divine will, God was pleased to visit the Egyptians with a plague of hail, which utterly destroyed the fruits and vegetables in the bud. This hail, exclusive of its being a phenomenon in Egypt, far excelled in size whatever had been hitherto seen of the kind in the coldest climates; and what escaped the hail, fell a prey to a devouring swarm of locusts, and in this manner was the whole produce of that year utterly consumed†. It will naturally be supposed, that, had not this prince been as foolish as

were plagued with them, in 1748; but happily their stay was short; some of these were from two inches and a half to four inches in length. They totally destroyed all the vegetables wherever they came; and the destruction caused by them was so great, that they almost put a stop to vegetation itself.

he was wicked, these judgments would have awakened him to a due sense of his danger; but the truth is, that Pharaoh had impiously determined to contest the matter with the Almighty, even at the risk of the destruction of himself and his people. He, at length, yielded that the Hebrews should be at liberty to depart with their wives and children, leaving only their effects behind them, to compensate the Egyptians for the losses they had sustained. But Moses objected to this proposal, as being unreasonable, as, in that case, they should be totally unprovided with sacrifices.

9. Of darkness.

This point was debated so long between the king and Moses, that in the interval, a thick darkness was spread over the land, during the continuance of which many persons perished; whilst not a few were apprehensive of being swallowed up in one general abyss. At the expiration of three days and nights, light re-appeared; and Pharaoh still continuing obstinate, Moses once more presented himself before him, and addressed him in these terms: "How long will you set your will in competition with that of the Almighty; he enjoins you, by me, to dismiss his people, the Hebrews; and nothing but a compliance with his pleasure in this respect, can preserve you from the impending destruction." The freedom of this expostulation so incensed the king, that he ordered Moses, at the peril of his life, never to mention another syllable to him on the subject. Moses replied, that he had now fully executed his commission; but that he was perfectly convinced that, in a very short time, both the king and his nobles would, of their own accord, urge the Israelites to hasten their departure: and with these words, he retired.

The Almighty retained still one plague in store, to punish the impious obstinacy of Pharaoh. He commanded Moses to give notice to the Hebrews to make ready on the thirteenth, the sacrifice which they were accustomed to offer on the fourteenth day of the month Xanticus. This month, which the Macedonians term Xanticus, is called, by the Hebrews, Nisan; and Pharmuthi by the Egyptians. Moses, in obedience to the command, convened all the Hebrews in one place; dividing them into tribes and companies. The assigned day being arrived, and all the necessary preparations made, early in the morning they offered up a sacrifice, sprinkling their houses with the blood of the victims for the purpose of purifying them. The flesh which was not eaten, they burnt, being upon the point of entering upon their journey. Such are the ceremonies, which we observe to this day, in the celebration of the Pascha, which signifies *passing over*; because God passed over the Hebrews without doing them the least hurt, when the Egyptians were struck dead by the pestilence; which, in the course of one night, made such devastation among the first-born* of Egypt, that multitudes of people of all

10. Death of the first-born, by pestilence.

* Calmet writes, that the term First-born in scripture often signifies the chief ones, the most distinguished, Exod. iv. 22. Psal. lxxxix. 27. Mic. vi. 7. So it may signify here the princes or chief ones of Egypt, as it seems to have been understood, Wisdom xviii. 12.

ranks beset the palace, loudly importuning the king to dismiss the Hebrews without any further delay. That prince, thereupon, sent for Moses, and ordered him to assemble his countrymen, and to retire with them out of the land; being strongly prepossessed, that the deliverance of Egypt could never be effected while they should remain in the country. At their departure, many of the Egyptians presented them with valuable gifts; some merely with the view of hastening them away, others from motives of friendship; nor could they refrain from tears at parting from the Hebrews; many feeling a sincere compunction for the barbarities they had been guilty of towards them.

C H A P. XIV.

The Hebrews depart from Egypt, under the Conduct of Moses.

THE route which the Israelites took was by Letopolis, a city at that time uninhabited; and on the site of which Cambyfes, in his expedition against Egypt, built the city of Babylon. They marched with great expedition, and, on the third day after their departure, arrived at Beelzephon, on the borders of the Red Sea. As they could obtain no provisions in their passage through the wilderness, they subsisted, for the space of thirty days, on no other food than meal kneaded with water, and made into cakes. They had now exhausted all the food they had brought out of Egypt, although they had used it with all possible parsimony. It is in commemoration of that scarcity, that the festival of *eight days* is held, which we call that of *Unleavened Bread*. But the number of the Hebrews was prodigious: there being sixty thousand men capable of bearing arms, exclusive of the women and children.

On the fifteenth day of the month Xanticus, the Hebrews departed out of Egypt; Moses being, at that time, in the eightieth year of his age, and Aaron, his brother, in the eighty-third. A period of two hundred and fifty years had elapsed from the time of Jacob's arrival in Egypt; and of four hundred and fifteen years from the æra of the entrance of Abraham into Canaan. They carried with them the bones of Joseph, as he had enjoined his sons, some time previous to his death.

The Egyptians quickly repented of the permission they had granted the Hebrews to withdraw themselves; the king in particular, who imputed all the misfortunes which had befallen the nation, to the enchantments of Moses.

Departure of the Hebrews from Egypt.

They are pursued by the Egyptians.

The Jewish doctors tell us, that all the idols of Egypt were destroyed this night; and Artapanus, in Eusebius, says that most of their temples were overthrown by an earthquake; to which some add, that God also destroyed their sacred animals.

They

They determined, therefore, to pursue them*; believing that they should easily subdue and compel them to return in their wearied and defenceless situation; if they should but be able to overtake them; but this they doubted, the road which they had taken being replete with difficulties even to a single traveller, but much more so to so large a number of persons marching in one body.

Their route near the Red Sea. But the motives which induced Moses to prefer this road to any other, were various: first, he hoped, that the very length of the way would deter the Egyptians from pursuing him, even if they should incline to that measure. Another reason was, that he wished to avoid passing near Palestine, lest the people of that place, between whom and the Hebrews an enmity subsisted of ancient date, should gain intelligence of their march, and take that opportunity to fall upon and destroy them. He was further induced to pass by the way of the wilderness, though inconvenient and round about, from a desire of performing the vow, which he had formerly made, to sacrifice on Mount Sinai, as God had commanded him; intending from thence to direct his course to Canaan.

Pharaoh over-takes the Israelites. When they arrived on the coast of the Red Sea, they were overtaken and surrounded by the Egyptian army, which consisted of six hundred chariots, fifty thousand horse, and two hundred thousand foot†; the main body being drawn up in battle array. The Egyptians had secured all the passes, and so effectually shut up the Hebrews between impassable mountains, and the sea, that they had not the least prospect whatever of escaping. To fly or fight with success was equally impracticable; and thus they were reduced to the wretched alternative either to starve, or yield themselves slaves to the Egyptians. In this desperate situation, they imputed the blame of all their misfortunes to Moses. The many wonders which God had wrought for their deliverance, and for the confirmation of their faith, were now obliterated. The clamours and cries of the women and children, who considered themselves as being utterly lost, incensed the people so much, that they were on the point of stoning Moses, whom they now considered as a false prophet, and of resigning themselves once more to the abject slavery from which they had so lately been delivered.

Who are encouraged to return to God. Moses, however, was not to be moved, either by the threats or outrages of this headstrong multitude: he placed the firmest confidence in the power of God, who, he was convinced, after having afforded them so fair a prospect

of obtaining their liberty, would not suffer his people to return under the yoke of their enemies.

CHAP. XV.

The Red Sea dividing, affords a Passage for Moses and his Followers: the whole Egyptian Army, being in Pursuit, is drowned by a sudden Return of the Waters.

Moses led the Hebrews towards the sea, in sight of the Egyptians, who, being fatigued with the pursuit, had resolved to take some refreshment, and defer giving battle till the next day. Having arrived at the seaside, Moses, taking out his rod, addressed himself in prayer to the Almighty; which being concluded, he struck the sea with his rod (which was the ensign of his commission for performing miracles), and the waters instantly divided; upon which, putting himself at the head of his men, he instructed them to offer thanksgivings to heaven for the remarkable providence manifested in their favour, and, in the name of the Almighty, called upon them to follow him. The Egyptians, observing them to proceed on the way which had been formed for their escape by the miraculous retreat of the waters, considered them as possessed of insanity, and judged that they were on the verge of inevitable destruction; but seeing them continue their course without impediment, they prepared to pursue them, flattering themselves in the vain imagination, that they might pass the same road with as little danger and interruption. While the Egyptians were arming themselves, and making other preparations for the attempt, the Hebrews reached the opposite shore. The Egyptians did not apprehend, that the passage had been opened solely for the preservation of the people of God, and ruin of their persecutors, but upon being witnesses to the success of Moses and his followers, they became more eagerly determined upon a pursuit, and more confident of success in their intended enterprize. They proceeded on their design; and when they had got within the bed of the river, the waters returned to their former course, and the whole army perished. This signal judgment was attended with storms of thunder, lightning, rain, and other violent contentions of the elements, so that nothing can be conceived more dreadful than the calamity of these insatuated people, who fell victims to the displeasure of an offended God‡.

* Besides their duty to the king, the prospect of recovering their vessels of gold and silver, and precious vestments, tempted them to the pursuit. Of all the insatiations that ever possessed the Egyptians, this was the strongest, that they should adventure to pursue the Israelites, when they saw, or might have seen, the sea opening her bosom to give them a passage.

† The Egyptian army consisted only of chariots and horsemen, for they were in haste to overtake the Israelites.

‡ This division of the Red Sea has given rise to the profane No. 3.

laughter of those described by the Apostle as "Scoffers, walking after their own lusts." Their great leader and guide, Voltaire, has shewn them the way, and he has had many willing disciples: but his impious assertions have met with such ample refutation, that I need not trouble the reader with a detection of them here. Moreover, when we consider that this great work was effected by the arm of Omnipotence, to whom universal nature is subservient, the wonder and difficulty vanish at once.

It is not in the power of language to describe the joy of the Hebrews for this unexpected deliverance. Seeing their cruel enemies utterly destroyed, and themselves in the secure possession of liberty, they abounded in expressions of the most sincere gratitude towards the Divine Being, whose providence had indisputably directed these singular events; and they employed the whole night in hymns, thanksgivings, and prayer; and, on the occasion, Moses composed a song in hexameter verse, which he dedicated to the honour of God.

The dividing of the sea for the preservation of the Hebrews, is not to be disputed; by reference to ancient records, it will be found, that a previous circumstance of the same wonderful kind has occurred. The several historians who have given the life of Alexander, attest, that when the Macedonians,

under the command of that prince, were at a loss for a passage, the Pamphylian sea divided; Alexander being appointed the instrument of God's providence, for the destruction of the Persian empire.

On the day following that of the above-mentioned judgment, the arms of the Egyptians were driven on shore, near to the spot where the Hebrews had pitched their tents; and this was considered by Moses as an additional instance of God's providence, the people being greatly distressed for want of arms, which were thus provided for their use. In obedience to the will of God, Moses now led his followers to Mount Sinai, there to offer sacrifice and oblations to God, for their signal deliverance, according to his own special command.

Moses leads the Hebrews, now armed, to Mount Sinai.

B O O K III.

Containing the HISTORY of such INCIDENTS as happened from the YEAR of the WORLD 2454, to 2455.

C H A P. I.

Journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Mount Sinai. The Difficulties they encounter on the Way. They murmur against Moses, and are relieved by a Miracle.

Distress of the Hebrews.

THE extreme hardships which the Hebrews suffered on their journey through the wilderness of Mount Sinai, did not a little abate the joy they felt, on occasion of their late miraculous and unexpected deliverance. They could procure no food; and the water they chanced to meet with, was in small quantities, and of so bad a taste, that the very cattle would not drink of it. At the instigation of their guides, they carried with them a supply of water when they first entered into the wilderness; and, that being exhausted, they were under the necessity of sinking pits; which, on account of the rocky quality of the ground, was not effected without great labour and fatigue.

In the evening they arrived at a place called Marah, which signifies, in the Hebrew, *Bitterness*; this name it acquired from the taste of its waters. They were much wearied; and, their provisions having

fallen short, they now began to feel the cravings of hunger. But they agreed to make a short stay at this place, having fortunately discovered a pit of water on the spot. This pit, it is true, could not afford a sufficient supply for so numerous a company; yet, when they considered the general state of the country, and that this was the last place where they could expect to find any water till they should arrive at Mount Sinai, the above discovery gave them no small satisfaction. But this water was equally bitter with the rest, and was utterly unwholesome, both for the people and their cattle.

Moses saw that the spirits of the Israelites were much depressed; and he was incapable of affording them the least comfort, as their present foes were not to be vanquished either by skill or valour. The whole community partook of the danger, and unanimously importuned Moses for relief in their distress. He again had recourse to supplications, praying that God would be pleased to correct the bitterness of the water, and to render it fit for use. The Almighty instantly complied; and Moses took from the ground a piece of wood*, which chanced to lay near at hand, and

The bitter waters of Marah made sweet.

* In the text, Exod. xv. 25. we read, "The Lord shewed him a tree," &c. What tree it was, is quite uncertain: the Jerusalem Targum calls it *ardipbue*, a tree which is said to bear flowers like lilies, but exceeding bitter. So that the divine power appeared the more in making it produce a contrary effect. Others think it was some tree which had a natural virtue to correct the bitter taste of the

water, which seems to have been the opinion of the author of Ecclesiasticus, ch. xxxviii. 4, 5. But to whatever second cause it be ascribed, the effect appears miraculous, since it was produced immediately, and to such a degree, as to correct the taste of the water for many thousands.

cleaving it in the middle, threw it into the water; acquainting the Hebrews that God had listened to their prayers, and had engaged to provide them with such water as should be fit for drinking; conditionally, that they should yield the most implicit obedience to all his commands. This they promised; and Moses ordered them to empty the well of half the water which it contained; assuring them that the remainder would, in that case, be pure and agreeable. This was accordingly done; and the effect was exactly as Moses had predicted.

The wants of the Israelites increasing, they threaten Moses.

The stock of provisions, with which the people had furnished themselves for their sustenance, for the space of thirty days, was now exhausted, and no means appeared of obtaining a further supply. The reflections suggested by these various calamities, plunged them in absolute despondency; and the impulse of their present wants and miseries obliterated from their minds the remembrance of all the former mercies of God towards them; whether proceeding directly from him, or whether communicated to them through the medium of his servant Moses, whom they accused as the cause of all their misfortunes, and threatened with immediate death. In the midst of this furious tumult, while the people, with stones in their hands, were preparing to put their threats in execution, Moses appeared among them, with that firmness and confidence which faith in God, and conscious integrity, will ever inspire; and, with a force of elocution peculiar to himself, reproved them for their ingratitude and impatience. He reminded them of various instances of God's kindness to them: such as their redemption from the bondage of Egypt, with the attendant circumstances; their safe passage through the Red Sea; the destruction of the Egyptians, who were drowned in the attempt to follow them; and the miraculous manner in which it pleased God to furnish them with arms, of which they were before utterly destitute; with many other particulars of a like kind.

These gentle chidings restored the most violent among the multitude to a degree of reason; Moses himself palliating their late unruly conduct, which he modestly imputed to the peculiarity of their situation. He then withdrew to an adjacent rock, where he offered up supplications to God, humbly petitioning him to commiserate the condition of this unfortunate people; to pardon their intemperate passions, and to charge the whole blame of their conduct on the weakness of their nature.* To this prayer God returned for answer, that he would speedily relieve the necessities of the people.

Moses, having obtained this promise, returned to the people with a joyful countenance, which they construed into a good omen; and, forgetting their late sadness, began to assume an air of cheerfulness. He communicated to them the declaration of the Al-

mighty, that he would quickly take compassion on them; which was soon afterwards fully ^{Quails sent.} verified: for a numerous flight of quails, being over-wearied in their passage across the Arabian Gulph, in the neighbourhood of which they are found in great abundance, dropt into the camp of the Hebrews, their strength being totally exhausted. The people considered this circumstance as an evident interposition of Providence in their behalf; and each man eagerly exerted himself to procure as large a share as possible of this unexpected bounty.

The Almighty, in a short time afterwards, furnished them with a second supply of food, of a different kind: for it chanced, as Moses was at his devotions, with his hands stretched out towards heaven, a sort of dew fell on them, and sticking thereto, quickly acquired a considerable degree of consistence: Moses immediately conceived an opinion that this was intended as food for the people, and, tasting it, found to his infinite satisfaction, that he had not formed a wrong judgment. The populace entertained a notion that, it being now the winter season of the year, this dew was nothing more than a kind of snow. Moses soon convinced them of their error; and first tasting it himself, and then giving it to them to make an experiment, proved to them that it would be found to be a certain preservative against famine: it had something of the flavour of honey, was nearly the size of a coriander seed, and in its appearance was not unlike bdellium.

The gathering of it caused, at first, much confusion and strife among the people, till the matter was regulated by an edict; enjoining all persons to gather each day an equal quantity, which was limited to the measure of an omer; Moses, at the same time, giving them the strongest assurances that they should have a constant supply of that food. This regulation was made, to prevent the stronger from gathering a larger portion than should fall to their share, to the prejudice of the weaker part of the community. To ensure obedience to the edict in question, God ordained, that whatever should be gathered by any person, over and above the specified quantity, should, on the next day, become putrid and unfit for food. This dew possessed one incredible and miraculous property, which was, that all who ate of it preferred it to every other kind of sustenance. To the present time, certain dews and rains are common in that country, which nearly resemble this which Moses procured by his intercession with God. It is styled, by the Hebrews, Manna*: the term *Man* signifying an interrogation: as if we should say, *What is this?* The people expressed the utmost joy on the occasion; considering this relief as coming immediately from heaven; and this was their sole subsistence for the term of forty years, during which they remained in the wilderness.

* In several parts of scripture, manna is called angel's food. Psal. xxviii. 25. &c. This provision fell but six days in the week; but so prodigious was the quantity, that it sustained near three

millions of people; every Friday there fell a double quantity, the next day being the sabbath: it ceased as soon as the Israelites had the corn of Canaan for their bread.

their arms during the night, whilst Moses, Joshua, and the other principal officers of the army, sat in council, regulating the operations of the ensuing day. When the dawn began to appear, Moses recommended to Joshua and the other commanders of the Hebrews, and also to the soldiers in general, to fulfil, by their conduct on that day, the expectations which the world had conceived of them, and thereby to acquire immortal fame.

Having thus impressed their minds with a due sense of piety, and an eager desire of glory, Moses recommended them to the divine protection, and retired to the top of the mountain. The two armies immediately joined battle, and the contest was carried on with great obstinacy on both sides. Whilst Moses held up his hands, the battle went in favour of the Israelites; but when, through fatigue, he was incapable of holding them up any longer, the Amalekites had the advantage. When Moses noticed this circumstance, he desired Aaron and Hur, the husband of his sister Miriam, to place themselves by his side, and support his hands; with a strict

The Amalekites totally routed.

caution not to suffer them to drop again. The Amalekites were utterly routed, and not a man would have escaped, had not the darkness of the night favoured the flight of the wretched remains of their army. This victory stands unparalleled in the whole history of our ancestors, both for the glory of the action, and for the beneficial consequences with which it was attended; it being a decisive conquest obtained over an invading enemy, the fame of which spread terror throughout all the adjacent provinces; and which was, likewise, attended with an immense booty. The plunder consisted of gold and silver plate, vessels of brass curiously wrought, money, splendid arms and habits, horses, baggage, and other valuable articles. Such was the event of this battle.

Moses distributes rewards to the army, and, in token of gratitude, erects an altar to God.

On the next day, Moses gave orders to strip the bodies of the dead, and to collect their scattered arms: he also conferred rewards on those who had particularly distinguished themselves by their valour. Nor did he neglect to ascribe due praise to the merit of the general; giving him public thanks for his conduct on the occasion, which were confirmed by the shouts and acclamations of the whole army. The number of the slain of the Amalekites was so great, as to baffle all computation, whilst the Hebrews lost not a single man in the action. Moses erected an altar on the spot, which he dedicated and inscribed to *God the Conqueror*, and sacrificed thereon; predicting, at the same time, the total destruction of the Amalekites, in consequence of their treacherous conduct towards the Hebrews, when they were on the verge of perishing in the wilderness. The solemnity concluded with feasting

and rejoicings; Joshua and the other officers, with the whole army, being entertained by Moses in a manner suitable to the occasion.

This was the first action in which the Hebrews were engaged, from the time of their departure from Egypt. After having refreshed themselves for a few days, they proceeded forwards with a better regulated and more numerous army than before; the plunder which they took from the Amalekites having enabled them to supply a great number of the people with arms. Continuing their progress thus, by short marches, they arrived at Mount Sinai, where, as we have already observed, God appeared to Moses in the burning bush*. This was the third month from the time of their leaving Egypt.

C H A P. III.

Jethro repairs to Mount Sinai, to felicitate his Son-in-law Moses on his late Successes.

WHEN the news of the miraculous success which Moses had experienced was communicated to Jethro, he immediately determined to pay his son-in-law a visit, with the view of congratulating him on the occasion, and of meeting with his daughter Zipporah and their children. Moses received him with the greatest joy imaginable; and, offering up a sacrifice to God, feasted all the people, distinguishing them according to their tribes and families, on a spot not far distant from the burning bush already mentioned. In the midst of their festivity, Aaron, Raguel, and the rest, sung hymns in honour of the Omnipotent Author of their late deliverance: nor did they omit to pay the due tribute of praise to the army, and to their preserver, by whose authority and guidance so many wise and brave men were directed in their proceedings, which were attended with such astonishing success.

While Moses was attending to the judicial appeals of the public, his father-in-law observed, that he must be greatly embarrassed by the diversity of business in which he was engaged; but, conscious that the people held his authority in so high a reverence as to submit more cheerfully to the most severe sentence from him, than obtain a partial decision in their favour from another tribunal, he judged it not prudent to interrupt the course of public justice: but when the business of the day was concluded, he delivered his sentiments, and advised that other persons should be united with Moses in the administration of justice, and in the government of so considerable a number of people.

Jethro's prudent counsel to Moses accepted.

This proposal was highly agreeable to Moses; and

* There is a convent at Mount Sinai, dedicated to St. Catherine, where the shrine and relics of that saint are deposited in a marble chest. Adjoining the church is the chapel of the Holy Bush. Here are two wells: one is called the Well of Moses, and

their arms during the night, whilst Moses, Joshua, and the other principal officers of the army, sat in council, regulating the operations of the ensuing day. When the dawn began to appear, Moses recommended to Joshua and the other commanders of the Hebrews, and also to the soldiers in general, to fulfil, by their conduct on that day, the expectations which the world had conceived of them, and thereby to acquire immortal fame.

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the other, the Well of the Holy Bush. The Turks destroyed the pavement of the church, expecting to find treasures; but Athanasius afterwards repaired it in an elegant manner.

he gave directions for immediately adopting the several regulations which Jethro had suggested; and before an assembly of the people, acknowledged them to be the production of his father-in-law.

CHAP. IV.

The Law of God is communicated to Moses upon the Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments.

Moses ascends Mount Sinai.

MOSESES called an assembly of the people, and informed them of his intention of repairing to the mount for the purpose of addressing himself to the Lord; adding, that he entertained the hope of returning with comfortable assurances. Having directed them to pitch their tents at the foot of the mount, he ascended.

As Moses had directed, the Hebrews stationed themselves at the foot of the mountain, where they humbled themselves before the Lord, and ruminated on the agreeable information promised them on the return of their leader. During his absence they observed the appointed festivals, frequently purified themselves, and lived in the most rigid continence, in obedience to the command imposed upon them, supplicating God to extend his gracious favour to Moses, and through him to bestow upon them what might be deemed expedient towards their happiness. They feasted on this occasion, and their wives and children were dressed with more than ordinary pomp. Before sun-rise, on the third day, a thick cloud* appeared, covering the whole camp of the Hebrews, every other part of the hemisphere being remarkably clear; this was the first prodigy known of the kind. A violent storm of thunder, lightning, wind, and rain ensued, intimating that God was present. So greatly alarmed were the Hebrews by this circumstance, that, with marks of the greatest consternation, they closely confined themselves to their tents, admitting the belief that God, in his displeasure, had taken away Moses, and that they should experience a similar fate. While they were under this terrible apprehension Moses returned, but with such expressions of joy and dignity in his countenance, that their fears were removed: the air now recovered its former serenity.

Moses led the people to a spot where they distinctly heard the immediate voice of God giving them instructions concerning the performance of their duty. To this he was induced by the consideration, that these instructions would come with

far greater weight from God himself than from the lips of any mortal. The voice was distinctly heard and understood by every one present; but with regard to the commandments, which were comprised in the two tables left by Moses, we are restricted from giving the identical words thereof, but the purport of them is as follows:

1. We are taught that there is but one God, and that he alone is intitled to our adoration.

2. That we are not to worship the image or representation of any living creature.

3. That every man is bound to abstain from swearing rashly.

4. The seventh day is to be kept holy, and not to be profaned by labour.

5. That our parents have the strongest claim to our obedience and respect.

6. That we must do no murder.

7. That we are prohibited from committing adultery.

8. That we are not to steal the property of another.

9. That we must not, in any manner, calumniate the character of others.

10. That no man must covet any thing that belongs to his neighbour.

The people expressed great satisfaction in hearing from the mouth of the Almighty those particulars which had been before communicated to them by Moses. A few days only had elapsed, however, when they began to importune Moses to obtain for them a code of laws† for the regulation of their civil concerns, with which he complied.

Nearly about this period Moses again repaired to the mount, having previously acquainted the people with his design, that a sufficient number might be present at the time of his retiring thither.

As he continued there longer than they had expected, forty days being elapsed before his return, the people began to be apprehensive for his safety; and, in the midst of their fears, they dreaded nothing so much as the being deprived of him by any sinister accident. They were much divided in their sentiments on the occasion: some, who were not very favourably disposed towards him, insisted that he had certainly been devoured by wild beasts; others, more charitably inclined, fancied that the Almighty had taken him to himself; but those of most prudence among them, considered the matter in both points of view.

At the expiration of forty days, during which he tasted neither food nor drink,

Moses re-ascends the mountain, and remains there forty days.

He returns to the army.

* The miraculous cloud of glory indicated some invisible and majestic presence; and the extraordinary commotion and perturbation in the course of nature, manifestly discovered his immediate interposition; and the heavenly ministers, who were attendants upon the divine Majesty, summoned the people by a sound resembling that of a trumpet.

† Though it be true that these judicial laws were given by

Moses to the Hebrews only, and that other nations must be governed by the laws of their several countries; yet such is the justice and equity on which they are founded, as to render them worthy the imitation of other states and kingdoms. And it is not without reason alledged, that many of the laws of Sparta, Athens, Rome, and other commonwealths, were borrowed from the Mosaic institution.

Moses

Moses returned to the army, by whom he was received with inconceivable joy. He acquainted them, that, as a proof of the divine favour to them, the Almighty had communicated to him, for their use, a set of instructions which would render their lives virtuous and happy. He further informed them, that it was God's pleasure that they should build a tabernacle*, for his occasional residence among them; whereby the necessity of any future journeys to Mount Sinai would be precluded, as this tabernacle was still to accompany the army wherever it went. With respect to the form and dimensions of the building, he told them, that he was already provided with full instructions; and concluded with producing to them the two tables, on which were inscribed, by the hand of God himself, the ten commandments, five on each table.

C H A P. V.

By the Appointment of God, Moses erects a superb Tabernacle for the divine Worship.

The people contribute largely towards building the tabernacle.

THE return of Moses, and the discourse he held, greatly elevated the affections of the people, who became emulous to surpass each other in contributions towards the intended structure. Gold, silver, copper, scarce and valuable wood, that was not subject to injury from the worm; precious stones set in gold; rich perfumes of various kinds; scarlet, purple, white and blue sheep-skins, wool of the same colours, and cattle for sacrifices, were presented in great abundance. Some of the people gave in proportion to their possessions, and others considerably more than they could afford without inconvenience. The public contribution being made, Moses selected skilful architects, and ordered them to forward the building with all possible dispatch, according to the commands he had received from the Almighty. These architects are mentioned in the sacred scriptures; one was named Bezaleel, and he was the son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah; and the other was Aholiab, the son of Ahisamath, of the tribe of Dan; and of so high a reputation were they for proficiency in the art they professed, that they would have been appointed to the employment, had the election depended on the voice of the public.

* God having now solemnly ratified his covenant with Israel, to be their God and king, and they his peculiar servants and people, gives orders next about a place for his solemn worship, where, by visible symbols of his divine presence, he should reside among them as their governor and protector, and the great object of their adoration. This was to be the tabernacle with the ark in it, which, agreeable to their travelling condition while in the wilderness, was to be a kind of portable temple to move along with them. Its frame, fashion, utensils, ministers, and services, to be such as would be a model of that more magnificent temple service in the

Moses judging it expedient to put a check upon the extensive liberality of the people, issued a proclamation, setting forth, that what had been collected was fully sufficient for the use and service of the tabernacle, which was to be so contrived as to admit of removal as occasion might require. In due observance of the commands he received from God upon the mount, Moses gave instructions concerning the magnitude and proportion of the building, and the construction of the sacrificing and other vessels and utensils necessary for divine worship. In forming the sacerdotal vestments, the women displayed great zeal in the pompous ornaments they provided; and in other respects they employed their attention in contributing to the magnificence of the structure, and supporting the dignity of the sacred function. The materials being prepared, Moses appointed a festival, enjoining every man to attend and offer sacrifice according to his ability; and when this ceremony was performed, he began to construct the tabernacle, which we shall endeavour to describe with all possible accuracy.

In the outward court, which was an hundred cubits in length, and fifty in breadth, were twenty pillars of brass, placed at equal distances, ten pillars being ranged along, and ten across the building; each pillar was five cubits high, and decorated with borders and rings of silver: the bases of these were of brass curiously wrought and gilt, and were affixed to the earth by means of pins, each of a cubit in length. Cords being passed through the rings, bound the several parts together in so compact a manner, as to give it sufficient firmness to withstand the most violent gusts of wind: and, from the cornices, a veil of the finest linen wrought with great ingenuity, depended to the very bases of the structure.

The front of this edifice was fifty cubits in width. The entrance was twenty cubits wide, with two pillars of wood on each side the passage. The bases of these were overlaid with brass, and all the remaining part with silver. There were six other pillars, three on each side, which, for the sake of strength, were let into each other, and concealed from view by a curtain of exquisite workmanship. The entrance, which, as it has been already observed, was twenty cubits wide, was also five cubits in depth; and before it hung a veil of fine linen, curiously wrought with flowers and figures, in colours of violet, scarlet, and purple; but the representation of animated crea-

land of Canaan, even as that temple itself was to be but a figurative resemblance of a more complete and spiritual dispensation of religion under the Messiah. See Heb. viii. 5.

The mystery of the tabernacle was fully understood by the learned Nachmanides, who, in few words, but pregnant, expressed himself to this purpose; "The mystery of the tabernacle was this, that it was to be a place for the Shechinah, or habitation of Divinity, to be fixed in;" and this, no doubt, as a special type of God's future dwelling in Christ's human nature, which was the TRUE SHECHINAH.

tures

The laver. tures was avoided. A laver, being a large vessel of brass, with a foot of the same metal, was placed within the gate of the court, for the priests to wash their hands and feet therein*.

The tabernacle stood in the midst of the court, with its front to the east, for the benefit of receiving the rays of the sun at its rising. Its length was thirty cubits, its breadth twelve, and its height equal to the breadth. Of its two sides, one faced the south, and the other the north; and the prospect from the back front was towards the west. Each of these sides was formed of twenty planks, of a quadrangular shape, a cubit and a half in breadth, and of the thickness of four fingers; these planks were overlaid with gold; with two tenons, let into as many mortises, to each plank, and two bases of silver. The west-front was composed of six planks, of the same kind with the foregoing, which were also covered with gold, and were inserted into each other with so much art, that they appeared to be one intire piece. These six planks measured but nine cubits; but two others, of the same dimensions with respect to length and breadth, but much thicker than the rest, were added to them, and placed in the same position, one at each end, for the purpose of connecting more firmly the two ends, and the west-front of the tabernacle together.

Rings. Golden rings, or staples, were fastened to all these planks, and they were placed in regular order, answering in a direct line to each other. Several bars, plated with gold, and of the length of five cubits, were passed through these rings, and, extending from one end to the other, were designed to strengthen that division of the building, by compacting its various parts as closely as possible. The back part of this edifice was furnished, in like manner, with bars and rings; the bars being disposed in such order as to answer to each other. Bolts and staples were also fixed at the corners; and, these, with the assistance of mortises, to bind the different parts together, served to secure the tabernacle from the injuries of the weather.

Divisions of the tabernacle. The inner part of this tabernacle consisted of three divisions, each of the length of ten cubits. At the above distance from the bottom stood four pillars, with equal spaces between them, reaching from one side of the tabernacle to the other: these pillars, and their bases, were constructed on the same plan, and with the like materials, as those mentioned before. Beyond these pillars, was the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or *Holy of Holies*, into which even the priests, to whom all the other parts

of the tabernacle were open, were prohibited entrance.

The tabernacle, being thus divided into three parts, appears to bear some analogy to the plan of the universe. * The first division, to which the very priests were denied access, may be admitted, in some measure, to resemble the heavens, as being the residence of the Deity: and the two other divisions, which were free to the priests alone, may be considered as no unapt emblems of the earth and sea. Five gilded columns, the bases of which were brass, stood at the entrance of this tabernacle, with curtains or veils of fine yarn, which were dyed blue, purple, and scarlet, and interwoven with each other.

Curtains. The first curtain, which served to separate the *Holy of Holies*, or the space within the four pillars mentioned above, from the *Holy*, was ten cubits square, and richly ornamented with flowers, and various other figures, except those of living creatures. A second curtain, of equal size and workmanship, overspread the five columns at the entrance of the building, being fastened with hooks and eyes to the top, and hanging down as low as the middle of the columns; the remaining part being left open for the entrance of the priests. This curtain was commonly concealed from view by another of the same size, placed at a small distance from it, but less costly in its materials and workmanship. A number of rings were tacked to the outer curtain, with strings passed through them, to draw it up at pleasure; and, on particular occasions, to expose the inner one to the view of the people. The outer one served at ordinary times, and in bad weather especially, as a kind of fence to that within, from the rain or any other injury. To this day, the same sort of curtain is used at the door of the temple.

Hangings. The tabernacle was covered, both at the top and sides, with ten pieces of hanging, which reached within a foot of the floor. These hangings† were each twenty-eight cubits in length, and of the breadth of four cubits, and were joined together with golden loops, in so artificial a manner, that they seemed to form one whole piece. Eleven other pieces of the same breadth, but longer by two cubits each, than the former; and which were made of goat's hair, instead of wool, of which the others were composed, served as coverings to the ten above mentioned: and the eleventh was hung against the door of the tabernacle, to which office it was particularly destined on account of its being the odd number. Over these coverings of goat's hair was another of skins, to preserve them from the bad ef-

* Ablution was an ancient right observed in all acts of worship as a proper emblem of that moral and internal purity which renders every oblation acceptable to God. See *Gen. xxxv. 2. be clean.* This was the first thing that was done for *hallowing* the priests, as we read *Lev. viii. 6.* And therefore 'tis probable, that their *whole bodies* were now washed, in token of their obligation to study *universal purity*, and to cleanse themselves from *all* unrighteousness in general; but afterwards they were appointed to wash *only their hands and feet* before they entered into the tabernacle (*ch. xxx. 19, &c.*), to

remind them of that particular reverence, and pious recollection which becomes men in their immediate approaches to God, and of those partial blemishes, and daily imperfections, from which even those had need to be cleansed who are habitually pure and holy.

† The Hebrew word signifies † "slings;" the Chaldee renders it "curtains:" they were, as Grotius asserts, pinked or perforated with holes, so as not to exclude the light, though they hindered the approach.

fects of the heat and the rain. This spectacle, at a distance, from its sky-coloured appearance, seemed to many to be an exact representation of the heavens.

The ark.

The tabernacle being thus completed, they next began to construct the ark, for which purpose they made use of a certain wood, which is called Heron by the Hebrews, the extreme hardness of which enables it, in a particular manner, to resist either rottenness or the worm. The figure and dimensions of the ark were as follow: The length of it was two cubits and a half, and the breadth and depth one and a half; the whole being overlaid with the finest gold, and contrived with such skill, both within and without, that not the least part of the wood could be seen. A number of golden hooks were employed to cramp together the different parts of the cover, all of which were highly polished, and so firm as to preclude all danger of their grating against each other.

Four golden rings were fastened to the frame, one at each corner: and through these were passed two bars of gilt iron, one on either side, for the purpose of removing the ark from place to place; for the sole mode of conveyance used was that of carrying it on men's shoulders, which office was performed

Cherubims.

by the priests and Levites alone. On this cover were placed two winged figures, called by the Hebrews Cherubims*; and which corresponded with the description given by Moses of those beings which he saw surrounding the throne of God; the like of which no mortal had ever seen before. The two tables of the decalogue were deposited in the ark, which was appointed to be placed in the sanctuary.

Table of shewbread.

A table, to which that at Delphos bore no small resemblance, was fixed in this tabernacle; the length being two cubits, the breadth one, and the height a cubit and a half. The feet of this table were round, from the bottom upwards to the middle, but square from thence to the top; with a border projecting from them, of the thickness of four fingers, and a crown of gold encompassing it on every side: these feet, in short, exactly resembled those which the Dorians make use of for their beds. Four rings of gold were fastened beneath this border, into the upper parts of the feet, one to each corner; with gilt bars made of the most solid wood, to serve as handles for removing it as occasion

* These did not contradict the second commandment, because they were not made as symbols of any deity, or as objects of adoration; they were only to represent to the Jews, by their prostrate attitude, the necessity of adoring the God of Israel, who resided in his glory between them. Their form approached that of oxen more than that of any other animal, not but that they were a kind of chimera, resembling no particular animal, according to the assertion of historians; and as their faces probably resembled that of an ox, the symbol of the Egyptian deity, the Israelites might from hence be led to suppose them the symbols of the presence of the true God.

† This altar was to be of wood rather than of solid brass, that it might not be too heavy: but notwithstanding its being overlaid with brass, ver. 2. had it been common wood, it must have been

should require. This table was placed on the north side of the temple, at a small distance only from the sanctuary. Twelve loaves of unleavened bread, six on each side, continually stood on the table, piled regularly one above another. Each loaf contained the quantity of two assars, or seven attic cotylas, equal to two omers, according to the Hebrew measure, of the finest flour: and above each pile of loaves was placed a golden dish filled with incense. These loaves were removed at the end of every seven days, and the table supplied with fresh ones. The seventh day is that which we term our *sabbath*. But of this we shall speak more at large in the subsequent part of the work.

On the south side, directly opposite to the tabernacle, stood a candlestick, cast in gold, and hollowed throughout; the weight thereof being one hundred minas, called by the Hebrews, cinchares, and by the Greeks, a talent. The ornaments of this candlestick consisted of bowls, lilies, pomegranates, and small cups, amounting to seventy pieces, and were spread over the seven branches, answering to the number of the planets, of which the candlestick was composed. Each branch was furnished with a lamp; and, as the candlestick stood in an oblique position, all these lamps fronted toward the east and south.

In the space between the afore said candlestick and table, a small altar of incense was placed, which was constructed with the same impenetrable kind of wood; with the ark. The length and breadth of this altar were each one square cubit, and the height two cubits; with a golden fire-hearth, encompassed with a border of the same metal, and rings and staves, for the convenience of removing it.

In the front of the tabernacle, another altar was erected, of the same kind of wood with the former; being five cubits square, and three in height. It was framed upon the same model with that before-mentioned, with this distinction only, that every part of it was overlaid with brass, and that a grate, formed of a kind of net-work, was fixed in a middle space between the top and bottom, to admit the passage of the ashes. A number of phials, censers, cups, pans, and other instruments, were also provided for the service of the altar, all which were made of fine gold.

soon consumed to ashes by the continual heat; wherefore Le Clerc conjectures, that this shittim-wood might be the larch-tree, which bears the fire like stone. Pliny says of it; *Nec ardet, nec carbonem facit, nec alio modo ignis vi consumitur, quam lapides*, Nat. Hist. l. xvi. c. 10. Calmet supposes this altar to have been a kind of coffer or wooden frame of about five feet and a half high, and the one half of its height to have been occupied by feet on which it stood. Thus, he thinks it would both be more portable than as we commonly suppose it, and the fire having vent from below, would be less apt to melt the brass or burn the wood. To which he adds, that all the altars of the Egyptian Isis are represented in this fashion, i. e. as frames supported by feet.

C H A P. VI.

The Garments of the Priests, High-Priests; the Purifications, and Festivals.

The priests' garments.

EVERY priest was prohibited from exercising the sacerdotal office, till he had first been purified, in the usual forms prescribed by our law. The under garment, which he wore, was made of fine linen, twined in folds, and is called a manachase, or binder, by the Hebrews, and in shape much resembles our trowsers, or drawers. The priest, in putting it on, drew it over his feet, and it was open from the top downwards, and closely tied upon the hips. Over this was a coat of very fine linen, called chethemene, signifying a linen cloth; chethon being the term used for flax, of which linen is made. It sat very close to the body, having narrow sleeves reaching to the ground. This garment was fastened about the waist with a linen girdle, of the breadth of four fingers, and ornamented with needle-work of divers colours, so ingeniously executed, as to resemble, in a considerable degree, the skin of a snake. Various flowers and figures, in blue, purple, and scarlet, were embroidered on this girdle, which passed twice round the body of the priest, and, for ornament sake, was suffered to hang down to his feet, except on those occasions when he was engaged in the duties of his office, at which times he threw it back over his left shoulder, that he might have his hands the more at liberty. This girdle was called abaneth by Moses; but we now term it emian; a word which we have borrowed from the Babylonians. There was neither plait nor fold in this garment, which was made wide at the neck, and was held together with a buckle, both before and behind; the Hebrews have given it the name of massa-baanzes.

The masna-emphthes, or cap.

The priests also wore a sort of mitre or cap, called masnaemphthes, which resembled a small helmet, and covered little more than one half of the head. This cap was made of linen, and being bound about the head with a fillet, covered with another of finer texture; and this came so low, as totally to conceal the under one, and to secure it from all danger of falling off, while the priest was performing sacrifice.

Exclusive of the habits and ornaments above-mentioned, the high-priest was accustomed to wear certain others, to which he was entitled by his office: such as the methir, which is a purple robe reaching to his ancles, and is fastened round him with a girdle, nearly resembling that already described, except that the ornaments were variegated with gold. A fringe went round the bottom of this vest, which was also ornamented with curious pomgranates and

bells of gold, placed interchangeably, and at equal distances. This robe was without seam, and had two openings in it, both lengthways; the one reaching a little below the shoulders, and the other to the middle of the breast, with a border to conceal those openings, and another to cover the parts through which the arms were to pass into the sleeves.

The priest wore over this garment another, which greatly resembled the epomis of the Greeks, according to the description which has been given us of the latter, and was named the ephod*. The length of it was a cubit, and it was embroidered in every part with gold and a great variety of the most beautiful colours: it had also sleeves to it; and thus was in reality nothing more than a short coat. Upon the middle of the breast of this robe was left a vacancy for receiving the effen, which by the Greeks is called

The ephod.

The oracle.

logion, signifying the Oracle, or in the Latin, *Rationale*. To the corners of the effen were affixed rings of gold, through which purple ribbons were passed for the purpose of fastening the effen and the ephod together. The seams and spaces were concealed by strings of a colour correspondent to the vestment, being wrought over them. On each shoulder, the high-priest wore a sardonix set in gold; and these stones answered the purpose of clasps, by closing the parts of the ephod. The names of Jacob's twelve sons were engraven upon the above-mentioned stones in Hebrew characters; that worn on the right shoulder bearing the names of the six elder, and the other those of the younger brethren. The effen was enriched by twelve stones of beautiful appearance and inestimable value; on these twelve stones the names of Jacob's twelve sons were respectively engraven, according to the order of their births; and this distinction was given on account of their being esteemed the superiors of our several tribes. They were made fast by small partitions of gold, and disposed into four rows; the first consisting of a sardonix, a topaz and an emerald; the second a ruby, a jasper and a sapphire; the third a lygyrus, an amethyst, and an agat; and the fourth a chrysolite, an onyx, and a beryl. As a farther support to the weight of these precious stones, two other fastenings were conveyed to the upper part of the effen, and to them were joined two gold chains, worked in wreaths, and reaching to the shoulder-piece; the upper ends of the chains were carried about the back and hooked behind the border of the ephod. A girdle of the colour of the robe was also joined to the effen, and this passing twice round the body, was formed in a knot before, where the ends, depending from the waist, were terminated by tassels of gold fringe, curiously wrought.

The tiara, or mitre of the high-priest, differed no otherwise from that of the in-

The high-priest's mitre.

* Whoever considers the composition of the ephod, the breast-plate set with the richest jewels, the robe, the crown of gold, the gems on the shoulders of the ephod, together with their size, their arrangement, and the engravings upon them, must, with Philo confess, that the laity adorned the priests like so many kings, who

awed the spectator by their solemnity and the magnificence of their dress, *ἡρώδης τις σπουδαία καὶ τιμὰν*. And it was partly owing to the effect of this dress, that Alexander was so struck with the appearance of the high-priest, that he prostrated himself, and saluted him. See Book XI. c. 8.

ferior priests, than in being covered with another, of a purple or violet colour, and surmounted with a triple crown of gold. A kind of cup, much resembling the bud of a plant which is called, by the Hebrews, *saccharus*, and *hyosceamos* by the Greeks, was placed over this crown. But, for the information of those to whom this plant is utterly unknown, or known by name only, it may not be amiss to subjoin a short description of it. The plant in question, grows usually to the height of something more than two spans; the root of it bearing some resemblance to that of a turnip, and its leaf to mint. The bud is shaped like a round knob, and is inclosed in a coat, which cracks and falls off, in proportion as the fruit grows ripe. This cup, which, as I before observed, was placed over the golden crown, was much about the size of the joint of a man's little finger, and round and hollow, like the inside of a goblet; but, for the benefit of the reader, I will explain myself a little more fully on the subject. It was partly of a hemispherical figure, narrow towards the top, and widening itself towards the brims, like a pomgranate cut in two: nature had furnished it with a cover, so curiously rounded, that it seemed to have been turned for the purpose, and from this there arose a number of sharp points, resembling the prickles of a pomgranate: and within this cup was the fruit contained. Its seed was shaped like that of the plant *sideritis*, or wall-fage, and it bore a flower which differed very little in its appearance from that of plantane. Such was the figure of the ornaments on that part of the mitre which reached from the neck round to the temples; but on that part which covered the forehead, was fixed a golden plate, on which was inscribed the holy name of God. It is unnecessary to add any thing further, respecting the habits of the high-priest.

C H A P. VII.

Aaron constituted High-Priest by the Command of God.

THE Almighty appeared to Moses, and commanded him to appoint his brother Aaron to the high-priest-hood. Hereupon Moses assembled the people, and in a most pathetic manner represented to them the great virtues of his brother Aaron, mentioning that he had repeatedly exposed his life to imminent danger for the public welfare, for which he entertained the most zealous attachment.

Aaron made high-priest. The people unanimously coincided in the appointment of Aaron; than whom

no man had a better claim to the priesthood, either with regard to the high rank of his family, or the gift of prophecy with which he was endued. Superadded to these considerations, the public were greatly influenced in his favour on account of his relationship to Moses, whose extraordinary qualities had procured him a high degree of veneration.

The surplus of what had been collected towards building the tabernacle Moses ordered to be expended in veils and coverings for the edifice in question, the golden candlestick, the altar of incense, and the other sacred vessels, in order to secure them from damage, in case of removal. He afterwards assembled the people, and laid a tax on them of half a shekel each person, to defray the expences of the work; computing four Attic drachmas to the Hebrew shekel: and to this they submitted with all imaginable cheerfulness. The number of those upon whom this tax was levied was 605,550; who were all denizens, and from twenty to fifty years of age. The money thus raised was wholly appropriated to the service of the tabernacle.

Moses purified the tabernacle, and the priests who were ordained to offer sacrifice, in the following manner: he mixed five hundred shekels-worth of the finest myrrh with an equal quantity of iris, to which he added half that quantity of cinnamon and balsam, both articles remarkable for their fragrantcy. These ingredients, being first pounded together, and steeped in a hin, equal to two Attic choas, of the best olive oil, were set over the fire, and melted down into an ointment of the most pleasing odour conceivable. The ceremony of purification consisted in anointing the priests and the tabernacle with this ointment, and in offering up certain sacrifices, of different kinds, in the tabernacle.

The dedication of the tabernacle, and of all the vessels belonging thereto, took place in the year following, on the new moon of the month Xanticus, or Nisan. The Almighty, on this occasion, gave the Hebrews a convincing proof of his gracious acceptance of their zeal for his service, by descending to take possession of the building which they had erected for his residence. The circumstances attending this miraculous event were as follow: The sky was totally clear, save just over the tabernacle, which was covered as well as partly environed, with a cloud*, neither so thick as to indicate the approach of bad weather, yet sufficiently opaque to intercept the sight. From this cloud issued so gentle and refreshing a dew, as convinced all true believers that God himself had deigned to visit them in person on the occasion.

The tabernacle consecrated.

* This cloud had for some time rested on the tent of Moses; but when the tabernacle was finished, it settled upon the tabernacle, where it continued in the form of a cloud by day, and a glorious light by night, till they entered the land of Canaan, which had long before been promised to their fathers. The tabernacle was a type of our blessed Redeemer's dwelling in our nature, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." The altar of burnt-offering

pointed out the death and sacrifice of our Lord. The altar of incense denoted our Lord's powerful intercession for us. And the ark of the covenant was an eminent emblem of him, from whose mouth we receive a law, founded upon better promises; by whose intercession we have access to the throne of grace with all boldness, and whose satisfaction to the Divine Justice is our true propitiatory, or mercy-seat.

Moses,

Offerings for
sin.

Moses, after having rewarded the various artizans who had been employed in erecting and ornamenting the edifice, according to their respective merits, offered up, in the door-way of the tabernacle, a bullock, a ram, and a kid, as an atonement for the sins of the people, in obedience to the orders which he had received from the Almighty on that subject. When the beasts were killed, Moses took a part of the blood of each animal, and sprinkled Aaron and his sons therewith; after this, he purified them with water of the fountain, and anointed them with oil; and thus were they consecrated priests of the Lord. This ceremony was performed for seven successive days, on each day an oblation or sacrifice being made to heaven. Moses appointed the celebration of a festival on the eighth day, and on this occasion enjoined the people to provide such sacrifices as their circumstances would permit. They not only acquiesced in this order with cheerfulness, but with an emulative piety strove to excel each other in the value of their offerings. No fire had been carried to the altar; but when the sacrifices were prepared and laid thereon, a flame, resembling a flash of lightning, burst forth and consumed them, to the amazement of the spectators.

Nadab and
Abihu con-
sumed by fire
from heaven.

Had not Aaron been perfectly resigned to the will of the Almighty, his sorrow must have been extreme and inconsolable on account of the judgment of heaven upon Nadab and Abihu, the two eldest of his four sons. Disregarding the injunction of Moses, they were preparing to sacrifice, according to the ancient manner, when they were struck to death by a judicial fire from heaven. Moses directed their father and brothers to convey their remains out of the camp, and cause them to be interred in a proper manner. The people gave way to the most immoderate grief for the loss of these brothers: but Moses exhorted Aaron and his remaining sons to bear the shock of this dreadful circumstance with a becoming fortitude, observing that it was not consistent with the dignity of the priest-hood to indulge the weaknesses and private passions of humanity, in prejudice to the glory of the universal Creator.

Moses paid no regard to the acclamations of the multitude, but intirely resigned himself to the worship and service of God, conducting himself as a private individual, excepting only that he continued to perform the duties of his holy function. Instead of repairing to Mount Sinai, he now retired to the tabernacle for instructions to regulate his conduct for the public advantage. He delivered to the people

written laws and precepts for rendering them acceptable in the sight of the Almighty, and for the preservation of peace and unanimity.

The consecration of the tabernacle, and of all those things which were destined to its service, being now completed, the people gave an unbounded loose to their joy, which they expressed in continual hymns and sacrifices; flattering themselves that, as the Almighty had now condescended to take up his residence among them, all their difficulties would be at an end, and that they should for the rest of their lives enjoy an uninterrupted course of prosperity. All the tribes offered sacrifice, both jointly, and separately; and the leaders and princes of the different tribes brought each six waggons, drawn by two horses, to assist in removing the tabernacle, in case of need: to these they added a charger weighing one hundred and thirty shekels, and a silver bowl of seventy shekels, both filled with fine flour mixed with olive-oil, and intended for the oblations; with an incense-cup, filled with perfumes, and estimated at the value of ten daricks. Their burnt-offering consisted of a young bullock, a ram, and a lamb of a year old; and, for their sin offering, they sacrificed a he-goat. They also sacrificed each day two bullocks, five rams, as many lambs of the first year, and a like number of he-goats, for their peace-offerings: and these sacrifices were continued at the rate of one each day, for the term of twelve days.

Moses now constantly repaired to the tabernacle instead of Mount Sinai, to receive instructions from the Deity, relative to the laws which were to be established for the government of the Hebrews; which, being of divine origin, and far above all human comprehension, were intitled to an implicit and perpetual obedience from those for whose benefit they were promulgated.

C H A P. VIII.

Of Sacrifices and Purifications, with their Forms and Ceremonies.

SACRIFICES are either public or private, and there are two modes of celebration. One is called a burnt-offering, or holocaust, signifying that "*the whole sacrifice is to be burnt.*" The burnt-offering of a private man consists of a bullock, a lamb, and a goat*; they must be males, and the two latter not more than a

Description of
sacrifices.

Burnt-offering.

* By restraining the sacrifice to bullocks, goats, and sheep, God might possibly have had a reference to the rites made use of in this age, and by claiming these animals have vindicated his peculiar right to them in opposition to the idols to whom they were respectively offered. The Jewish sacrifices might be considered as fines, and therefore limited to such animals as were most useful, and the gratitude of the sacrificer was shewn more manifestly, than if the useless species had been required, which may be one reason why swine were not offered, for the Jews never used them for food. As

these animals were such as were offered by the patriarchs, the enjoining them now was recalling the simplicity of those early ages. These animals were always at hand, and could for that reason be offered on any pressing and sudden emergence. Besides this, we may consider, that the sacrifices were followed by a feast on the victim, which was esteemed a federal rite, and therefore such animals as were allowed for food, must necessarily be offered in sacrifice. Herod. Lib. ii.

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The beasts for sacrifice, according to the custom of the Jews.

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The Messenger from the top of the Mountains, watch and observe the first appearance of the Moon; in order to give notice to the Nation for celebrating the Neomenia.

year old, though the first may somewhat exceed that age. Being killed, the priest sprinkles the blood of the animal about the altar, and, after being divided, salt is thrown upon the parts, and they are laid upon the wood, which is previously kindled to consume them. The entrails and feet being washed by the priest, he casts them into the flames, to be entirely consumed with the other parts of the offering. The skins are the property of the priest.

Peace-offering. For peace-offerings, or offerings of thank-givings, the same species of creatures, being male and female, upwards of a year old, and free from blemish, are sacrificed. The priest sprinkles the altar with blood, and lays thereon the kidneys, caul, fillets of the liver, and the rump of the lamb. The breast and right shoulder belong to the priest. The persons who offer the sacrifices are allowed to eat of what remains for the space of two days; but what is not consumed in that time, must be burnt.

Sin-offering. The sin-offering is performed in the same manner; but such as cannot provide the above sacrifices are allowed to substitute two young pigeons, or two turtles; one as a burnt-offering, and the other as a due to the priest.

For sins of ignorance. A lamb, or young the goat, is the offering for the sin of ignorance; and in this ceremony the priest only sprinkles the corners of the altar with blood; after which he places upon the altar the kidneys, the caul, and the fibres of the livers of the sacrifices. The flesh and the skin belong to the priests in virtue of their office, and our law expressly orders that the whole of the flesh shall be eaten on the day of sacrifice. If a man is guilty of a wilful sin, of which no legal evidence can be adduced against him, he shall offer a ram as an atonement; the flesh of which shall be given to the priests; conditionally, that it be eaten in the tabernacle, and on the same day. The sole difference between the sin-offering of a private person and that of one of the heads of the tribes was, that the oblation of the latter consisted of a bull and a he-goat, instead of a ram, which was required from the former.

Laws for sacrifices. It was also ordained that in all sacrifices, whether private or public, a certain quantity of fine flour should be brought with each victim: the proportion being one assar to a lamb, two for a ram, and three to a bullock; and this was to be mixed with oil previous to its consecration. The proportion of oil used on these occasions was, half a hin to a bullock; a third part of one of those measures to a ram, and a fourth part to a lamb. A like quantity of wine was also provided for the same purpose, and was by the law ordered to be poured upon the altar. The method of offering fine flour, without sacrificing, for the performance of a vow, was, to spread a handful of it upon the altar, and to deliver the rest to the priest, to be eaten either boiled, or being kneaded with oil,

or made into cakes; the person sacrificing, at the same time, reserving such a quantity as he deemed requisite for burnt-offerings. It is prohibited by the law to sacrifice the young with the dam, unless the former be at least eight days old. Divers sacrifices are appointed for the recovery of health, and in other cases; on all such occasions, cakes are eaten with the flesh of the victims, and the priests are admitted to take their share; but no part of it is allowed to be left till the next day.

C H A P. IX.

Laws relating to the Priests, the Sacrifices, solemn Days, and other religious and civil Matters.

IT is strictly ordained by the law, that a ^{Numb. xxviii. 32.} lamb of the first year shall be sacrificed every morning and evening, the charge to be defrayed out of the public treasury; and on the seventh day, or sabbath, two are to be offered up in like manner. At the beginning also of every month*, exclusive of the customary oblations, seven lambs, each one year old, and a ram were sacrificed; likewise a he-goat, as a propitiation for sin, lest any offence should, perchance, remain unexpiated.

At the commencement of the seventh month, called Hyperberetæus, the offering consisted of a bullock, a ram, seven lambs, and a he-goat, for a sin-offering.

The tenth day of the same month was observed as a fast till night: and the offerings were a young bullock, two rams, seven lambs, and a he-goat for a propitiation, exclusive of two other goats; one of which was presented alive at the altar, and afterwards suffered to go loose into the wilderness, as a scape-goat, to atone for the sins of the people; the other goat and the bullock were conveyed to a clean spot, at a small distance from the camp, and there totally consumed to ashes. The high-priest afterwards returned to the temple, with the blood of the two animals, which he sprinkled with his finger, seven times, on the cover of the tabernacle, the golden altar, the great altar which stands before the door, the floor, and in general, the whole edifice: the bullock was provided on the occasion by the high priest. The extremities, together with the kidneys, the fat, and part of the liver, were placed on the altar: and, with a ram, which was also furnished by the high-priest, were all sacrificed to the Almighty, as a burnt-offering.

The people received orders to put their tents in such a condition, by the fifteenth day of the same month, as to resist the rigour of the approaching winter: and they were further enjoined, immediately upon their entrance into the promised land, to repair to the capital, as being the place destined for the seat of the holy temple, and there to solemnize a festival of eight days, with burnt-offerings, oblations, and

* The Greeks also, probably in imitation of the monthly sacrifices of the Hebrews, appointed a person to observe, from an eminence, and give notice to the people, when the new moon first appeared, in

order to their keeping, at the return of every month, or new moon, their feast of *Neomenia*. See the plate facing this page.

peace-offerings; carrying in their hands branches of myrtle, willow, and palms, with sprigs of peach-tree.

The first of the eight days was set apart for the burnt-offering, which was to consist of thirteen young bullocks, fourteen lambs, two rams, and a goat, for a propitiatory sacrifice. A like number of the lambs and rams were daily offered up for the space of six days: but of the bullocks, one was abated in the sacrifice of each day, till they amounted to no more than seven. The eighth was to be kept as a day of rest and relaxation: and the people offered up, as I have already observed, a calf, a ram, seven lambs, and a

Feast of tabernacles.

goat, for an atonement. In commemoration of the incident of the Hebrews erecting their tents, was the feast of tabernacles * instituted; and it is to this day observed by our people with all imaginable strictness. On the fourteenth of the moon, of the month Xanticus, or Nisan, which is considered as the beginning of the year, we celebrate the feast of the passover†, as did our ancestors at the time of their deliverance from the yoke of the Egyptians: in the celebration of this festival, we are enjoined by our laws to take especial care not to leave any part of the oblation till the next day.

Feast of unleavened bread.

The feast of unleavened bread, which continues seven days, commences on the fifteenth of the same month, and is next in succession to that of the passover. The oblations directed to be made on this occasion are, two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, for a burnt-offering, and a goat each day, for a sin offering, for the benefit of the priests. The people, on the second day of the feast, and the sixteenth of the month, offer up an oblation to God of the first fruits of their grain, before they presume to taste of it themselves. The mode of the oblation is as follows; they parch a quantity of corn in the ear upon a clean hearth, and having bruised it well, they take the quantity of an assar, and place it upon the altar, where one handful is suffered to remain, and the rest falls to the share of the priest. The people are then permitted to reap their corn as they please; and the oblation usual in this case, is a lamb for a holocaust, or burnt-offering.

Pentecost.

The feast of Pentecost was celebrated on the fiftieth day, that is, at the conclusion of

seven weeks, or forty-nine days, subsequent to that of the passover: the term Pentecost signifies in the Greek tongue, *fifty*; which number is denoted in the Hebrew, by the term assarthay, by which title the above feast is distinguished by the Jews. The sacrifice appointed for this day was two wheaten loaves of leavened-bread, containing two assars of flour, and the same number of lambs, which were to be eaten in the evening by the priests: but no part thereof was to be reserved till the next day. The burnt-offerings were three calves, two sheep, fourteen lambs, and two goats, for an atonement for sin. There were also various other ordinances, regulating the number and quality of the burnt offerings, and the times in which they were allowed a relaxation from labour, in their several feasts; together with certain rules, prescribing which of the sacrifices might be eaten.

It was further ordered that this bread should be baked on the eve of the sabbath, and placed the next morning on the holy table, forming two piles, each consisting of six loaves, which were to be placed opposite each other, with a golden cup of incense on the top of each pile: and these loaves were to remain till the next sabbath-day, when they were to be given to the priest, and their places supplied with others. The incense was to be renewed in the like manner; and that which was taken away was ordered to be thrown into the holy fire, in which the burnt-offerings were consumed. The quantity of an assar of fine flour steeped in oil, and slightly baked, was offered by the high-priest twice a day; the one half in the morning, and the remainder in the evening. o

C H A P. X.

The Levites set apart. Laws and Ceremonies respecting Purifications.

MOSES, having separated the tribe of Levi from the rest of the people, to officiate at the altar, purified them with water from the spring; and after they had sacrificed in the manner prescribed by our law, committed to their care the tabernacle, the holy

* The tabernacles or walks for the celebration of this feast, were anciently made with the boughs of such beautiful trees as abound with oil, fat, or resin; because the boughs of those trees, by means of their oleaginous or resinous nature, long retain their verdure. Nehemiah, ch. viii. 15. thus describes them: "Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive-branches and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches, and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written." But the practice now-a-days is a quite different thing.

† This feast is a solemn and religious duty, from which none, who are of age, are exempted, but the female sex. It is solemnized twice every season, on two successive days; the same rites and services being performed on each. The doubling of the festival is owing to the pretended uncertainty of the Jews in the matter of computing the time. The book of the law is brought out twice: five men read such

portions of it as relate to the offerings which were made on this festival, and likewise a haphara out of the prophets. About noon there is sometimes a sermon in praise of the law. The book of Ruth is likewise read on this feast, because Ruth's adventure happened in the time of the wheat harvest.

In memory of the promulgation of the law, they strew the synagogue, their houses, and sometimes the streets they dwell in, with grass and green herbs, and adorn all their windows with green boughs, and with roses and other flowers; and sometimes wear upon their heads chaplets of green herbs, because all was green about mount Sinai when the law was delivered. With this view likewise, on this venerable anniversary, they eat a great deal of that sort of food which is produced from milk, as curds, cheese-cakes, custards, &c. because, say they, the law is white and pure, and sweet as milk.

vessels,

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The Jews celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles.

vessels, and all things else thereunto appertaining, under the controul of the priests; and they were from this time considered as being consecrated to the service of the Deity.

At the same time, Moses instructed the people in those points which constituted the difference between meats clean and unclean; or those which were allowed and those which were prohibited from being eaten: but we shall speak further with respect to this matter as opportunity shall offer. They were strictly enjoined to abstain from the blood of every kind of creature whatever, upon a persuasion that the very being of the animal was inherent therein: nor is the flesh of any creature that hath died of itself; or the fat either of goats, sheep, or oxen, to be eaten under any pretext whatever.

Unclean persons.

All lepers, and such as were infected with a gonorrhœa, were obliged to retire from the city; and, in like manner, women, during the time of their courses, were enjoined to withdraw themselves from all communication with the other sex for the space of seven days, at the expiration of which they were considered as being purified, and were allowed to return to their families. They who had assisted at the interment of a corpse, were also deemed unclean for the seven succeeding days: but when the term of the pollution extends beyond seven days, the party must offer two lambs; one of which must be sacrificed, and the other given to the priests. Leprous persons are totally banished the city, and excluded from all human conversation. But if it so happens that God is graciously pleased to free any person from this dreadful distemper, and to re-instate him in his former health, the party on whom such blessing is conferred, is bound to offer various sacrifices, in gratitude for the benefit bestowed.

Laws for women in child-bed.

A woman, who has lately brought forth a child, is restricted, if it be a male, both from entering the temple, and from attending on public worship, for the space of forty days†; or, if it be a female, for double that term. But, at the expiration of that time, she is admitted to make the oblations prescribed in such cases; part of which are offered up to the Almighty, and the remainder falls to the share of the priests.

For adultery, or jealousy.

If a man entertains a suspicion of his wife's chastity, he must bring with him an oblation of an assar of barley-meal; spreading a handful of it on the altar, and delivering the rest to the priest to be eaten. One of them, having placed the woman at the gate of the temple, which faces the tabernacle, takes off her veil, and, having inscribed the sacred name of God on a piece of parchment, orders her to declare upon her oath, whether she

had ever defiled her husband's bed. To this she replies with the following imprecation: "If I am guilty of the crime laid to my charge, may my thigh rot from my body, may my belly burst, and let the last hours of my life be spent in torture: but if, on the other hand, it shall appear that the accusation against me is founded solely on the unreasonable jealousy of my husband, I beseech thee, Lord, to grant me a son within the space of ten months from the present day." The priest then washed the writing out of the parchment with fair water, into which, after having strained it into an earthen vessel, he cast some of the dust from the floor and walls of the temple, and presented it to the woman to drink. In case she proved innocent of the crime alledged against her, she quickly afterwards conceived, and was, in due time, safely and happily delivered of her burthen; but if to the crime of incontinence she added that also of perjury, her death was attended with all the circumstances of horror and ignominy already mentioned.

CHAP. XI.

Laws prohibiting Adultery and Incest, and for regulating the Marriages of Priests. The Sabbath of the seventh Year, and the Year of Jubilee. Laws and Ordinances of War.

MUTUAL confidence between man and wife was considered by Moses as indispensably necessary towards conjugal happiness; and he was convinced, that the interest of the government, as well as of private families, materially depended on the propagation of mankind under the sanction of the marriage institutes. Incest, either with the mother, mother-in-law, aunt, either on the side of father or mother, sister, or daughter-in-law, he pronounced to be an abominable sin. He forbade the cohabitation of man and wife during the periodical state of purgation; and all unnatural intercourse was strictly forbidden, and severely punished.

Divers laws and ordinances.

Besides an observance of the general laws of matrimony, particular ordinances were made in respect to the priests. They were prohibited contracting marriage with maid-servants, slaves, women being divorced, or such as came under the denomination of public hostesses. A priest was permitted to marry a widow, but that liberty was not granted to a high-priest, who was enjoined to marry only a virgin. The high-priest was not allowed to approach the dead, but the inferior

Marriage of Priests.

† During the first seven, she was denied the conversation of her friends, but, for the three days which succeeded, was permitted that liberty, being only excluded from the sanctuary, and from partaking of the sacrifices, which she might otherwise have eaten. Maimonides imagines that this liberty was given to the Jews in opposition to the custom of the Zabeans, who were religiously scrupulous,

and laid their women under great restraints in these cases. The general idea, which all polite nations had of the uncleanness of women for the first month after child-birth, seems to have been originally derived from the Egyptians, from whom Pythagoras borrowed most of his doctrines, and especially that relating to women in these circumstances.

Persons invested with the sacerdotal function were permitted to shew the usual forms of respect towards their deceased fathers, mothers, brothers, or children. A priest having any disease or bodily imperfection, was excluded from performing ceremonies at the altar, and even denied admission to the temple, but he was allowed his full proportion of the oblations. Moses judged that the exercise of the sacred function required a purity of manners in the common concerns of life, and therefore deemed those unworthy the sacerdotal robe, who were not free from imputation on the score of moral reſtitution. The priests were not allowed the use of wine at the time of wearing the vestments of their office; and the sacrifices they made were appointed to be perfect in form, undivided, and free from impurity.

At the approach of the year of jubilee*, which, being interpreted, signifies *Liberty*, all lands having been alienated, returned to the original proprietors: and the restitution was made in the following manner. An exact computation was formed of the produce of the land, from the time of the sale thereof, and also of the charges which had accrued upon it, and, if the former were found to exceed the latter, the ground was restored to the seller, without any kind of condition whatever: but, if the expences amounted to more than the produce, the purchaser received the difference, and relinquished the possession to the first owner: if the produce and the expences chanced to be equal, the land in that case also, again became the property of the seller. The same rule was also observed with respect to the sale of houses situated in villages; but a different mode was adopted in regard to those in towns inclosed with walls. In this latter instance, if the seller refunded the purchase-money before the expiration of the twelve months, he was intitled to resume the possession; but, if he suffered that period to elapse, he was deprived thereby of all claim to this privilege till the year of jubilee.

These necessary regulations being made for the religious and civil government of the state, Moses now directed his attention to the forming of certain ordinances relating to the military department. He, accordingly, issued orders to the heads of the several tribes (that of Levi only excepted) to form exact lists of those persons in each tribe who were qualified to bear arms: the Levites, being consecrated to the service of God, were consequently exempted from every other kind of duty. The number of those thus qualified was found, upon the review, to be 603,650, from the age of twenty years to fifty. And Moses advanced Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph, to the rank of princes of the tribes; the first in the room of Levi, and the other in that of Joseph, his father, in compli-

* Among the variety of reasons assigned for its institution, we may add the following: By this means God fixed the Jews to the land of Canaan, preserved a distinct knowledge of their several tribes and families, ascertained the very tribe and family from which the Messiah sprung, and thereby enabled him to prove the validity

ance with the request which Jacob made to Joseph, when he adopted the sons of the latter, as we have already observed.

When the Hebrews, at any time, pitched their tents, the tabernacle was erected in the centre of the camp, three tribes being stationed on each side thereof, with wide streets and intervals between; and with a market-place, in which were shops of various trades, arranged with such regularity, as to resemble a well-constructed city. The quarter next the tabernacle was assigned to the priests and Levites; the latter of whom were numbered apart from the rest of the people, and were found to amount to 23,880 males, from the age of thirty days and upwards. While the cloud, before-mentioned, continued to hover over the tabernacle, the people, considering it as an intimation of the presence of the Almighty amongst them, remained in camp; but struck their tents, and proceeded on their march, whenever it was removed. Moses also directed two silver trumpets to be made: these were used for convening the people, at the removal of the tabernacle, marching of the army, &c.

The removal of the tabernacle from place to place was performed in the following manner: on the first sounding of the trumpets, the three tribes which were stationed on the east-side thereof began to put themselves in motion, as did those on the south-side upon the second sounding of it. The tabernacle was then taken to pieces, and the several parts of it were laid upon the carriages; six of the tribes preceding, and the remaining six following it; while the Levites closely environed, to prevent the approach of all unqualified persons. The three tribes which were posted on the west-side of the camp began their march on the third sounding of the trumpets; and the fourth sounding was the signal for those to move which were placed on the north-side. At this period Moses and the Hebrews celebrated the paschal-sacrifice, being the second return of that solemnity from the time of its institution previous to their departure from Egypt.

C H A P. XII.

A Mutiny against Moses, in consequence of a Deficiency of Provisions. Miracle of the Quails.

THE army now departed from Mount Sinai, and after sojourning at different places, repaired to Jeremoth, where an insurrection took place, the people violently upbraiding Moses with having prevailed upon them to eva-

of his claim to that character, from the correspondence between his birth and the characteristics recorded in the ancient prophecies; and, as it has been observed, Providence prevented any confusion in their genealogies, by limiting their captivity in Babylon to seventy years, in which space they neither could have been corrupted nor lost.

uate

cuates one of the most eligible parts of the globe, and under pretence of procuring the blessings of plenty and happiness for them, deluding them into a state of the most pressing necessity; alledging, that they already were in the greatest extremity, from a deficiency of water, and if they should be no longer supplied with manna, inevitable ruin must ensue. The popular clamour against Moses being arrived at a great height, one of the people addressed himself to the desperate multitude, reminding them of the hazards, fatigue, and toil which he had encountered in the cause of the public, and advised them to depend upon the Almighty for relieving their necessities: but this, instead of appeasing, aggravated the mutiny to a more violent degree of desperation. Notwithstanding the insult and indignity which had been cast upon Moses, he appealed to them in terms of the most gentle persuasion; and assured them, that they should be speedily supplied with meat sufficient for their sustenance for several days. They paid no regard to what Moses said, but gave vent to insulting and opprobrious language, scornfully asking him by what means he could provide maintenance for so many thousand people. He replied, that the Lord and his servant would speedily supply them. Upon

Quails sent.

his pronouncing these words, an immense number of quails fell into the camp, and were taken up by the people: but soon after this circumstance, God judged it proper to execute vengeance upon the Hebrews for the iniquity of their conduct, and afflicted them with a terrible plague, to which great numbers fell a sacrifice*. The place where this punishment was inflicted upon the Hebrews was called Cabrothaba, or the "graves of lust."

CHAP. XIII.

MOSES sends Spies into CANAAN. They are delighted and alarmed at the Account they receive of the State of the Country, and its Inhabitants. A Conspiracy is formed against MOSES, which is defeated by JOSHUA and CALEB.

Address of Moses to the people.

WHEN the Hebrews had arrived at a place called the Streights, which lies on the borders of Canaan, and is remarkable for the inconveniences of its situation, Moses addressed himself to the people in these words: "It pleased the Almighty to promise us two signal blessings; liberty, and the possession of a fruitful land. The first of these his bounty hath already bestowed on us, and you will, ere long, be established in the

enjoyment of the other. We are now upon the borders of Canaan, and it will be in vain for the princes of the country, even with their united force, to oppose our progress. Yet must we not expect to effect a conquest over this country without great difficulty and danger. Let us, therefore, send proper persons secretly to examine into the state of the country, and of its inhabitants: but, principally, let us act in concert, and let us ascribe the glory of all our actions to God alone, who will be constantly present amongst us, and in all our battles will be our guard and defender."

This proposal was highly approved by the people, who, at the advice of Moses, immediately made choice of twelve of the most eminent persons for courage and prudence, one out of each tribe, to be dispatched before, in quest of intelligence. They travelled through the whole country from Egypt and the parts adjacent, as far as the city of Amathe, and to mount Libanus. Having made strict observations on the nature of the soil, the condition of the country, and the manners of the natives, they returned; having completed the undertaking in forty days. The account they gave of the extraordinary fecundity of the land, together with the sight of the fruits which they had brought with them, in confirmation of their assertions, inspired the people with the most eager desire of rendering themselves masters of so desirable a country.

But when the spies had represented to them the difficulties and dangers of the enterprise, the rapid and impassable rivers, the inaccessible mountains, the numerous strong holds, and impregnable cities; and a gigantic race of men, dwelling in Hebron, of such enormous stature and strength, that, from the time of their leaving Egypt to that day, they had never seen any thing similar; all these considerations, I say, which had already filled their minds with fears and apprehensions, through their insinuations, produced the same effect upon the multitude. These suggestions discouraged the people to such a degree, that they quitted the assembly in the utmost confusion, and gave themselves up, during the whole night, to despondency and lamentations; loudly venting their complaints against the Almighty and against Moses. "God," said they, "gives us the most flattering promises, but he performs nothing which he has promised." They next directed their resentment against Moses and Aaron; and having thus spent the night in imprecations on their leader and blasphemy against God, they early in the morning entered into a combination to put

Spies sent to Canaan.

The people dismayed at the report of the spies.

* Though the people expressed only a muttering which did not reach the ears of Moses, yet the Lord, "who is about our habitations, and about our beds, who understandeth all our thoughts afar off," took notice of their discontent; and when he had heard it, then consumed them by fire: whether it was only a "great fire, as the mountains of the Lord signifies great mountains," or it was

lightning, which is termed "the fire of God," 2 Kings, i. 12. Job i. 16. or a "blasting wind," common in these countries, we shall not determine. Yet it must be observed, that it spread throughout the camp, as the word translated the uttermost parts generally signifies.

Moses and Aaron to death without delay, and to return to Egypt*.

Caleb and Joshua interpose their good offices to appease the mutinous people.
In the midst of this dangerous tumult, Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, and Caleb, of the tribe of Judah (who dissented in opinion from their associates in the late expedition to the land of Canaan) fearing the consequences which might attend the tumult, addressed the people to this effect: "Can you possibly, entertain the least doubt of the veracity and goodness of the Almighty, yet, at the same time, give ear to idle stories concerning the land of Canaan, which are calculated and propagated merely to impose on your credulity? Ought you not rather to confide in those, who have exerted themselves to the utmost to establish you in the possession of these blessings? The height of mountains, and the depth of rivers, are feeble obstacles to check the progress of men of unshaken resolution, engaged in a glorious cause; especially when God himself has promised to be their protector and defender. Let us advance, therefore, to the attack, without hesitation, nor harbour the least doubt of success. You have only to follow us where we shall lead you, and trust to the power of the Almighty for the event." This was the method they took to allay the fury of the people: but Moses and Aaron prostrated themselves before the Lord, and besought him, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of those who were committed to their guidance and care, to calm the troubled minds of the multitude, and to deliver them from the effects of their impotent rage. Their supplications were attended with success; and the cloud appeared as usual, over the tabernacle, denoting the presence of the Deity.

* The unwillingness of the Israelites to leave Egypt, and their impatience to return thither, are convincing proofs of an overfondness for its customs and superstitions. When we consider this, we seem more inclined than the generality of critics, to excuse the false accounts of the pagan writers concerning the *Exodus*, or departure

A severe threatening denounced.
A confidence in the above vision induced Moses to inform the populace that God would subject them to a heavy judgment; saying, that it was not intended as a punishment adequate to their guilt, but as a salutary correction of a father to his refractory offspring. "Upon my entering the tabernacle of the Lord," said he, "to avert the vengeance of heaven by tears and supplications, and to implore that, in his infinite mercy, God would not extirpate you from the earth, the Almighty condescended to represent, that you had betrayed shocking instances of ingratitude for the blessings he had bestowed, in rejecting the confidence due to the promises he had made, and depending on the falsities and misrepresentations which had been propagated by the spies. Be assured that God will not utterly destroy his chosen people; but the land of Canaan you must not expect to obtain; for you are irrevocably doomed, for the term of forty years, to wander in the wilderness. This sentence, however, is not meant to extend to your children, to whom God, in his own good time, will bestow the sovereignty of that very fertile country, which the obstinate infidelity of their progenitors has rendered them unworthy to possess."

The people now in amazement and terror applied to Moses, imploring him to intercede with God in their favour, and obtain a remission of the punishment denounced against them for their iniquities, and a deliverance from the wilderness. He gave them to understand, that the proceedings of the Almighty being founded in wisdom and equity, it was folly to imagine that the punishments he was pleased to denounce against mankind might be averted by their importunate and unjustifiable solicitations.

sure of the Israelites, who concur to represent the Jews as expelled or forcibly driven out of Egypt; for so indeed they were. Their mistake was only about their driver. The pagans supposed him to be the king of Egypt; when indeed it was the God of Israel himself, by the ministry of Moses.

B O O K I V.

Containing TRANSACTIONS from the YEAR of the WORLD 2454, to 2495.

C H A P. I.

The HEBREWS, contrary to the Advice of MOSES, attack the CANAANITES, and are defeated.

AMONG all the troubles and mortifications which the Hebrews experienced in the wilderness, nothing affected them more sensibly than the restriction by which God had forbidden them to attempt the conquest of the land of Canaan. This

measure, however, they were determined, at all events, to carry into execution; and as Moses from time to time earnestly dissuaded them from it, they acquainted him, in plain terms, that they would no longer submit to be directed by him, but would follow the dictates of their own judgment; adding, that they were convinced he had no other motive in withholding his consent, than to make himself necessary to them,

them, by detaining them as long as possible in their present distressed situation. Under this notion, they rashly entered upon the war, in a full persuasion that God would afford them his assistance; not so much from any peculiar regard for Moses, as from the fatherly affection which he had constantly expressed for their nation. They doubted not, if they conducted themselves courageously, that he who had formerly conferred on them the blessings of liberty, would now grant them victory: and even admitting that Moses should exert all his endeavours to render the Almighty unfavourable to their cause, they imagined they should still be an over-match for the Canaanites. "Where is the difference," said they, "whether we are subjected to the tyranny of Pharaoh or Moses? We change our master, it is true, but our condition must still continue the same, as long as we submit to be deluded by the artifices of this vain, ambitious man. Unwilling to be longer deluded with the idle pretence of seeking God, or to yield to the arrogance and insolence of an individual, we have no means left to extricate ourselves from the inconveniencies of our present situation, and to avert those with which we are threatened, than depending on the guidance of the Almighty, to march immediately against the Canaanites, without waiting any longer for the concurrence of our legislator."

Such were the sentiments of the people in general; and, under the influence of this impetuosity, they marched with the utmost resolution and confidence to the attack. But the Canaanites, though inferior in force to the Hebrews, received their shock with firmness, and put the assailants to the rout, killing a considerable number of them on the spot, and pursuing the rest even to their camp. The Hebrews were totally dispirited by this defeat, which they apprehended might prove still more fatal to them in its consequences; and they were so conscious of the imprudence of having joined in battle with the enemy before they had received God's direction on the subject, that they readily imputed this shameful repulse to their rashness and disobedience*.

The Canaanites were so elated with this success, that Moses, fearing lest they should attempt to push their advantage further, considered it as the most advisable step he could take, in the present dilemma, to withdraw again into the wilderness. Having proposed this measure to the people, who were now convinced of their absolute dependence on him, they willingly assented thereto, with a full determination to attempt nothing further against the Canaanites, till they should be duly authorised by the commands of the Almighty.

C H A P. II.

CORAH and his Associates raise a Faction against MOSES and AARON, relative to the Appointment of the latter to the Office of High-Priest.

* Fear always accompanies guilt.—They had no courage to renew the attack, but gave themselves up to dependancy, and to the

CORAH, a man of considerable reputation among the Hebrews, both on account of his rank and wealth, and thoroughly versed in the arts of acquiring popularity, entertained a strong jealousy of the extensive power which Moses had obtained over the people. This man, being of the same tribe and family with Moses, and his possessions being more ample than those of the other, loudly exclaimed against the injustice which had been done to himself by the advancement of Moses to the supreme authority; and his complaints made a strong impression on the Levites and those of his own family.

Although Corah's pretext implied a regard for the public welfare, yet the real design he had in view was, to dispossess Aaron of his dignity, and to establish himself in his room. The plausibility of these suggestions won so much on the minds of the people, that no less than two hundred and fifty of the chief men among them united in a plot, to deprive Aaron of the high-priesthood, and to bestow it on Corah.

The people were now thrown into a great ferment, and ran in the most tumultuous manner to the tabernacle, crying out, "Stone him! stone him!" (meaning Moses.) "Take away this tyrant, and relieve us from the insupportable burdens with which he has loaded us."

Moses was well informed of the proceedings of Corah, and of the effects which they had produced on the multitude. But, depending on his integrity, and conscious that the advancement of his brother to the priesthood had been ordained expressly by God himself, and had not been effected through any sinister views of his own, he made no scruple, being skilled in the arts of ingratiating himself with the people, to appear before the whole multitude assembled: and he addressed himself to Corah in these words:

"I consider you, Corah, and the several persons who have espoused your cause, as those who deserve an honourable distinction: but still some consideration is due to the rest of the people, notwithstanding their inferiority in wealth and other qualities. Had I acted from a self-interested motive, I should have taken possession of the place myself: but I was guided by principles of honour and justice. The Almighty himself appointed Aaron to the priesthood, and that act of the Divinity discharges me of every criminal imputation. Supposing Aaron to be invested with the sacred function in conformity to the divine pleasure, excluding the idea of my partial interference in the cause, he shall still depend upon a repetition of your suffrages, without availing himself of any advantage on the score of his former election.

"Your presumption, Corah, in contending against the liberty of the Almighty to select a priest to serve at his altar, is an instance of impiety which must be looked upon with astonishment and horror. But another day will put a period to this controversy. Let the candidates for this holy office assemble to-mor-

row

row in the morning, with fire and incense in their censers. And, Corah, I enjoin you in particular, to curb your ambitious views, and not to attempt exalting your own power and authority above that of the Deity. In the discharge of his sacred office, the conduct of Aaron having been unexceptionable, to his presence on this occasion no reasonable objection can be formed. Being assembled, let the candidates offer up incense in the presence of the multitude, and the sacrifice proving most acceptable to the Lord shall distinguish the man to be constituted high-priest; and the possession of the sacred office shall be ratified and confirmed to him, by the authority with which I am invested. Thus will all contentions subside, and I shall be no longer subject to the accusation of shewing partiality to my brother Aaron."

The multitude were appeased by the above address, which removed the unfavourable impressions they had entertained against Moses, whom they acknowledged to be a man of sagacity and virtue: and the council was now dissolved.

C H A P. III.

The Judgment of God upon CORAH, DATHAN, and ABIKAM. The Priesthood given to AARON and his Posterity.

THE people attended the sacrifice on the following morning, and were divided in the interests of the contending parties, some being desirous of exposing Moses, as a man acting on partial and interested motives, and the more moderate endeavouring to preserve tranquillity, from a consideration that government and the public welfare would be greatly endangered if the commonalty were suffered to obtain the ascendancy.

Dathan and Abiram were summoned to attend in support of their pretensions: but upon the return of the messengers, Moses was informed, that they positively determined not to abide by the proposed decision, on the plea that by means of sinister and indirect practices he had obtained an unwarrantable power: and that they had resolved no longer to submit to the authority he had usurped*. Moses now called to certain elders, and commanding them to follow him, repaired towards the spot where the malcontents had assembled. Upon receiving intelligence of his approach, Dathan and his adherents, with their women and children quitted their tents, and attended by the guards, to resist any attack which might be made, waited the event of this unexpected proceeding. Moses deliberately approached Dathan, and then with up-lifted hands thus appealed to, heaven in a

voice sufficiently audible to be understood by the surrounding multitude.

"Do thou, O Lord, who didst condescend to appear from the fire upon Mount Sinai, permitting thy servant to hear thy voice, and making him a witness to thy wonderful prodigies; thou who didst confer on him the honour of an embassy into Egypt, lowering the arrogance and pride of the people of that country, and redeeming the Hebrews from their oppression; thou who reduced the powerful Pharaoh and humbled him at my feet; who formed a dry passage through the sea, and changed that passage into sea again, for the preservation of thy people and the destruction of the Egyptians; provided us with arms when in a defenceless state; gave sweetness to corrupt waters, and commanded streams to burst from the rocks when we were in danger of perishing from extreme thirst; afforded us food from the sea, and supplied us with nourishment from heaven; thou by whose direction our laws were framed and our government established; who art the righteous judge and infallible witness of all things in the creation; do thou espouse my cause, and bear testimony, that in the appeals submitted to my decision I have distributed justice equally, and never shewn partiality towards the rich man, or been corrupted to oppress the poor. Vindicate, O Lord, thy power and glory to future ages, by an exemplary punishment upon these blasphemous detractors. Let them not meet the fate of common men, but as an example, teaching generations yet unborn, to hold thy divinity and power in due reverence, and as they are unworthy to inhabit the earth, let that earth swallow them with their families and all their dearest possessions. If I am guilty of the crimes imputed to me, may the lot of my accusers be happiness and freedom, and may the imprecations I invoke upon them be directed to fall a just punishment upon myself. But when thou, O God, shalt direct thy vengeance against the oppressors of thy people, distinguish, I beseech thee, the guilty from the unoffending; involve not such as have lived in a due reverence of thy honour and glory in a common fate with those who have dared to violate thy divine commands."

Having delivered this appeal, which was frequently interrupted by tears, the earth became violently agitated, resembling the billows of an enraged sea; a general consternation prevailed among the people, who confusedly traversed the camp with expressions of the utmost terror and amazement. At length, the ground on which they stood opened, with a horrible sound, and swallowed up the whole faction, together with their families, their tents, and all their possessions: the fissure closing again immediately, with such exact-

Their dreadful punishment.

* In the most reproachful manner they sent him word, that they hoped shortly to see the management of the nation in better hands than those that had led them from a plentiful settlement, with promises of a fruitful country of their own, and at last left them to wander in a starving wilderness, with nothing but a pretence that

their children are to enjoy it forty years hence, when they are all dead; and as if it were not enough to lose their country, they had lost their liberties too, by submitting to a man who imposed what laws he pleased upon them; and, to advance himself, had given them nothing but one slavery in exchange for another.

ness,

ness, that not the least mark of it could possibly be perceived.

Such was the miserable end of this desperate faction; and in this manner did God at once vindicate both his justice and his power. Nor was the fate of these persons in the least commiserated by their friends or relations; nay, the whole multitude, on the contrary, expressed the greatest satisfaction on the occasion, considering them in no other light than as the pest of their nation, and as men who were undeserving even of human compassion. Moses afterwards assembled all those who had offered themselves as candidates for the high-priesthood; again referring the choice to God himself, that he, among those who pretended to that dignity, might be elected, whose oblation should be found to be most acceptable in the sight of the Almighty. The number of those persons was two hundred and fifty; all men of great reputation with the people; both on account of their high rank, and of their personal qualifications; and with them came Aaron and Corah. The whole company placed themselves before the tabernacle, and began to offer up the incense they had brought with them. At this instant a fire suddenly appeared, to which that of volcanos, or of whole forests involved in flame, bore no kind of proportion; and its brightness and intensity plainly demonstrated that it came from heaven alone. This fire so effectually consumed the bodies of Corah and his associates, that not the smallest remains whatever of their carcases could be found; yet, as a convincing proof that this was effected by a supernatural agency, Aaron received no kind of injury from it. In order to perpetuate the memory of this tremendous judgment, Moses ordered Eleazar, the son of Aaron, to affix the censers* of Corah and the rest to a brazen altar, which was erected for that purpose. It was now incontrovertibly proved that Aaron had not been advanced to the pontificate by any unfair means, but by the appointment of God himself; in virtue of which evidence he continued to hold it for the remainder of his life.

CHAP. IV.

Regulations respecting the PRIESTS, and other Incidents, during 38 Years.

A fresh mutiny against Moses.

THE seditious disposition of the people still prevailed, notwithstanding the late calamities of which it had been

productive; and another tumult arose, which was more fatal, if possible, in its effects than the former; as the causes which gave birth to it were of a nature not easily to be removed. The Hebrews had conceived a notion that the punishments which God was pleased from time to time to inflict upon them, were the result of the applications of Moses to the Almighty for that purpose. The relations of the deceased embraced this opportunity of incensing the multitude against Moses, by representing to them the necessity of giving a timely check to his arrogance and lust of power, which, they observed, might be very easily effected.

Moses foresaw the approaching storm, and with great prudence, in order to avert the danger which was greatly to be apprehended from the present tumultuous conduct and disposition of the people, convened an assembly, in which he patiently listened to their complaints; and that he might not increase the popular ferment, ordered the heads of the respective tribes, each man to bring his rod, with the name of his tribe inscribed thereon; and that the staff should be conferred on him whose rod should bear upon it any peculiar mark of the favour of God towards him. This proposal was agreed to, and Aaron brought his rod with the rest, on which he had inscribed the title of the tribe of Levi. Moses placed them in the tabernacle for the present, and, on the following day re-produced them to their respective owners in the presence of all the people. All the rods were found to be in the same state in which they were left the day before, save that of Aaron, which appeared not only covered with branches and buds, but, to increase the wonder, bearing a ripe almond also; the rod having been taken from a tree of that species. This extraordinary spectacle threw the people into the greatest consternation imaginable; and, although they could not divest themselves entirely of their resentment against Moses and Aaron, the rancour of their enmity having in a great measure subsided, they acquiesced in the determination of the Almighty, with respect to the election of Aaron, who was thus a third time confirmed by God himself in the possession of the office of high-priest, in which he continued, without any further interruption, to the time of his death. This incident happily concluded those commotions in which the Hebrews had been unfortunately engaged, at different periods, for a course of time.

Moses exempted the Levites†, who, ^{Separation of the Levites.} were dedicated to the immediate service of God, from all military duty and charges; and, that

* As the censers had been employed to a sacred use, which made it unlawful to adapt them to common uses, therefore God commanded they should be beaten into broad plates, and laid over the great brazen altar, i. e. the altar of burnt-offering, not the altar of incense, for that was overlaid with pure gold, Ex. xxxvii. 26. and these censers were of brass, ver. 39. Besides, the altar of incense was in the holy place, out of the view of the people; and consequently plates there placed would not serve as a sign to them. The

censers were to serve for a memorial, to perpetuate the memory of this rebellion, to warn posterity from doing the like, and to teach them by this sad example to pay a due regard to those whom God has chosen to minister in holy things, lest they be overtaken with the same signal perdition.

† God having, by the foregoing miracles, vindicated the honour and authority of the priesthood, he now lets Aaron know (probably by the hand of Moses) the importance of his office, wherein he

that they might not be prevented from attending properly to the duties of their function by the care of providing a maintenance for themselves, he directed that, as soon as the Hebrews should, with the assistance of the Almighty, have acquired possession of the land of Canaan, the revenues of forty-eight of the most flourishing cities throughout the country, together with the land round each, to the extent of two thousand cubits, should be appropriated to the use of the priests and Levites; granting them, besides, a tenth part of the annual produce of the earth, which duty was to be paid by all the possessors of land in general; and this ordinance is to be observed, with the strictest punctuality, even to the present time. Having spoken sufficiently respecting the revenues of this tribe, I shall now advert to those particulars which relate to the priests alone.

Revenue of the priests. Of the forty-eight cities above-mentioned, Moses ordered that thirteen should be assigned to the maintenance of the priests, and the tenth part of the amount of the tythes, and the first-fruits of all the productions of the earth, as oblations to God. The firstling of every four-footed animal offered in sacrifice, if a male, was delivered to the priests to offer up, and afterwards to be eaten by the owners and their families in the city; save only such as, by our laws, are prohibited to be eaten, in which case the owner shall present a shekel and a half to the priest, in lieu of the animal, and the first-born of a man is to be redeemed with the sum of five shekels: a duty is paid also upon wool and corn, as in the case of those who bake bread, who are obliged to deliver a cake to the priest.

Vow of the Nazarenes. With respect to the Nazarenes, who oblige themselves by a solemn vow to suffer their hair to grow for a certain time, and during that period to abstain from wine; when they repair to the temple, to consecrate their hair, the time expressed in their vow being expired, whatever sacrifices they offer, fall to the share of the priests: and the same rule is observed with regard to the sect, who stile themselves Corban, which signifies, *a gift*. These persons, at the time they appear before the priests, and request to be released from their vow and engagements, are obligated to pay a certain sum, which is fixed at fifty shekels for a man, and thirty for a woman; and those who are unable to pay this tax, are obliged to submit themselves to the direction of the priest.

The breast and the right shoulder of every beast killed for private use belongs also to the priest. Such was the provision which Moses made for the maintenance of the priests, exclusive of the sin-offerings, of which we have already spoken in the foregoing book. The wives, children, and servants of the priests were also allowed to partake of all oblations, save in the

was to behave with great care and circumspection; and withal he again declares what was the duty of the Levites, as distinct from that of the priests. And from thence he proceeds to tell them what maintenance he had settled upon both, for their encouragement in doing their duty.

case of sin-offerings, which were to be eaten only by the priests officiating at the time, and that on the same day, and without quitting the temple.

These regulations being made, and the public tranquillity being now fully restored, Moses marched his troops to the frontiers of Idumæa, previously dispatching his ambassadors to the king of that country, to request a free passage for the Hebrews through his territories; engaging that his troops should be guilty of no irregularity on their march, and should pay for whatever necessaries they might stand in need of. The king, however, refused to grant his request, and, raising a numerous army, prepared to oppose him, in case he should attempt to force a passage. Moses, on this occasion, applied to God for his direction how to act, and received for answer, that he must carefully avoid being the aggressor: whereupon he determined to pursue his route by the way of the wilderness.

At this period, Mariam*, the sister of Moses, died, in the commencement of the month Xanticus, forty years having now expired from the time of evacuating Egypt. She was publicly interred, with great magnificence, upon the mountain called Sin; and after thirty days, which was the time appointed for mourning, Moses performed the ceremony of purification upon the people. A red heifer, which had not been subjected to the yoke, was brought by the priest to a clean spot at a small distance from the camp, and there slaughtered; after which, dipping his fingers in the blood, he seven times sprinkled it upon the tabernacle of the Lord; and the whole carcase was then put upon the fire, with a small branch of cedar, some hyssop, and scarlet wool. The whole being consumed, the ashes were gathered, and conveyed to the cleanest adjacent part, by a goat of unblemished chastity. Such as required to be purified in consequence of having rendered themselves unclean, either by touching a corpse, or attending the ceremony of interment, was to cast a part of these ashes into a fountain, and on the third and seventh day with a bunch of hyssop to sprinkle himself with the water. This ceremony of purification Moses enjoined to be practised when the Hebrews should possess the land promised them by the Almighty.

The purification for the death of Mariam being performed, Moses marched his army to Arabia, directing his road through the desert; and upon his arrival at the principal city, which was called Arce, but now bears the name of Petra, Aaron ascended an high mountain, and it having been predicted to him that the period of his life was near approaching, he disrobed himself of the pontifical stole, and resigned it to his son Elea-

The Idumeans refuse to grant a passage.

Death of Mariam, sister of Moses.

Death of Aaron.

* Mariam, the sister of Moses, is supposed to have governed the Hebrew women, as Moses did the men. She died a virgin; and Eusebius says, that in his time her tomb was discovered at Kadesch, near the capital of Arabia.

zar, as the rightful successor to the dignity. In the first moon of the month called by the Athenians Hecatombeon, by the Romans Augustus, and by the Hebrews Sabba; he died upon this mountain in the presence of the whole army, being in the hundred and twenty-third year of his age*. Thus in the same year Moses lost his brother and sister.

CHAP. V.

MOSES subdues SEHON and OG, and divides their Kingdoms by Lot.

THE time allotted for the mourning for Aaron being expired, Moses advanced with his troops to the banks of the Arnon, which takes its rise among the mountains of Arabia, and, traversing the whole desert, finally discharges itself into the lake Asphaltitis. The king of the Amorites was named Sehon, to whom Moses sent a very respectful message, desiring permission to march through his country, and giving him the strongest assurances that his subjects should not sustain the least damage whatever. Sehon would not grant him a passage; but possessed himself of all the fords, to prevent his crossing the river.

This refusal, and the consequent conduct of the Amorites, incensed Moses to a high degree, and he determined to disappoint their meditated attack upon him, by carrying the war into their own country; being apprehensive lest the Hebrews, through inaction and the want of provisions, should again fall into their former irregularities. But, to avoid the imputation of rashness, he first applied himself to God, to know whether he might attempt to force a passage with the sword; and the Almighty not only granted him permission, but promised also victory in the contest. Thus encouraged, Moses led his troops to the attack, having previously inspired them with the fullest confidence of success, by communicating to them the declaration of the supreme Being in their favour. Immediately upon the first onset, Sehon and his army fled with the utmost precipitation, being seized with a terror which rendered them incapable of opposing the Hebrews. They flattered themselves that they should secure a retreat in some of their fortified cities: but the Israelites, who were lightly armed and very swift of foot, pursued them so closely, that their flight availed them little; Sehon and great numbers of his followers being slain on the banks of the river, where they halted to quench their thirst. The victory, in short, was complete,

* Aaron was buried in the same place where he died. He ascended this mountain to prepare for his dissolution; and conferred his sacerdotal office, according to the divine direction, on Eleazar his son.

† This Og was of the remnant of the giants of Rephaim, who were a mighty people in the country of Bashan, or Batanea. It would seem that this people too, as well as the Amorites, were the

and the Hebrews obtained a prodigious booty on the occasion; the most valuable part of which was a plenteous crop of corn, still unreaped, of which they had long been in great want. The whole country, in fact, was now become their own, through which they ranged without controul; very few of the inhabitants having survived the late defeat.

The Amorites manifested on this occasion an equal deficiency of conduct and of courage; having neither prudence to avert the danger, nor firmness to sustain it. The spot which the Hebrews had now acquired the possession of formed a kind of peninsula, being situated between three rivers, viz. the Arnon on the south; the Jaboc, which empties itself into the river Jordan, on the north; and the river Jordan on the west.

But the Israelites had still another formidable enemy to encounter, in the person of Og*, the king of Galadene and of Gaulonitis, who was hastening to the assistance of Sehon, his friend and ally, at the head of a numerous and powerful army. He received intelligence on his way of the defeat of Sehon; but this did not in the least discourage him from pursuing his design; and he continued his march, with a firm resolution to risk the event of a battle with the Hebrews. This temerity, however, cost him dear; himself and his whole army being utterly destroyed. Moses, in consequence of this second victory, crossed the river Jaboc, penetrated into the territories of Og, razing the cities, and putting the inhabitants to the sword.

CHAP. VI.

MOSES invades the Country of the MIDIANITES. Transactions between BALAAM and BALAK. PHINEHAS, from Motives of Zeal, puts ZIMRI and COSBI to Death.

THE Hebrews soon afterwards removed their camp to an extensive plain, in the neighbourhood of Jericho; a city famous for its opulence, and abounding in palm-trees and balsam. These people were so elevated with their late successes, that they eagerly wished for further opportunities of signalizing their valour; and Moses deemed it highly impolitic to suffer this martial disposition to be depressed through the want of exercise. He, therefore, after having spent some time in offering sacrifices to God, and in rejoicings and entertainments, detached a body of his troops to ravage and destroy

aggressors of the Israelites, and so brought their overthrow upon themselves; unless we will say that the Israelites attempting to march their army through Bashan without asking the king's permission, was equivalent to declaring war upon the Bashanites; for we don't find that they asked leave to pass through their territories, as they did with respect to Edom and Sihon.

the country of the Midianites. The motives which induced him to commence this war were these :

The growing power of the Israelies had of late given great umbrage to Balak, king of Moab, and an ally of the Midianites; insomuch that he began to be apprehensive for the safety of himself and his dominions: for he was ignorant that God had restricted the Hebrews from attempting the conquest of any other country than that of Canaan. He durst not openly attack a people whom repeated victories had rendered so confident of success; but being desirous to give some check to their further progress, he sent ambassadors to the Midianites, to consult with them on the steps necessary to be taken, for the common safety of both nations.

Balak requests
Balaam to
curse the He-
brews.

With these embassadors the Midianites joined some of the principal men of their own nation, and sent them to Balaam, who resided beyond the Euphrates, and had acquired a great reputation by his predictions, requesting him to return with those persons, that he might denounce the vengeance of Heaven upon the Hebrews. He received them with great respect, and after supper was ended, addressed himself in prayer to God, for his direction how to act. The Almighty was pleased to order him not to comply with the request which had been made to him; and he thereupon went back to his guests, and acquainted them, that he would gladly have gratified their desire, but that God, to whom he was indebted for all his reputation as a prophet, had refused him his permission; adding, that the people whom they wished him to curse, were the peculiar favourites of heaven; and that he, therefore, would rather advise them to secure their friendship upon any condition whatever.

The embassadors now returned home; but were sent back again on the same business by the Midianites, at the earnest intreaty of Balak, who was greatly chagrined at the bad success of their first journey. Balaam, being desirous of obliging them, again had recourse to the Lord to know his pleasure, who being incensed at this second application to him on the subject, abruptly answered, that he might return with the embassadors, agreeable to their request; which he accordingly did, without noticing the extraordinary mode in which this permission was granted. In passing through a narrow part of the road which lay between two walls, and would not admit of the passage of two persons at a time, he was encountered by an angel of the Lord. The ass on which Balaam rode, stopped short at the appearance of this vision; and upon his endeavouring to make her pro-

He is resisted
by his beast,
and reproved
by an angel.

* The angel of the Lord so moved her tongue, as to make her utter human accents. Maimonides takes all this that happened to Balaam for a prophetic vision, not being able, it seems, to reconcile the literal sense to reason. But there is no occasion for having recourse to that hypothesis; neither is there any thing absurd or incredible in understanding it literally; for if the Heathens believed their deities powerful enough to give speech to brute animals, as appears from the story of Achilles's horse in Homer, and of Phryxus's ram in Apollonius: how much more may Jews or Christians believe

ceed, she crushed his foot against the wall; the angel still remaining on the same spot, and the prophet continuing to correct the animal as before. But God being pleased to endue the creature with the power of speech, she reproached her master with the injustice and cruelty of his conduct, and explained to him the cause of her not going forward, pleading also, that she never till now had once given him the least offence. Balaam was equally amazed and alarmed at this circumstance, of the ass speaking with a human voice*; and the angel, now discovering himself, reproached him in very severe terms; telling him, that the beast was not in the least to blame on the occasion, but that he himself had incurred just censure, by presuming to enter upon a journey in direct contradiction to the express will of the Almighty. Balaam was very desirous to return immediately, but the Lord commanded him to proceed on his way, strictly enjoining him, however, to utter nothing but what he himself should suggest to him. The above condition being admitted, Balaam repaired to the king, who received him in a gracious and condescending manner, and he requested that he might be conducted to some adjacent eminence, commanding a view of the Hebrew army. Balak, attended by his courtiers and other persons composing the train of royalty, accompanied him to the top of a mountain about sixty furlongs from the camp. After mature deliberation, turning his face towards the spot on which the Hebrews were encamped, he delivered his predictions in these words:

"Happy people! God will bestow on you the blessings of this world in the utmost abundance; you shall be constantly directed and supported by the divine Providence, and shall render yourselves famous throughout the world for your virtues: the reputation of your offspring shall surpass even that of your progenitors; for the Almighty will make you his peculiar care, and will grant you a degree of happiness far superior to that of the other nations of the earth. You shall obtain possession of the promised land, which yourselves and your issue shall enjoy to the latest period of time. The whole universe shall be filled with your fame, and your offspring shall increase so abundantly, that they shall be found in every part of the earth. Blessed and wondrous nation! who, numerous as ye are, derive your origin from one common ancestor.

"You must, for a time, be satisfied with the possession of the land of Canaan, though a spot too confined, both for your numbers and your fame; but know, that the period approaches, when you shall have no other limits than those of the world. Your

the same to have been effected upon an extraordinary occasion, by the special interposition of the Almighty or one of his angels.

This miracle of making the ass speak to Balaam, served to convince him demonstrably how vain it would be for him to endeavour to speak otherwise than God should order him; since the same power that here caused even a dumb animal to move its tongue very differently from what it was naturally capable of, would certainly over-rule even his tongue, and make him say just what, and no more than what was dictated to him.

issue

issue shall be numerous as the stars of heaven: yet shall no want of any of the conveniencies or comforts of life be found among that infinite multitude: but the Almighty shall confer on you the blessings of plenty, peace, valour and victory; and the children of your foes shall be your subjects and servants. May our enemies therefore, be yours also; since, by rising in opposition against you, they will expose themselves to inevitable destruction. It is to God, in short, that you are indebted for all these favours; to that God who alone can exalt the oppressed, and humble the haughty, as in his wisdom and justice he sees fit."

Throughout the whole of this speech, it was apparent that the prophet was actuated by a supernatural and divine impulse. But Balak vehemently complained that he had falsified his promise, and, after having received many valuable presents to denounce a curse upon the Israelites, he loaded them with blessings. To these reproaches Balaam replied in the following terms:

"Can you imagine, O king, that a prophet, when delivering his predictions, is permitted to utter and omit what he thinks proper? In this case, he is merely the instrument of the Deity, who suggests to him every word he speaks, and he is himself totally unconscious of all he says.

"When the Spirit of God takes possession of our breasts, we no longer retain a command over ourselves. It was far from my intention to utter a single word in praise of the Israelites, or concerning the happiness and glory which the Almighty designs to bestow upon them: but I found myself compelled to declare what the Almighty has decreed in their favour. However, in order, if possible, to fulfil the wishes of yourself and the Midianites, let other altars be erected, and fresh sacrifices be offered up, and I will again make trial whether God will permit me to curse this people." This proposal was immediately complied with; but God still refused to hearken to the solicitations of the prophet, who, falling on his face, predicted the unhappy fate of various princes and states, who should unfortunately oppose that chosen people; several of the particulars of which have been so circumstantially verified, that there is every reason to expect that the rest will be accomplished in due season.

This disappointment incensed Balak to such a degree, that he dismissed the prophet with evident marks of displeasure, who immediately departed homewards: but when he arrived on the banks of the Euphrates, he bethought himself of an expedient to ingratiate himself with Balak, and the princes of Midian, and being again introduced to them, addressed them in these words:

"In order to convince you how sincerely I am disposed to gratify your wishes, though in some degree, at the hazard of God's displeasure; I have de-

vised a scheme which, possibly, may produce some effect in your favour.

"If you can derive any satisfaction from the acquisition of a slight and short-lived advantage over them, adopt the advice which I shall now give you. Select a number of the most beautiful virgins of your country; and having set off their natural charms with the ornaments of art, let them be sent into your enemy's camp, being previously instructed in what manner to demean themselves. If the young men among the Hebrews should appear to be captivated with their beauty, and should express their passion with any degree of warmth, either in their words or actions, let them peremptorily declare their intention to return home directly, unless their suitors will consent to abandon the religion and laws of their country; substituting in the place thereof those of the Midianites and Moabites; and, should they comply therewith, they will draw upon themselves the resentment of the Almighty." Having concluded his speech, he retired.

This advice was immediately carried into execution; and the Hebrews were effectually ensnared by the charms of the persons, and conversation of these maidens, and urged their suit with the utmost fervency of passion. The women conducted themselves in such a manner as to raise the desires of their lovers to the highest pitch; and, perceiving that they had fully succeeded in this part of their design, they instantly feigned a resolution of returning home without delay; but consented to remain where they were for a short time, at the earnest request of the men, who, to induce them thereto, eagerly pressed upon them the acceptance of their affections, their lives, and their fortunes. The virgins now perceived that their lovers were ready to submit to any terms they should prescribe, and one speaking in the name of the rest, addressed them in these words:

"It was not from any motives of disgust towards our parents and friends, nor with the view of making sale of our persons, that we have quitted our dwellings, most illustrious youths, to repair to your camp; but solely with the design, as you are intire strangers in this country, to render you any service which may lay in our power. You profess an ardent affection for us, and an earnest desire to retain us with you. Could we be convinced of the sincerity of your professions, we should not hesitate to comply with your wishes, provided you will make us your wives, for on no other terms will we consent to continue with you; nor will you, we trust, think us over solicitous in a matter of such delicacy."

The Israelites were so intent on the gratification of their appetites, that they implicitly yielded to whatever the virgins were pleased to require of them; and did not even scruple to abandon the ancient

§ These women exposed themselves to the lust of the Israelites, and enticed them to idolatry, by the counsel of Balaam, who having learned that the prosperity of Israel depended upon their observance

of the divine laws, and that there was no way to bring a curse upon them but by seducing them from their duty, bethought him of this low stratagem to accomplish his wicked purpose.

religion and laws of their forefathers; joining with these women, who were now become their wives, in the notion and worship of a plurality of gods, in the indiscriminate use of all kinds of meats*, and, blinded by the vehemency of their passion, gave themselves up to the practice of every species of irregularity.

The whole camp, by imperceptible degrees, became infected with the conduct of these men; few instances remaining of that veneration of the Deity, by which the practice of former times was distinguished; for the licentiousness to which the introduction of these new customs and manners had given birth, so universally pervaded all ranks of people, that it soon became utterly impracticable to check the progress of this dangerous evil.

One of the chiefs of the tribe of Simeon, who was named Zimri, had espoused Cosbi, the daughter of Zur, a Midianite of the first rank and quality. This man, at the instigation of his wife, openly avowed his marriage, and his consequent change of religion. Moses, fearful of the consequences of this disorderly conduct of the people, convened a general assembly, and, in a discourse which he had framed for the purpose, represented to them the indignity which the memory of their ancestors sustained from their present conduct, in thus preferring the indulgence of their inordinate lust and appetites, to that veneration which they owed to their Creator. He farther observed to them, how inconsistent it was for men who had demeaned themselves soberly and virtuously in the wilderness, to be guilty of such unpardonable excesses in a land of plenty, and to squander in their prosperity what they had acquired, not without considerable danger and difficulty, in the time of their adverse fortune. By these means he hoped either to shame, or to argue them into a change of conduct; carefully avoiding to give the least umbrage, by addressing his discourse to any one in particular, it being his intention to reclaim those who were culpable, and not to expose them by a public censure. When Moses had finished, Zimri rose from his seat, and replied to him in a speech expressed in terms of the most insolent nature, in which he openly avowed and justified his conduct, and also delivered the sentiments of the whole party.

The people waited in anxious expectation of the event of so audacious an insult; being greatly apprehensive that it would be productive of mischievous effects. But Moses, being fearful lest the multitude should rise in arms if he should attempt to resent the gross affront which had been offered him, instantly dismissed the assembly, without making the least reply to his opponent. This outrage, however, would probably have been carried to much greater lengths,

* The feasts upon sacrifices, among the Heathens, were generally accompanied with music and dancing, and sometimes with pompous processions, which inticed youthful minds to partake of them, and had a tendency to inflame their carnal appetites, which the women would not let them satisfy unless they consented to worship their idols.

but for the death of Zimri, which happened soon afterwards in the following manner.

Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the high-priest, and grand-nephew of Moses, was highly renowned for his valour and other accomplishments. This youth was so much incensed against Zimri†, on account of the contempt he had shewn to the laws of his country, that he determined to put him to death; from a conviction that, in the case of a faction similar to the present, the more exalted the rank of the ringleader might be, the more exemplary ought to be his punishment. He, therefore, repaired to the tent of Zimri, and slew both him and Cosbi, with one thrust of his sword. Many others of the Hebrew youths, animated with a like spirit with Phinehas, immediately attacked the associates of Zimri, the major part of whom they devoted to a similar death with their leader; and those who escaped at that time, were quickly afterwards carried off by a pestilence, which swept away not only the rebels themselves, but such of their relations also, as, by their influence and authority, might have restrained them from the commission of those sins which occasioned their deplorable fate. The number of those persons who lost their lives in this manner, amounted to fourteen thousand. These treacherous practices of the Midianites enraged Moses so highly, that he detached a body of troops to over-run their country, and totally root out the whole nation.

CHAP. VII.

Defeat of the MIDIANITES. MOSES appoints JOSHUA his Successor.

THE number of the troops sent by Moses on this expedition was twelve thousand men, one thousand from each tribe, and they were headed by Phinehas, of whom we have made mention in the foregoing chapter.

When the Midianites heard that the enemy had already marched to their frontiers, and were still advancing, they assembled their troops, seized upon several passes, which they fortified in the best manner the shortness of the time would admit, and prepared to receive their attack. At the very first ^{The Midianites overcome.} shock, however, they gave way, and fled, an incredible number of them being killed in the pursuit. Amongst these were the five kings of the country. The Hebrews ravaged the whole country, and, in pursuance of the instructions given by Moses to Phinehas, utterly destroyed all the inhabitants, save the virgins, who were carried away captives, to the number of thirty-two thousand. Phinehas afterwards returned with his detachment to the army,

† Zimri appears to have been very impudently wicked, and to have had a high contempt both of Moses's authority, and of God's, whose servant he was; and as a farther aggravation of his sin, it is added, that he did it before the face of all the people, and that, when they were mourning for their sin, lamenting the common calamity, and imploring the pardoning mercy of God.

bringing

bringing with him a prodigious booty, consisting of fifty-two thousand oxen, sixty thousand asses, with household plate, and vessels of gold and silver to an immense value.

Upon a distribution of the spoil, Eleazar and the priests received one-fiftieth part, another fiftieth fell to the share of the Levites, and the remainder Moses divided among the people, every individual of whom acquired a considerable booty on the occasion. Moses, being now greatly advanced in life, declined the functions of a leader, governor, and prophet, in favour of Joshua, whom he proclaimed to be his successor, in conformity to the command he had received from the Almighty. Joshua was perfectly qualified to execute the important commissions with which he was invested, having obtained to a proficiency of knowledge in the divine and human institutions, under the immediate direction of his just and able predecessor.

Petition of Gad, Reuben, &c. after due consideration, granted. About this time, the tribes of Gad and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manassah, petitioned Moses to grant them the country of the Amorites, which had been lately conquered, and was considered by them as a spot highly desirable: they were the more solicitous to obtain this point, as they possessed numerous herds and other cattle, and the earth produced abundance of excellent pasture. Moses understood this request to be made merely to avoid engaging in a battle, and accused them of pusillanimity and indolence.

"I perceive," said he, "the drift of your stratagem: your design is, to indulge yourselves in ease and indolence, while your countrymen are opposing the common enemy, and encountering the difficulties which must inevitably occur in pursuing their victories beyond the Jordan, and penetrating into the country which has been promised them by the Almighty."

In consequence of Moses having manifested a displeasure at what they requested, they urged, that the sole motive of their application was a desire to obtain a place of security for their wives, children, and effects; adding, that if fortified places were to be assigned them for the above purpose, no impediment would remain against their engaging in the common cause, and that they would pursue the war wherever their leader should command.

The scruples which Moses entertained being entirely removed by this declaration, he transferred to them the land of the Amorites, in the presence of Eleazar, the high-priest, Joshua, and the other chief magistrates, conditionally that they should unite with their countrymen in a league offensive and defensive, and not quit their arms till the war should subside.

Cities of refuge. Ten of the forty-eight cities before-mentioned were built by Moses, and three

of them he appointed as sanctuaries for such as had killed a fellow-creature by chance-medley, or without malice prepense. During the life of the high-priest within whose jurisdiction the homicide was committed, the refugee was to remain in banishment; and if the offender was found without the place of refuge, the law allowed that the kindred of the deceased might slay him; but gave no other person an authority to deprive him of life. Bozor, erected on the borders of Arabia, Ariman in Galadene, and Gaulanan in the country of Batanaa, or Batanitis, were the cities of refuge or sanctuary. Moses enjoined, that upon taking possession of the land of Canaan, three cities of sanctuary, having the privileges above described, should be constructed, among those belonging to the Levites.

C H A P. VIII.

The last Oration of MOSES to the People: The Laws which he delivers to them.

FORTY years, within thirty days, having now elapsed since the departure from Egypt, Moses assembled the people at a place now called Abila, on the banks of the river Jordan, and adjacent to a field of palm trees, and addressed them to the following purpose.

"The pleasure of the Almighty, and the course of nature requiring me to resign my breath, after having arrived to the hundred and twentieth year of a vexatious and toilsome life; and it being ordained that I shall no longer employ my arms in war, or my advice in council, to facilitate your progress towards the land of Canaan; I am sensible, in this the latest hour of my existence, of a peculiar satisfaction in the idea that I leave my fellow-soldiers and the partners of my toils and sufferings in a happy prospect of those promised blessings which are to crown their wishes. Even at this most important period, I must not omit that part of my duty which relates to your happiness; nor fail, according to the abilities I possess, of explaining to you in what that happiness consists, and pointing out the means by which it is to be obtained: The unremitting attention which I have observed in my endeavours to promote your welfare and happiness, will give authority to what I shall deliver, and let the integrity of my past days bear testimony that I am deserving confidence: and further be it observed, that the declaration of a man on the verge of eternity is uttered in sincerity of heart, and claims a sacred observance.

"Be assured, that all human happiness consists in the favour of the Almighty, to whom alone it belongs to reward the virtuous, and punish the wicked. If

§ They declared, that they were all of them ready to go, or as many as should be thought necessary. Accordingly we find that forty thousand of them went over with their brethren, ready armed for war, to the plains of Jericho, Deut. iii. 18. Jos. iv. 12. and they

shewed both faith in God, and love to their brethren, thus to go in the front of the battle, and generously risque their lives against such powerful enemies, without any farther benefit to themselves, leaving their weak families behind them to the divine protection.

you

you demean yourselves conformably to the commands of God, and to the precepts which I have communicated to you by his order, you shall acquire the highest degree of reputation, and the prosperous state of your affairs shall constantly excite the envy and jealousy of your neighbours; besides, the happiness you now enjoy shall be continued to you in perpetuity, and all your wants shall be abundantly supplied. But, beware that you make no innovations either in your laws or religion. Adopt my counsel, and you shall become invincible; for while God is on your side, it is a matter of no consideration by whomsoever you are opposed. Obedience is constantly attended with adequate and glorious rewards, and is in itself the greatest benefit which man can possess. Exercise it among yourselves, and it will render you mutually happy, and establish your fame in after-ages. By such conduct you will ensure to yourselves a happy establishment; and my utmost wish would be gratified, could I but see you in a settled state before I resign my breath. To obtain this, you have only to pay due attention to the precepts which have been delivered to you for the regulation of your conduct, and to yield an implicit obedience to the orders of those who shall be placed in authority over you, to provide for your welfare and security.

"The divine Being, by whose direction you have been hitherto guided, and to whose bounty you owe all the benefits derived from my administration, will continue to be your guardian and protector, so long as you worship him in the manner he has prescribed. You will have also a sufficient number of excellent advisers in the persons of Eleazar, the high-priest, Joshua, the senate, and the heads of the tribes. Demean yourselves towards them with all submission; for thereon will your happiness greatly depend; as he will never be qualified to govern others, who has not first learnt the lesson to obey.

"God grant that none of your successors may experience an impetuosity of conduct from you, similar to what I have been too often exposed to; for you must be sensible that my life was frequently in much greater danger from you than from all the attacks of our enemies. I mention not this circumstance with a design to reproach you; nor would I wish to remind you of your former faults at the time I am about to leave you for ever. Let your past misfortunes teach you prudence, and, when you have obtained possession of the land of Canaan, do not suffer yourselves to be seduced, by the riches and plenteousness of the country, to depart from your duty to your governors; but remember that your welfare depends on a due subserviency to your superiors; and that if ever the attractions of wealth and luxury shall render you

neglectful of that veneration which you owe to God, and of the respect to which your rulers are intitled, the Almighty will forsake you, and, instead of your guardian and protector, will become your avowed foe: you shall lose with ignominy the conquests you acquired with reputation and valour, and shall be dispersed as vagabonds over the face of the whole earth.

"When these calamities come upon you, it will be then too late to repent of your misconduct, and to wish that you had conformed yourselves to the laws of God and your country. Effectually, therefore, to guard yourselves against falling into so fatal an apostasy in future, you must utterly extirpate the inhabitants of the countries you shall subdue, and totally consume their temples, groves, and altars with fire. Lest this, however, should not be sufficient to answer the intent, I have composed a code of laws and ordinances, for the regulation both of your public and private conduct, under the immediate direction of God himself; the due observance of which will render you the happiest people on the face of the earth." At the conclusion of this discourse, Moses delivered to them a written book, containing divers laws and rules, which are as follow:

"When ye have settled yourselves in the land of Canaan, ye shall build on a spot distinguished by its fertility and the beauty of its prospect, and to be chosen by God himself, by the agency of his prophet, one single temple*. In this temple ye shall erect one altar only, which shall be formed of unhewn stones, taken promiscuously from the quarry, and fitted to each other with all possible accuracy and neatness; ye shall not ascend, either to the temple or to the altar, by a flight of steps, but by a gentle rising of the ground. And ye shall erect no other temple or altar throughout the land which ye shall possess; for ye are one nation, and adore one only God.

Laws and rules for the government of the Hebrews in the land of Canaan.

One temple, one altar, and one God.

"Let the blasphemer be stoned to death, and his carcase be hung upon a gibbet for the space of a whole day, and afterwards be thrown into the ground with every mark of ignominy.

Blasphemy made death.

"Thrice a year, every individual of your nation shall repair from all parts of the land to this temple, to offer sacrifices, and to implore the future blessings of heaven; and, by the freedom of a social intercourse, to give birth to a reciprocity of friendship among the different members of the community. It tends greatly to promote the benefit of men of the same lineage and profession, to acquire a personal knowledge of each other: for the impression made by a word, a look,

To worship thrice a year in the temple.

* This was commanded before, but is now repeated because of the great importance of it, to prevent all strange worship. As if Moses had said; As this injunction, whereby your nation is confined to one certain place of public sacrifice and worship, is intended to keep up the distinction between you and other people, and is made

in opposition to the general custom of idolatrous worshippers, who pick out numberless places for their devotions, as their superstitious prejudices and fancies dictate to them; you are to look upon it as a capital precept, and take special care to observe it.

or an action often surpasses all conception; whereas, this advantage will be intirely forfeited unless such meetings are promoted.

A second tenth.

“Exclusive of the tenth appropriated to the maintenance of the priests and levites, a second tenth also of the value of the produce of the land shall be expended in sacrifices, and in the celebration of public solemnities in this holy city; as the power who grants us the gratuitous possession of the land is, doubtless, fully intitled to a part of the fruits thereof.

The hire of an harlot not to be offered.

“Nothing shall be offered in sacrifice which is purchased with the wages of prostitution; for the Almighty abhors all unclean practices. Nor, for the same reason, will any thing be accepted as an oblation which arises from the hire of a female animal, intended to preserve the breed.

Not to revile the gods of other nations.

“Ye shall not speak ill of the gods of other countries, nor shall ye despoil their temples, or take away any vessel or other thing which is destined for the service of their altars.

Priests only to wear mixed garments.

“No man shall presume to wear a garment made with a mixture of woollen and linen, unless he be of the order of priests, to whom alone that privilege belongs.

Laws to be publicly read on the feast of tabernacles.

“At the conclusion of every seventh year, during the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, the priest shall read to the people assembled the book of laws, at which ceremony persons of every rank, sex, and age, shall be permitted to attend; for it is highly proper to impress their minds with a due knowledge of the laws, that they may not plead ignorance in excuse for their misconduct. Offenders also are more easily restrained from the commission of crimes, when they know the punishments which they are liable thereby to incur. The impressions which men receive by the ear are forcible and permanent, and, being convinced of the propriety and necessity of legal institutions, they are at all times prepared to accuse themselves, whenever they are guilty of a breach of those institutions.

Children to be taught the law.

“I particularly recommend it to you to initiate your children early in the knowledge of these laws, as the most advantageous and necessary study to which they can possibly apply themselves. Twice a day, therefore, let them be put in mind of the memorable mercies of the Almighty towards them, particularly in their deliverance from the bondage of the Egyptians: for thanksgiving is a duty equally incumbent upon us with prayer. Inscribe upon their doors, their heads, arms, and other parts of their bodies, memorials of the power and goodness of God, that they may constantly have in their minds the bounties of divine providence towards them.

* Accordingly, they had judges appointed, and consistories erected in every city, for the determining all differences arising out of
No. 4.

“In each city let a council* be established, consisting of seven persons; men equally famed for their virtue and piety; and to these let twice the same number of levites be added. Permit no man to use irreverent or scurrilous language in your courts of justice; for by accustoming yourselves to pay a due deference to your earthly governors, you will insensibly become attached to the practice of all religious as well as moral duties. The sentence of the judge must be definitive, except in cases of evident error or bribery. As justice is the point to which the proceedings of the courts universally tend, it ought to be administered with the strictest impartiality. It argues a distrust of the divine power and mercy, to manifest more fear of the resentment of a man in high station than of God himself, as if the latter were inferior to the former; which those who act in the above manner evidently insinuate. If the persons before whom a matter is brought to be decided, should, either from the want of a thorough knowledge of the particulars from misinformation, or from any other circumstance, be found incompetent (which not unfrequently happens) to pass judgment therein; let the cause be removed to the holy city, to be determined by the high-priest, the prophet, and the senate. No man shall be condemned upon the testimony of fewer than two credible witnesses.

The Jewish magistracy instituted.

“The natural levity, and propensity to talkativeness in the female sex, renders them unfit to be admitted as witnesses in a court of justice: their testimony, therefore, shall not be received.

Women's testimony inadmissible.

“Every slave also shall be rejected as an evidence, because from the debasement of his mind, arising from the abjectness of his condition, he may probably, either through fear, or from motives of avarice, be induced to deviate from the truth.

And that of slaves.

“He who prefers a false accusation against another upon oath, shall incur the same punishment as, in case of conviction, would have been inflicted on the party accused.

Punishment for a false oath.

“If a man be found dead in any lone place, and no proof can be given, either positive or presumptive, of the manner in which his death happened, the strictest inquisition shall be made, and rewards offered for the discovery of the parties concerned. But, should these measures fail of success, the magistrates of the several districts adjacent to the spot where the body was found, shall assemble, and ascertain, by an exact measurement, which of those districts is nearest to the spot in question. This matter being determined, the inhabitants of such district shall provide a heifer, which they shall bring into a place totally unfit for every purpose of vegetation; and, after cutting the sinews of the neck of the victim, the priests, levites, and elders, shall wash their hands with water over the head

Homicide, or manslaughter.

the law, tho' not as to the power of life and death, which was seldom granted them by their sovereigns, except in larger cities.

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of the animal, and in the most solemn manner shall declare their innocence, and utter ignorance of the homicide in question; concluding the ceremony with the most earnest supplication to the Deity, to avert the guilt of blood from the people of that place in future.

Theocratic government preferred.

"A theocracy being the best form of government, let that be adopted and constantly maintained by the Hebrews, and the abolishment of it will be attended with many bad effects: for under such a government the people are subjected to the laws alone, which will sufficiently instruct them in every point of their duty: let them be satisfied, therefore, that the Almighty deigns to take upon himself the supreme direction of their affairs.

Advice concerning a king.

"If, notwithstanding, ye should find in yourselves a propensity towards a monarchical government, be careful to chuse for your king* a person of your own nation; a person eminent for his justice and probity, of great moderation, and free from guile: one who shall place greater confidence in the direction of the Almighty, for the good government of his kingdom, than in his own judgment; a person, in short, who shall conform himself upon all occasions to the advice of the high-priest and elders: without indulging himself in a plurality of wives, or in useless parade and ostentation; lest this affectation of power and pomp should in the end lead him to encroach upon your rights and privileges, and to assume a degree of authority which may prove highly inconsistent with your interest.

Not to remove landmarks.

"Ye shall not remove either your own or your neighbour's landmarks, as they were from the first designed to maintain inviolable the peace of society. Let them remain immoveable as the foundations of the earth, and as if they had been fixed by the hand of God himself, at the era of creation. The breach of this injunction will inevitably produce wars and tumults: and as ambition is the basis of war, this kind of injustice derives its origin from avarice.

Fourth year fruit only to be offered, or eaten.

"Ye shall neither eat yourselves, nor offer in sacrifice to God, the first-fruits of such trees as do not bear till the fourth year from the time of their being planted; all such being unnatural productions. But in the fourth year, when the fruit is become fit for gathering, let the whole be plucked, and conveyed to the holy city, where the owner shall consume it, together with the tithes of his other fruits, in company with his relations and friends, and with the widows and orphans.

* This by no means imports that God commanded them to make them a king when they came to Canaan, as some of the Jews understand it; but only that if they would needs have a king, he should be one of their brethren. It appears from this passage, that the fault of the Israelites lay not in asking a king, but in asking him from wrong motives, and in a licentious, disorderly manner. See 1 Sam. viii, 5, 19, 20.

"No vineyard shall be ploughed up, for the purpose of its being sown; since superfluous cultivation will but impoverish the land. Vineyards not to be sown.

"Oxen are the only animals which shall be used for the plough; for beasts of different kinds should not be joined together in the same yoke. To plow with oxen only.

"The seed with which ye sow the land shall be unmixed; as, by mingling several sorts together, you will create an unnatural confusion. Seed to be unmixed.

"Ye shall not suffer animals of different species to generate; lest the evil example should tempt mankind to indulge themselves in the gratification of unnatural lusts. No adulterate mixtures of beasts.

"When ye reap your corn, be careful that ye leave a large proportion of gleanings for the relief of the poor; and ye shall act in like manner when ye gather your grapes and your olives; nor will your bounty go unrewarded: for when a man evinces a proper consideration of the miseries of the poor, God will fertilize the land which he possesses, and will grant him the blessing of plenty. Ye shall not muzzle the ox whilst he treadeth out the grain; as it would be totally inconsistent with justice and reason to debar any animal from partaking of the fruits of his own labour. Gleanings to be left for the poor. Oxen treading corn not to be muzzled.

"Suffer the passenger, whether he be a native or a stranger to gather the ripe fruit as he passes through your grounds, and to eat his fill; but without taking any part thereof away with him. At the time when ye press your grapes, if a traveller should request a few bunches of them, do not deny him so small a proportion of those fruits which God has been pleased to bestow upon you in such great plenty; particularly as this fertile season is but of short duration. The breach of this injunction shall be punished with thirty-nine lashes, to be inflicted by the hands of the common executioner. The remembrance of the many sufferings which ye underwent, both in Egypt and the wilderness, ought to humanize your temper so far, at least, as to render you compassionate to the necessitous. Passengers on a journey not to be denied ripe fruits.

Exclusive of the two annual tenths, already mentioned, one of which was set apart for the use of the levites, and the other for the celebration of all public solemnities; a third also shall be levied to be distributed every third year among the poor widows and orphans of your nation. Third tenth, for widows and orphans.

† From a grateful sense of the same divine deliverance, Moses exhorts them to be mindful of those provisions made for the poor by the laws, Lev. xix. 9, 10. xxiii. 22. wherein they are ordered not to be over-nice and exact in reaping the fruits of their fields and vineyards; but to leave something to be gathered by their poor neighbours.

First fruits to the temple, as a thank-offering.

Ye shall not neglect, at proper seasons, to bring your first-fruits* to the temple, and, after returning thanks to God, and offering the customary sacrifices, ye shall deliver them into the hands of the priests; having paid the usual dues to the levites, and for the solemnization of the festivals; when ye are about to return home, ye shall place yourselves before the door of the temple, and shall give thanks to God for rescuing the Israelites from their grievous bondage in Egypt, and for establishing them in the possession of so beautiful and fertile a country; publicly declaring, at the same time, that ye have paid the several dues required by the law. Ye shall then offer up your prayers to God, both for your own private welfare, and for that of the public; requesting not only a continuance of his present favours and mercies, but also an increase of them in future.

Laws respecting wedlock.

A man who has attained to a marriageable age, and is inclined to take to himself a wife, shall make choice of a virgin, who is a free-woman, descended from virtuous parents, and well educated: but let no one presume to attempt the chastity of the wife of another man, thereby to give uneasiness and vexation to her husband. If a freeman marries a bond-woman, he shall not be justified on the plea of love; for a man derogates from the dignity of human nature when he suffers his passions to usurp the mastery over him. Let no man espouse a reputed harlot; for God will not accept a nuptial oblation from the hands of an impure person; moreover, the offspring of such marriages commonly manifest their origin by the depravity of their manners.

Punishment of a woman marrying as a virgin, who is not such.

A man, who imagining he had married a virgin, finds himself deceived, shall bring the matter to a judicial determination, and shall produce his proofs: the father, brother, or the person who is the nearest relation to the woman, shall appear in her behalf. If the charge against her be not clearly proved, the husband shall be compelled to entertain her as his lawful wife, and the marriage shall never afterwards be dissolved, but upon the most indisputable evidence of her guilt. But, should it appear that the accusation was founded solely in malice and calumny, the husband shall, by way of punishment, receive thirty-nine stripes, and shall also be amerced in the sum of fifty shekels, to the use of the father of the woman. On the other hand, if the guilt of the

woman shall be made evident, and she be of mean extraction, she shall be stoned to death; or, if honourably descended, particularly from a sacerdotal family, she shall be burnt alive.

Primogeniture adjusted.

If a man shall marry two wives; and shall (from whatever motive) prefer the one before the other, and the favoured wife shall prevail upon him to demand the privilege of primogeniture in behalf of her son, who is younger than the son of the other wife; in this case, I say, ye shall not comply with his demand; for, according to my laws, the elder son is intitled to a double portion of the inheritance, and it would be unjust to suffer this partiality of his father to operate to his son's disadvantage, by depriving him of the above privilege.

A virgin betrothed not to be corrupted, or seduced.

If a virgin, who is contracted to one man, shall suffer herself to be debauched by another, both parties shall be deemed as guilty, and shall both be punished with death; the man for seducing the woman to prefer the gratification of an avaricious or lustful appetite, to an honourable matrimonial alliance, and the woman for suffering herself to be influenced by such base and degenerate motives. But, if a man shall be convicted of having ravished a woman, on a spot at a distance from all help, he alone shall be sentenced to death. Whoever shall seduce a virgin, who is under no engagement to any other man, shall either marry her, or, if the parents of the woman will not consent thereto, let the delinquent compound for his offence by the payment of fifty shekels to her father.

Respecting a man's parting with his wife.

When a man is determined, as often happens, to separate himself from his wife, upon whatever account, he shall deliver to her an instrument, signed by his own hand, whereby he engages never to require her to return to him again: and this will bear her harmless in contracting a second marriage: nor will the divorce be otherwise valid. But if, after the death of her second husband, the woman should be inclined to return to the first, she shall not be indulged therein.

Case of a husband's dying without issue.

When a married man dies, leaving no issue, let the brother of the deceased espouse the widow†, and, if a son should be the produce of this second marriage, he shall be named after the first husband, and shall inherit the estate; for it is necessary to the public welfare, that family

* Every Israelite being obliged by law to offer the first-fruits of his field and vineyard, at the tabernacle, at the proper seasons of the year; Moses now prescribes to them the forms of solemn profession and prayer, with which each offerer should present them. First, that at his presenting them to the priests in waiting, he is to declare he brings them in humble and grateful acknowledgment of the divine providence and goodness, that has settled him and his family in this fruitful country, pursuant to the gracious promises made to his forefathers.

† This obligation is understood, by the Hebrew doctors, to lie

upon the eldest surviving brother, by the same father. And if the eldest brother, that married his brother's relict, died also without issue, then the next surviving brother was to marry her; and so forward, according to the case supposed in the gospel. But this is to be understood only of a brother that was unmarried, as appears from Lev. xviii. 18. And this is thought to be implied in the words, *if brethren dwell together*: for though the younger, while he continued single, may be supposed to dwell with the elder, yet, when he married, he would dwell in an house of his own. If there was no brother, properly so called, to perform this duty, the next

family names should be preserved from one generation to another, and that their possessions should devolve intire from heir to heir: and it will be a consolation to the widow to spend the remainder of her days with one so nearly related to her first husband. In case of the refusal of the brother to conform to this ordinance, let the widow prefer a complaint against him to the senate, setting forth the insult which, by his refusal, he had cast upon the memory of the deceased. The members of the senate shall then interrogate him on the subject of his conduct, and whatever arguments he may use in his defence, the result will be this: the widow shall loosen the latchet of his shoe, and, spitting in his face, shall reproach him with the contempt he has manifested for the memory of his deceased brother; adding, that by such conduct he justly incurred his present punishment. He shall then quit the court, thus stigmatized; and the widow shall be permitted to marry whoever she thinks proper.

Duties enjoined on a maid, wife, or widow, taken captive.

"If a woman, of whatever condition, whether maid, wife, or widow, be taken prisoner, and the person who makes capture of her be inclined to marry her, they shall not cohabit as man and wife 'till the woman shall have shaven her head, and shall have fulfilled the time of her mourning for the friends and relations she may have lost in the battle; and at the end of the time she shall be allowed to enter into the nuptial state. Every man who takes a woman to wife with the view of having issue by her, is bound to pay some attention to the wishes of his wife, and not to indulge his own inclination at the expence of her's. But at the expiration of thirty days, which is a sufficient term for bewailing the loss of our friends and relations, the marriage ceremony may be performed without any imputation. If he should, through a natural fickleness of temper, wish to separate himself from her afterwards, he shall not reduce her to her former state of slavery, seeing that the bath by her marriage emancipated herself from bondage.

Undutiful children to be admonished;

"When children shall be guilty of irreverent behaviour towards their parents, let the father or mother, whom nature has constituted their judges, admonish them in terms adapted to convince them of their folly and disobedience; if such admonition produce the proper effect, let the former misconduct of the parties be forgiven, as the effect rather of human frailty than of premeditation; and this lenity will redound to the honour of our laws, and will greatly administer to the

comfort of the parents. But if the children still persevere in their rebellion, in utter contempt both of the authority and advice of their parents, let the laws, in that case, take their course; and let the parties, in consequence, be stoned to death, on a spot without the city, and their bodies, after being exposed one whole day on a gibbet, shall be taken down in the evening to be interred. The same rule shall be observed with respect to the burial of the body, in every other case of public executions. Even the enemies of the state are intitled to the rights of burial. It is sufficient that the delinquent suffers the penalty of the law, and the punishment ought not to extend beyond death.

and, if refractory, stoned to death.

"It shall not be permitted to one Hebrew to lend to another either money, meat, or drink, upon usury; for it is an unjustifiable action to make an advantage of the distresses of those of our own nation. Let it be remembered, that the consciousness of having done a good action, is its best reward: thus benevolence itself would become clear gain, did man but confide in the Almighty for that reward which he will indubitably confer, either sooner or later, on the virtuous and humane. Let those who borrow either money or fruits, wet or dry, make a point of discharging the debt whenever God shall enable them so to do: for this is nothing more than depositing so much money or effects in the hands of another, for your own use and service upon any future occasion.

No lending upon usury to an Hebrew.

"If a debtor shall be so totally devoid both of shame and conscience as to neglect the re-payment of what he borrowed, the creditor shall demand of him a pledge, which he shall receive at the door, but shall not be permitted to enter his house, unless in virtue of an order for that purpose from the judge. In case that the debtor can conveniently spare the article which he has pledged in the hands of his creditor, the latter shall retain it till he has received satisfaction for the debt; but if, on the other hand, he shall chance to be in very indigent circumstances, it shall be returned to him again before sun-set; particularly if it should be a garment, which he may possibly want to keep him warm during the night: so much does God commiserate the case of the poor.

Law relating to borrowing.

"Ye shall not receive in pledge either a mill, or any thing which appertains to the working of it; lest the owner should thereby be deprived of the means of earning a maintenance.

Working utensils not to be taken as pledges.

of kin, who in scripture is also often stiled *brother*, in a larger sense, was bound to marry her. And, indeed, I should be apt to think, that by *brother* here was meant only a kinsman; because the law expressly prohibits marriages between brothers in law and sisters in law, Lev. xviii. 16. However, it appears from Gen. xxxviii. 7, 8. to have been customary in very early times, even among the patriarchs, for brothers to marry their brother's widows. And Huetius assures us, that some of the Indians and Persians, and the Tartars that inhabit Iberia and Albania, still retain this custom.

* This law is of the same merciful nature with that in Exod. xxi. 26. which enjoins, that a person's raiment, which was

pledged, should be restored before sun-set: hence we find that an Israelite was not to take any thing of his neighbour in pawn or pledge, which is absolutely requisite for the subsistence of himself and family. The reason assigned for this prohibition, that the violation of it would be equal to taking a man's life to pledge, or to the depriving him of all means of subsistence, is very strong, and inculcates the exercise of benevolence and charity in such a light, as reflects no small honour on the Divine legislator. Both the millstones were necessary to grind his corn. The Jews made use of hand-mills, which they worked one upon another, to grind their corn.

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