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ACADEMICAL LECTURES

ON THE

JEWISH SCRIPTURES

AND

ANTIQUITIES.

BY JOHN GORHAM PALFREY, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

VOL. I.

THE LAST FOUR BOOKS OF THE PENTATEUCH.

Si quis igitur percontari velit, verbis hisco Paulinis, Τίς ἡ ἀρίθεια; humillimè respondetur, sequentibus Apostoli verbis; Πολλοὶ κατὰ πάντα τρίπον* πρῶτον μὲν γινώσκοντες, ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ.

KENNICOTT, *Dissertatio Generalis*.

So Law appears imperfect; and but given
With purpose to resign them, in full time,
Up to a better covenant.

Paradise Lost, xii. 300.

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TO

HENRY WILLIAM PALFREY,

OF NEW ORLEANS,

THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS BROTHER.



PREFACE.

I LAY before the public some of the results of my studies upon the books containing the record of the Divine revelation through Moses.

On some accounts I could certainly have desired to keep the work longer by me. To say nothing of a literary finish, which it is not likely that the little leisure I enjoy would soon have afforded me opportunity to attempt, paths of inquiry have been continually opening before me as I proceeded, which I have longed to follow, and which I have believed would lead to important illustrations and confirmations of views presented in this volume.

But life is short, and art is very long. If some years should be yet before me, I do not suppose, that they would be most profitably employed in following out separately my own trains of thought and investigation. I would rather seek the advantage of comparing my conclusions, such as they are, with those of my fellow-students in this department ; and I venture to hope, that the present

essay may be not without utility in calling attention to some prominent questions, and thus finally leading to clearer and more satisfactory opinions respecting the Jewish system, than are commonly entertained.

Of the parts of this discussion, which will be thought liable to objection, it is likely, that what relate to the Sabbath, and to the supply of Manna and the miraculous guidance of a cloud in the wilderness, will be viewed with as little favor as any other. I request those, who, after well considering the substance of the third Lecture, still think that I have used unreasonable freedom with the text in the former of these instances, to suspend their judgment, till we have advanced to the examination of some books in which important facts relating to the history of the text are better developed.

The question upon the two other points, is simply one of safe and judicious interpretation of the record. The reader will not need to be reminded, that no objection is raised to the common opinion, on the ground of its presumption of miraculous agency. My theory of miracles is extremely simple. I know nothing of any Laws of Nature, which are to restrain God. What we call by that name, are merely the results, stated in general terms, of our own observations on the actual course of events. Show me an occasion, which engages the Divine be-

nevolence to make a direct revelation of truth, and immediately (because I know no other way to authenticate a revelation) miracles become as credible to me as other events, and as capable of being substantiated by sufficient human testimony. And such an occasion I recognise to have existed, when, the world being overrun with pernicious idolatries, the doctrine of one God made its appearance in Judaism.

If, however, it belongs to a miracle, intended as an instrument of conviction, to be extraordinary, — that is, rare, — I submit it to the candid judgment of others, how, to the end of authenticating the revelation, appearances like those in question can be satisfactorily understood to have been permanently exhibited through forty years, so as to be daily witnessed by multitudes from infancy to manhood. In examining this part of the record, with a view to ascertain how much it declares, I have wished to express myself modestly; and I freely grant, that these phenomena may have had other objects, requiring their permanency, independent of that virtue of theirs as miraculous *evidence*, which it would seem the quality of permanency must impair. In respect to the provision of Manna, particularly, it may have been, that while the better sort of the people had supplies of their own, others needed to be fed by a continuous supernatural dispensation;

and it may have been necessary, for the security of the Tabernacle from roving tribes, that it should be pitched, for the most part, in barren and unfrequented tracts, where its attendants would be cut off from the common sources of supply.

The little space, given in this volume to single important investigations, will be observed to be a necessary incident of the extent of the plan. To ask, for instance, why I have not treated the question of the Canon more at large, would be merely to inquire why I have not projected a different work.

Such consideration as the system of Typical Interpretation appears to me to merit, I reserve for the third of the volumes, designed to compose this series.

My common use of the word *Jews* for the descendants of Jacob might be made the subject of a punctilious criticism. But it seemed to me, that to study to avoid it would be affectation; and, indeed, at the time of the revolt of the northern tribes, the word *Israelites*, which might be thought entitled to a preference, became equally specific in its sense, as the name of only part of the race.

In only two or three instances have I been compelled to give references at second hand, for want of access to the original authorities. In these cases, taught by much hard experi-

ence how unsafe it is to rely upon the exactness of quotations, I have taken care to testify to nothing more than the representation made by the modern scholar.

For the typographical execution of the volume, I am under great obligations to the learned and faithful conductors of the University Press. Such *errata* as I have observed, are exhibited in a table, to which I request the reader's attention. After a thorough revisal, Hebrew types are so liable to injury in the course of printing, that, where they are used, errors may not improbably be found in some copies, which do not appear upon the sheets in my hand.

Finally ; it would give me the truest satisfaction, if I might learn, that views, here presented, had been the means, in any instance, of removing scruples, which once painfully exercised my own mind.

*Divinity College, Cambridge, Massachusetts ;
December 30th, 1837.*

ERRATA.

<i>Page 6, line 16, for</i> closest,	<i>read</i> closer.
" 11, " 30, " אָכַר,	" קָכַר.
" 25, " 23, " אֶזְלוֹרַי,	" אֶזְלוֹרַי.
" 32, " 32, " De Vir. Illust., cap. 24,	" Catal. Script. Eccles., I. 176 (Edit. Eras.)
" 86, " 16, " repeals,	" repeats.
" 103, " 26, " attracts,	" attract.
" 122, " 3, " Moses,	" Aaron.
" 191, " 9, " preferred,	" preserved.
" 200, " 7, " corn-harvest,	" wheat-harvest.
" 200, " 21, " interdicted,	" enjoined.
" 226, " 6, " hast favor,	" hast found favor.
" 310, " 3, " to the,	" with the.
" 336, " 31, " † The,	" † Numb. ix. 15-23.—The.
" 340, " 33, " לַפְגִּיָּהִם,	" לַפְגִּיָּהִם.
" 349, " 36, " was probably,	" was (compare Numb. xxviii. 5, with Ex. xxix. 40.)
" 357, " 19, " בָּיִת,	" בֵּית.

Railley 1838

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ON THE

JEWISH SCRIPTURES AND ANTIQUITIES.

LECTURE I.

LANGUAGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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THE subjects which are to come before us, in a survey of the Jewish Scriptures and Antiquities, have strong claims on the attention of a Christian. If the received opinion in the Christian church be well founded, the Jewish books contain the record of a supernatural revelation from God. And the interest of such a revelation can never cease, through the circumstance of its being superseded by more ample disclosures of truth in another system. Still it remains important and memorable, as making part of the history of the divine administration for man's spiritual benefit. Still, what it comprehends is truth, which God held to be of moment enough to justify the resort to extraordinary means in its communication; and truth

therefore, which even in its earlier and less complete forms of exhibition, Christians cannot but desire to investigate.

The study of the Old Testament scriptures has important direct relations to that of the documents of the Gospel dispensation. Not only were the forms of expression of the evangelical writers affected by those of the ancient language of the race to which all of them belonged, to the degree that an interpreter, who should omit this circumstance from his consideration, would often be without a clue to their sense; but their habits of thought had been formed under influences, to which the institutions and the faith, prescribed and expounded in these scriptures, contributed a material part. They make constant reference to their national history; and to a reader unacquainted with it their illustrations must needs fail of the intended use. They refer to practices and opinions, respecting which their ancient scriptures afford the needed information. They exhibit Christian truth, as it had impressed itself on Jewish minds; and, without knowing something of the formation of such minds through the action of current sentiment and surrounding society, we shall be liable to lose more or less of the spirit and scope of their representation. They were much employed in themselves controverting, and in showing how their Lord opposed, Jewish errors. To enter into the spirit of such arguments, we need some information respecting the origin, the nature, and the bearings of the prejudices they were designed to expose. They imply, — at all events, they seem to imply, — a connexion between the Mosaic and the Christian systems. The character and the extent of this connexion make a

problem for whoever would arrive at entirely satisfactory views of the latter.

In our times, the settling of the right interpretation of the Old Testament has become an object of peculiar importance. It cannot have failed to be observed by persons in any degree conversant with recent infidel writings, that, in far the greater part, their arguments designed to discredit Christianity are drawn from views received by Christians concerning Judaism. With Christianity they identify prevailing conceptions respecting the Jewish system and history, in a way for which it may be that Christian scholars have afforded them but too fair a pretext; and, this done, whatever they find vulnerable in these latter, they make to appear as a weak point in the Christian scheme. I apprehend, that a just exposition of the Mosaic institution, and of its relation to that of Jesus, would disarm infidelity of its most formidable weapons. I suppose that Christians have generally taken a ground on this subject, which they cannot justify for themselves, and which they cannot maintain against their opponents. But, however this may be, every one acquainted with the state of the controversy between the apologists and the assailants of our faith, sees cause to admit the extreme importance of having well-defined and defensible opinions respecting the degree of its responsibility for the character of the dispensation, which introduced, or, at least, preceded it, as well as respecting the essential claims of that dispensation, its principles, and purport.

The writings, which thus come under our notice, are mostly composed in the Hebrew language. This name, by which it is commonly known, is however

never applied to it in the Old Testament.* In a few texts it is called "the Jews' language."†

By Jewish and Christian writers, it has been often maintained to be the original language of man. But besides that, for want of evidence, reaching so far back, that proposition is incapable of being proved, it seems to be based upon an unquestionable error. Language is from its nature fluctuating. It adapts itself, step by step, to the altering wants, fashions, and intellectual conditions of men. Nothing can absolutely arrest its essential tendency to change. What comes the nearest to such a check, is the currency of some great national work, holding such a place in the respect of a people, as to become, both avowedly and insensibly, a standard of speech. Such was partially the effect of the version of the scriptures by Luther, and of that of King James's translators, upon their respective languages; and such appears to have been that of the writings of Moses themselves. But these compositions, according to the commonly received chronology, were not produced till language had been used for two thousand five hundred years; nor is there reason to suppose that they had been preceded by any thing,

* Nor, probably, in the New. One cannot positively affirm, whether, for example, in Luke xxiii. 38, and Acts xxvi. 14, the ancient language of the race was meant, or the then vernacular tongue, commonly called the Syro-Chaldee. The latter, no doubt, was intended in John v. 2, and Acts xxi. 40. The name *Hebrew* is very fitly applied to the ancient language, being the designation of the race which employed it, in Gen. xiv. 13, and numerous other places of the Old Testament. Its derivation is unsettled; some referring its origin to Eber (Gen. x. 21; 1 Chron. i. 19.), an obscure ancestor of Abraham; others understanding it to come from the root עָבַר, "he passed over," and to have reference to Abraham's immigration from Chaldea into Canaan, over the Euphrates. And this etymology is confirmed by the Septuagint. Ἑβραῖον τῆς πατρίδος. (Gen. xiv. 13.)

† 2 Kings xviii. 28; Isa. xxxvi. 11; Neh. xiii. 24; 2 Chron. xxxii. 18. The form, in the Hebrew, is adverbial; but our version is unexceptionable.

sued to exert an influence of the sort in question. By Moses, (supposing him for the present to be the author of the books which go by his name,) the language of his nation was in a degree fixed. Down to his time, I see no room for doubting, that it had been exposed to all the occasions of incessant change. It was a branch, derived by remote descent from the language, first spoken by man. But to identify it with that speech, is not only to proceed altogether without proof; it is, further, to deny the existence of causes, which could not have failed to operate.

It is probable, that at the time of Abraham's removal from Chaldea into Canaan, the Hebrew language, or at least a language so closely resembling it as to be merely another dialect from the same stock, was so widely in use as to include the native country of that patriarch. He appears to have conversed without difficulty from the first with the people of Palestine;* his grandson, Jacob, seems to have enjoyed an equal facility of intercourse with the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, when he journeyed into that district;† and the names of Laban's family are of Hebrew construction. But, whether employed by Abraham before or only after his arrival in Canaan, Hebrew was the vernacular speech of that country. Isaiah's words are peculiar, where he calls it "the language of Canaan," ‡ in an age when the Jewish territory was no longer known by that name. Proper names, which Abraham found in use among the Canaanites, are strictly Hebrew.||

* Gen. xiv. 18-24; xx. 9-15; xxiii. 3-16.

† Gen. xxix. 4 et seq.

‡ Isaiah xix. 18.

|| For instance; קִרְיַת־סֵפֶר, Kirjathsepher, *city of the book*; (comp. Judges i. 11); אֲבִימֶלֶךְ, Abimelech, *father of the king*; מֶלְכִי־צֶדֶק, Melchizedek, *king of righteousness*.

Carthage was a colony of the Phœnicians, who inhabited the Canaanitish sea-coast; and we have the authority of Jerome and Augustine to the point, that the Hebrew and the Punic or Carthaginian languages had the closest affinity.* Livy says, that the Carthaginians called their consuls *Suffetes*,† a well-known Hebrew word (שֹׁפֵטִים), and the same by which the Israelitish champions are denominated in the Book of Judges. And a curious corroboration of the same fact occurs in the deciphering, by Bochart, of some lines put into the mouth of a Carthaginian, in a play of Plautus.‡

From the time of Moses to that of David, it cannot be perceived that the language of the Jews sustained any very material changes. With the extended commerce of Solomon, and particularly after the closest relations between Judea and the East, existing from the time of Ahab, and still more after that of Hezekiah, we

* "Punicæ linguæ, in quâ multa invenimus Hebræis verbis consonantia." Augustin. de Gen., lib. 1.—"Hebræi dicunt Messiam, quod verbum Punicæ linguæ consonum est, sicut *alia permulta Hebraica, et pene omnia.*" Idem, Contra Literas Petiliani, lib. 2, cap. 104.—"Pœni, sermone corrupto, quasi Phœni, appellantur [Carthaginienses,] quorum lingua linguæ Hebrææ magnâ ex parte confinis est." Hieronymi Comment. in Jer., lib. 5, cap. 25.—For some further authorities to this point, see Walton's Prolegomena, 3, § 16. It is elaborately treated in the second book of Bochart's Canaan.

† "Suffetes, quod velut consulare imperium apud eos erat." Lib. 30, cap. 7.

‡ Bocharti Canaan, lib. 2, cap. 6. The play in which the passage occurs is the Pœnulus. Hanno, the Carthaginian, is introduced (Act V. Scene 1.) as uttering a soliloquy, the first sixteen lines of which, though expressed in Latin letters, are not Latin, and, by the mistakes of copyists not acquainted with the language, have been reduced to mere gibberish. Bochart has restored the original reading of the first ten lines, (the next six he understands to be not Punic, but Lybian,) and shows, so far, the similarity between the Punic and the Hebrew. The proof that his conjectures in the way of emendation are correct, is found in this; that the lines, so amended, no otherwise differ from the sense of the eleven

find a sensible adulteration of the purity of the tongue. When in the Babylonish conquest the national independence was overthrown, the prevailing opinion has been, that, during the exile, the national speech was lost; and that the families who returned brought with them only the Chaldee. But this can by no means be safely inferred from such a text as that in the eighth chapter, eighth verse, of Nehemiah; it is not, in itself, a probable thing, so short was the term of absence; and Malachi, who of course must have desired to be understood by those whom he reprov'd, and who reprov'd people as well as priests, wrote in Hebrew more than a hundred years later. The strong

Latin lines which follow, than as a free translation differs from its original. I give the first three lines for a specimen.

Reading of the editions.

Nythalonim uvalonuth si corathisima consith
Chim lach chunyth mumys tyalmictibari mischi
Lipho canet hyth bynithii ad ædin binuthii.

Bochart's restoration.

Na eth elionim veelionoth sechorath yismecun zoth
Chi melachai nitthemu; matslia middabarehem iski.
Liphurcanath eth beni eth jad adi ubenothai.

Hebrew-Syriac expressed by the latter.

נָא אֶת עֲלִיּוֹנִים וְעֲלִיוֹנוֹת שְׂכוֹרָתָהּ יִסְמְעוּן זֹאת
כִּי כֹלְכֵי גִתְמוֹ: בְּצִלְחַ מִדְּבָרֵיהֶם עֲקָקִי:
לְפִירְקַנַּת אֶת בְּנֵי אֶת יַד אֲדִי וּבְנוֹתַי:

The same literally rendered into Latin.

Rogo Deos et Deas qui hanc regionem tuentur,
Ut consilia mea compleantur, prosperum sit ex ductu eorum negotium
meum.
Ad liberationem filii mei a manu prædonis, et filiarum mearum.

Corresponding Latin lines in Plautus.

“Deos deasque veneror, qui hanc urbem colunt,
Ut, quod de meâ re huc veni, ritè venerim;
Measque ut gnatas, et mei fratris filium,
Reperire me siritis.”

probability I conceive to be, that the returning exiles brought back both their own ancient language, and that of their conquerors among whom they had been sojourning; and that it was only by degrees, that the latter supplanted the former, both continuing for a time in use together, in a way of which examples exist in portions of this country, inhabited by other than English descendants. And I apprehend that the same is to be said concerning the introduction of the square Chaldee characters, in the writing of Hebrew, instead of the ancient letter; — that is, if the opinion be true, generally held by the learned, but which it is not to my purpose to discuss, that what we now call the Samaritan alphabet, from its being used in the Samaritan writings, and in the Samaritan copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch, was, before the captivity, the alphabet of the Jews.

After the Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, surviving only as the language of the Jewish schools, it became greatly corrupted by mixture with the Chaldee and Syriac, and by a large infusion of words from the Greek, the Latin, and other sources. In this state, exhibited to us in the ancient collections called the Talmuds, it goes by the name of the Talmudical dialect. The same process, continued further in later ages, through contributions from various modern tongues, has produced a language, used by the recent Jewish writers, and called, from this cause, the Rabbinical. In a loose way of description, it might be said to bear a relation to the Hebrew, like that which the Romaic bears to the Greek, or the Italian to the Latin. Though called by one name, and having everywhere an essential uniformity, yet, as might be expected from the manner of its creation, it exhibits varieties, as employed in different parts of the world, even at the same period.

A question, once agitated with great warmth, is, whether the vowel points, as we now have them from the Jews, made part of the original written language. The question is evidently of material importance; since, if the vowels were not affixed by the authors, but were the addition of a much later age, they are of no further authority, than as they express the sense put upon words by persons skilled in the language, and in possession of a traditional interpretation. And, in this case, they may now be rejected by a critic, as reasons of interpretation may dictate, and others be substituted in their place, attaching a different meaning to words.*

By the Buxtorfs, father and son, and their successors, champions of the antiquity of the vowel punctuation, it was urged, that vowels, as much as consonants, are essential parts of words; that to omit the writing of them would be to make written language ambiguous and unintelligible; that, particularly after the Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, it could not have been learned in books, not expressing the vowel sounds; and that, in fact, in the Jewish books "Bahir" and "Zohar," written both about the time of our Saviour, the vowel points are made the subject of express and frequent comment. On the other hand, by Capellus and others, it was maintained, 1. that the letters called the *matres lectionis*, viz. א, ה, ו, י, ע, were the vowels of the Hebrew, — a theory, however, which can by no means be made out, and which has since been modified or relinquished; 2. that, for readers well acquainted with a language, writing which presented only the conso-

* It is the vowel punctuation alone, which marks, for instance, the difference of signification between the following words; דְּבַר, *a word*; דִּבְרָה, *a pestilence*; דִּבְרֵי, *a pasture*; דִּבֵּר, *he spoke*; דִּבְרֵי, *speaking*; דִּבְרָה, *spoken*; דִּבֵּר, *to speak*; and six other forms of the verb, each with its appropriate meaning.

nants might be sufficient, the connexion of the passage naturally dictating to them the sense to be put upon words, and of course the vowels to be supplied in their pronunciation;* 3. that the supposition of points, as making part of the original written Hebrew, contradicts the analogy of the cognate languages, and of the Samaritan copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch; 4. that the manuscripts of scripture, used in the synagogues, are to this day destitute of a punctuation; 5. that, in Jewish observations upon various readings, we find none relating to the vowel points, though these could not have failed to be a copious source of such, had they been originally written; 6. that the Cabbalists never deduce their mysteries and allegories from the points, but always from the consonants alone; 7. that the authors of ancient versions certainly read the text, in numerous instances, in a manner different from what is indicated by the present points; 8. that no hint of their existence is given by the early Christian critics, (Origen and Jerome, for example,) though the latter often speaks of Hebrew words being differently pronounced by different readers; and; 9. that the books "Bahir" and "Zohar," instead of being contemporary with our Saviour, are not a thousand years old; a point which seems to be well established from internal evidence, and from the fact that they are never quoted by other writers, till a time far within this period.

* This is confirmed by the actual practice of persons acquainted with Hebrew, when they read from an unpointed copy, and by every instance we may have known of reading, in any language, from a page full of abbreviations. Indeed, the system of vowel notation is, in no language, any thing more than a partial relief from the embarrassment supposed; our five English vowel characters, for instance, standing for no less, according to Walker's theory, than fifteen sounds, an enumeration which many would esteem altogether incomplete.

These reasons, and others like, have led to a general acquiescence of the learned, in the opinion, that the vowel punctuation, as we have it in our Hebrew, was elaborated in the Jewish schools, at some time between the fifth and tenth centuries of our era. It was probably not an invention completed at once, but grew up, by degrees, from a simple notation to its present complexity and fulness. And this conclusion leaves the critic at liberty to propose expositions of a sentence, such as the present punctuation would not admit. It is a liberty, however, which he should not so use, as if no respect, or little, was due to that reading of the Hebrew, which the points preserve. Whether or not the elements of the apparatus were drawn from a remote antiquity, which used a smaller number of points, and those perhaps only affixed at first to the more equivocal words (as is seen in some Arabic printing), it seems impossible to doubt that the Masoretic * invention perpetuates for us the reading, which, at the time of the invention, was received, by force of ancient tradition from the fathers, among the people by whom the writings were preserved, venerated, and studied. As such, they are, in the lowest estimate, an exceedingly valuable ancient commentary. They seem to be entitled even to be regarded as *primâ facie* evidence how a passage should be read, though reason may often appear, in a given case, for setting their evidence aside.†

Learners of the Hebrew language are very properly

* *Masora* means *tradition*, from מָסָרָה, (Chaldee,) *he offered or committed*. The Masorites are the line of critics who have bequeathed to us these traditions. There will be occasion to treat at some length of their extraordinary labors, in the sequel.

† "Jus fas non est, temerè projicere atque negligere ista interpretum publica ministeria; sed nec Judaico stupore et vanâ religione nostros implere decet." Semleri Apparatus ad Lib. V. T. Interpretationem, lib. 1, cap. 1, § 2.

content to accept, as true, those statements respecting the meaning of single words, and the meaning of the forms of inflexion and combination of words, which in the one case the lexicons contain, in the other the grammars. But they will scarcely fail to ask themselves the question, upon what evidence the truth of those representations rests. Whence comes that knowledge of the Hebrew language, which such works profess to convey? For we have them not, as we have for the study of Greek and Latin, proceeding from the time when the language to which they relate was spoken.

Our first resource for the purpose of constructing Hebrew grammars and lexicons, with which we may be satisfied, is in the unbroken tradition in the schools and the families of the Jewish race. Hebrew has never ceased to be taught, from generation to generation, from father to son, from learned rabbi to disciples who aspired to succeed him. And, though the instruction thus transmitted should be found to be often imperfect, and sometimes erroneous, still it affords the desirable basis for more exact and extended investigation.

The knowledge so preserved is also incorporated, in parcels, into the grammatical and critical observations of the Jewish doctors from the age of the Talmuds down. But, as far as we know, it was first digested into the form of a lexicon by Menahem ben Saruk, in the eleventh century.* This work remains in manuscript. It was followed by the much more considerable collection of Rabbi ben Jonah, a Spanish physician; and this again by the Lexicon of Rabbi Kimchi, first published at Naples in 1490, to which a grammar from

* There was an earlier essay of the glossary kind, by Saadia Gaon, at Babylon, in the tenth century; but it embraced only seventy words, interpreted in Arabic. He is said to have also composed a Grammar.

the same hand succeeded. Pagninus, a Dominican of Lucca, in his Hebrew Lexicon and Grammar, published early in the sixteenth century, furnished, I believe, the first considerable contribution to these studies which was made from a Christian source. A new era was opened by the labors of Schultens, of Leyden, who died in 1741. Of him presently I am to speak further in a different connexion.

Another source of information respecting the meaning of Hebrew terms and forms, is found in observation and comparison of them in the different connexions, in which they occur in different passages and books. This has of course been resorted to by all lexicographers and grammarians, in proportion to the extent of their investigations, and the good judgment with which these have been conducted.

A third and exceedingly valuable source of such information is afforded by the ancient versions. Of these, the Alexandrine version, commonly called, from a Jewish fable respecting its origin, "The Septuagint" or *Seventy*, has the greatest worth; because of its antiquity, — being referred to a time, between one hundred and three hundred years before the Christian era, when Hebrew had hardly ceased to be a spoken language; because of its being made by Jews, who may be presumed to have well understood the words and forms they were translating; and because of their work being more available to critics of the present day, than other ancient versions into languages less understood than the Greek. But, in order to derive all the benefit from this version, which at first view it seems to promise, we need a purer text of it than is yet possessed, and more complete lexicons of the Hellenistic dialect of Greek, into which it was made. Nor is it safe to ascribe to its authors, without qualification, a competent

knowledge of the language from which they were translating. When we are sure that we have their sense, we cannot, merely on that ground, be sure that we have a correct representation of the original, which lay before them.

The fragments of Greek versions by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, referred to the first two Christian centuries, have a similar, though less important use. The Peshito (or *Accurate*) Syriac, commonly dated from the first or second century, is an instrument yielding in importance, for the use in question, only to the Greek of the Seventy. It has the further advantage, that, being in a language cognate to the Hebrew, it is able to convey a peculiarly exact representation of its sense; but, on the other hand, a less complete knowledge of it is possessed by modern scholars, than of the Greek or Latin. The old Samaritan version of the Pentateuch, though reckoned very ancient, loses part of its value from the same circumstance. Among other aids of the same kind, more or less considerable, are the Chaldee Targums, particularly those of Onkelos and Jonathan, generally supposed to have been prepared either before, or not long subsequent to the Christian era, and the Vulgate Latin, dating from about the year 400. The Greek history of Josephus, though never representing the Old Testament more closely than in the way of a paraphrase, yet is not without its use in this connexion.

It was Schultens, whom I have already mentioned, who first began to enrich the lexicons through researches in the cognate dialects.* The family of lan-

* This course of investigation was proposed and defended by him in his works entitled, "Origines Hebrææ," "Vindiciæ Originum," "De Defectibus Hodiernis Linguae Hebrææ," and "Institutiones ad Fundamenta Linguae Hebrææ."

guages to which the Hebrew belongs, improperly called by modern critics the Shemitic, since part of them were spoken by descendants of Ham, appears to be divided into three main branches; 1. What may be called the Canaanitish, that is, the Hebrew, with the Phœnician, afterwards the Punic; 2. the Aramean, embracing the East Aramean, or Chaldee, and the West Aramean, or Syriac, to which may be added, as less important subdivisions, the Samaritan, and the Palmyrene, exhibited in inscriptions on the ruins of Palmyra; 3. the Arabic, to which are closely related the Maltese and the Æthiopic, though this last, unlike the rest, is read from the left hand to the right. It was to be presumed that these languages (part of them preserved in a much more copious literature than the Hebrew) would, if diligently searched and judiciously used, be able to throw much light upon its etymology; that, for instance, if the meaning of a Hebrew word remained doubtful or obscure in consequence of infrequent use in scripture, or of insufficient or conflicting authority of the versions, it might be traced and ascertained by means of the established use of corresponding words in the sister dialects. Proceeding in researches founded on this assumption, Schultens, by his own labors, made important contributions to Hebrew lexicography. They have been still further successfully pursued by Simon, the learned Professor of Sacred History and Antiquities at Halle, whose work is the basis of those of Winer and Eichhorn, well known as containing further collections of the same authority; and by Gesenius, whose Thesaurus, now in process of publication, will perhaps leave little, that is attainable, to be still desired.

But it is clear that conclusions, sustained only or chiefly by facts obtained in this way of research, are not

to be received without extreme caution. It is not only that the meanings of that (far the largest) class of terms, which stand for complex ideas, are of the most evanescent character; but, also, all that exceedingly numerous description of words, which, in a secondary sense, bear some figurative relation to the primitive, are likely to receive altogether different applications, according as the different mental associations of different races have dictated the selection of one or another sort of analogy in fixing the metaphorical use. For an instance of the former kind, who does not see how different is the significance of the word *virtus*, as used by a Roman, from that of the same word, retained with one or another trifling change of form in the languages of modern Christendom, and how unsafe it would be to attempt, by interpreting the one, to fix an exposition of the other? An example of the other description is furnished by a common root, subsisting with scarcely any variation of form in the English and Low Dutch.* In the former speech, "to understand," means, in a very familiar, but a figurative use, *to comprehend*. In the latter, it denotes, with more close adherence to the primitive acceptation, *to sustain*; and the corresponding substantive, in like manner, signifies in the one case *intelligence*, in the other *assistance*; and the adjective, in the one case *sagacious*, and in the other *helpful*. Were we disposed to argue from the force of the Dutch word to that of the English, we might in many instances be repelled, as no good sense would be produced. But, in others, where the mistake would be equally great, there would be nothing in the context to expose it. For instance, in the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, thirty-fourth verse, ("Give me understanding, and I shall

* I take this illustration from Le Clerc's "Ars Critica," Part. 1, cap. 4, § 10.

keep thy law,") if we were to infer, from the analogy alluded to, that *understanding* meant *help*, we should have reached a good sense, but it would not be the true one.

Such instances show, at a glance, the caution with which aid from the cognate dialects should be sought. Yet they do not disprove the great value, which such assistance may possess. It may confirm the evidence of one or more versions, against the opposing authority of others, which are abstractly of more consideration. It may furnish a sense, where, from mere defect of information concerning a word, a text has remained unintelligible. And particularly, it may often supply the links, by which a secondary sense is connected with a primary, when otherwise that connexion would be imperceptible.

Some of the statements, which have now been made, cannot have failed to make manifest the unreasonableness of those, who demand that the Old Testament should be interpreted with the same fulness as the New, or who press with equal confidence their own interpretations of its language. It is out of the question for any man to suppose, that he can be acquainted with Hebrew as familiarly and thoroughly, as he may be acquainted with Greek and Latin. We have not so much as the rudest grammar, or lexicon, or version, proceeding from the times when any man knew Hebrew as one knows his vernacular tongue. We have not an extended Hebrew literature, so that, by comparing various connexions in which the same word is used, we may arrive, by long approximation, at its varieties and minutiae of sense. On the contrary, the total remains of it are collected in one volume of no great bulk, in which, of course, numerous words occur but a few times, and many not more than once, while some, it is

not unlikely, are mere errors of transcription, which it is now too late to correct. It was besides a language, in some respects, of very inartificial, and, we must needs say, incomplete construction, leaving room, in its forms, for great latitude of interpretation; or, if that latitude was not in reality so great as to us it seems, then it was restricted by devices, which we at this distant time are unable to detect. The limitation, in the forms of the verbs, to three moods and two tenses, may be specified as a prominent imperfection of the kind of which I speak.*

But even that knowledge of a language, which so partially, from unavoidable circumstances, we possess of the Hebrew, is clearly far from being all, which an interpreter wants for the entirely satisfactory execution of his work, or all, which, in the present instance, we are precluded from obtaining. There are no side lights thrown for us upon the social and intellectual condition and habits of the Jewish people, by the writers of other nations. With very few exceptions, and those not of a nature to afford us any aid, the earliest monuments of profane literature are hardly earlier than the latest in their sacred collection. What we would know of the growth and complexion of opinions, necessarily referred to more or less in these writings throughout, we must learn, as best we may, from themselves. Their own brief sketch of the national history is all, on that subject, which is accessible to an interpreter, when he would inform himself, for uses so important to his task, concerning the feelings of the people, and the

* "Fatendum est eum conari *σχιδίη περιάν μίγα κῦμα θαλάσσης*, qui sperat se, subsidiis memoratis adjutum, mediocrem adepturum cognitionem Hebraicæ linguæ; hoc est, se eam ita intellecturum, ut omnibus in locis, aut saltem plurimis, Veteris Testamenti, possit certo sibi persuadere se æque intelligere quid Scriptores sacri velint, ac olim, dum vivebant, ab Hebræorum vulgo intelligebatur." Clerici Ars Critica, P. I. cap. 4, § 3.

sources of illustration and allusion to which their writers would spontaneously have recourse. All that can be known concerning those characteristic national habits of thought, which dictate the whole form and taste of composition, must be gathered from the same inadequate materials. Yet more ; we not only want this knowledge respecting the individual nation in question, in order to the best interpretation of its literary remains, but we lack it even in relation to that age of the world's history. And if the habits of expression, and the force of the same forms of speech, differ materially, and differ arbitrarily, as we know they do, in different cotemporaneous branches of the same family of nations, and that too where the modern link of commerce unites them, much more do they differ in distant ages, between nations of as different temperament, culture, and condition as the Orientals and the modern civilized states ; and especially may marked peculiarities be reasonably looked for among those, all whose thoughts and habits were of domestic, isolated origin.

A careful interpreter will not forget this ; nor, by insisting that he must present distinct statements, will he be led to take up with error, where he is under no necessity of taking up with any thing worse than ignorance. Does any one think it reason for dissatisfaction, that (if what has been urged be just) God, in his providence, has left us so much less capable of interpreting completely and minutely the records of the old covenant, than those of the new ? He ought to reverse the statement, and be grateful, that, profitable and interesting study as the old dispensation may be, still, as the old, as to its direct authority, is superseded and obsolete, and the new is our authoritative guide in all matters of faith and duty, we are possessed of such superior facilities for the exposition of the latter.

LECTURE II.

CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CURRENT VIEWS RESPECTING AN OLD TESTAMENT CANON.—ITS SUPPOSED FORMATION BY EZRA, AND THE MEN OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE.—QUESTIONS RESPECTING THE FACT OF SUCH A COLLECTION, AND PRINCIPLES OBSERVED IN MAKING IT.—EXTENT OF THE COLLECTION RENDERED IN THE ALEXANDRINE VERSION.—BOOKS MENTIONED BY PHILO.—EVIDENCE FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT, — FROM JOSEPHUS, — FROM MELITO, — FROM ORIGEN, — FROM FATHERS OF THE FOURTH CENTURY, — FROM JEROME, — FROM THE TALMUD.—CONCLUSION FROM THE WHOLE INQUIRY.

THE current opinion of Protestant Christians respecting the Canon of the Old Testament is as follows :

Thirty-nine Jewish books, now extant in Hebrew, (with the exception of two, parts of which are in Chaldee,) were recognised by the Jews, while they retained a national existence, as containing the revelations, or the authoritative record of the revelations, which God had made to their race. All these books possess, if not an equal, yet a peculiar character of sacredness, which, being shared by no other Jewish writings, makes a broad distinction between them, and the books and portions of books, which are called Apocryphal. And precisely this collection of canonical books, and neither more, nor fewer, nor different, are referred to in the New Testament writings, under the names of “the Holy Scriptures,” “the Law and Prophets,” and “the Law, Prophets, and Psalms.”

It has even been extensively believed, that Ezra, on the return from the captivity, made a collection of books ascribed by him to divinely authorized writers, and

placed it in the people's hands, to be their guide of faith and practice.* Had we any credible historical testimony to such a transaction, it would be of the first importance. But we have none whatever. Nor indeed, is it possible that it could have occurred in respect to the whole collection now received, inasmuch as part of it is allowed, on all hands, to have been composed after Ezra's time.

Again; there is a Jewish fable, that the Canon, as above described, was completed and arranged by a body of men, called the "Men of the Great Synagogue."† Had it been so, interesting questions would arise, respecting the authority and the qualifications of those individuals for such a work; respecting the amount of necessary information which they possessed, and the degree of good judgment which they exercised. But no such body as the Men of the Great Synagogue is known in authentic history. The phrase seems to have been first used by the Talmudists for the leading men of the first three centuries after the return from Babylon, when spoken of collectively, and so gradually to have come to be used for a supposed associated council of such persons.

Two questions present themselves as of great importance in this connexion. 1. Was a Jewish Canon, a collection of books consisting of so many, and no more, ever settled by the Jews during the time of their national existence; that is, while they could do it intelligently? And if so, then, 2. On what principles was it settled?

* See Prideaux's *Connexions*, Vol. II. Part. I. Book 5. Year 446, B. C.

† Prideaux (*Ibid.*, B. C. 292) approves the view, that the two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi, were inserted into the Canon by Simon the Just, whom, after Maimonides and other rabbies, he calls the last of the Great Synagogue.

If the former of these questions should be answered in the affirmative, the latter would still remain a very material one, in respect to its bearing upon current opinions, and upon Old Testament interpretation. If we knew that a Canon was definitely formed by the Jews, on their return from the captivity, or at some later period, we should then need to inquire, for what purpose, and on what basis, was it formed. Was it intended to embrace all the existing remains of national literature, whether of a religious, political, historical, didactic, or poetical kind? This certainly, upon abstract grounds, is not an improbable supposition. Or was it designed to comprehend all writings, which for any reason were esteemed particularly valuable? Or was it meant to include all which treated of sacred subjects, and no other? Or was its aim to give those (and no other), which were understood to have been composed by divinely commissioned men? He who should assume this latter ground, if we knew that a definite Canon had been formed, would still have to prove that it was formed on the principle which he alleges, rather than on either of the others, which in the nature of things are equally reasonable; and further, that it was discreetly, and with sufficient knowledge, formed upon this principle. And, in order to prove this, it would not be enough for him to urge passages of the New Testament, which call the Jewish writings by such names as "the Holy Scriptures;"* for, supposing the phrase to have been applied to all the writings indiscriminately which are found in our received collection, and to no other, still it would remain to be said, 1., that merely to give to these writings, in speaking of them, the name by which they were currently known, could not safely be con-

* Rom. i. 2; 2 Tim. iii. 15.

strued into an undistinguishing confirmation of all the authority, which might in any quarter be ascribed to them; and, 2., that the epithet "holy" or "sacred" by no means necessarily implies so high a character, as that of supernatural revelation from God. Every thing is sacred, which is entitled to reverence. Every thing is holy to us, which is connected, though it should be but remotely, with our religion.

If we knew the time and author of such a uniform arrangement as has been supposed, we should have some guidance, at least, in ascertaining also its principles. But not only, as has been remarked, has history left us altogether in the dark upon this point; it must be owned further, in reply to the first question above proposed, that there does not appear to have been any absolutely uniform Canon of the Old Testament, till three or four centuries, at least, after the New Testament revelation. If this be true, then it follows, not only that the uniformity was introduced at a period too late to admit of its being intelligently done, but still more, that, in giving this kind of definiteness to what earlier times had left indefinite, a contradiction was offered to the truth of history. If before; and at the time of our Saviour, the Jews did not know, that precisely the books which compose their and our present received Canon possessed a peculiar and exclusive character of sacredness, then it never could become known to the Jews, for instance, of the fourth century; since it could only be through the channel of that earlier age, that the opinion, allowing that it was a correct one, could have come down to this later.

Of testimonies to the extent of a Jewish collection of sacred books, the most ancient, and therefore one of especial value, is that of the Alexandrine Version. If, in the three centuries before Jesus' advent, there existed

such a Canon, as has been supposed, and if it is to be presumed that Jewish translators would have observed it in making a version into Greek, then it was not the same with the now established Canon, inasmuch as, in addition to the books herein contained, the Alexandrine version comprises nearly all the matter, embraced in our English collection called the Apocrypha.

Philo the Jew, of Alexandria, a copious writer, contemporary with our Saviour, is naturally looked to for information on this subject. He gives us, however, no account of a Jewish Canon, though he quotes, or refers to, nineteen books of the Old Testament, applying to some of them such titles as "The Prophetic Word," "Sacred Writings," &c. Of the others received by us, he makes no mention; and on the other hand he occasionally borrows expressions from writings which we reckon as Apocryphal.

Leaving the Egyptian Jews, the earliest authority, to which we can have recourse for the prevailing opinion on this subject in Palestine, is the New Testament. It is thought to refer in some way to all the books of the Old, except six;* but it nowhere says any thing of a Canon, either in the use of that expression, or any equivalent. As to any number of books, intended to be embraced in designations which it employs, its language is altogether indefinite. If one should speak of the "English Classics," it would be quite safe to infer that he meant to include Milton and Shakspeare, and some others, in the description; but how comprehensive he designed it to be, would be left uncertain. So he, who spoke of the "Sacred Scriptures" to Jews, would certainly be understood as not intending to omit the writings of Moses; but his language would not define

* Judges, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah. Seventeen of the thirty-nine books are not directly quoted.

how many others were associated in his mind under that title, nor would it convey his opinion that it did pertain at all to a precise and immutable number.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, was contemporary with the Apostles,* a priest, and a Pharisee. A passage from his writings is the most important, that is adduced in this controversy in favor of the prevailing opinion. I give it below. † The following is a correct translation ;

“There are not with us myriads of books, inconsistent and conflicting ; but only twenty-two, comprising a record of all time, which are justly confided in. And of these, five are the books of Moses, which embrace laws and the tradition of the origin of man, extending to his death. This period falls a little short of three thousand years. And from Moses’ death to the reign of Artaxerxes, king of the Persians after Xerxes, the prophets after Moses wrote in thirteen

* He was born, A. D. 37.

† Οὐ γὰρ μυριάδες βιβλίων εἰσὶ παρ’ ἡμῖν, ἀσυμφώνων καὶ μαχομένων· δύο δὲ μόντα πρὸς τοῖς ἑκοσὶ βιβλία, τοῦ παντὸς ἔχοντα χρόνου τὴν ἀναγραφὴν, τὰ δικαίως [Θεῖα] πιστευμένα. Καὶ τούτων πέντε μὲν ἴσθι τὰ Μωϋσείως, αἱ τοῦς τι νόμους περιέχει καὶ τὴν τῆς ἀνθρωπογενείας παραδοσιν, μέχρι τῆς αὐτοῦ τελευτῆς. Οὗτος δὲ χρόνος ἀπολείπει τρισχιλίων ὀλίγον ἰσῶν. Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Μωϋσείως τελευτῆς μέχρι τῆς Ἀρταξέρξου, τοῦ μετὰ Ξέρξην Περσῶν βασιλέως, ἀρχῆς, οἱ μετὰ Μωϋσῆν προφήται τὰ κατ’ αὐτοὺς πραχθέντα συνέγραψαν ἐν τρισὶ καὶ δέκα βιβλίοις. Αἱ δὲ λοιπαὶ τίσσaris ὕμνου εἰς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑποθήκας τοῦ βίου περιέχουσιν. Ἀπὸ δὲ Ἀρταξέρξου μέχρι τοῦ καθ’ ἡμᾶς χρόνου γίνεσθαι μὲν ἕκαστα· πίστιως δὲ οὐχ ὁμοίως ἠξίωται τῆς ἀρὰ αὐτῶν, διὰ τὸ μὴ γενίσθαι τὴν τῶν προφητῶν ἀκριβῆ διαδοχὴν. Δῆλον δ’ ἐστὶν ἔργω, πῶς ἡμῖς τοῖς ἰδίῳις γράμμασι πισιστιύκαμιν. Τοσούτου γὰρ αἰῶνος ἦδη παραγωγικότος, οὔτε προσθεῖναι τις οὐδὲν, οὔτε ἀφελῆν αὐτῶν, οὔτε μεταθεῖναι τιτόλμηκε. Πᾶσι δὲ σύμφυτόν ἐστιν εὐθύς ἐκ τῆς πρώτης γενίσεως Ἰουδαίοις, τὸ νομίζεῖν αὐτὰ Θεοῦ δόγματα, καὶ τούτοις ἱμῖνισιν, καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, εἰ δέοι, θνήσκουσιν ἡδῶς· ἦδη οὖν πολλοὶ πολλὰκις ἰώρανται τῶν αἰχμαλώτων, στρέβλας καὶ ταντοῖων θανάτων τρόπου ἐν θανάτρῳ ὑπομίνοντες, ἐπὶ τὸ μηδὲν προῖσθαι παρὰ τοῦς νόμους καὶ τὰς μετὰ τούτων ἀναγραφὰς. Joseph. contra Apion. lib. I, § 8. The word Θεῖα, which would require the last clause of the first period to be rendered, “which are justly considered divine,” has crept into the late editions of Josephus, from Eusebius’s quotation of the passage, in his Ecclesiastical History, lib. 3, cap. 10. See Eichhorn’s Einleitung in das A. T., § 40. Havercamp notes upon it ; “ Illud Θεῖα ex Eusebio.”

books the things done in their times. The remaining four comprise hymns to God, and rules of life for man. From Artaxerxes down to our time, every thing has been recorded. But these records are not accounted worthy of equal credit with those before them, because the succession of prophets has not been exact.

“And it is plain in our conduct, what credit we have given to our own scriptures. For, though so long a time has passed, no one has ventured to add any thing to them, nor take away from them, nor alter them. But it is innate with Jews from their very birth, to esteem them directions of God, and adhere to them, and even cheerfully to die for them, if need should be. And many captives have often been seen, bearing tortures and every kind of death in the theatres, rather than admit a word against the laws, and the records [interspersed, or connected] with them.”

If it was essentially the more numerous books of our present Canon, that were meant by Josephus to be comprehended within the number twenty-two, such a distribution of them, by whomsoever made or adopted, was obviously a device to conform the number to that of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet; and accordingly it required an arbitrary arrangement of the contents of the several divisions, which greatly impairs the apparent definiteness of the statement. Modern critics differ in making this distribution. Unquestionably the undertaking is attended with difficulty. If Josephus had our present Canon in view, where, for instance, did he arrange the book of Job, to which individually he never alludes? Not among books of “hymns to God, and rules of life for man,” for the four places of that collection are wanted for the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, the last three of which books he also never names. And it may be thought that there are

strong objections, from the structure of the book of Job, to supposing that Josephus intended to refer to its author as one of those "prophets after Moses," who "wrote in thirteen books the things done in their times." Further, Josephus says that the second division of books, referred to by him, proceeded from writers, who lived between Moses, and Artaxerxes, successor of Xerxes; that is, Artaxerxes Longimanus. But Artaxerxes Longimanus died in 424, B. C. And the prophecy of Malachi at least, now making part of our Canon, has always been referred to a later period.

I will not propose to regard Josephus as expressing, in the first period of the quotation given above, his individual sense of the peculiar authority of certain books, twenty-two in number. It is true, that, as a mere question of grammar, there would be no difficulty in understanding him to have used the plural number for the singular [*us* for *me*]; and so I perceive he is actually interpreted in the version of Bradshaw, who cannot be thought to have had in view the argument, which I am supposing, founded on his translation of the words. The context, however, seems to be opposed to such a rendering. I gather from the passage, that, as early as Josephus' time, there had been made an enumeration, under the heads of the letters of the alphabet, of books bearing upon the national history previous to the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus; that this enumeration, in its third class, included didactic and devotional writings ascribed to two distinguished monarchs of Israel, these having connexion with their biographies and the history of their reigns; and that it had acquired sufficient currency to justify Josephus in referring to it. The arrangement may even be supposed to have been adopted by the Pharisees as a body, being entirely in the punctilious spirit of criticism, characteristic of that

sect; to which also, as has been remarked, Josephus was attached. To those who made it, the books belonging to the older times were all invested, by the venerable association of antiquity, with a peculiar sacredness; and a suitable date for division between the older and recent times was afforded by the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, when Nehemiah had restored the Jewish city and worship.

The force of the second paragraph above quoted, and its degree of connexion with the first, may perhaps be rendered more apparent by a few observations on the design of the passage, and on its place in the general argument wherein it is introduced. Josephus is speaking of the twenty-two books, in their character of trustworthy historical documents. His treatise against Apion is a vindication of his "Jewish Antiquities," from the censures of that writer. Why,* he asks, should all the world persist in looking for true history only to the Greeks? The Greeks are the worst of authorities, instead of the best. They are comparatively moderns. Their oldest writings are recent. They have taken less pains † with their monuments and records, than other nations; and their authors, though numerous, are often mutually opposed ‡ in their testimony, having written, for the most part, with a view to popular applause.§ The Egyptians, || Babylonians, and Chaldeans have exercised more caution in this respect. Especially have the registers of the Jews been well kept by their priests and prophets. Few persons have been permitted to write among us; and we meet with no contradictions among those who have written. Then follows the passage I have cited, in which Josephus says, referring to an arrangement of books relating to ancient history,

* Cont. Apion. lib. 1, § 2.

§ Ibid. § 5.

† Ibid. § 4.

|| Ibid. § 6, 7.

‡ Ibid. § 3.

that they may all be reckoned under the number twenty-two; adding that the documents he had in view were composed by an uninterrupted succession of prophets, an opinion which may well have prevailed to a wide extent among his countrymen, in the age when he lived.

In the second paragraph of the quotation, he urges the constant credit given by the Jews to their national records, while the Greeks were perpetually engaged in altercations concerning the truth of theirs. In proof of this, he alleges their attachment to those laws of theirs, which made so important, and to foreigners so peculiarly questionable a part of their national history, and to which all the rest bore a certain relation. They observe scrupulously in respect to them, he says, the precept given in Deuteronomy.* Though so many centuries have passed, no one has ventured to "add any thing, or remove any thing," or make any change. It is instinctive with Jews to regard them as God's ordinances, and adhere to them as such; and, sooner than admit a word against "the laws and the records with them," it is well known that our people will die in torments.

These observations, I think, show that it is impossible to identify a number of documents for history, of which Josephus spoke as referable in some way to twenty-two heads, with those ordinances of God for which he declares his countrymen to be willing to die in torments. He does not, it must be allowed, express himself with the accuracy which he would have used, had his design been to guard against any misapprehension of his words, in their bearing on that question of our modern technics, to which we now apply them. Then it is

* iv. 2; xii. 32. The precept relates only to the Law, strictly so called. I have not remarked, that Josephus' reference to it, which almost amounts to a verbal quotation, has been before pointed out. But it appears to me very obvious, and to be material to the best understanding of the passage.

likely he would have gone on to say, that the care of the Jews for preserving the law, properly so called, in its primitive purity, and their willingness to encounter any evil sooner than incur the guilt of doing it a wrong, communicated to them a habit of similar circumspection in respect to all writings, which had a relation to it, and to the history of its expositions and of its influence. It is true, that he points out no such distinction, by means of any mark of transition between the periods, which I have set off as the beginning and end of separate paragraphs: But there is at least as great inexactness of composition (if such it be thought) at the beginning of the last period of the first paragraph, where every one will allow that there is an ellipsis, requiring to be supplied by a translator; and what was uppermost in Josephus' mind is abundantly evident from his specification, at the end of the passage, of "the laws and the records with them." And if any one should even think, that there is some spirit of exaggeration in the language, it was no more than what was very natural in the case, nor more than we find fully paralleled in the context. In the period immediately preceding the quoted passage, it is said that there is "no discrepance in the records" for history referred to; an assertion impossible to be made by a person acquainted, like Josephus, with the books of Kings and Chronicles, if he were studious of accuracy in his statement.

The sum of the whole, then, divested of inferences improperly drawn from the second paragraph, I take to be this. The Jews are said by Josephus to have a number of books, including the books of Moses, or the Law, understood by them to have been written in their ancient times, (viz. previously to the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, when their city and worship were restored,) which books a practice had been introduced, we know

not how extensively, of arranging under twenty-two heads, corresponding to the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Respecting the manner of making this distribution, there could, it is true, have been no very great difference of opinion; for the books understood by all Jews to have this antiquity, must have been to a great extent the same. But, on the other hand, the fact of the use of this enumeration, by no means establishes the fact of a uniformity of opinion respecting the collection, or respecting its several heads. An agreement among any number of persons to reckon their ancient books in this manner, so partially abridged the latitude of opinion concerning the individual authority of this or that writing, that whatever difference the nature of the case admitted, may perfectly well have continued to exist. The book of the Minor Prophets, for example, was reckoned as one. He, then, who did not see fit to include in it the book of Jonah, or who rejected from it any number of these compositions, greater or less, (provided the number rejected by him did not exhaust the book) would still agree to the received enumeration. Job might or might not be reckoned among the thirteen prophets, by one who approved the general scheme; for, if he scrupled to reckon that book among documents relating to Jewish history, he would separate Nehemiah from Ezra in his computation, or Ruth from Judges, or Lamentations from Jeremiah, and so keep the number full. On the other hand, in the truest spirit of the arrangement, and with the same propriety that the different books of Jeremiah are reckoned as one, a friend to our (so called) Apocryphal book of the Wisdom of Solomon would attach it to the Proverbs attributed to that monarch. Our Apocryphal books of Ezra would be naturally arranged in the same class with the other book or books

bearing the same title. Nor, in short, would there be any difficulty in disposing any part of our Apocryphal collection, or of other Jewish writings whose antiquity could not be disproved, under the same number of divisions which Josephus has assigned.

Remarking only further, that it is safe to infer, that Josephus had heard of no time nor author of a formal arrangement of a Canon, else he could hardly have failed to mention them in the connexion, I proceed next to the mention of the authority of Melito, Christian bishop of Sardis in Lydia, dated by Cave and Lardner, about A. D. 170. His works, of which Eusebius* and Jerome† have preserved catalogues, to the number of twenty, are all lost, with the exception of a few fragments. He is the first writer, who gives us a detailed list of any Old Testament collection. In that list, Lamentations, Nehemiah, and Esther are not included; but they were, probably enough, viewed as appendages of the books of Jeremiah and Ezra respectively, and reckoned under those names. What I regard as of much more importance is the implication, in the language of Melito, that, at Sardis, in Asia Minor, a place not remote from Palestine, nor unfrequented by Jews, the constituent parts of the Old Testament records were not a subject of notoriety (as it would seem they could not fail to be, if they had been anciently and authoritatively, or in any way definitely and by common consent, established); but, on the contrary, a subject of curiosity. “Since,” he writes to his brother, or friend, Onesimus, as his words are preserved by Eusebius, ‡ “in thy zeal for the word, thou hast often

* Hist. Eccl., lib. 4, cap. 26.

† De Vir. Illust., cap. 24.

‡ Hist. Eccl., lib. 4, cap. 26. Μελίταν Ὀνησίμω τῷ ἀδελφῷ χαίρειν· ἐπιδή πολλάκις ἠξίωσας σπουδῇ τῇ πρὸς τὸν λόγον χράμινος γινίσθαι σοι ἐκλογὰς, ἕκ τε τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος καὶ πάσης τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν, ἵτι δὲ

desired to have selections from the Law and the Prophets concerning the Saviour and the whole of our faith, and hast also wished to obtain an exact statement of the ancient books, how many they were in number, and what was their arrangement, I took pains to effect this, understanding thy zeal for the faith, and thy desire for knowledge in respect to the word, and that in thy devotion to God thou esteemest these things above all others, striving after eternal salvation. Having come therefore to the East, and arrived at the place where these things were preached and done, and having accurately acquainted myself with the books of the old covenant, I have subjoined and sent them to thee. Of which the names are these; of Moses, five; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Joshua, son of Nun, Judges, Ruth; four of Kings, two of Chronicles; a book of Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, and the Wisdom,* Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Job; of prophets, books of Isaiah and Jeremiah; writings of the twelve prophets, in one book; Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra; from which also I have made selections, distributing them into six books."

I will not extend the discussion beyond reasonable limits, by raising any question as to the degree of

καὶ μαθῆν τὴν τῶν παλαιῶν βιβλίων ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀκριβείας, πόσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν καὶ ὁποῖα τὴν τάξιν ἴεν, ἰσχυθῆσα τὸ τοιοῦτο πρᾶξαι, ἰσιστάμενός σου τὸ σπουδαῖον περὶ τὴν πίστιν, καὶ φιλομαθῆς περὶ τὸν λόγον, ὅτι τι μάλιστα πάντων πύθῃ τῷ πρὸς Θεὸν ταῦτα προκρίνεις, περὶ τῆς αἰωνίου σωτηρίας ἀγωνιζόμενος· ἀνελθὼν οὖν εἰς τὴν ἀνατολήν, καὶ ἔως τοῦ τόπου γινόμενος ἵνα ἐκπύχῃ καὶ ἐπράχῃ, καὶ ἀκριβῶς μαθῶν τὰ τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης βιβλία, ὑποτάξας ἔπιμψά σοι· ὧν ἰστί τὰ ὀνόματα· Μωϋσίου πέντε· Γένεσις, Ἔξοδος, Λευιτικὸν, Ἀριθμοὶ, Δευτερονόμιον· Ἰησοῦς Ναυῆ, Κριταί, Ῥούθ· Βασιλειῶν τέσσαρα, Παραλειπομένων δύο· Ψαλμῶν Δαβὶδ, Σολομῶνος Παροιμιαί, ἡ καὶ Σοφία, Ἐκκλησιαστής, Ἄσμα Ἀσμάτων, Ἰώβ. Πρῶφητῶν, Ἡσαίου, Ἰερειμίου· τῶν δώδεκα ἐν μονοβίβλῳ· Δανιὴλ, Ἰεζικιὴλ, Ἔσδρας· ἕξ δὲ καὶ ἐκλογὰς ἰποιησάμην, εἰς ἕξ βιβλία διελών.

* This translation, if correct, brings our apocryphal book of Wisdom into Melito's catalogue. To avoid this, some render, "which is also called Wisdom."

strictness with which we ought to interpret Eusebius's declaration, that he has accurately reported the words of Melito. Nor will I propose any different interpretation of the passage from that commonly received, though the accurate knowledge, which Melito declares himself to have obtained respecting the books of the Old Testament, might be argued, with some plausibility, to relate to the contents of books named by him, from which he subjoined selections; rather than to a specific number of the books, of which he subjoined a list.* What I am content alone to urge here, is, that, towards the end of the second century, there was a question, among inquisitive Christian men at Sardis, respecting the authorities of the Jewish faith; a question which, I submit, could not possibly have been raised in any such form, had there existed a Canon of the definiteness and authority commonly supposed; for it would then have been a matter of uniform consent and of general notoriety, wherever there were Jews. And, if it did not exist in that age, there were of course none but critical grounds, on which the questions relating to it could be discussed and determined afterwards. And a determination resting on critical grounds is open to the revision of critics of any later age; these latter, of course, taking

* He says, indeed, that his correspondent had not only wished to possess extracts from the ancient Jewish scriptures, but also to learn how many they were, and in what order disposed; that is, to ascertain, as we might say, a Canon of them. But this latter wish, in respect to the number of books, it does not appear, so distinctly as has been assumed, that Melito had found himself able in any way to gratify; while, in regard to their order, at least, (a point which, in the question, has equal definiteness and prominence with the number) it must be owned that his answer is altogether peculiar. He writes that, when he had come to the East, he sought and obtained accurate information respecting the books of the old covenant, that is, books relating to that dispensation. But that he had been informed by any one of a definite collection of such books, of an authoritative character not shared by others, is what it is not so clear that he does say.

care to respect the judgments of their predecessors, as far as they have reason to believe, that those judgments rested on sufficient grounds.

The most, then, to be inferred from the testimony of Melito, as it is commonly understood, would be, that on diligent inquiry, during his travels in the East, and apparently in Palestine, he had become acquainted, as he thought, on credible authority, with an Old Testament collection, composed of the books which he specifies. And then not only should we remain ignorant of the degree of credibility of his informers, of the degree of confidence with which they entertained their opinion, and the extent to which it prevailed; but, much more, their view would also be shown to be of limited prevalence, by the fact that it had to be inquired after by inhabitants of Asia Minor, to say nothing of its being contradicted by the larger list, furnished by the much more ancient authority, the authors of the Alexandrine Version.

The next material evidence is that of Origen, in the beginning of the third century,* who, in a passage preserved by Eusebius,† gives a full list of books, on the authority, as he says, of Hebrews.‡ They are twenty-two in number, as he disposes them, the arrangement having reference, as he expressly affirms, to the number of alphabetical elements.§ All the books of the now received Canon are included, except the Minor Prophets; and the two books of Maccabees, reckoned as one, are added to complete the alphabetical number. The now Apocryphal book of Baruch, reckoned with Jeremiah, is also introduced into the list.

* He was born, according to Lardner (Credibility, Part 2, chap. 38), A. D. 184, and died in 253.

† Hist. Eccl., lib. 6, cap. 25.

‡ Ὡς Ἑβραῖοι παραδίδουσι.

§ Δύο καὶ ἑξήκοντα, ὅσους ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς στοιχείων ἰστίν.

A legitimate inference from this passage of Origen appears to be, that, the alphabet having come to be regarded by the Jews in the enumeration of their sacred writings, the list was made up, as to the less considerable books, by a somewhat arbitrary selection, some being introduced into one catalogue and some into another. The fact that Origen has given to the Minor Prophets a place in his "Hexapla," does not affect our knowledge of his opinions, nor throw any light upon our inquiry. The nature of his enterprise required that he should do so, whatever was his estimation of those works. For, at least, they were contained in the Alexandrine Version, which, in his Hexapla, he has undertaken to exhibit. The Hexapla is lost, and only fragments have been recovered. There is no reason to doubt, that, in its complete state, it contained books which are not found in the received Canon, because such books were comprehended in the versions which it collated, if not then extant in Hebrew. And, in point of fact, we have the testimony of Bahr^d,* that fragments of Origen's collation of the Maccabees and Judith in his great work, yet exist in some manuscripts.

Beyond Origen, I shall not pursue in detail the testimony of the Egyptian Christians upon this subject. The following admission of Eichhorn† will suffice to show, that the evidence from that father, which has been exhibited, is less adverse to the common theory, than that of the generality of others, who, like him, may be supposed to have had their information from Egyptian Jews. "The Egyptian Christians accounted the Apocryphal writings of the Old Testament to be worthy of high estimation. After them, or their Septuagint version, the

* *Origenis Hexaplorum quæ supersunt, cum Notis a C. F. Bahr^d, Tom. i. p. 168.*

† *Enleit. ins A. T., § 310.*

Ethiopians divided the Old Testament into four parts. I. The Octateuch, consisting of the five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. II. The Kings, in thirteen books; viz. the two books of Samuel, two of Kings, two of Chronicles, two of Ezra (Ezra and Nehemiah), Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, Psalms. III. Solomon, in five books; Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Wisdom, and Sirach. IV. The Prophets, in eighteen books; Isaiah, Jeremiah's Prophecy and Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve Minor Prophets. They had besides two books of the Maccabees."

Authorities in the fourth century are less important; but they go to show, that no uniformity had, up to that time, been established. Athanasius, of Alexandria, (A. D. 326 – 373) in a fragment generally allowed to be genuine, of a work called the "Festal Epistle," introduces a list,* by saying; "The books of the Old Testament are all of them in number two and twenty; for so many are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet said to be." It does not include Nehemiah, by name, though probably Athanasius intended it as the "Second Book of Ezra," of which he speaks. He also embraces Baruch, and a work called "The Epistle."† Of the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Sirach, *Esther*, Judith, and Tobit, he says, that they are "not canonical indeed, but ordained by the fathers to be read by neophytes." — The list of Cyril ‡ of Jerusalem, (A. D. 315 – 386) has the same contents with our own Canon, except that, like that of Athanasius, it embraces Baruch and "The Epistle." — Epiphanius § of Cyprus (whose death is dated, A. D. 403) includes all the books of our received

* Athanasii Sancti Opera, Tom. i. p. 962. (Montfaucon's edition.)

† The same which is now appended, as a sixth chapter, to our book of Baruch.

‡ Cyrilli Hierosolymitani Opera, p. 66. (Milles's edition.)

§ Epiphanii Sancti Opera, p. 19. (Paris edition. 1622.)

catalogue, adding also to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, his "Epistle," and the Epistle of Baruch. — On the other hand, the council of Carthage (A. D. 397) decreed as follows; * "It is our pleasure, that, besides the canonical scriptures, nothing be read in the church under the name of divine scriptures. Now the Canonical Scriptures are; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua son of Nun, Judges, Ruth, two books of Kings, Job, one book of Psalms, *five books of Solomon*, twelve books of the Minor Prophets, also Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, *Tobit, Judith*, two books of Ezra, and *two of the Maccabees*." While we here find the titles of some books not approved in later times, we see no mention of Chronicles, and none apparently of Esther. The "two books of Kings" probably embraced what we call the books of Samuel. †

Coming down to Jerome, (who died A. D. 420) ‡ and the Talmudists of the fifth century, we obtain evidence of a definitive settlement of their Canon by the Jews.

In his "Prologus Galeatus," § Jerome says, that, as there are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet, so the Hebrews have that number of books; || and of

* See Lardner's Works, Vol. ii. p. 574, (4to.)

† I do not adduce the authority of the 60th canon of the council of Laodicea, (referred to a time near the middle of the fourth century,) the genuineness of that canon being so extremely suspicious. Its list, and for the most part the arrangement, are the same with those of Cyril.

‡ This is the date of his death commonly adopted by ecclesiastical historians. Some writers would place it a year or two earlier, or later. But their difference is not material. See Lardner's Works, Vol. ii. p. 532.

§ This Prologue may be found in the common editions of the Vulgate, prefixed to the version of the books of Samuel and Kings, the first books which Jerome translated. He calls it "galeatus," or "helmeted," because, as he says, "being the beginning of his labors on the Old Testament, it may serve as a head to what is to follow."

|| "Quomodo igitur viginti duo elementa sunt, per quæ scribimus

these he proceeds to give a list, distributing them into three divisions. The first division contains the Law, the five separate books of which he designates by their Hebrew and Greek titles. The second division consists of the Prophets; viz. Joshua; Judges, with Ruth; two books of Samuel, and two of Kings, each pair being reckoned as one; Isaiah; Jeremiah, with Lamentations; Ezekiel; and the book of the twelve Minor Prophets. The third class, he says, is called, *Hagiographa*,* (*holy writings*), and is composed of Job, the Psalms, three books of Solomon, viz. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles; Daniel; Chronicles; Ezra, in two books, (including our Nehemiah); and Esther. "Whatever," he adds, "does not belong to this list, is apocryphal;" and he specifies as such the books of Wisdom, of Jesus son of Sirach, of Judith, of Tobit, and of "the Shepherd." He elsewhere speaks† of Baruch, and of our apocryphal portions of Daniel, in the same manner. In another place, viz. in a letter to Paulinus,‡ (computed to have been written about A. D. 396,) he gives a catalogue in all respects the same, except that there are some transpositions of the names of the books.

The same collection of books, which, at the end of the fourth century, had come to be received by Jews as of distinctive authority, to such an extent as to lead Jerome to speak of it in the terms above quoted, is also specified in the Babylonish Talmud.§ In that

Hebraicè omne quod loquimur, et eorum initiis vox humana comprehenditur; ita viginta duo volumina supputantur, quibus quasi literis et exordiis in Dei doctrinâ, tenera adhuc et lactans viri justi eruditur infantia."

* The origin of this viciously formed Greek word is doubtful. It has been ascribed to Aquila, author of one of the versions into Greek.

† Opera, Tom. v. pp. 261, 567. (Edit. Erasm.)

‡ Ibid. Tom. iii. pp. 7, 8.

§ It is material to observe this distinction. There are two Talmuds, that of Jerusalem, and that of Babylon; the one consisting of the "Mischna" and the "Jerusalem Ghemara"; the other, of the Mischna, and

compilation we find the following catalogue; The Law; The Prophets, consisting of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, the Twelve; and The Writings, (כתובים) or Hagiographa, viz. Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, Daniel, the roll of Esther, Ezra, and Chronicles.

The list of Jerome,* and of the Talmud is the same,

the "Babylonish Ghemara." The Mischna, (or "second law," so highly do the Jews speak of it,) is reputed to have been compiled by Judah Hakkadosh, (or *the Holy*) who completed his work at some time between A. D. 190 and 220. (See Ugolini Thesaurus, Vol. ii. p. 55; Vol. xvii. p. 263.) The Ghemaras, to use Ugolino's language, consist of "discussions and controversies upon the Mischna." That of Jerusalem was published by Rabbi Johanan, in or about A. D. 370. (Ibid., Vol. i. p. 129.) That of Babylon, the work of Rabbi Ase, dates from A. D. 500. (Ibid., Vol. i. p. 131.) Eichhorn, in citing that testimony of the Talmudists, with which we are now concerned, merely dates it with the words "Sec. II.—IV." (Einleitung ins A. T., Vol. i. p. 136), thus ascribing it to some time previous to the year 400; and then refers to the book "Bava Bathra," for authority. The original book Bava Bathra, is part of the Mischna, making the third chapter of the fourth book of that collection. If (belonging to so early a period) the Mischna exhibited the enumeration of Sacred Writings in question, the fact would be of the first importance. But it contains nothing of the kind. The passage is found in the Babylonish Ghemara, in Volume viii., folio 14, page 2, (near the foot,) of Morinus's edition. I give the reference particularly, because this edition, without an index, or any other of the usual aids for examination of its contents, is the only one, to which in this vicinity we have access.

* No aid is to be derived to our investigation from the versions ascribed to the period between the Christian era, and Jerome's version, or the Vûlgate. Of the Chaldee "Targums," or Paraphrases, none but those of Onkelos and Jonathan, embracing only the Pentateuch and the Prophets, can be dated, with any probability, so far back. — The Old Samaritan versions do not extend beyond the Pentateuch. — The Old Italic version (supposing this name, derived from a passage in Augustine, to be rightly applied) is extant only in fragments. Having been made from the Greek of the Septuagint, it is to be presumed that its contents corresponded with those of that collection. — The Syriac version, as exhibited in Walton's Polyglott, (where it was reprinted from that of Paris, with the further aid of four manuscripts,) embraces most of the Apocryphal books; viz. the Third book of Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, "the Epistle" of Jeremiah, the Additions to Daniel,

which, at the time of the Reformation, was adopted by the Protestant churches, and to which they have ever since adhered. The Romish church, at the same time, at the Council of Trent, (A. D. 1545 - 6,) sanctioned that of the Vulgate, which contains, beside the books translated by Jerome, most of those which exist in the Alexandrine Version, they having been preserved in the Vulgate from the older translation, commonly known by the name of the *Italic*.*

I have urged, at the greater length, the lateness of the period, at which the Jews came to a definitive agreement respecting the Canon of their scriptures, because of the confidence, with which, in our times, a different opinion is entertained. But, before I leave the subject, I would recur, in a word, to the other question, presented in the beginning of these remarks. If, instead of having to refer to the fourth or fifth century for a specific determination of canonical books, we could trace it to the time of Josephus and Philo, or the time of the Maccabees, or of Simon the Just, still that determination would not be authoritative for us; nor would it have a claim to our adoption upon any grounds, independent of the reasons, which we might find to have justified the original arrangement, or of other reasons which might now weigh with our own minds.

On the most impartial and careful estimate, therefore, which I am able to make of the whole evidence, I find myself unauthorized to acquiesce in the prevailing opinion, described in the beginning of this Lecture, respecting a similar and a distinctive authority of thirty-nine

and the two books of Maccabees. But the history of that version is obscure, and there is good reason for believing that part of these books, at least, were not in the original "Peschito." See Eichhorns Einleit. in das A. T., § 252.

* Simon, *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, liv. 2, chap. 11. Horne's Introduction, Vol. i. p. 293.

books of the Old Testament, pertaining to them as severally comprehended in an authoritative Canon. I cannot thus confound Ecclesiastes, or the Canticles, with Exodus. For aught that I can learn, that which, *a priori*, would be strongly probable, actually took place; and, after the period of the composition of all those books, concerning which a question could now arise, single books, or different partial collections of books, were in different Jewish hands, being severally held in different degrees of esteem by different persons; the Law, for instance, being received by all, and the books of the Maccabees, for instance, being prized and sought by some, and not by others. I find no way to avoid the opinion, that, as in the New Testament collection, so in the Old, the several books are to be judged on their several and independent grounds of evidence; and that, further, the mere circumstance of being excluded from the established Canon, and stigmatized by the title of Apocryphal, should not prevent other books from having their claims considered. I find nothing in history to simplify the labor of a critic on the Jewish scriptures, by satisfying him, that, by mere force of being found embraced in the now received collection, a book is to be acknowledged for an authoritative teacher of faith or practice. This is what, I conceive, he has first to ascertain, before he is justified to proceed upon it as a fact.

LECTURE III.

TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE TEXT OF THE LAW SUBJECT TO BE VITIATED BY COPYISTS, PREVIOUSLY TO THE SEPARATION OF THE KINGDOMS. — INFORMATION RESPECTING ITS EARLY CONDITION TO BE DERIVED FROM THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH. — CONTROVERSY RESPECTING THE ORIGIN OF THE SAMARITAN COPY. — HISTORY OF THE TEXT, TO THE TIME OF EZRA, — OF THE ALEXANDRINE VERSION, — OF ORIGEN, — OF THE MASORITES, — OF THE INVENTION OF PRINTING. — PRINTED EDITIONS. — IMPOSSIBILITY OF FORMING A WHOLE CRITICAL TEXT. — RECAPITULATION OF PRINCIPAL ANTE-MASORETIC AUTHORITIES.

THE condition of the Text of the Old Testament, in respect to genuineness and purity, presents another important inquiry to the interpreter of its contents.

We know nothing of any critical labors expended upon the Text, before the third century of the Christian era. Up to that time, and, in a less degree, for a much longer period, as will presently appear, it was exposed to those chances of corruption, through mistakes, and possibly through design of transcribers, which are known to have taken effect on other ancient writings. Nor is there any reason to suppose, that divine Providence protected the books of the Old Testament, by means independent of human care, any more than that it so protected the books of the New Testament, which we know, however, not to have been dispensed, in this respect, from the common lot of writings frequently transcribed.

For the purpose of the present investigation, we may safely assume, what in its proper place I shall maintain,

that the books attributed to Moses were, in fact, substantially his production; since, if any one should determine otherwise, our results would be no further affected in his mind, than that, proposing a later date for the origin of those writings, he would understand them to have been subject to dangers of corruption through a less time. For the same reason, I may be permitted, for the present, to suppose the general correctness of the common opinion, respecting the succession in which the other parts of the Old Testament collection were composed.

At the close of the book of Deuteronomy* we read, that Moses, having "made an end of writing the words of the Law in a book, until they were finished," committed the volume to the Levites, directing them to lay it up, by or "in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord," to remain there, after his death, "for a witness," against the people, when they should violate its provisions. As the national code, it was of course fit that it should be deposited, under responsible public charge, at that place which was at once the political centre of the nation, and which, from its religious sanctity, would extend to it the most effectual protection.

Were copies early multiplied? This is a question, which we can answer only on grounds of probability; but I think it must be allowed that these are extremely strong. There was no policy, requiring that the people should be kept in ignorance of the contents of the law. On the contrary, as it was designed for the constant regulation of their conduct, means were expressly prescribed for its periodical promulgation to them.† There was no policy, requiring that its use should be restricted to oral communication through the priests. On the

* xxxi. 24 - 27.

† Deut. xxxi. 10 - 13.

contrary, it was prescribed as a duty for every king, when Israel should assume a royal government, to make a copy, with his own hand, on his accession to the throne.* A great familiarity with it was urged upon the people at large, in terms which imply, that a disposition to study it with all possible aids would not only not be thwarted, but be commended and encouraged.† Magistrates were not to execute their trusts at the central seat of authority alone; they were dispersed among the cities of all the tribes;‡ and the homes of the Levites, whose whole official function consisted in the administration of the religious law, were to be in separate communities, remote from the tabernacle.§ It appears to the last degree improbable, that numerous copies of the Law would not be provided, at least for the use of those numerous classes of persons, on whose intelligent application of it, so much, by its own provisions, was made to depend.

If copies from Moses' autograph were made, one is safe in saying, on the ground of universal experience, that, made with whatever care, they were not immaculate; and that the list of errors was increased with each successive transcription. An exact, undeviating, written copy of a composition of considerable length, if we may not call it an impossible achievement, is probably a work of which no example exists. An amanuensis, intending to give a strict representation of an existing manuscript, is deceived by his eye; or by his ear, if he writes from dictation; or he omits, or repeats a word or a passage, where successive words or passages have similar endings or beginnings; or, having read a clause, he trusts his memory while he writes it, and erroneously puts down a word synonymous with the original, or of similar

* Deut. xvii. 18 - 20.

† Ibid. vi. 6 - 9; xi. 18 - 21.

‡ Ibid. xvi. 18.

§ Ibid. xxxv. 1 - 8; Joshua xxi. 1 - 42.

sound ; or, observing that he has omitted a word or a phrase, he subjoins it, rather than deface his copy, and thus produces a transposition ; or, finding in the margin of the page, from which he is transcribing, a remark which, in the first instance, was only a gloss, he mistakes it for an omission, which the previous transcriber had accidentally made, and had thus supplied, and accordingly adopts it into the body of his own text.

These are some of the most common mistakes, universally incident to transcription from a written page. A transcriber of bolder genius will venture on the correction of what strike him as deviations, for instance, from good grammar or rhetoric, presuming them to have been errors of the copyist whose work is before him ; or he will introduce illustrations, or more full or satisfactory expressions, from some other book, or some different part of the same ; or he will add a few words by way of explanation ; or, for the better information of his readers, he will modernize words, especially proper names ; or he will even go so far as to change an expression for some other, which, through convictions of his own, appears to him better to represent the author's views, conforming it to what, when the scriptures are the writings in question, is called the *analogy of the faith*.

How far, and in what comparative degrees, these and the like causes of error affected the early copies of the writings of Moses, supposing that copies were made, we have now very inadequate means of determining. I only add, that, apart from such always operative causes of accidental error as have been named, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the obligation of a copyist simply to present an exact transcript of his original, (without any action of his own mind, except to the end of securing such identity,) could have been felt in those

remote ages, before such a science as textual criticism had entered any one's imagination. And if I should be reminded of the solemnity, with which any addition to the law, or omission from it, is forbidden,* let it suffice to say at present, that he who would interpret this prohibition as relating to the verbal contents of the book, and contend that it was rigidly observed, will have also to take the ground that the Pentateuch was not the work of Moses, inasmuch as there are parts of it, which could not have proceeded from his hand.

If we could show the common opinion respecting what is called the Samaritan Pentateuch,† to be well-founded, we should obtain important aid towards determining the condition of the text of the Law at the time of that great revolution, the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, in the year 975, B. C., about five centuries after Moses' death. That opinion (at first confidently urged, and in the last and the present century still maintained by many critics of the first consideration,) is, that the Samaritan text has descended

* Deut. iv. 2.

† The Samaritan Pentateuch is to be carefully distinguished from the Samaritan Version of the same books. The latter work is in the Samaritan dialect, a branch of the Aramæan. The former is a peculiar critical instrument, being simply the Hebrew text of Moses' five books, exhibited, without a vowel punctuation, in Samaritan letters. Some references by ancient Christian fathers to the existence of such a work in their times had been observed. For instance, Origen says; *Καὶ τούτων μνημονεύει Μωϋσῆς ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις τοῦ Δευτερονομίου, ἃ καὶ αὐτὰ ἐκ τοῦ τῶν Σαμαριτῶν Ἑβραϊκοῦ μεταβάλλομεν.* Hexapla ad Num. xiii. 1. — And again, *Καὶ τούτων μίμνηται Μωϋσῆς ἐν Δευτερονομίᾳ, ἃ ἐν μόνοις τῶν Σαμαριτῶν εἴρομεν.* Ibid., ad Num. xxi. 13. — And Jerome; "Samaritani etiam Pentateuchum Mosis totidem literis scriptitant, figuris tantum et apicibus discrepantes." Prologus Galeatus. — "Superfluum est quod in Samaritanorum volumine reperitur (Gen. iv. 8); 'Transeamus in campum.'" Opera, (Ed. Erasmi,) Vol. iii. p. 203. But till the seventeenth century, it was not known to be still extant. In 1616, a copy was brought from Damascus to Paris, from which the text was printed in the Paris Polyglott, and subsequently in that of London. Other copies have been since obtained.

by successive transcriptions from copies, written in the ancient character, which were in circulation among the northern tribes, at the time of the revolt; and that accordingly it represents, substantially, the text of those copies. This view has found opponents; particularly, of late, among critics who hold to a comparatively modern compilation of the Pentateuch. By some (as Le Clerc,) the Law has been supposed to have been introduced into Samaria by the priest sent, in the latter part of the eighth century before our era, to instruct its new inhabitants in the religion of the country.* Others (among whom Gesenius is most conspicuous) have understood it to have been carried thither by Manasseh,† brother of Jaddus, the Jewish high-priest, when, influenced by his Samaritan father-in-law, he instituted the Mosaic worship in a temple built upon Mount Gerizim; while others yet (as Archbishop Usher) have proposed theories assigning to it a more recent date.

The argument has taken so wide a range, that I cannot so much as state its heads, within the limits, which I am bound to observe. I must content myself here with expressing the opinion, that a person who holds to the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, will find strong reasons in favor of the hypothesis of the descent of our Samaritan text, from copies possessed by the northern tribes, previously to the separation of the kingdoms. The impossibility of the reception of Jewish books by the Samaritans; at any later period, on account of the hereditary hostility between those communities, though the view is not without great weight, has perhaps been urged

* 2 Kings xxvii. 24 - 28.

† His time is differently dated; by some, (as by Gesenius, after Josephus,) near the end of the fourth century before Christ, or the age of Alexander the Great; by others, (as Prideaux and Jahn,) a hundred years earlier.

in too unqualified terms, and without sufficient consideration of the different manner, in which the Samaritan territory was peopled at different epochs. But, as long as the ten tribes continued a constituent part of the united nation, if copies of the law were in circulation at all, there were copies, without doubt, in their possession. After their secession, I think it will not appear that there was ever, during the period of their independent existence, any thing like a universal apostasy from the Mosaic religion. This being so, and particularly if the Law continued to make the civil code of the northern kingdom, it would, in that community, no more than in the Jewish, be in danger of suppression or neglect; nor does any good ground occur for supposing (what, if the view which recommends itself to me, be rejected, is the only alternative), that, the manuscripts existing in the country having ceased to be copied, and been lost, it became necessary to introduce others from abroad, to supply the need, when it came to be felt.

Thus much may be reckoned certain; that, at whatever period the divergency of the Samaritan text from that now extant in the square character took place, the received readings of the Pentateuch at that period were, for the most part,* the same that we now find them in the passages, in which the testimony of these two independent authorities accords; that is, in far the greater portion of the matter contained in the Mosaic books. And if we find any reasons to conclude, that readings, supported by their joint authority, are still deviations from the original writing,† it becomes necessary to sup-

* I say "for the most part"; because, though essentially kept independent by the different character of their alphabet, and the estrangement between the communities which used them, it is not impossible, that, in single instances, either may, in later times, have been conformed to the other.

† That such is the fact, there can scarcely be a doubt on any part. See,

pose, that the corruption was introduced previous to the period of their divergency from each other, whether we assign that divergency to the eighth century before our era, or to the fourth or fifth, or to a later time.

The civil and religious frame of the Jewish state, overthrown in the Chaldean conquest, was restored by Ezra and his coadjutors, as far as might be, according to the ancient model, in the fifth century before our era. They referred to the written law for this purpose. Whence did they obtain that document? Is there any reason to suppose, that Ezra was in possession of that autograph of Moses, which a thousand years before had been deposited by the side of the ark? If not, did he use a copy, which, under public authority, had succeeded to the place of that autograph in the sacred archives, or a copy, which had reached him through private hands?

Though veneration for the original chirography of great men, and of important works, is probably to be reckoned a modern sentiment (at least in the intensity in which it exists among us), yet it would seem to have so much connexion with essential habits of the human mind, that, at least in so strong a case as that of a document nearly a thousand years old, of such a character, and from such a hand, as that of the Law of Moses, it could hardly fail to be awakened. If awakened, it would seem that it could scarcely fail to be in some way manifested in the history, if the original volume was in existence at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's inroad, or of Ezra's return. Yet on neither of these occasions is there any allusion of the kind, though a somewhat precise detail is given of the spoils carried

for example, Genesis xxxvi. 31 et seq., where the Hebrew and Samaritan copies read alike.

away by the Babylonian general from the pillage of the Temple.*

We could better estimate the probabilities of the case, if we knew the materials, upon and with which the original law was written. The writings found on the linen envelopes of the Egyptian mummies, make it probable that this frail material was in common use for writing in that country, whence it is to be presumed that Moses would adopt it.† Excluded from the air,

* 2 Kings xxv. 13-16. — Had Moses' autograph been in Ezra's hands, and been replaced by him in the sanctuary, we know of nothing, provided the materials were sufficiently durable, to prevent its remaining securely there till the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, (A. C. 170.) Had that monarch added its destruction or deportation to his other outrages, we could hardly have failed to read of it in the proper place (1 Mac. i. 20-28; 2 Mac. v. 15, 16.); for, at least in the time of the Asmonæan brothers, the reverence for the volume would have been at its height. Had it escaped violence at his hand, by a concealment, to which it might be supposed the first alarm of his intentions would have prompted, we know of nothing to endanger it till the destruction of the second temple by Titus. The Temple copy of the Law figured at Rome in Titus' triumphal procession. Δίπριτι δὲ πάντων τὰ ἐγκαταληφθέντα τῷ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἱερῷ χρυσῇ τε τεράπιζα καὶ λυχνία χρυσοῦ ὃ, τὸ νόμος ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐπὶ τούτοις ἕφιςτο τῶν λαφύρων τελευταῖος. Josephus de Bello Judaico, lib. 7, cap. 5, § 5. Titus afterwards gave it to the historian at his request. Ἀγνησιν ἐποιούμην Τίτον, καὶ βιβλίον ἱερῶν ἔλαβον χαρισαμίμου Τίτου. Idem, de Vitâ Suâ, § 75. Josephus could not have omitted to intimate his good fortune, had he understood himself to be the possessor of the original writing of Moses.

† Eichhorn (Einleitung ins A. T. § 63,) ascribes the invention of the art of preparing hides for writing, to so late an age as that of one of the Attali, in the second or third century before Christ. I know not on what authority this is done. It is probably an inference from the Latin name for parchment, ("charta Pergamena,") Pergamus having been the capital city of that dynasty. Eichhorn inaccurately represents Pliny as saying, (Hist. Nat. lib. 13, cap. 11,) that he found traces, in old authors, of the use of linen for writing before the Trojan war. The same critic argues from Jeremiah xxxvi. 23, that the book there ordered to be burned in the monarch's own presence could not have been of parchment, on account of the offensive stench, which that substance would emit. But, if this might be positively inferred, it would be unsafe reasoning from the practices of the age of Jehoiakim to those of the age of Moses, and from the writings of Jeremiah to writings of the different character which belonged to the Law.

as in sarcophagi, it might be preserved through a course of ages; but a book of that material, subject to any frequent use, could not be otherwise than short-lived.*

Did any standard copy of the Pentateuch, whether the law-giver's autograph or not, having been preserved in the sacred precincts till the time of Nebuzaradan's invasion, come, after the return from the captivity, into Ezra's hands? I have not found that there is so much as any Jewish tradition of later times, asserting such a fact; though, even without foundation, no story would seem more likely to obtain currency, than one to this effect. There is a relation,† that Jeremiah, at the captivity, hid the tabernacle, with the ark and the altar of incense, in a cave; but nothing is said of any copy of the national code. And, on the contrary, there are plain signs of a tradition, that the Temple copy was destroyed at the burning of that edifice;‡ a tradition, which, whether correct or not in its main statement, appears to show, that no accredited account had been handed down of the preservation of any such copy. In a letter represented to have been written by the Jews of Palestine to those of Egypt, (B. C. 144,) Nehemiah is said§ to have founded a library in the Temple. It might be supposed that so venerable a relic, as the ancient authorized copy of the Law, had it existed, would have

* Eichhorn states that Pliny, (lib. 13, cap. 12, § 26,) and Aulus Gellius, (lib. 2, cap. 3,) speak of two hundred years as the greatest age of a manuscript, in moderate use, in their time; and he argues, that the duration of books must have been less in earlier ages, while the arts of preparing materials to write with and upon, were in a yet more immature state. (Einleitung, § 87.) But I do not find the passage in Aulus Gellius; and, as Pliny merely says that he has seen papyrus manuscripts nearly two hundred years old, without implying how much longer they might last, his testimony is not much to the point.

† 2 Maccabees ii. 5.

‡ Augustin. de Mirabilibus, lib. 2, (Vol. iii. col. 751, ed. Basil.) "Esdras, Dei sacerdos, *combustam a Chaldæis in archivis templi restituit legem.*"

§ 2 Maccabees ii. 13.

made the basis of such a collection ; but no hint of that nature is given.

It is accordingly to be viewed as probable, that the copies which came into use in Judea after the captivity, were such as had remained in private hands. That such copies had in fact been made, which I have argued above* to be likely, even as to the earliest age, appears to be rendered scarcely less than certain, in respect to the later times of the monarchy, by the relation of Jehoshaphat's mission of a number of Levites and priests to teach the people, "throughout all the cities of Judah," having "the book of the law of the Lord with them." †

In the mean time, what had been the history of the numerous other books, still extant, understood to be composed between Moses' time and that of Ezra? In the book of Joshua we read ‡ of his having annexed a writing of his to "the book of the law of the Lord;" and Samuel is said to have written what we should call the Constitution of the kingdom, about to be established, "in a book, and laid it up before the Lord." § Was the same disposition made of other books, now existing in our Old Testament collection? This is commonly supposed, but it is an opinion entertained without evidence. || On the other hand, that before the

* Page 44.

† 2 Chron. xvii. 9. Compare, also, 2 Chron. xix. 5.

‡ xxiv. 26.

§ 1 Samuel x. 25.

|| Such writers as Dr. Gray are in the habit of asserting this as a thing indubitable, and even of going into some detail in the groundless allegation. "To the same sanctuary were consigned, as they were successively produced, all those historical and prophetic books, which were written from the time of Joshua to that of David, including their own works. Solomon having afterwards erected a temple to the honor of God, appointed that *in future the sacred books should be deposited* in this holy receptacle, and enriched the collections by the inspired productions of his own pen." Gray's "Key to the Old Testament," page 4. Such statements as I have italicized, given as history, one can only read with amazement. — See also Horne's Introduction, Part 3, book 1, chap. 1, § 4. Even

captivity, there had been made, in the Temple, a collection of books, is a supposition favored by some circumstances of probability. The fact of such a collection subsequently to that event, cannot be doubted,* and it is not unnatural to view it as a renewal of an earlier existing institution. What, in that case, the older library contained, we have, in the absence of all records concerning it, no means of determining; but there seems no room for doubt, that, had it survived the ruin of the city and Temple, it would have been much richer than the collection which has reached us, preserving, among others, for the later ages, some of those now lost books, to which numerous references are found in books of our Canon.† In any event, all reasons which appear to justify the supposition, that the books of Moses came into the possession of Ezra and his contemporaries through private hands, lead to the same conclusion respecting the works of later writers. And that copies of these works were in circulation, we may find the more cause to allow, when we come to observe instances, in which the prophetic writers have manifested acquaintance with one another, and even borrowed from one another, or from a common source.‡

But, to go a step further back, were these compositions, all, or any of them, *edited* by their authors? I use a modern expression; but it is one, answering to a sense,

Simon takes for granted the existence of a Temple library previous to the captivity. "En qualité d'orateurs publics, ils (les Prophètes) haranguoient en présence du peuple selon les besoins de l'état; ils prédisoient les maux dont il était menacé, &c. Ces harangues ou prophéties étoient enrégistrées et conservées dans les archives." *Histoire Critique du V. T.*, liv. 1, chap. 4.

* See Josephus, *Antiquitates*, lib. 3, cap. 1, § 7; lib. 5, cap. 1, § 17.

† "The book of Jasher," for instance, Josh. x. 13; "the book of the Wars of the Lord," Numb. xxi. 14; "the book of Nathan," 2 Chron. ix. 29; and many others. — Comp. 1 Kings iv. 31–33.

‡ Compare Isaiah ii. 2–4, with Micah iv. 1–3; Isaiah xv. xvi. with Jeremiah xlvi; Obadiah 3 et seq. with Jeremiah xlix. 7–17.

which has no peculiar reference to modern times. If some of such compositions were published under their authors' oversight, which were they? and who superintended the publication of the rest? That these are important questions, every one will own, who reflects, for a moment, how materially different will be his interpretation, according as he understands the heading of a Psalm, for example, which professes to give an account of the date and occasion of its composition, to have proceeded from the writer, or from some irresponsible copyist. This hint, alone, is in place at present. The developement of its relations belongs to a later stage of our inquiries.

Concerning the condition of the text, possessed by Ezra, in respect to purity, we have no historical information. But there are readings, the corrupt character of which can scarcely be doubted, and which, at the same time, the Hebrew copies and the ancient versions concur substantially in exhibiting. The origin of such corruptions is naturally referred to a time, before versions began to be made; and as the erroneous readings are such in number and extent, that the interval between Ezra and the earliest version (which, it will be remembered, was only from two to three hundred years) does not appear sufficient to have produced them in the usual manner, we are led to the conclusion that they had already established themselves in the copies antecedent to the captivity.*

It is to be presumed, that, after the return to Palestine, copies of the old books came into active circulation; for the Jews, from Solomon's time, had enjoyed a considerable degree of culture, and their actual condi-

* Also, compare different copies of the same composition, in the Hebrew text; as Psalm xiv. with Psalm liii.; Psalm xl. 14 et seq. with lxx.; xviii. with 2 Samuel xxii.

tion could not have failed to inspire a lively interest in their ancient records. Further; the multiplication of transcripts of the Law was necessary, as, from this period, lessons from it were read in the Sabbath service of the synagogues scattered through the country.* On the other hand, it is not likely, that the more ancient copies, which had come into the hands of Ezra's contemporaries, were long preserved. The practice of making notes in the margin of old books, thus overloading and incumbering the page, would make it convenient to supersede them, from time to time, by new copies, in which, all that it was thought fit to preserve, should be fairly written out; and still more, the old books were written in a character, which, if the current opinion be well founded, was now disused, and probably before long became illegible to any but the learned.

From the Alexandrine version we learn a few interesting facts, respecting the condition of the Hebrew text in the third century before our era. The copies which served for the original of that version were already furnished with some *midraschim*, or comments of an allegorical character.† The breaking up of the written text into separate words had not yet been arranged, at least in any uniform manner.‡ The division into verses of any kind was a device yet unknown,§ and figures were not always written out in words, but often expressed by the numerical power of single letters.||

* See Prideaux's "Connexion," &c., Part i., book 1, year 444.

† This appears, for example, from the Greek readings of Judges viii. 30, and 1 Sam. vi. 20. See Patrick's Commentary ad loc.

‡ E. g. Jeremiah xxiii. 33. The Hebrew text reads; אָת־מִדְרָשׁוֹ ; where the Septuagint has; *ὁμοίως ἰσως τὸ λῆμμα*, answering to אָת־מִדְרָשׁוֹ. Numerous references of this kind might be given.

§ Compare, e. g. the Septuagint and Hebrew of Psalm xlv. (Sept. xlv.) 12, 13. The marks, separating verses on the present Hebrew page, make part of the Masoretic system.

|| Compare the Septuagint and Hebrew of 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. The

The Alexandrine version, came into general use among the Jews, not only of Egypt, but of Palestine;* and it has been suspected (without sufficient reason, that I can find), that, in consequence, their attention was withdrawn for a time from the Hebrew original. It was almost necessary; that, after the Christian revelation, translations should be referred to by them in their controversies with the Christian writers, few of whom had any acquaintance with Hebrew. But both parties became dissatisfied with a witness, which did not sufficiently answer, throughout, the views of either; and this circumstance appears to have given rise to the other Greek versions of the period, made partly by Christians, and partly by Jews.

The principal of these versions were the works of Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and three anonymous authors. Parts of them remain, dispersed in the works of different ecclesiastical writers, and especially surviving in the extant fragments † of the Hexapla of Origen.

latter reads "seven years of famine"; the former, "three years." שבע, *seven*, would hardly be mistaken for שלש, *three*. But the letters having respectively these numerical powers, 7 and 3, are similar. On the other hand, it appears that numbers were sometimes expressed in words. In Nehemiah v. 11, the Hebrew text reads קצת הכסף, the "*hundredth* of the money"; the Septuagint, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀργυρίου, "*from the money*." There can be no doubt that the Greek translators had the whole of the first word on their Hebrew page, and read it as קצת.

* Philo made it the ground of his comments. Whether Josephus made it his authority, has been disputed of late; but further examination has confirmed the commonly received opinion. The estimation in which he held it, is proved by his repetition of the fable concerning its origin. (*Antiq. Lib. 12, cap. 2, § 10-14.*) The New Testament writers not only quote from it for the most part, but their style is formed upon its model. Tertullian (*Apologeticus, cap. 18,*) says that it was even read in the Jewish Synagogues. See also Buxtorf's "*Lexicon Talmudicum,*" ad verb. אֲלֵינֵהֶן, and Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone, § 72; Cohortatio ad Græcos, § 13.*

† Morin, in 1587, made the first collection of these fragments. Drusius (1622) and Martianay (1699) followed in the same work. The edition

The Hexapla, dating from about the year 230 of our era, was the fruit of what may be called the first critical labors expended by Christians upon the Old Testament. It exhibited the Hebrew, with the Septuagint and the other Greek versions which have been specified, in parallel columns. But its chief object was to settle the text of the Septuagint; and accordingly its usefulness to us, in respect to the Hebrew original, would, even if we possessed it entire, be less than might, at first view, be supposed. Through Jerome, however, who consulted it in its complete state, some single valuable facts, relating to its readings, are collected.

Between Origen's time and the sixth century, some results of critical attention, on the part of the Jews, to their sacred writings, begin to appear. The Talmuds give rules for the observance of copyists,* particularly in the way of caution against the mutual substitution of similar letters. They speak of comparisons of different Hebrew manuscripts, mentioning a few instances of disagreement in their readings. They refer to fifteen instances of those *puncta extraordinaria* (extraordinary marks) which we find in many places in our existing editions. And they present specimens of those comments in the way of emendation, and of directions to the reader and writer, which afterwards became so numerous in the Masora.† In this interval, we find the first traces of a separation of verses and words in writing.‡ The divisions, called *Paraschioth* and *Haphta-*

most in use is that of Montfaucon, in 1714. There have been considerable later detached contributions.

* For specimens of these, see De Wette's "Lehrbuch der Hist. Kritisch. Einleit. ins A. T." § 89.

† For particulars, see the same, and Jahn "Introductio in Libros V. F." § 107.

‡ Jerome, in commenting on Zac. xi. 11, explains the peculiar Septuagint version of that verse, by saying that its authors combined two words

roth,* are necessarily referred, by their occasion and use, the former to a time as early as that of the institution of synagogues, the latter to the age of the Syrian persecution in the second century before Christ, the period of the introduction of a public reading of the prophets.

To the Talmudists succeeded the Masorites, who elaborated, and (with some exceptions, for the most part not material,) completed the Jewish critical apparatus, which has come down to our day. They devised, or at least matured the complicated system of vowel notation, and affixed the vowel points, with the others, called *diacritical*, and the accents. They commented upon the text, at large, in notes critical, grammatical, and exegetical. They counted the verses, the words, and the letters of each book; they ascertained the middle verse, word, and letter of each; and recorded these observations. They remarked the verses containing the whole, or certain portions of the letters of the alphabet. They designated letters written larger or smaller than the common size, inverted and suspended letters, final letters occurring in the midst of a word, and letters with the medial form, occurring at the end.† These fruits of their laborious industry, having announced them first to their pupils in lectures,‡ they embodied in what is called the "Greater Masora." Of this the "Little Masora" is an abridgment. The period commonly assigned to these labors, (though the taste for them, and the pursuit

into one; "illi duo verba in unum copulantes." But it might admit a doubt, whether it was by inspection of his page, or simply on grounds of interpretation, that he regarded the letters as making two words.

* These פְּרָשִׁיּוֹת (*divisions*) and הַפְּטוּרֹת (*dismissions*) are the technical names of reading lessons in the Law and the Prophets respectively. Both are in number fifty-two, or otherwise fifty-four, the latter arrangement having reference to intercalary years.

† For a minute account of these labors of theirs, see Buxtorf's "Tiberias," cap. 12 - 16.

‡ Buxtorfii Tiberias, cap. 3, p. 9.

of them, began earlier, as we have seen, and continued to later times,) is that from the sixth century to the tenth. Their scene was the Jewish schools in Babylon and Palestine, particularly that of Tiberias in the latter country.

From the Masorites we have received our Hebrew Bible. Early in the eleventh century, a collation of the eastern or Babylonish manuscripts, with those of the west, or Palestine, conducted by Jacob Ben Naphtali, of the former school, and Aaron Ben Asher of the latter,* exhibited, as the result of the comparison, eight hundred and sixty-four various readings, all relating to the vowel points and accents, with the exception of one,† which presents a question respecting a division of words. Our editions, for the most part, follow that of Ben Asher. The critics of that age had such estimation with their countrymen, that the copies sent out under their patronage superseded all others of earlier origin; and, at the present day, there is not extant a single Hebrew manuscript, which can be confidently held to be older than the eleventh century.

The actual existence of various readings in the Masoretic manuscripts, denied for a time, but abundantly proved in the collations of Kennicott, De Rossi, and others, shows that the Masoretic apparatus did not absolutely secure the text, as there was no reason to suppose that it would, against all further chance of alter-

* There was an earlier list of various readings, two hundred and twenty in number, exhibited in a comparison of the same two classes of authorities. It has been differently referred to the seventh and eighth centuries, and even to an earlier time, see De Wette's "Lehrbuch" &c. § 92. But its date cannot be ascertained. All the various readings relate to consonants, except two, which have reference to the point Mappik; a circumstance, which strongly marks it for the essay of an age prior to the vowel punctuation.

† Canticles viii. 6, שְׁלֵהֶבֶתָּהּ, *alias* הֵבֵלֶבֶתָּהּ.

ation. Comparatively speaking, however, these modern various readings are few and inconsiderable. They appear to have had their source chiefly in a fastidious desire of grammatical correctness, after the grammar of the language came to be a subject of attention in the Spanish schools, and in occasional conformities to the Chaldee paraphrases, which had long ago taken the place of the Greek Alexandrine version in the common use of the dispersed Jewish families.

The first printed edition of any part of the Bible was one of the Psalms, with the commentary of Rabbi Kimchi, issued at Bologna, as is believed, in 1477. The first edition of the whole Bible was published at Soncino, in 1488, and was the basis of that of Brescia, in 1494. The second independent edition was that of the Complutensian Polyglott, executed under the patronage of Cardinal Ximenes, at Alcala in Spain, between the years 1502 and 1517. A third was issued by the Bombergs, at Venice, in 1518, and a revision of the same, under the care of Jacob Ben Chaim, eight years later.* These three editions, particularly the last, make the main sources of all that have followed. Joseph Athias availed himself of manuscript authorities to some extent, in preparing the Amsterdam edition of 1661. That of Vander Hooght, containing some various readings, followed in 1705. Michaelis, for his edition of 1720, collated five manuscripts and nineteen editions. The splendid edition of Houbigant (a priest of the Oratory at Paris), in 1753, scarcely justified its pretensions to a critical character. It exhibited the unpointed Hebrew text, following the readings of Vander Hooght, without

* Bomberg's edition first exhibited the existing division into chapters. Though adopted by the Jews, it was of Christian origin, being arranged in the twelfth century, by the Cardinal Hugo di Santo Caro, in order to the construction of a Concordance of the Vulgate.

other emendations than those of typographical errors. It was accompanied with a Latin version, and with various readings in the margin, from the Samaritan Pentateuch; expressed in the square Hebrew letter.

Properly speaking, the modern textual criticism of the Old Testament began with Kennicott, the first volume* of whose great work was printed in folio at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1776.† Before his time, there had been a superstitious belief in the absence of all various readings, of any consideration, from the Masoretic manuscripts. Buxtorf had even asserted their absolute uniformity, and Capellus had not ventured to deny it; and the urgency of the Protestant divines to maintain the verbal exactness of the copies of the scriptures, in the original tongues, against the Catholic assumptions for the Vulgate, had contributed to maintain the belief. In part by the aid of other scholars, Kennicott collated for his edition, more than six hundred manuscripts, besides fifty previous editions. Fifty-one of his manuscripts he reckoned to be from six to eight hundred years old; to one hundred and seventy-four he ascribed an age of from four to six hundred years; and the rest he esteemed more modern. Kennicott's text is that of Vander Hooght; with a chain of various readings from the Hebrew manuscripts and the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The more extended collations of De Rossi, of Parma,

* Containing the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and the books of Samuel.

† "Opus magnum, multoties annunciatum, avide expectatum, magnis curis vigiliisque et multis impensis accuratum, qui et antequam publicum in conspectum prodiit, sub censuram vocatum, accusatum, defensum, ad nostras pervenit manus, haud levi ære comparatum." Masch's edition of Le Long's *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Part. i. cap. 1, sect. 1, § 42. This work gives full descriptions of all the printed editions of the Hebrew Bible, down to the year 1783.

followed. In the preparation of his work, issued in 1784-8, he examined no less than three hundred editions, and seven hundred and thirty manuscripts. Some of these latter he supposed himself authorized to refer to so remote a period as the seventh or eighth century; a conclusion which has not been commonly acquiesced in by the learned. — But this specification cannot be further pursued. The convenient edition of Doederlein and Meisner, published at Leipsic, in 1793, has had an extensive circulation. That of Jahn* contains a selection of various readings, but is chiefly recommended by its convenient arrangement of parallel passages in the historical books. The manual edition of Augustus Hahn, issued at Leipsic in 1831, distinguished for the beauty of its page, as well as the general correctness of its typographical execution, has come into common use in this country.

The account which I have given of the history of the Text, is but a rapid and condensed outline; but it may serve for the basis of more particular remarks, as occasion will hereafter occur for such. We have seen occasion to allow, that, in the later ages, the Jews have given a remarkably minute attention to the preservation of the integrity of their sacred books; while, in the earlier times, we have found no proof that the natural causes of error on the part of copyists were in any way precluded from their usual operation; and have seen that both the occasional difference between the different early authorities, and phenomena, which cannot be mistaken, of the Hebrew text itself, indicate that errors in transcription did in fact occur.

* John Jahn, author of the "Introduction to the Old Testament," "History of the Hebrew Commonwealth," "Archæologia Biblica," and other works. His Hebrew Bible was published at Vienna, in two volumes, in 1807.

The forming of a critical text of the Old Testament, after the accurate type of the critical text of the New, as prepared by Griesbach and others, is now an impossible work; inasmuch as, our Hebrew manuscripts being of Masoretic origin, there are many readings preserved in the older authorities, (the ancient versions, for example,) which no longer exist anywhere in Hebrew, and accordingly, to replace them in the text, they would need to be translated by the modern scholar into that language, a course which would obviously transgress all authorized bounds of critical discretion. But, though the preparation of such a satisfactory text, extending to the whole body of the sacred records, must needs be despaired of, a cautious interpreter is bound to forsake the Masoretic reading of any passage, wherever he sees reason to believe, that, from other sources, a better reading (that is, having more probability of being original and genuine,) may be supplied. — I close this lecture with a brief reference to a few of these sources, simply exhibiting them, for our future convenience's sake, in one view, and avoiding for the present all those questions, (extending themselves over a wide range of inquiry, and necessarily leading to much difference of opinion,) which relate to their respective claims as arbiters of controverted readings.

The Samaritan Pentateuch, notwithstanding the disputes concerning its date, the manner and occasion of its origin, and its more recent fortunes, is allowed on all hands to be of great antiquity, and is entitled to special consideration. The ancient Samaritan version affords no independent authority, as it was made from this text, which it follows with a servilely literal imitation.

The worth of the Alexandrine Greek version as a textual authority, has likewise been the subject of much discussion. Its correspondence with the Samaritan text in

the Pentateuch is a fact of the most striking and weighty character. Could we be sure that it exactly or essentially represented, in Greek, the sense exhibited in Hebrew copies existing at the time when it was made, it would be an evidence, from its greater antiquity, far outweighing, in cases of difference, any now extant Hebrew manuscripts. But the degree of attention and skill, with which its different parts were prepared, has been matter of disagreement; its own original text (since that, too, as much as the Hebrew, has been exposed to all the chances of time,) is itself a subject for critical inquiry; and it has been charged, in different quarters, with having sustained designed corruptions, at different eras, for the purpose of conforming it to the Hebrew standard, or, on the other hand, for the suppression of evidence which the Hebrew, and itself originally, afforded. — The histories of Josephus present, throughout, striking conformities with the Alexandrine readings. — To the class of Greek textual authorities belong also the quotations from the Old Testament, in the New, (as far as it can be made probable that these were designed to be exact,) and the parts of Greek versions, mentioned above as having been included in Origen's Hexapla.

Representations of the Hebrew text, as it existed in times long anterior to the Masorites, are also to be sought in the Syriac Peshito version, and the oldest Chaldee Targums. — The former presents a repetition of the remarkable fact, observed in respect to the Samaritan Pentateuch; that of a general characteristic similarity to the Alexandrine readings, where the Alexandrine differ from the Hebrew. — The Targum of Onkelos is of great consideration as a textual guide. That of Jonathan, as being more paraphrastic, is less valuable for this use, as it was formerly remarked to be for the use of interpretation. But this class of authorities have also been

charged with having been remodelled, by Jews of the middle ages, after the Hebrew copies in their hands.

The Latin Vulgate is another of the most important ante-Masoretic authorities. In preparing it, Jerome neither wanted information concerning the Jewish readings, nor aid from the Jewish learning, of the time.* He himself confessed, however, that he occasionally forsook the Hebrew for the Greek; † and his work is thought to have suffered alterations in later times, for the sake of conforming it to the "Old Italic," and on the other hand, to the Masoretic Hebrew. Questions of this nature, in short, embarrass the use of all the old versions, in their application to textual criticism.

Quotations of Old Testament passages in the Talmuds are not seldom found to exhibit readings, varying from those of the Masoretic copies. The character of Rabbinical quotations, from the eleventh century downward, is that of coincidence with the Masoretic text. The Christian fathers are generally found to have taken their Old Testament quotations from the version used in their respective churches, whether the Syriac, the Greek, or the Latin. ‡

* "Cum a me nuper literis flagitassetis, ut vobis Paralipomenon Latino sermone transferrem, de Tiberiade quendam legis doctorem, qui apud Hebræos admirationi habebatur, assumsi, et contuli cum eo a vertice, ut aiunt, usque ad extremum unguem, et, sic confirmatus, ausus sum facere, quod jubebatis." Hieronymi Prefatio ad Paralip.

† Hieronymi Præf. ad Pent. ; Præf. ad Com. in Eccles.

‡ The arrangement of the books in our common Hebrew Bibles is that of the Masorites; in our English Bibles, that of the Latin Vulgate. For an exhibition of different arrangements (fifty in number), which have been used at different times, or are found in some writer, see "Wolf's Bibliotheca Hebræa," Part i. Sect. 1, ad calcem.

LECTURE IV.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

NATURE AND AMOUNT OF PROOF TO BE LOOKED FOR. — STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION. — CONNEXION OF THE MIRACULOUS RELATIONS IN THE PENTATEUCH WITH LATER HISTORY. — DIFFICULTY OF REFERRING IT TO ANY RECENT AGE. — APPARENT REFERENCES TO IT IN LATER BOOKS. — ARGUMENT FROM THE NUMBER OF EARLY TEXTUAL CORRUPTIONS. — OBJECTIONS TO ITS AUTHENTICITY, FROM THE SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER OF ITS NARRATIVE, — FROM SUPPOSED IMMORALITIES, AND ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF THE DEITY, — FROM PASSAGES INDICATING A LATER ORIGIN, — FROM THE SUPPOSED MODERN CHARACTER OF ITS STYLE. — FAVORABLE INTERNAL EVIDENCE, — FROM THE GOOD INFLUENCE EXERTED BY IT, — FROM SINGLE TEXTS, — FROM ITS ANTIQUATED FORMS OF SPEECH, — FROM ITS JOURNAL CHARACTER, — FROM THE ANTIQUE SPIRIT OF ITS LAWS, — FROM ITS ANTHROPOMORPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF GOD, — FROM THE CHASM IN ITS HISTORICAL RECORD, — FROM THE CHARACTER OF THE RELATIONS IN THE BEGINNING OF GENESIS. — CONCLUSION FROM THE WHOLE VIEW.

IN proceeding to an inquiry into the authenticity of the books attributed to Moses, it is of the first importance to have correct views respecting the kind and amount of evidence, which it is reasonable to demand or expect. It must be allowed, that we have by no means the same degree of external testimony to the authenticity of these writings, as we have to that of the books of the New Testament; a fact, which, so far from creating either surprise or discontent, should rather call forth our gratitude, that what concerns us much the more nearly, presents itself to our minds with much the greater accumulation of proof.

But, while we speak of the inferiority of external evidence in the one case, to that possessed in the other,

we should carefully observe the bearings of the remark. If there were no more of this kind of proof for the source of the Gospel of Matthew, than there is for that of the Pentateuch, the former would, on that ground, be justly liable to a suspicion, which by no means attaches on that ground to the latter; inasmuch as the former had its origin in a comparatively modern age, and in an age of writers, who might reasonably be expected to be taking some notice of it at a period not long subsequent to that of its production. The latter is referred, by the supposition, to a remote antiquity, when there was no contemporaneous literature, which has come down to these times. The fact (had it been so) that no writer, near to the age and place to which Matthew's narrative is ascribed, had recognised its existence, would have afforded a good argument against the truth of that hypothesis, because the works of such writers are now extant. The like fact affords no such argument in respect to the narrative of Moses, because, as we have not the works of such writers to consult, it cannot be argued from any silence of theirs, that their age was ignorant of its existence. While I am free, therefore, to acknowledge, that, in my view, it would be doing great injustice to the historical claims of the books of the New Testament, to maintain that the writings now under our notice stand upon equally firm grounds of proof with them, I can by no means admit, on the other hand, that these latter are to be prejudiced by any such comparison. The question for a wise consideration in respect to these is, not whether under different circumstances, they might have been sustained by further proof, but whether we have in their support a reasonable amount of such proof, as the circumstances of their production permitted to come down to our time. If they were written by Moses, we could now produce no contem-

poraneous testimony to the fact. That we cannot produce it, then, is no proof to the contrary.

Another preliminary remark is, that the question on the authenticity of the writings attributed to Moses requires to be more accurately stated, than has been usual. The critics, of highest name, who have argued for their later origin, have still held that the laws, which they contain, are either in whole, or in great part, to be referred to him as their author; while they, on the other hand, who consider the books as his production, yet regard them as not having come down to us without more or less interpolation. The necessity of their argument calls for this admission; for, since it is agreed on all hands, that there is matter, now contained in the books, which must have been composed at a later time than that of Moses, (inasmuch as it clearly and ostensibly refers to more recent history,) the question becomes reduced within these limits;— Either the whole composition is to be dated from a later age than that of Moses, or else passages, afterwards composed, were interpolated into his work. It is clear, then, that between these parties, the question respecting these books, in their present state, becomes a question of more and less. It is a question, respecting the recent origin of a larger or a smaller portion of their contents. The one class of interpreters, while they would refer the basis of the laws to Moses, would comprehend the miraculous relations, with other parts, under the head of subsequent additions, and thus make the books, in their digested shape, to be the creation of a modern age. The other class (with better reason, as I think,) regard those parts as having a connexion with the system, as well as often with the special laws, too intimate to admit of their being thus dissevered; while they conceive that generally, if not uniformly, the smaller portions, which

must, at all events, be considered to have proceeded from a later time, present, in their construction or position, the appearance of not being integral parts of the work ; that (so to speak) these parts have no essential adhesiveness to the context.

Another consideration which we ought to carry with us to the argument, is this. If the narrative of Moses' ministry, contained in these books, is true, it affords us an intelligible account of another fact, indisputable as to its reality, and of a most extraordinary character ; a fact, the occurrence of which we are unable in any other way to explain ; viz. that of the existence, among the Jews, of religious institutions of a peculiar description, embodying and sustaining a pure theology. The fact no one would call in question. From the earliest period in which the Jews appear in history, they are found in possession of the doctrine of One God. Whence did they obtain it ; and, when obtained, how did they preserve it ? Let the Jewish views of the divine character and providence be compared with those of other nations, as the literature or the history of other nations has made their views known to us. Let the hymns of David, for instance, be compared with the Theogony of Hesiod, not very remote from them in point of time. In the former, what true and just conceptions respecting the undivided being and sovereignty of God ; and, substantially, what correct and affecting views of his attributes, and his relations to man ; and how perfectly contrasted with all the representations of the Greek poet upon the same subject ! All the rest of the world was abandoned to different forms of senseless and corrupting idolatry. History affords no ground for any qualification of this statement. But in Judea there shone a pure light of divine truth. To what was this owing ? Not to the greater civilization of the

Jews. It would provoke a smile, to compare the culture of that people, in their palmiest days, with that of the nations from which we have the classical mythology. How came it, that this nation, otherwise certainly not distinguished above others, escaped the else universal tendency of mankind to a foolish and depraving worship? Admit the truth of the Mosaic history, and all is clear. Deny it, and the most extraordinary and perplexing problem (shall I not say?) in all history, is presented.

I am reasoning for those who admit the abstract credibility of miracles; and to them I submit, that the reality of the Mosaic miracles is rendered positively and strongly probable, by the known existence, in after times, of that theology, in support of which they are alleged to have been wrought. They are requisite to account for an undeniable fact. That the Jewish nation, when it emerges from the darkness of antiquity into relations with other states, and into the notice of history, is found in possession of such a theology, is a fact, only to be explained, considering the condition of other nations as compared with its own, on the supposition of its having received a supernatural revelation. Such a revelation is only to be authenticated, as far as we can see, by displays of supernatural power. If such displays of power were made, then it seems altogether more reasonable to suppose that they were the same, for whose record the nation points to books ascribed to the lawgiver himself, than to suppose that the record of miracles actually wrought is lost, and that a narrative of others has been fabricated in their place. The earlier history, if true, solves the problem of the later. It should be shown to be subject to strong objections, before it can properly be rejected, to leave that problem unexplained.

I ascribe much importance to the consideration of the difficulty of fixing, with any probability, on any later period in history, as admitting of the composition of the Pentateuch, than that to which the current opinion actually refers it; that is, if we allow general historical authority to the books, which relate the subsequent history of the Jews; for it is true, that without them we have no grounds on which to reason. The assignment to a date belonging to the period of the Judges, would, I apprehend, be attended with rather less difficulty, than any other, except that which I believe to be the true one. It would, however, be liable to the strong objections, that the times of the Judges were extremely disturbed and unsettled, and such as to make the conjecture a violent one, that they could either have given birth to the composition, or have admitted of the introduction of the institutions, to which, whenever received, it must have given rise; and still more, that they were too near to the time of the alleged ministry of Moses, to allow a fabricated account of events, which, if real, must have been matter of such recent notoriety, to obtain circulation or credence. If we advance from the time of the Judges, to that of the Kings of the twelve tribes, besides the passage in the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy,* which breathes such a vehement spirit of jealousy of regal government,† we are met by the great difficulty, that the whole character and bearing of the Jewish institutions, as the law prescribes them, is thoroughly republican; and of course, when there was

* Verse 18 et seq.

† The tone of the book of Judges, probably written after the establishment of the monarchy, is characteristically opposed to that of this passage. In the last chapters, the reader is repeatedly reminded, where the relation of any disorder or outrage occurs, that it took place in times when "there was no king in Israel," and accordingly "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges xvii. 6; xviii. 1; xxi. 25.

a monarch, the time had passed for any such system to be devised. After the revolt of the ten tribes, and the consequent establishment of two independent monarchies, the state of things continued such as to cause the last consideration to have at least equal weight; and to this is to be thenceforward added the extreme improbability, that the northern kingdom would have received the law, or any of its institutions, from a people against whom they continued to cherish a bitter hostility.* All the evidence, then, which we have of its existence among them, appears to be substantially so much proof of its having existed among them before the separation. If, ascribing little importance, or giving a different explanation, to the testimony relating to the existence of the law in the northern kingdom, we should fix on the time during which the kingdom of Judah survived it, for the production of the books, our argument would still labor under the difficulty presented by their pervading and essential republican tone; and the possibility of such a theological system being devised at a period, when the nation had multiplied its relations with surrounding idolatrous states, will become more incredible. On the return from the captivity, we are told of the reading of the law of Moses to the people, by Ezra, and of many of them divorcing their wives, agreeably to the directions which they understood it to contain.† Their interpretation of its precepts may or not have been correct; but their obedience, in such a case, to

* The occurrence of alternate honorable notices of the ancestry of the tribes of Joseph and Judah respectively, is another objection to this scheme. Compare Gen. xlix. 8-12, with 22-26; Deut. xxxiii. 7, with 13-17. Numerous historical relations, reflecting honor now on one, now on the other of these tribes, will present themselves in the same view. It is difficult to imagine a citizen of either the northern, or the southern kingdom, making such records as we find, flattering to the national pride of the rival state.

† Ezra x. 1-19.

its supposed injunction, leaves nothing to be desired in the way of evidence respecting the sense which they entertained of its authority. The time of Nehemiah approaches, within about a hundred and fifty years, to that when the Pentateuch was translated into Greek, as containing the record of the origin of the Jewish institutions.

At this period, we also become able to make observations on the text of the Pentateuch, which may be thought to have an important connexion with this argument. We find the readings of the Greek version to be different, in numerous instances, from those of the Hebrew original now in our hands, indicating, that, to some extent, diversities existed in different copies at the time when that version was made. Still more, we find an agreement between them in not a few readings, which from satisfactory considerations, we conclude to be deviations from the original text. Considering the amount of such deviations, the manner in which they pervade the whole texture of the volume, and the peculiar character of some of them, a strong probability may be thought to exist, that they could only have been produced as a consequence of repeated transcriptions; in other words, that a course of ages must have elapsed between the date of the original composition, and the date of those textual corruptions of it which we now discern. — And, if we believe the Samaritan Pentateuch to have existed among the northern tribes before the separation of the kingdoms, or even from the time of Ezra, it affords us a still stronger argument of the same kind, since it resembles the Septuagint, not only in the exhibition of readings different from those of our Hebrew, but in the exhibition of interpolations and glosses, which must have found their way into the copies, at an earlier time than that to which any of

our now extant authorities reach, and which themselves must have been much posterior in their date to the original composition, since only a long course of time could have created a necessity for such illustrations.

I would retrace this evidence, at the same time bringing into view some passages in later Jewish books (attributed to successive ages), in which the Pentateuch has been understood to be referred to, as already in existence. — The volume which three hundred years before Christ was translated into Greek as containing the ancient Jewish documents, (received by the nation as such, whether in Palestine, Egypt, or elsewhere,) could hardly have been fabricated between that time and the time of Nehemiah, a century and a half earlier; and when we read in his book of something “written in the Law,”* which we actually find in the volume in question, and of a reading “in the book of Moses,” † to which the same remark applies, and of a reading, “in the book of the Law of God,” ‡ it seems an inadmissible hypothesis, that in this short interval Nehemiah’s “book of the Law” had disappeared, and another succeeded to its place. With Nehemiah, Ezra was contemporary, (unless we will undertake to deny the historical credibility of these later books,) and he too speaks of “the book of Moses,” and of writing contained “in the Law of Moses, the man of God,” § which composition there can be no doubt, whatever it was, was the same to which Nehemiah applied the like names. If we date the books of the Chronicles correctly, they were compiled about the same time,

* Neh. x. 34, 36. Compare x. 29–39, with e. g. Ex. xiii. 13, xxiii. 10, 19; Lev. xxv. 4; Num. xviii. 12; Deut. xiv. 22.

† Neh. xiii. 1. Compare Deut. xxiii. 3.

‡ Neh. viii. 8.

§ Ezra iii. 2; vi. 18.

and they too testify* to the existence of a "Law of the book of Moses," of a "book of Moses," of a writing "in the Law of Moses," of a "book of the Law of the Lord," and of a writing "in the Law of the Lord," which it is difficult to imagine was different from that so named in Ezra and Nehemiah. In Ezra's time, as has been observed, we have the best evidence (if we admit the truth of the then recorded transactions) of the sacred authority attributed to the book; and the Chronicles, in the texts which I have cited, recognise the existence of the same book in the reigns of Josiah, Amaziah, Joash, Jehoshaphat, and David, antecedent in different ages to Nehemiah, the last preceding him by about five hundred years. The books of Kings I think will appear to have been written about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, a period, again, altogether too near to that of the composition of the books of Chronicles, for the name "Law of Moses," which they too speak of† as a written law, to be transferred from one authoritative and necessarily notorious work, to another pretending to its authority. In addition to the recognition, in the historical books of Kings and Chronicles, of the existence of the book called the "book of the Law of Moses," and the "book of the Law of the Lord," throughout the period of the Kings, I have before urged the extreme difficulty (from the universal political spirit of the Pentateuch) of supposing it to be a forgery produced within that period; a period which covers the whole time between the composition of the books of Kings, and that of the book of Joshua, if, as I think we may hereafter see reason to allow, this latter book is to be referred to a

* 2 Chron. xxv. 4, (compare Deut. xxiv. 16.); xxxv. 12; xxiii. 18; xvii. 9; 1 Chron. xvi. 40.

† 1 Kings ii. 3; 2 Kings xiv. 6.

time not far remote from the accession of Saul or David. In Joshua we find not only a "book of the Law" * spoken of, and a "book of the Law of Moses," † but we find it related to have been Joshua's guide about four hundred years earlier than the time of the Kings, and in some passages we have precise notices of its contents, ‡ which, corresponding with the contents of the Pentateuch now in our hands, aid us, as far as they go, to identify the one with the other. And upon this period also bear the remarks before made, relating to the necessity of the book of the Law having been composed before the separation of the kingdoms, if, in fact, it was received by the northern tribes, and to the unsuitableness of the period of the Judges for the production of such a work. §

I am not unaware, that such an argument, as I have here detailed, is not of the nature of demonstration. It may be said in reply, that the assumed dates of the successive writings to which I have referred, require themselves to be proved; and there may be hesitation respecting the identity of the "book of the Law," to which they refer, with the Pentateuch in our hands. The answer to one, who should take the former ground, would be furnished by the general impossibility of the production of such a succession of forgeries (for succession it must have been, as the differences in style between the different books sufficiently show); and

* Josh. i. 8; viii. 34.

† viii. 31; xxiii. 6.

‡ Ibid. xi. 12; (compare Numb. xxxiii. 52 seq. Deut. vii. 1 seq.) xiv. 2, 4, 5; (compare Numb. xxvi. 52-56; xxxv. 1 seq.) xvii. 3-6; (compare Numb. xxvii. 1-11.) xx. 1-9; xxi. 1-8. (compare Ex. xxi. 13; Numb. xxxv. 9-30; Deut. xix. 1-13.)

§ For large lists of passages, understood to have the bearing alluded to in this paragraph, see Jahn, *Introductio in Libros Sacros V. F.*, Pars. 2, § 6, 8. Huet, *Demonstratio Evangelica*, prop. 4, cap. 1. Witsii *Miscellanea Sacra*, lib. 1, cap. 14.

particularly by all the arguments, hereafter to engage us, which go to prove the assumed date of the several later books to be the true one. To the question respecting the identity, I know of nothing material to be added to what has been already urged, which could be stated to much advantage in general terms. As we proceed to the examination of the later books, we shall constantly have occasion to take notice of a condition of things, and of opinions and practices among the Jews, which it may appear to us are hardly to be explained, except on the supposition that the Law, essentially the same that it is known to us, was in their hands, during the successive periods of their history. For the present, I suppose it will be readily allowed, that the language, which I have quoted from the later books, is what we might expect to find it on the supposition that a reference to our Pentateuch was intended, and such as any one would be disposed to receive in proof of its early origin, unless he was of opinion, that there is internal evidence against the authenticity, such as to outweigh the external in its favor.*

* I say "internal evidence," because, as to external, from the earliest period to which our knowledge of Jewish opinions can be traced back, I cannot find good proof of the existence of any doubt concerning the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, earlier than the middle of the twelfth century, when such a doubt was timidly expressed (in respect, however, only to some passages, and only on critical grounds) by a Jewish doctor, Aben Ezra. (See Spinoza's *Tractatus Historico-Politicus*, cap. 8. But compare Semler's "*Apparatus ad lib. V. T. Interpret.*" lib. 1, cap. 2, § 27.) Spinoza, in the seventeenth century, assailed the authenticity elaborately; and Hobbes, in his treatise entitled "*Libri Mosis non a Mose, sed de Mose, scripti sunt.*" Le Clerc at first adopted their opinion ("*Sentimens de Quelques Théologiens d'Hollandé*"), but afterwards retracted it, and argued against it in the Preface to his *Commentary on the Old Testament*. It is well known to be entertained by some of the most celebrated German critics of the present day; as Bertholdt, Vater, Gesenius, and De Wette.

One sometimes meets with the statement, that many of the early heretics, especially among the Gnostics, were "opposed to the Pentateuch." This assertion needs to be defined. Many of the early heretics were

On the whole, I apprehend that the external evidence for the authenticity of the Pentateuch is substantially all, which, on the supposition of its authenticity, we could expect under the circumstances to possess; and

opposed to the Pentateuch, in the sense of its being a book of truth and authority; but few, if any (as far as I can learn), were opposed to it in its claim to have proceeded from Moses' hand.

Irenæus, for instance, says, that Basilides (early in the second century,) was an enemy to the Law. But he was so far from being an enemy to it in the only sense with which we are concerned, that his evidence is distinctly in favor of its Mosaic origin. He believed that Moses gave and recorded it, but that Moses was prompted in its promulgation, not by the Supreme God, but by an inferior deity. "Prophetias autem et ipsas a mundi fabricatoribus fuisse ait [Basilides] principibus, proprie autem *legem, a principe ipsorum, qui eduxerit populum de terrâ Egypti.*" Irenæus adv. Hær. lib. 1, cap. 23.

For proof that the same thing is true of Marcion, and of the Manichæans, see Lardner, History of Heretics, book 2, chap. 10, § 31, Credibility, &c. Part 2, chap. 63, § 6. They rejected the Law, not as falsely claiming to have been given by Moses, but, on the contrary, as given by Moses under a false representation of having proceeded from the Deity. "Deum, qui *legem per Moysen dedit, non esse verum Deum, sed unum ex principibus tenebrarum [dicunt Manichæi],*" says Augustin as quoted by Lardner. And again; "*Legem per famulum Dei Moysen datam, non a vero Deo dicunt.*"

Tertullian (de Præscriptione Hæreticorum, § 1, p. 223, Paris edition,) says of Apelles, whom he calls a follower of Marcion and Cerdon; "*Legem et prophetas repudiat.*" But he adds; "*Habet suos libros in quibus probare vult, quod omnia quæcunque Moses de Deo scripserit, vera non sint, sed falsa sint.*"

All such views are opposed, in the most direct manner, to the theory, which, in a hasty adoption of the general statement, that early heretics were "opposed to the Pentateuch," they might be thought to favor.

I have said above, that, as far as I can learn, few, if any, early heretics were opposed to the Pentateuch, in its claim to have proceeded from Moses' hand. Of course there may be much evidence on the subject, with which I am not acquainted. But I have met with nothing, which strikes me as material, except in a single period in John of Damascus, commonly reckoned the last of the Greek Fathers. He flourished as late as the eighth century. Of the Nazarenes, he says, that they hold the writings of the Pentateuch not to have proceeded from Moses. *Τὰς τῆς πεντατεύχου γραφὰς οὐκ εἶναι Μοϋσίου δoγματίζουσιν.* (De Hæres. 19. Le Quien's edition, Vol. i. p. 80.) I am at a loss to explain this statement, supposing it to be correct, in consistency with the notorious fact, that the Nazarenes, as long as they are known in history, were zealous for the

that in all, or most minds, it would actually create a strong persuasion of the authenticity of the work, were not its contents thought to be such as to bring suspicion upon that hypothesis.

obligations of the law. See Lardner's Jewish Testimonies, chap. 1, § 2. I am fain to believe, that John, writing in a comparatively modern age, had misunderstood some previous author. That he knew little of the Nazarenes, may be presumed, since he only devotes ten lines to a community or class of believers, as interesting as any in all Church History. Besides, his credit is not good. See Venema, Instit. Hist. Eccles., Vol. V. § 150.

Epiphanius' account of Ptolemy (de Hæres. cap. 33, p. 216 et seq., Paris edition) is hardly to be brought into this controversy. Ptolemy, he says, who (§ 1,) embraced the heresy of the Gnostics and Valentinians, and added some things to what he derived from his masters, "is not ashamed (§ 2,) to *speak injuriously* of God's Law by Moses." In what way Ptolemy speaks of it injuriously, Epiphanius goes on to show, by quoting (§ 3-8,) a letter from Ptolemy to Flora, wherein Ptolemy maintains, that the Law proceeded partly from God, partly from Moses, and partly from the "elders of the people." In the distinction between parts of the Law ascribed to God, and other parts ascribed to Moses, there is of course no implication of any doubt, that the record, so far, was from Moses' hand; on the contrary, the reality of that fact is implied. To maintain his view, that part of the Law proceeded from "the elders," Ptolemy, so far from referring to any tradition from other times, or any difference of opinion existing in his own, appeals to the scriptural texts, Isaiah xxix. 13, Matthew xv. 6, and Mark vii. 7, in which he understands Isaiah and Jesus respectively to declare, that traditionary interpretations have been inserted in the body of the scriptures; an argument, which Epiphanius tells him (§ 9,) only proves his great ignorance, in imagining that the glosses condemned had been interpolated into the text, and which, indeed, it is difficult to believe could ever have been seriously urged.

Ezra is said, in some passages of the Fathers, to have been the "restorer of the Law"; and from this, and other like language, it has been argued, that those who entertained that opinion must have believed the books of Moses to have been lost before Ezra's time; in other words, they must have believed, that, when Ezra came back from Babylon, those books were not in existence (Herbst "Observationes quædam de Pentateucho," &c. in "Commentationes Theologicæ," by Rosenmüller and others, Vol. i. Part. 1, § 18.) And this view is thought to receive confirmation from a passage in the Apocryphal book called the second book of Esdras, (xiv. 19-48.)

This book is a rhapsody, written, as I believe, by some Christian. The representation, which it contains, of Ezra's asking to be permitted to renew the Law, does not imply, to my mind, the existence of any tradition to that effect. The whole is a work of imagination. And, in fact, what Ezra is represented as having obtained leave to write, is not the Penta-

This remark brings us to a consideration of the internal evidence. And, first, if there be those who discredit the Pentateuch, on account simply of its containing a miraculous history, it is not with them that

teuch, but [ninety-four, or] two hundred and four books (v. 44) of which he was to reserve seventy (v. 46) for the reading of the wise.

Jerome (ad Helvidium, Vol. ii. p. 8., Erasmus's edition,) has this language. "Whether you choose to name Moses the author of the Pentateuch, or Ezra its restorer, I do not object." ("Sive Moysen dicere volueris auctorem Pentateuchi, sive Esram instauratorem, non recuso.") Jerome is referring to the expression "to this day," as found in two places of the Pentateuch, which he specifies (Gen. xxxv. 4, where, however, the words are not now extant in the Hebrew, and Deut. xxxiv. 6). The words "this day," he says, in the period preceding that quoted above, must refer to the time, when the narrative in which they are found was arranged. "Certe hodiernus dies illius temporis existimandus est, quo historia contexta est." This is equally true, he argues, whether you regard Moses the author of the work, or Ezra its restorer; implying that the words "this day," may, in the first text referred to, have proceeded from Moses himself, since he lived some generations after Jacob, to whom the text relates, while in the latter passage, it is probable that they proceeded from Ezra, since they recognise Moses's death as having occurred. In that case he inserted them in his character of restorer, or reviser, of the Law, an office commonly attributed to him, by Jews and Christians, at the time when Jerome lived.

Augustine says, (Vol. iii. col. 751, D., Basil edition,) "The time of the captivity being complete, God provided for the return of his people, and the remission of their captivity, by the clemency of Cyrus. At which time Esdras, the priest of God, restored the Law burned by the Chaldees in the archives of the Temple; being full of the same spirit, in which it had been written." I find nothing here, but the statement, that, the standard copy of the Temple having been burned, Ezra took care to supply its place with another, which might be relied on as being correct, since Ezra was endued with a like spirit to that of Moses, its author, and accordingly could make no mistake. His supposed inspiration was referred to, as giving authority to his editorial labor, just as (with a view to similar security) inspiration was attributed to the Septuagint translators, in the Jewish fable concerning that version. If Augustine had meant as much more than this, as some have supposed, he was not the man to dismiss it in a period.

To the same effect I understand Irenæus, who in fact gives, in his context, the fable to which I have referred in the last paragraph. "At the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar," says he, (lib. 3, cap. 25, p. 255; Oxford edition, 1702,) "the Scriptures being corrupted, God inspired Ezra to arrange again all the words of the prophets, who had gone before, and to restore to the people the legislation through Moses." Διαφθερισάν

I am now arguing; but with those, who,—believing, that, as often as it may concern the divine goodness to make a special revelation to men, a revelation will be made, and that it will then be ratified, in the only way, which, as far as we can see, is possible, that is, by miracles, and believing that such a revelation was actually made through Jesus to the world,—are prepared to admit also the antecedent credibility of a miraculous revelation through Moses to the Jews.

Again; if it is urged, that immoralities are commanded, and erroneous and unworthy views of the Deity presented, as they have been thought to be, in the Pentateuch, the conclusion against its supernatural origin will, I admit, be made out, provided the fact can be sustained. It must, therefore, be the course of an advocate of its authenticity, and it will be mine in what follows, to show that the alleged facts are not proved, and do not exist. But this is an argument, which is only to be presented in the examination of single passages, as they successively occur.

When it is said, further, that there are parts of the Pentateuch, which Moses could not have written, the truth of the remark must be admitted. The inference attempted to be founded on it, is met by the general observation, that later interpolations might well be expected to occur in a composition so ancient; in addition to which, I expect to show, in respect to them

τῶν γραφῶν τοὺς προγεγονότων προφητῶν πάντας ἀνατάξασθαι λόγους, καὶ ἀποκαταστήσαι τῇ λαῷ τὴν διὰ Μωϋσίου νομοθεσίαν.

The representation of Clement of Alexandria, appears to me to be of the same character. "Εσδρα, δι' ὃν γίνεται ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ ὁ τῶν Διοπιύστων ἀναγνωρισμὸς καὶ ἀνακαινισμὸς λογίων. (Stromata, lib. 1, p. 241; Leyden edition of 1616.) "Ezra, through whom was the redemption of the people, and the *recension and renewal* of the divinely inspired oracles." It is revision, recension, and republication which are spoken of; and not, that I can find, reproduction, in any case.

individually, that they are mostly, if not all, of a clearly parenthetical character, and precisely such as it might be supposed they would be found, if they did not make part of the original texture of the piece, but were glosses brought into it by later hands.*

When it is urged, that the style of the Pentateuch very closely resembles that of the compositions of the age of David and Solomon, leading to a suspicion of a contemporaneous origin, I reply, what I believe no competent Hebrew scholar will dispute, that, (when a proper allowance has been made for the Chaldaisms, introduced by foreign intercourse in the more recent times,) the difference of style between the Psalms of David and the book of Deuteronomy, for example, which, on our supposition, were but four hundred years apart, is very nearly as great, as that between the Psalms of David and the writings of Malachi, though between these two writers was an interval of six hundred years, embracing a period of the most momentous political revolutions. The simple solution of both facts is, that, in the East, the fashions of language do not rapidly change,†

* See Numbers xxxii. 38, for an instance of such an alteration being expressly alleged.

† "It is worthy of remark, that the style and manner of Confucius and his immediate followers were found to differ very little from those of the best writers of the present day. One of the commentaries consulted by Mr. Marshman was published one thousand five hundred years after the death of Confucius, and the other much later; yet the only difference he could discover between them and the original consisted in the former being rather less concise. 'Indeed,' he adds, 'whatever I have heard or read of the language, tends to convince me, that it is radically the same, whether exhibited in the conciseness and sublimity of the ancient sages, the easy and copious style of the modern writers, or the familiarity of conversation.' This is, perhaps, the most extraordinary instance that the world has exhibited of a living language proved, by direct and positive testimony, to have been written and spoken by nearly one third part of the human race, for more than two thousand years, without undergoing any material change. How true, and at the same time how strictly applicable to the Chinese, is the observation of Dr. Johnson, that 'the lan-

any more than other fashions ; and, further, that a standard work, taking the lead of the literature of a nation, or doing more, as the Law of Moses did for a long time, and almost constituting the literature of a nation, fixes its forms of speech for ages.

Turning from the supposed adverse, to the favorable internal evidence, I ask a Christian, who believes, that whatever professes to proceed directly from a benevolent God, is recommended to his reception, in that character, by its apparent strong efficacy to subserve the purposes of God in the religious improvement of his children, to observe the fitness of the Law of Moses, to exert, and the fact of its having actually exerted, such an influence. This, again, opens a view, which must be pursued in its details, as we advance in the reading of the Pentateuch.

Among the internal evidences, I ought not perhaps to omit, though I would not confidently urge, the evidence adduced from several texts, to show that Moses is represented in the Pentateuch itself as its writer. It is true, that, understood as they have been, they after all prove no more than this ; that the Pentateuch was the work of Moses, if honestly written by any one ; that it was produced either by him, or by an impostor ; and that thus they would make all the evidence of its having been written with good design, go to corroborate the opinion of its Mosaic origin. And I think it must be owned, that there is great uncertainty in an argument, which interprets the declaration that Moses was the author of certain specified passages, into a claim for him of the

guage most likely to continue long without alteration would be that of a nation raised a little, and but a little, above barbarity, secluded from strangers, and totally employed in procuring the conveniences of life.'"—
Review of "Marshman's Dissertation on the Chinese Language." Quarterly Review, Vol. v. p. 401.

authorship of the whole composition, of which now they make a part.

The style of the Pentateuch agrees with the supposition of a remote age. The idioms of language* and the rhetorical representations are of a simple character,†

* The pronoun אַתָּה, e. g. and the noun נַעֲרָה are used as feminines in the Pentateuch, the former no less than about two hundred times. Gesenius (*Geschichte der Hebräischer Sprache und Schrift*, § 31) admits both to be archaisms. Jahn has pursued this subject very diligently. Some of the results of his examination are exhibited in his "Introductio," &c. § 3. The subject is said to have been treated by him more at large in two posthumous essays, published in the second and third volumes of "Bengel's Archiv für die Theologie," a work which is not within my reach. Jahn affirms (*ibid.*), that "there are no foreign words to be found in the Pentateuch, except some of old Egyptian origin," and of these he instances several.

† The following argument, extracted by Horne (*Introduction*, Vol. ii. p. 18,) from Bishop Marsh's "Authenticity of the Five Books of Moses Vindicated," loses something of its force, through the too confident tone in which it is urged. It is besides of that nature, that some familiarity with the original writings is requisite, before one can admit or deny its cogency. I can only say, that, after much time passed in the study of these writings, it has to my mind very great weight.

"It is an undeniable fact, that Hebrew ceased to be the living language of the Jews during the Babylonish captivity, and that the Jewish productions after that period were in general either Chaldee or Greek. It necessarily follows, therefore, that every book, which is written in pure Hebrew, was composed either before or about the time of the Babylonish captivity. This being admitted, we may advance a step further, and contend, that the period which elapsed between the composition of the most ancient and the most modern book of the Old Testament was very considerable; or, in other words, that the most ancient books of the Old Testament were written a length of ages prior to the Babylonish captivity. No language continues during many centuries in the same state of cultivation, and the Hebrew, like other tongues, passed through the several stages of infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. If, therefore, on comparison, the several parts of the Hebrew Bible are found to differ, not only in regard to style, but also in regard to character and cultivation of language; if the one discovers the golden, another the silver, a third the brazen, a fourth the iron age, we have strong internal marks of their having been composed at different and distant periods. No classical scholar, independently of the Grecian history, would believe that the poems ascribed to Homer were written in the age of Demosthenes, the orations of Demosthenes in the time of Origen, or the commentaries of Origen in the days of Lascaris and Chrysoloras. For the very same rea-

while the tone and structure of the composition, throughout, are such as we might expect from a man engaged in an enterprise like that which it describes.*

An argument, which strikes me as of great weight, but which is only to be set forth in an examination of the details, as we proceed, is that furnished by the arrangement of the materials. The work is written, for the most part, in the manner of a journal, as Moses would be extremely likely to write, but as an author composing in a later age would not be. Such an author would record the laws in one form, as he found them existing in the shape, which, after any modifications, they had taken, or as he would have them to exist. The Pentateuch not only, in connexion with laws, records the occasions which respectively gave rise to them; but, in later passages, it repeals laws prescribed in earlier, or changes, or abrogates them, a course in which it is not easily conceivable that any one should proceed, who did not live at the time of their enactment, repeal, or change. Of the same class is an argument, which may be drawn from such passages as that, for instance, near the end of Exodus, relating to the construction of the tabernacle. In what manner should we expect a writer to speak of that edifice, who lived

son it is certain that the five books, which are ascribed to Moses, were not written in the time of David, the Psalms of David in the age of Isaiah, nor the prophecies of Isaiah in the time of Malachi. But it appears from what has been said above, in regard to the extinction of the Hebrew language, that the book of Malachi could not have been written much later than the Babylonish captivity; before that period, therefore, were written the prophecies of Isaiah, still earlier the psalms of David, and much earlier than these the books which are ascribed to Moses."

* One characteristic is thus described by Jahn; "The order of discourse is not everywhere the most convenient; it frequently runs on in broken and unconnected fragments, many of which are wound up with distinct conclusions. All this shows a writer distracted by a multiplicity of business; writing not continuously, but with frequent interruptions, and in the constant anticipation of interruption." *Introductio*, Pars 2, § 3.

after its construction? Should we entertain any doubt; that he would confine himself to describing its general arrangement and effect? But the manner in which it is treated in the passage, to which I refer, is of a very different character. In the first place, the most minute directions are given as to the manner of its construction, as one would give an order to mechanics respecting a work for which great solicitude was felt; and then, with the same particularity of detail, it is related how those orders were executed. I am at a loss to point to any principle in human nature, which will help us to account for such a composition, proceeding from any other person than one so situated as Moses is related to have been.*

Further; there are laws, which, if I may so speak, seem to breathe the desert air; arrangements, for which there was no apparent necessity, and scarcely any possibility of their observance, after the wanderings in the Arabian wilderness were over. I believe we shall meet with not a few such. To whom does it not occur, that the direction to the males of the nation to assemble three times in every year had its first occasion in the necessity of preserving the integrity of the people, by preventing those who had the care of flocks and herds from wandering, in their nomadic excursions, to too great a distance from the central camp?

* The justness of the remark here made may be tested by a comparison with what is actually said on the subject in question by Josephus. Respecting the laws, that writer says, (Antiq., lib. 4, cap. 8, § 4,) "All things are written [by me] as he left them; nothing being added for the sake of ornament, nor which Moses did not leave. But I have made the innovation of *arranging every thing agreeably to its subject*. For by him the things written were left without arrangement, just as he had obtained them severally from God." In another place (lib. 3, cap. 6), Josephus describes the tabernacle; and the description which he gives is precisely of that kind, which, as above intimated, might be expected from a writer of any age subsequent to that of its erection.

There are few things, perhaps, in the Pentateuch, which go so far to create a prejudice against the supposition of a supernatural authority in its writer, as what is thought the rude, anthropomorphic character of some representations in it of the divine Being. That subject is not yet before us. I touch upon it no further than to say, that such representations, as far as they do exist, whatever other observation they may call for, are just so much proof to us of the early origin of the book containing them. Such representations have clearly some relation to the views of a rude people. They would be out of place, if prepared for the comparatively refined age of David, or Solomon, or Hezekiah. Their character is scarcely reconcilable with the supposition of their having had any such late source.

There is a remarkable chasm in the history between the book of Genesis and the book of Exodus. It corresponds to the interval between the time of Jacob and the time of Moses, about four hundred years. How is this to be accounted for, on the supposition of a late origin of the books? That period, the period of the sojourn of the Jews in Egypt, enveloped in the mists of a foreign region and an ancient time, would have made, to a late annalist, precisely the fairy land of legendary history. How came this alone, of all the ages between Abraham's and the writer's own, to be wholly omitted, when we should, on the contrary, expect it to be made peculiarly prominent, on the supposition that a comparatively modern inhabitant of Palestine was the writer? Why was it not filled up by him with marvels, like the period of the Judges? I think that the question admits of no plausible reply. On the supposition of Moses' authorship, no such problem is presented. We shall see the reason of his writing the history of his own time, and of those of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ;

and I think we shall see that there was no like reason, and no apparent reason whatever, for him to write more particularly, than he has done in two or three verses, of the generations which had intervened between that of Joseph and his own.

Once more (for other remarks of a similar character must be left to find their several places hereafter); I see not how any one can imagine, that the taste of a people and age, capable of relishing such compositions, as, for instance, the Psalms of David, and the Prophecies of Isaiah, could have offered any demand or encouragement for such relations as some of those in the early part of Genesis. For myself, as far as, from the contemporaneous productions, I am able to form any conception of the habits of thought and writing of those later times, the reference of the first book of the Pentateuch, and of not a few parts of the others, to those times, seems to me no less than an anachronism of the most palpable description.

I do not pretend to have treated, in this lecture, an argument of such extent as the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. I have scarcely aimed at more than to lay out the ground, and prepare the way for future observations. The internal evidence will be brought before us, in the whole progress of our inquiries respecting the contents of these five books; while to the external, contributions will be obtained from many of the more recent Jewish writings (whether canonical or not) which are to come under our view. For the present, I conclude with the remark, that, without urging the external evidence with a confidence such as has been professed in respect to it, but such as I think it will not justify, it yet appears to me, that whatever there is, favors the commonly received opinion; and that it is substantially what we should be entitled to expect on the supposi-

tion of the correctness of that opinion, the actual circumstances hardly admitting, in any such case, of more. The internal evidence alleged against the authenticity, I conceive to be based, for the most part, on mere misapprehensions, while that in its favor is of a very weighty kind and large amount, as I hope we may see in the sequel of these discussions. I make no separate questions, at present, of the Mosaic origin of the books of Genesis and Deuteronomy. We may find reason, in the sequel, to think, that the existence of the one is scarcely to be accounted for, except by regarding it as a Preface, or of the other, except by considering it as an Appendix, to the Law contained in the three other books.

LECTURE V.

EXODUS II. 11. — VI. 30.

PURPOSE OF THE MOSAIC REVELATION. — OBJECTION TO IT, FROM THE LIMITATION OF ITS BENEFITS. — FITNESS OF THE PUBLICATION OF A PURE THEOLOGY, HOWEVER LIMITED. — DISCRIMINATION, A PART OF THE UNIVERSAL LAW OF PROVIDENCE. — THE MOSAIC SYSTEM ADMITTED PROSELYTES, — WAS DESIGNED FOR THE ULTIMATE GOOD OF MANKIND, — CANNOT BE SHOWN TO HAVE BEEN THE ONLY ANCIENT REVELATION. — OBJECTION TO IT FROM ITS RUDENESS AND IMPERFECTION. — UNREASONABLENESS OF THE EXPECTATION THAT WHATEVER PROCEEDS FROM GOD SHALL BE PERFECT. — THE MOSAIC SYSTEM WAS ACCOMMODATED TO THE MINDS WHICH IT WAS TO ADDRESS. — DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING ITS INTERPRETATION. — REMARKS ON VARIOUS PASSAGES CONNECTED WITH MOSES' ASSUMPTION OF HIS OFFICE.

I BEGIN my remarks on the contents of the Old Testament, at the point where Moses, if the history be his, takes up the narrative upon his own personal knowledge; the previous portion of his work relating to what he could only have known through information derived from others. The passage before us records the circumstances, under which he assumed the office of revealing to the Jews a religious law, and guiding them to a national independence.

And here is the proper place to consider what was the object of the Mosaic revelation, and to maintain the fitness of that object, as deserving to be regarded by the Divine Being, against any incredulity, with which, presented in its general statement, it may be viewed.

That object, I conceive, is correctly stated as follows; To put the Jewish people in possession of a pure theology, and to place them in a condition to preserve it

themselves, and to become the instruments, in good time, of communicating it, under better circumstances, to the rest of the world.

An objection naturally occurs to the limitation of knowledge so valuable. Why, it may be asked, should so desirable a revelation, of truths of which the whole idolatrous world stood so much in need, be limited to a single nation, and that a nation politically so insignificant?

I might reply, first, that to have a pure worship of God ascend but from one corner of this our earth, would seem, as far as we may judge, to be, in itself, an object suitable to be accomplished. When such questions are asked, as that to which I have just referred, we are apt to look for answers involving considerations of men's benefit exclusively. Without laying much stress upon the thought, (since I grant that it connects itself with considerations, which we are little competent to discuss,) I would, however, inquire in passing, whether this question of men's greater or less benefit, is in fact the only question in the case. Is it not an intelligible, and, as far as we may reason, a probable thing, that, as an independent object, God's honor was to be consulted by his worship not being permitted to be wholly banished from this earth? When the misguided nations were doing homage to some foolish imagination of their own hearts, might there not be an abstract fitness, regarding alone the relation of the Divine Being to the worlds he has made, requiring that the knowledge and service of Him should not be allowed to be utterly excluded from this portion of his universe?

But, secondly, when it is asked, why a revelation, if worth communicating, should have been communicated to the Jews alone, and other nations not been allowed to partake in its benefits, I reply, that this is a question

to which we have no right to expect an answer, any further than an answer is furnished by observation on the whole course of divine Providence. We might as well ask, why one nation enjoys a better climate than another; why, among individual men, there are native differences of talent and disposition; why one man is made to live under a government which oppresses his mind, and another under social influences, which give his mind scope and excitement; why one man's religious interests are made to prosper, from the first, under exemplary parental care, and another is exposed from his infancy to all sorts of moral contamination. The question concerning the justice of such inequalities, may or not be a question hard to answer; but, such as it is, it relates to the whole acknowledged course of the divine administration, and accordingly cannot, with any propriety, be made a ground of distrust of the divine original of the Jewish system. Undoubtedly, it applies as much to Christianity as it does to Judaism. But it applies no more to either, than it does to all the endless variety in human fortunes and condition. That, which is seen to be the universal method of divine operation, certainly cannot, when presented among the circumstances of a supposed revelation, be urged as a ground of objection to its pretended origin. That there should be a difference of privilege among different nations, is but one instance of that infinite variety which we see to be studied in all the works and providence of God; nor is it inconsistent with his justice, inasmuch as it remains for justice ultimately to make the requisite allowance, when final retribution comes to be assigned. If the order of the divine government was not to be deviated from in this instance, then part of the world was to be preferred before other parts; and, had the preference fallen on some

other nation instead of the Jews, the same question would still have remained to be asked. Yet it is not necessary, nor fit, to suppose, that the selection of the Jews, for the distinction they enjoyed, was arbitrary. The most that we can say is, that we do not know the reasons which determined the Divine Mind in making the distinction. Could we look back into antiquity, as a more complete history would enable us, we might, perhaps, see some such reasons in the capacities, character, condition, relations of this particular people. And perhaps we might not. But certainly there is nothing to surprise us in our being unable to see what it was, that determined the Divine Mind to such a preference, nor does it raise any presumption against the fact that such a preference was actually exercised.

Thirdly ; I suggest, that preference of one nation was not, in fact, in this instance, exclusion of the rest of mankind. Other men, to whom the knowledge of the Mosaic religion might come, could adopt it, if they would. It made express provision for receiving proselytes to every privilege of the chosen race; and we find, both in its earlier and later history, that proselytes did, in fact, receive the religion, and come to stand, in respect to it, on the same footing with the descendants of Israel. But, much more than this; the institution, so far from excluding, in any sense, the mass of mankind from its benefits, was expressly designed to be ultimately for the benefit of all mankind, by being an introduction to Christianity; by preparing the way for a system, which mankind in their existing state of culture could not have been made to embrace, without some violence done to that free agency of theirs, which God never violates; but which, through the preparation of the intervening ages, they would be brought into a con-

dition to receive. Men were now universally bigoted to idolatry. To reclaim the whole ultimately to better views, the fittest way for God, who always works by means, to adopt, — the only apparent way (I would say it with reverence) to secure the end without invading men's free-will, — was to reclaim first a portion of mankind, by subjecting them to a minute, detailed, (shall I say, technical?) discipline, only capable of being administered in a small community. Such we shall find the Jewish system to have been; — a system well adapted to train one community to the profession of religious truth, which, when they were established in it, they would be fit instruments for communicating, in an extended and spiritualized form, to the world. And their situation, both while an independent and a subjugated people, favored this design. At one time (that is, in the reign of Solomon,) Judea was itself a great power, having extensive relations as such; and at other periods, the people were successively connected, in a different relation, with the four great empires of ancient history, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman; while, at all times, their geographical position, having on their border the nation which carried on the commerce of the world, and inhabiting a territory which made the thoroughfare of whatever intercourse there was by land between the three continents, favored the dissemination of a knowledge of their sacred institutions.

Once more; though I do not undertake to deny, yet I certainly would not venture to assert, that the ground of all this questioning is solid; and that the Jews were the only people in antiquity favored with a supernaturally revealed religion. Perhaps the most, that with safety and modesty we could affirm upon the subject, is this; that we have no sufficient evidence to

show, that any other nation has been so privileged. If ever any other people did receive a religious system supernaturally sent from God, and therefore pure, I am as ready as others to own, that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is now lost; since I know no other, which can produce evidence of having been so sent by him. But this is not proof, that he never did make any other such revelation. When he does make a revelation, I conceive that, in every just view of the case, he is to be considered as committing the truths revealed, like any other gift, to the care of human conscientiousness and wisdom. In proportion as these are wanting to their trust, the truths disclosed (as we know from the history of Christianity and Judaism themselves) may be obscured, and, for aught we are authorized to say, may eventually be wholly lost. God, having bestowed his gifts, will not, by a constant miracle, continue to protect them, against misuse or even forfeiture. Christianity was so corrupted during the dark ages, as to be all but lost for the time being, and to be apparently in danger of absolute extinction. It may be, that some other system or systems, adapted, in their respective ways, to the wants and condition of other nations than the Jews, were revealed in remote antiquity, which, however, have been in time so crusted over with corruptions, as to have lost all the appropriate signatures of truth. Would it be safe, for example, to affirm, that the Hindoo faith had not its source, however corrupted and ruined now, in a divine revelation? Some of its interpreters say, that its original documents teach a perfectly pure and rational theology.* If it be so, then

* I refer particularly to some of the publications of that extraordinary man, the late Rammohun Roy. In the preface to his translation, published in 1816, of one of the chapters of the Ved, he said of that book; "The unity of the Supreme Being, as the Sole Ruler of the Universe, is

the present condition of that system will hardly prove, that it did not begin in an express revelation, any more, than the corruptions of Romanism will prove the same thing concerning Christianity. If that representation be well founded, then the most that can be positively declared, is, that the proofs of the rightful pretensions of the Hindoo system to a supernatural character, if such ever existed, are lost; and that the original truths have been so overlaid and superseded by later errors, as to be no longer profitable or discernible. At all events, the most that I find myself able to assert, is, that I know no proof of any other religious system, except the Mosaic and Christian, having been ever supernaturally revealed. But this is a very different thing from asserting that no other religion ever was so revealed; and the latter is a ground, which he who would urge an argument, founded upon it, against the credibility of the Jewish system, assumes without any authority whatever.

So much for any supposed antecedent improbability in a revelation (if a revelation were made) being limited, as was the Jewish. By way of preparation for examining fairly the provisions of that system, I would next say a few words, in a general way, upon a subject, which, in its details, will frequently come before us in the investigation. A prejudice is apt to be excited against the Jewish system by a certain character of rudeness which it obviously bears, when compared with

plainly inculcated, and the mode of worshipping him particularly directed. The doctrine of a plurality of gods and goddesses is not only controverted, but reasons assigned for its introduction," &c. This publication gave rise to a controversy, in the course of which appeared his "Defence of Hindoo Theism," and "Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds," more fully maintaining the view, that "the theology of the Vedas is the doctrine of one self-existent, omnipotent God;" and these were followed by translations of other parts of the Brahminical books, professedly executed for the establishment of the same fact.

Christianity, or judged agreeably to the habits of thinking which prevail at the present day. I ask, whether it is just, or in any degree philosophical, to give way to such a prejudice. Would any one defend it on the ground, that whatever proceeds from God, must needs be perfect? Nothing can be more false. The Infinite Mind, incessantly active, studies (so to speak), and delights in, an infinite variety; and of course, where there is a variety of works and administrations, (which itself is a surpassing excellence of the whole system taken together,) there must, of necessity, be more excellence in some forms of these, and less in others. To say that all should be equally complete, would be to say that there ought to be the dulness and inoperativeness of uniformity, or rather of identity, instead of the beauty which characterizes, and the multiform relations and mutual influences arising out of, the variety which we find existing.

If our earth were the only dwelling-place of beings capable of religion, then it might perhaps be, that the divine attributes would insure its having a religious administration of the highest possible perfection. But making, as it appears to do, but a small part of an infinitely varied universe, I should feel authorized to insist, if my argument required it, that we had no more right, on the ground of the divine attributes, to demand, for our earth, in any period of its existence, an abstractly perfect religious administration, than we should have a right, on the same ground, to demand, that an earthly insect should be a perfect creation of almighty skill, endowed with all intellectual and moral attributes, or to refuse to believe in its existence, if it was less than such a creation. That may clearly be the best possible thing, as part of a great system, — as fitly contributing to the endless variety, — which, judged only

by itself, would possess no such character. God looks at every thing as part of the universal system. We cannot do this. But we ought to be extremely backward to condemn that which may have become subject to our suspicions, only through our own narrowness of view;—through our own partial supply of the needful facts for arriving at a just estimation.

But to go so far is by no means necessary for our argument. I suggest, again, that the perfection of any instrument is its complete adaptation to its use. To affect the mind of man, if God condescends to use those means which are consistent with the exercise of its free will, he will address himself to it in a manner adapted to its existing state of cultivation. He will address it, in other words, in the language, which, taking it as it is, will make it understand and feel. He will quicken it through the instrumentality of its accustomed associations. He will convey instruction to it through those channels, to which it has been used. We may think much of our refinement at the present day. But what great difference can we imagine there would be, between the degree of accommodation which it would be necessary for the Divine Mind to make to our poorly furnished and cultivated minds, if it should condescend directly to address them, and that, which, for the same purpose, was practised in the case of the ancient Israelites? If God is pleased to convey a message directly from himself, the form which it will take will be determined by nothing except regard to the manner in which it will best do its office; and what that manner is, will depend on the condition of that understanding for which the message is designed. To address the Jews in Moses' time in the same forms of communication which might now be suitable to be used with us, would be quite as unfit, as to reverse that

course, and address Christians, in a comparatively civilized age, in the manner which we find employed, in Moses' revelation, with the Jews.

We ought to consider more than we do, that the very supposition of communication on the part of the Divine Being, with any of his creatures, implies accommodation on his part to their state of preparation for the receiving of communications from him. Otherwise there is no effectual communication. The mind, addressed in a language which it does not understand, is not addressed. Doubtless God addresses superior intelligences in a different way from that, in which he will address his earthly creatures in any stage of their progress. Doubtless men, in a future improved state, may be addressed in a different manner from that which could now be used with us. So the contemporaries of Jesus Christ could bear to be addressed in a different manner from the debased and barbarous Jews of Moses' time. But, so far from suspicion properly attaching to the way, in which God is represented to have addressed these latter persons, on account of its not being the way most conformed to our own habits of taste and speculation, the very fact of its having a peculiar conformity to theirs, as far as we are able to detect that fact, ought to pass with us for a strong reason, corroborating the authenticity of the narrative.

I add another remark, preliminary to our entrance on the examination of the Pentateuch. It is, that students of Scripture are apt to fall into a great error, as to what they may reasonably expect from labors in interpretation, in consequence of the common, but entirely unfounded habit, of looking at all the books in the Biblical collection, whether of the Old or the New Testament, from the same point of view. They seem sometimes to expect to arrive as uniformly at complete and

satisfactory explanations of questions arising from the Jewish books, as from the Christian; and, when they fail to do so, they seem to think it a ground for objection against the former. I believe, that the admission of any prejudice arising from such a cause will be seen, on a moment's reflection, to be altogether indefensible. We must not expect to interpret the Jewish, as we interpret the Christian records. The latter have come down to us in a language, which we learn with accuracy from a variety of books, treating of a variety of subjects, and constituting perhaps the most copious literature which ever existed. They have come down to us from times, of which, considering their distance, we know extremely well the customs of society, and the habits of thought. We are acquainted, from ample sources, with the contemporaneous and preceding history, and we have almost contemporaneous expositions, which are not without their value. The Pentateuch, if we assign its date correctly, is much older than any monument of profane literature. It comes to us from the infancy of society. Language, always an imperfect instrument, especially when only written, was then in almost its earliest immaturity. The force of the whole mass of idiomatic expressions, on which grammars and lexicons, from their nature, give us little light, is lost to us, except so far as parallel passages may sometimes help us to recover them; nor only lost, but as often as, for want of knowing that an idiom was intended, we attempt to analyze a sentence by established analogies of the language, we are unavoidably led into a positive misconception of the sense. For want of contemporaneous history, we know very little, circumstantially, of the state of surrounding opinions; and when a law is prescribed, or a sentiment advanced, which had reference to these, we may be entirely at a loss for its import, or, if we

will be bolder than our ignorance warrants, we may entirely misconceive and misstate it. Apart from merely idiomatic forms of speech, the artifices of language on a larger scale, including all that belongs to the freedom of figurative exhibition, and much more than is commonly ranked under that head, vary their significance, in an arbitrary manner, in different ages and regions of the world; and in Hebrew literature, what is to furnish us with that explanation, needful in such cases, which is only furnished in the literature of other nations, by a large collation and comparison of instances of their occurrence?

I might enlarge greatly on this topic. But I suppose, that the general statement which I make, speaks sufficiently for itself; we have no right to expect to interpret the old Hebrew Scriptures, as we might interpret more modern books. We have no right to be disappointed, certainly none to be discouraged or offended, when our efforts after a satisfactory interpretation are sometimes foiled. When we have extracted from a passage, by what we may think a strict exposition of its language, a sense which seems liable to objections on external grounds, we have no sufficient right to insist positively that that sense is the true one. And, on the other hand, every satisfactory solution, which does reward our diligent inquiry, of any thing which at first view caused us embarrassment and doubt, is an added ground for the presumption, that, had we but a like sufficient knowledge of facts in respect to difficulties which still continue to perplex us, those difficulties too would disappear.

In the passage before us, we are told that Moses, having been outraged by the treatment which he saw one of his countrymen receiving from an Egyptian, and

having put the wrong-doer to death,* was obliged to flee from Egypt, and found a shelter with a priest or chief man of Midian, a region in the north part of Arabia, whose daughter he married. Here, after forty years,† while feeding his flock on a solitary mountain,‡ he received a divine summons to return to Egypt, and undertake the deliverance of the Israelites. He was empowered and directed to perform certain miracles, to satisfy his nation that he was divinely authorized to undertake the enterprise; and, after repeated expressions of his own reluctance and sense of incapacity to engage in a service so arduous and hazardous, and after being directed to associate his brother Aaron with him in its execution, he returned to Egypt to enter on the appointed office. Here the request of Moses and Aaron to the king, to permit the people to go a three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice by themselves, was denied, and hardships were inflicted on them, to punish them for the alleged indolence which prompted the proposal. Moses, repeatedly discouraged by the harshness of Pharaoh, and the discontents of the people, who now looked on him as the cause of the increased severity of their lot, was repeatedly reassured by divine communications, till at length he received directions to extort the consent which had been refused.

One of the first things which attracts our attention

* I think it may be inferred from Acts vii. 25, that this act of Moses was declared by tradition to have been intended for a signal of insurrection to the Jews; so that, if the tradition were well-founded, it seems that Moses already entertained the purpose of exciting them to attempt the recovery of their freedom.

† That is, if the same tradition is to be taken for authority. See Acts vii. 30.

‡ It is called (iii. 1.) "the mount of God," either as indicating its height, this being a form of the Hebrew superlative, or because the Law was afterwards published there. Compare iii. 12, xviii. 5, xix. 3 et seq.

here is, the representation of the manner in which Moses received the commission to his office. "The angel of the Lord," we are told, "appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush;"* that is, as I understand, the medium of divine agency, to attract his notice, was itself a bush, miraculously inflamed, without consuming.† His attention being thus fixed, he was next addressed in an audible voice, summoning him to stand still and lend a reverential ear; and then the purpose of the marvellous appearance was declared to him. If it was fit, that he should be summoned to such an errand, I submit, that, as far as we may humbly judge, the manner in which he was intrusted was such as it was worthy of the Divine Being to select. The solemn solitude of the mountain, the preternatural light, the intelligibleness and impressiveness of the articulate voice, (for that it was literal sound which conveyed the sense, and not an internal impression only, I take to be proved by the fifth verse,) all were, if we may say it, suitable adjuncts of such a scene. God may doubtless convey his meaning to the mind, which he designs supernaturally to enlighten, as well without spoken words as with them. In this case, as has been remarked, it appears that he employed the latter method, and it was fully paralleled in the New Testament times.‡ In other cases which will come under our view, we may perhaps find cause to believe, that the method was different, and that the language, "God spake to Moses," and the like, is used for divine

* I believe that an "angel [or messenger] of the Lord," מַלְאָכִי, ἄγγελος, will be found to mean in Scripture, any instrument or medium of divine communication or agency; and that accordingly the word does not determine the instrumentality spoken of in any case, to be either inanimate, sentient, human, or superhuman. Compare Psalm civ. 4; Exod. xiv. 19; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15; Isaiah xlii. 19, xliv. 26; Malachi ii. 7.

† Exod. iii. 2.

‡ See Matthew iii. 17, xvii. 5; John xii. 28.

communications received by Moses in any way, the form of the sentence being but an adaptation to the simple Eastern fashion of narrative.

If the reluctance of Moses to undertake his allotted office should excite in us any surprise, I believe that emotion will be only momentary. There is no evidence of his having been a person of decided courage, certainly none of his having possessed a character of great enterprise and ambition; and the difficulties and hazards of the undertaking were evidently great, and known by no one to be so, better than by himself. And if any reader be disposed to think that the divine command would necessarily preclude any temporary feeling, or submissive expression, of such reluctance, let him remember, that the state of mind which he unreasonably blames is no other than that evinced by our Lord himself, under circumstances of some similarity.* All the remonstrances of Moses, if so we are to call them, I conceive are fitly and satisfactorily classed under the same head, as expressions of natural emotion, in the form of prayer, to him with whom it remained to grant or to deny.†

* See Matthew xxvi. 39.

† The present is as convenient a place as any that may occur for a few words respecting that form of *dialogue* between God and Moses, which we find the latter frequently inserting in his narrative, and which may have occasioned us some surprise. I might perhaps be justified in dismissing it with the remark, that it is one of the simple rhetorical artifices, by which, in antiquity, when language was not even the partially philosophical instrument, that it has now become, the narrative style was diversified and enlivened. And I might compare it, thus regarded, to the habit of the classical historians, of inserting set speeches in the body of their works, which they ascribed to those whose actions they were recording, as a convenient device for letting the reader into their supposed state of mind at the time. But I prefer to take a different view. Whoever believes that Moses was supernaturally commissioned, believes that there was *communication* between God and him. Now with whomsoever I communicate, whether the instrument of communication be spoken or written

The question, related to have been asked by Moses, in the thirteenth verse of the third chapter, "When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, 'What is his name,' what shall I say unto them?" was probably prompted by a distrust which crossed his mind, under the bewildering circumstances of this extraordinary scene. He wished to satisfy himself that the being, with whom he was conversing in this remote wild, knew the name of the national Deity of the Hebrews. His question is expressly answered in the fifteenth verse; "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, '*Jehovah*, God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath sent me unto you.'" But first, in the fourteenth verse, the derivation of that name is brought to view, in a sense the most apposite to the occasion, indicating that the immutability which it denotes is now to be manifested, in Jehovah's fulfilment of his ancient promises to the patriarchs of the race.*

language, or the language of other conventional signs, or something different from all, it is fit that I should say, *he spoke* to me, and *I answered* him. No one would hesitate, for example, to describe thus a conversation with a deaf and dumb man. The communications between God and Moses, which of course occurred, (on the supposition of the divine illumination of the latter,) may have taken place in some ineffable way. And then there was no language fitter to use concerning them, than that which Moses has employed. If we had the account of Jesus' ministry from himself, instead of his disciples, does it not seem to every one in the highest degree probable, that this is the phraseology in which his intercourse with Heaven would have been described? (Compare John viii. 26, 28; xii. 50.) Into this form is actually thrown what many expositors consider the internal conflict, recorded (in all probability, in his own words) in Matthew iv. 1-11. Compare also Acts xxii. 17-21.—And after all, who knows that audible language was not the medium of the communications in question? Why should it not be? We use it in our common addresses to God; why should not Moses, in his, of an extraordinary character? Human beings addressed Moses in words; why should not God, if he saw fit to address him in any way?

* יהוה: from היה the verb of existence. Such is the Masoretic point-

In the fourth chapter is a brief account of Moses' return to Egypt, to enter on his mission, having received the power of authenticating it by miraculous manifestations, and been permitted to take his brother Aaron, as an associate in the enterprise.* Upon the latter arrangement, considered as having been made in consequence of Moses' own remonstrances, and to overcome his diffident reluctance to the task, it may be well to observe, that there is nothing to surprise us in a statement of God's conforming his method of action to the state of mind of his human instrument, nor of his having done this after expostulation from Moses, instead of before. On the contrary, the encouraging effect on the latter's mind, of seeing that he was indulged, was, as far as we may judge, an effect suitable to be produced. But, in the present instance,† it does not

ing; but whether it indicates the true ancient pronunciation, is uncertain. The Jews have a conceit, that the structure of the word indicates, in a peculiar manner, the idea of eternity; the preformative *v* being in Hebrew the grammatical characteristic of the future, the inserted *i* of the participle (which in Hebrew expresses present time), and the final *h* of the preterite of this class of verbs. And to this idea there is probably allusion in the Apocalypse (i. 4, 8; iv. 8; xi. 17.) It is likely, however, that the pointing is but an adoption (with a slight change, having reference to the different character of the initial letter,) of that of the word אֶרְנִי, which the Jews, from a superstition of theirs, always read, when אֶרְנִי occurs on the page, unless both words come together, and then, for euphony's sake, they point the latter אֶרְנִי, and read it אֶל־הֵימ, *God*. The material circumstance, however, is sufficiently clear; viz. the derivation of אֶרְנִי from אֶרְנִי, and its consequent expression of the idea of *self-existence, eternity, immutableness*. The idea, as is remarked above, is distinctly premised in the fourteenth verse. The verbs rendered in our version "I am that I am," in the Septuagint, "I am he who is," [ἰγὼ εἰμι ὁ εἶμι,] and in the Arabic, simply "I am the eternal," are in the future form; but the use of the tenses in the Hebrew is so free, that some grammarians do not scruple to denominate them both "aorists," and the rendering, "I have been [or am] what I shall be," would be unexceptionable.

* iv. 1 - 17. For remarks on questions arising out of iii. 18, 22, see pages 131, 136.

† See iv. 14, 27.

appear, that, in the association of Aaron with his brother, there was actually what we might call a change of the divine purpose.*

The greater cruelties recorded, in the fifth chapter, as having been inflicted upon the Israelites, in consequence of the solicitation which they had made, I conceive that we are to regard as having been providentially directed, to excite them to a stronger wish to escape from their oppressors. The genealogy of Moses and Aaron, towards the close of the passage before us,†

* The sense of the words rendered in our version, "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go," (iv. 21,) would be better expressed by the other form of our English future, "I shall harden," &c., the latter form being simply declarative of something known to be future, while the former includes the additional idea of its coming to pass in consequence of a purpose entertained by the speaker. The sense I take to be simply this; I know that Pharaoh, instead of being shaken from his purpose, as he should be, by what I shall do, will but be led to manifest a more obdurate obstinacy. — The incident related in verses 24–26, when divested of its figurative language, (a kind of language in which the remembrance of an exciting incident naturally clothes itself,) I understand to have been as follows. On his way into Egypt, Moses was seized with alarming illness. His Midianitish wife, who had hitherto withholden her son from being a subject of the Israelitish rite of circumcision, supposed, in the spirit of the time, that her husband's danger was a vindictive divine visitation for this disobedience, or a warning to desist from it, now that Moses was to be placed at the head of his people. She hastened, therefore, to propitiate the offended Deity; and believing her act to have been available for her husband's restoration, she said to him, "Behold thee a husband won back to me by blood."

† The words "By my name Jehovah was I not known to them," (vi. 3.) as commonly understood, contradict several parts of the book of Genesis; e. g. xv. 2; xxiv. 40; xxvi. 25; xxviii. 13. But there is no such inconsistency in the original. The words *לֹא נִוְרַעְתִּי לָהֶם*, are well translated, "I was not *disclosed, manifested*, to them;" that is, in the sense of the name I took. God was known, revealed, to the patriarchs, as "God Almighty," through his mighty interpositions in their behalf; but not as *Jehovah*, "The Immutable," because for them he had not yet fulfilled his promise respecting the establishment in Canaan. In that character, the character *Jehovah*, the character of continuity, permanency, unchangeableness, he was now, in the ministry of Moses, to appear. Compare verses 6, 7, 8, where the sense is disguised by the rendering "the Lord,"

is appropriately given in connexion with their entrance on their public trust. The fact that it is introduced by a concise sketch of the lines of Reuben and Simeon, while no other tribes are mentioned, is naturally explained by the consideration, that in any comprehensive genealogical list, to which Moses should have recourse for a register of the lineage of Levi, his own ancestor, he would find it preceded by those of Reuben and Simeon, the only older sons of Jacob.

instead of the proper name, "Jehovah." — "I will give it you [the land of Canaan] for an *heritage*," (verse 8,) not merely for a place of pilgrimage, as it was to your fathers, nor for you to be but tenants in it, as you have been on the Egyptian soil.

LECTURE VI.

EXODUS VII. 1.—XII. 51.

PURPOSE OF THE MOSAIC MIRACLES IN EGYPT.—REASON OF THE REPETITION OF SUCH ACTS.—EXPLANATION OF PHARAOH'S CONDUCT.—CHARACTER OF THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS, AND OF THEIR ACTS.—AMOUNT AND EXTENT OF THE MIRACULOUS OPERATION RECORDED.—OBSERVATIONS ON THE SEVERAL PLAGUES.—INSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER.—EXODUS FROM EGYPT.

WE shall obtain aid towards a satisfactory view of the portion of the Mosaic history at which we have now arrived, by attending to the preliminary consideration of the purpose, for which the miracles herein recorded were designed. If we should suppose, that they were intended for the conversion of all who witnessed them, Egyptians as well as Israelites, to a true belief, we should assume that, for which there is no authority whatever, and which would throw great difficulties in the way of the interpretation. They were intended to produce effects upon Jews and Egyptians both; but not the same effect. Their purpose was, to satisfy the latter, that the national God of the Jews was able to protect his people against their power, and so to extort a consent from them for the Jews to leave their territory. And to the Jews, on the other hand, these miracles were designed to prove, that they would be safe in placing themselves under the guidance of Moses, who was the instrument in working them. These miracles did not propose to prove, even to the Jews, that their national God was the only God. This was matter of subsequent revelation. Still less were they designed to prove this to the Egyptians; for to

them the religious system now introduced was not so much as offered. The sole object was to emancipate the Israelites, and bring them into a condition where the new system might be presented to, and adopted by them.

The remark which has been made, will serve to explain the character of some of these miracles. As the Egyptians were to be brought to understand, that they were to hope for no effectual protection on the part of their false national gods against the God of Israel, when he had resolved to release his people, some of these prodigies, at least, (as the corruption of the Nile, and the destruction of cattle,) were aimed directly against the Egyptian divinities;* and perhaps we should see the same remark to hold equally good of all, if we had but a better acquaintance with the Egyptian mythology.

If the question be asked, what reason there could have been for such a repetition of miracles, since it certainly was in the power of the Divine Being to accomplish that result by a single act, which the history represents to us as the consequence of many, I apprehend that the history itself presents a consideration, which will furnish the reply desired. "The Lord said unto Moses, 'Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt;'" that is, the consequence of the first wonders not producing a decisive impression upon his mind, was, that others should be used to create it; and that these, by their number and variety, might make a narrative fitted the more to affect the minds of the Israelites in all

* See Exodus xii. 12. Apis, Mnevis, and Onuphis were represented by the ox; Amun by the ram; Mendes by the goat. The subject is largely treated in the last four books of Jablonski's "Pantheon Ægyptiorum."

succeeding times.* That this very purpose was in view, we read in another place.† “I have hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and the heart of all his servants, (that is, I have so forbearingly wrought, that their hearts have remained hard,) that I might show these my signs before him, and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son’s son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know that I am the Lord.” Both the accumulation of exhibitions of miraculous power, and their variety, would cause their impression to be the greater; both on the minds of witnesses, and of those to whom they should be related. It was fit that the miraculous power of Moses, as much as that of our Lord, should be exerted in various forms. Some would be more struck with one mode of exhibition, others with another. Persons who might doubt of the reality of one, and suspect that their senses had been deceived, would cease to doubt when another was presented. Apart from the mere suitableness to work conviction, the attention of one person would be more awakened, his imagination more excited, his feelings more kindled by one wonder, and those of another by another. And even on any one mind, the impression of the power, which had been working would be the stronger, on account of the diversified and continued manifestations which it had taken. Moreover, as the Israelites and Egyptians were both numerous communities, it may be presumed, that, as the succession of those miracles, which were of limited extent, went on, the number of spectators was continually increasing.

Again; it will be asked, how it is possible that Pharaoh should have held out against such signal manifesta-

* xi. 9.

† x. 1, 2.

tions of divine power; that he should have failed to own such acts to be miracles, if they were actually done; or that, owning them to be miracles, he should venture to persist in opposition to the power which wrought them. The question, I think, proceeds upon the obviously erroneous ground, that Pharaoh is to be supposed to have reasoned like a monotheist of the present day. It was impossible that he should so reason. Like all men of that time, he believed in many deities. He believed that other nations, as well as his own, had patron divinities, who were able to suspend the laws of nature. That the God of Israel could do so, was no matter of surprise to him, nor any satisfaction to his mind, that he ought, and would be compelled, to do what the God of Israel required; for he kept hoping to the last moment that his own national gods would interfere, and by a display of superior power protect him. Who shall say, that an ancient polytheist, like Pharaoh, would or should feel bound to obey, simply because a miracle was wrought, when good, and wise, and modern Christians, lay it down solemnly, in philosophical treatises, that a miracle is not alone proof of the interposition of God, but that it may be wrought by superior evil beings? * At first, Pharaoh appears not to have been satisfied, that the extraordinary acts of Moses were done in the use of any other than natural means, a view which he was very likely to take up, from having witnessed the extraordinary feats of the jugglers of his court; and to strengthen this impression appears plainly enough to have been the object of those of this profession, who performed an imitation before him of the first miracles of Moses. Had these persons pretended to be the instruments of carrying on a contest of real

* See Doddridge's Lectures, Vol. i. pp. 373 et seq.

miracles on the part of the gods of Egypt, against the God of Israel, their course then clearly would have been to pretend to remove, by the power of their divinities, the plague, which Moses had inflicted by the power of Jehovah. To add to that plague would have been not at all to their purpose. This, however, they do; and it was entirely to their purpose, if, as I conceive, the issue they joined was, whether what Moses did was done by natural or by supernatural means. That it was by natural means, is what I understand them to have asserted; and they took the fit method to convince Pharaoh, that their assertion was true. "Moses has no commission even from the God of Israel," I understand them to have said. "It is true he works wonders. But we, without any superhuman aid, can do the like." This they attempted, in three instances, producing an imitation in each, which, under the circumstances, we shall see, might not have been difficult, to persons skilled in their arts of imposture. When, in the fourth instance, they had to own that they could do nothing of the kind, their exclamation, "This *is* the finger of God," [or, of the gods] sufficiently shows what it was which hitherto they had denied.

When the jugglers gave up the contest, which hitherto, for the purpose described, they had carried on, and owned that the Israelitish God was working, this was not an acknowledgment decisive of the further course of Pharaoh. It remained for him to await the issue of a contest, which his superstition would naturally lead him to expect, between the God of Israel, who wanted, as Moses had declared, the worship of his people, and the gods of Egypt, who, he believed, were able to protect their own country, and who, he continued to hope, would at length, though late, interpose to do so. Accordingly, we find him described as temporizing; giving

way, and making fair promises, when disaster was recent and heavy, and then suffering his hopes from his own divinities to revive. That such should be the state and progress of his own feelings, is, as it seems to me, nothing different from what we might expect; and also it is to be presumed, that the influence of his counsellors would be employed to the same end. — We are carefully to remember, that the object of the miracles was not to make Pharaoh a worshipper of Jehovah. Neither Moses nor Aaron is represented as making any proposition to him of that kind. They only demand of him to “let Israel go.” The repetition of their miracles at last compelled him to see, that his gods, for whatever reason, did not intend to interpose in his behalf. This did not lead him to give up his belief in their existence. There was no reason why it should. It only led him to conclude that he had incurred their displeasure; or that, for some other cause, it was their will to allow the Jews to be dismissed.

And here again, we have an answer to a question, which may naturally enough have arisen in some minds, why Pharaoh, incensed as he was against Moses and Aaron, did not vent his displeasure by taking their lives. With his views, after ascertaining, as he had done, by the confession of his own retainers, that it was by no arts of legerdemain, that they had occasioned him this disturbance, but simply by the power of another nation’s god, he could not expect to obtain relief in any such way. He would rather fear, that, by such violence, he would provoke further judgments at Jehovah’s hands, from which, as his recent experience had shown, he could not rely on his own gods to defend him.

Before I leave this course of remark, I would suggest, in a word, a bearing, which it seems to me to have on the question of the genuineness of this portion

of the history. Supposing it to have been written in Moses's time, we can understand why Jehovah is presented, in the course of these transactions, only in the character of the national God of the Jews. As yet he had been revealed in no higher character. The rest was to come, after the emancipated people were in a condition to receive it. It did come speedily. Jehovah was exhibited as possessing unparticipated divine attributes; the sole maker and governor of heaven and earth; God alone, no other existing anywhere beside him. So he was known by all the Jewish people who remained faithful to their law, in periods subsequent to this age. And I find it extremely difficult to conceive of a Jew, in any period after the foundation of the Jewish polity, throwing himself back so completely, in imagination, into remote times, as to conceive of Jehovah in the far inferior character (corresponding to the partial revelation, which alone had yet been made,) in which this passage presents him.

I remarked above, that, if we had a better acquaintance with the state of things and of opinions in Egypt at this time, particularly with the Egyptian mythology, it is likely that we should be able to explain, better than now, the reason of the selection of the particular miracles recorded, to affect the national mind; and, so far as this seems to us probable, just so far any prepossession against these miracles, having reference to their character, will be removed. I observe, further, that there can be little doubt, that perplexities now occurring would have been removed, had the account been given in greater detail, a detail which was unnecessary for contemporaries, and the want of which it is likely would be long supplied, to some extent, by traditional interpretation. In some cases, which I shall have occasion to specify, misapprehensions, which we

should almost certainly take up from language employed in the early part of a narrative, are in fact corrected by something naturally introduced in a subsequent part, without any apparent consciousness in the writer that it was necessary to explain what had first been said. In such cases, we learn that we had interpreted erroneously what first came under our view, only in consequence of something being added which serves us for a commentary upon it. The presumption is, that, in other cases, had the narrative been further pursued, light would have been thrown on what now is affected with some obscurity.

With these preliminary remarks, I proceed to a review of some of the circumstances attendant upon the emancipation of the Jews from Egypt. Moses is told, that repeated miraculous interpositions will be necessary to overcome the reluctance of Pharaoh to the dismissal of his slaves; and that by resorting to such, and so effecting the designed result, their divine protector will show that he is Jehovah,* that is, that he is immutably true to his word. In the fulfilment of their mission, Moses and Aaron accordingly presented themselves before Pharaoh, and, the latter, to authenticate their authority, throwing down his rod before the king, it became a serpent. "Then Pharaoh," as we are told in the English translation, "also called the wise men and the sorcerers; and the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments."† In short, here began a contest between Moses and the Egyptian wise men, which was continued through two other stages of Moses' acts, and the nature of which it belongs to us to investigate.

The question here presented is simply this. Are the

* Exod. vii. 5.

† vii. 11.

Egyptian “sorcerers,” as our version calls them, represented as persons capable of suspending or subverting, through any agency, the established laws of nature; or is the language such, that we are to esteem them to have been merely jugglers, as we well understand the meaning of that word? Is it intimated to us, that they actually performed acts similar to those performed by Moses, or that they cheated the senses of spectators by the appearance of performing them? Were they real wonder-workers, in a fair interpretation of the narrative, or were they impostors?

The former theory has been to a great extent held; and by Jewish and Christian commentators different views have been presented, in order to maintain its credibility. Some have understood, that the sorcerers actually performed these works, through the aid of evil supernatural agents; a view which has no foundation in any thing which we know of superior evil beings, and is obviously opposed to all just theory of miracles. Others have conceived the Divine Being to have empowered the sorcerers supernaturally to perform these acts, in order that the final victory of Moses over them might be still more signal; an exposition, which one need not scruple to call altogether unsatisfactory and puerile. The fact is, that there is no ground whatever for the violent supposition, which is thought to call for these explanations. If there be any such ground, it is to be found either in the words used by the historian in speaking of the Egyptian “sorcerers” and their acts, indicating the character which he ascribed to them, or else in the acts themselves which are recorded, they being of a nature to exceed human power.*

* I believe that this matter was first put upon its proper footing by Hugh Farmer, in his excellent “Dissertation on Miracles.” The passage before us is treated at length in chap. 4, § 1.

No such inference can be drawn from the words, used in the narration, respecting the acts, or those who did them. The agents are denominated by Hebrew words, translated “wise men,” “sorcérers,” and “magicians.”* The phrase “wise men,” which is literally and exactly rendered, is certainly as fit to be used of persons expert in arts of legerdemain, as of persons invested with supernatural control over the powers of nature; and the etymology of the two other words is such, that the closest rendering of them would be by the names, “mutterers,” and “scribes.” Again; their acts are called, in our version, “enchantments.” But the original describes them by a term, the meaning of which is simply, *covered*, or *secret arts*, an expression in the highest degree applicable to acts of simple imposture.† I may add, that, had the names been (as they are not) such as indicate, in their essential meaning, any supernatural endowments, nothing is more common than to apply such terms to those who claim such endowments, though the justice of their claim be not allowed. A person, who should speak, at the present day, of *fortune-tellers*, would not be understood as himself recognising those of whom he spoke, in the character indicated by the original composition of that word, but simply as describing the individuals in question by the character to which they made pretension.

Again; no inference is to be drawn, favorable to the supernatural character of the acts of the Egyptian wise men, from the nature of the acts ascribed to them. This we are to see in looking at them singly. We shall have occasion to observe that they were, in each case, very imperfect imitations of the acts of Moses; being, by the necessity of the circumstances, exhibited on a much

* חֲכָמִים, מְכַשְׁפִּים, מַגִּידִים.

† לְהַטִּים; the Vulgate renders the word *arcana quædam*.

more limited scale; and that, considering the advantage of preparation, which was actually in each instance possessed, as long as the attempts continued to be successful, there was nothing, in either, which was not entirely within the compass of those arts of deluding the senses, which this profession makes its study. Of course, I do not pretend to describe the methods of operation, which, in each instance were resorted to; for it is the very nature and essence of the art to conceal its processes. But, if it appears that nothing is related to have been done by these wise men of Egypt, which can be affirmed with any confidence to be beyond the resources of legerdemain, this is all which it can be thought necessary to show.

The rod of Aaron having been changed to a serpent, in Pharaoh's view, the contest between the Jewish leaders and the courtiers of that prince began. Pharaoh, we are told, "called the wise men and the sorcerers."* It may be presumed, that in summoning them to his presence, he informed them what it was that Aaron had done, and that they were expected to do. At all events, the intelligence of what had taken place could scarcely fail to reach them, and thus they had opportunity to prepare themselves for an imitation of the wonder which had been wrought. The taming of serpents, so as to conceal them about the person, and substitute them, by a sudden movement, for something held in the hand, is well known to be, in the East, at this day, one of the most common arts of jugglery. This was what was done in the present instance. The mere appearance of a transformation of a rod into a serpent, by an adroit and sudden concealment of the one, and production of the other, is what no one probably would affirm to be an impossible delusion of

* vii. 11.

the senses. "They also did in like manner with their enchantments, for they also cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents. — But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." This was something which they had not come prepared for; and accordingly we do not read that they attempted either to prevent it, or to follow it with any imitation.

But, it will perhaps be said, the narrative declares, that the wise men "also did in like manner with their enchantments"; and, in this expression, the historian is to be understood as representing them to have done the same act as Aaron. No such sense, however, is conveyed by the language. To "do in like manner," is not necessarily to repeat; it is simply to imitate, to copy, whether in the way of actual, or of apparent repetition. If this is not already sufficiently plain, it will be made so by a comparison with the eighteenth verse of the following chapter, where we find the same language, and there evidently not in the sense, which it has been thought to bear. "The magicians *did so* with their enchantments, to bring forth gnats; *but they could not.*" — And this might be dwelt upon as one of the several instances, occurring in this connexion, in which a hint, subsequently given, without any apparent purpose of throwing light on expressions previously used, compels us to abandon an interpretation of these, which otherwise would be not unnatural. And I am tempted here again to enlarge on the thought, that such instances admonish us not to urge general expressions to their utmost possible significance, even when no such subsequent explanations happen to occur. But I trust that enough has been said to make this principle familiar.

The wonder wrought in Pharaoh's view did not subdue his purpose; and he is threatened with a second,

no longer of a harmless character. In the execution of this warning, Moses and Aaron present themselves before him; “and he [Moses] lifted up the rod, and smote the waters in the river [the Nile], in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.”*

And here a question is brought before us, which I suppose appears to most minds as of prominent importance, in the interpretation of this whole narrative. It relates to the amount and extent of miraculous operation. We say, the only object contemplated was, to affect Pharaoh’s mind, because on his will depended the dismissal of the Israelitish people; and, this being so, we ask ourselves, what necessity was there for extending the severity of a judgment over a whole nation? What occasion was there, for instance, to distress a whole people with thirst, for the purpose merely of subduing the obduracy of its monarch? I suppose that nothing goes further towards creating incredulity in respect to the Mosaic miracles, than the thought to which I here refer. And I would do something towards removing the impression, which it makes.

I shall not content myself with saying, that, in the established order of the divine government, the mind of a ruler is generally reached through the fortunes of his subjects. It is true, however, and a truth which ought carefully to be weighed in its bearings on the relation before us, that the principle, here brought to view, is distinctly recognised in all the analogies of human history. If, in these instances of supernatural agency, God did address the mind of the monarch through an influence, exerted on it by his subjects in consequence of the unhappiness of a condition into which they had been brought, it is no more than he is constantly doing

* vii. 20.

in his common providence, when, for instance, a prince, living in seclusion and luxury, is induced to consent to a peace, because his people, on whom alone the burden falls, are impatient of the sacrifices and disturbances of war. The wisdom and righteousness of such a divine economy it does not belong to this place to vindicate, though it admits of the most satisfactory vindication. It is enough to say, what all will admit, that such is the divine economy in respect to natural events; and, being so, no prejudice can attach to the credibility of events alleged to be supernatural, because they also are marked with this character. We ought to expect to see one course of divine action impressed with the same signatures, which we trace on another, proceeding from the same source.

But, leaving this general statement, I conceive that we are by no means justified, in point of fact, in understanding the historian's statements as having been intended to be of that comprehensive character, in which they have been commonly received. Assuredly, if we undertake to discredit his narrative by a process of reasoning, sound or otherwise, founded on the supposed fact that he has represented the supernatural operations to have been carried on over an incredibly wide extent, the burden of proof lies on us to show, that he has actually described them as spread over the extent supposed. I proceed to some considerations, tending to make it appear, that this cannot be affirmed with the confidence which has been common.

In the first place, in our very partial acquaintance with ancient geography, who would undertake to say, that the name "Egypt," which, in one acceptance, stood, no doubt, for all the realm of the Pharaohs, did not, in another, stand for a portion of that territory, perhaps for a small district of it, possibly for the mere

precincts of the royal court? In ancient geography, two instances, of the kind supposed, are familiarly known. The name "Adria" is given, in a narrower sense, to the gulf within the capes of Italy and Greece, and, in a wider, to that estuary, along with a portion of the Mediterranean, south of those promontories *; and the name "Asia," which denotes to us the whole vast reach of a continent, extending over a hundred and sixty degrees of longitude, in another acceptation meant what we now call "Asia Minor," and, in another yet, a small district in its southwest corner, immediately about the city of Ephesus.

Again; it is said, that "there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." † The expression seems comprehensive; and yet, that the historian did not mean to say that the inhabitants of the kingdom were wholly deprived of access to pure water, is manifest from his own words which follow, where he says, that "all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink." ‡ That by the phrase, "the waters of Egypt," is meant nothing more extensive than the "waters of the Nile," which irrigated the central portion of that country, not only seems highly probable in itself, but I think its probability is heightened by some important

* See Ptolemy, lib. 3, capp. 4, 16, ad init. Strabo, lib. 7, cap. 5, § 1. Compare Acts xxvii. 27; xxviii. 1. For want of attending to this equivocal meaning of the word, Le Clerc argues, (*Ars Critica*, pars 1, cap. 1, § 1,) that the "Melita" of Paul's shipwreck could not have been our Malta.

Illustrations of this kind might be collected in an indefinite number. In our day, the name "Britain" stands for spaces of very different size, distinguished, it is true, by the epithets "Great" and "Little." "America," in its proper sense, means the whole western continent. In a very common use, it denotes the United States. The French Canadians give the name "Boston," to the whole territory subject to the Federal Government, as well as, more specifically, to a single city. "Holland" denotes the Kingdom of the Netherlands, or one of its provinces. "Austria" is one kingdom, or the empire, consisting of several.

† vii. 21.

‡ vii. 24.

considerations. Aaron is commanded, "Take thy rod and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon *their* streams, [that is the streams of the waters of Egypt,—the streams into which the waters of Egypt, whatever they were, spread,] upon their rivers, upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water."*. But when we are told of what he actually did, in the following verse, the statement is as follows; "He lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in *the river*, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood, and the fish that was in the river died, and the Egyptians could not drink of the river;" and thus it was, because the Nile was corrupted, and not because the waters of every part of the kingdom shared the taint, that it is said "There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt."†

The injustice which we do to the historian, if we interpret, in an unlimited sense, all expressions which he does not take care expressly to limit, will be further apparent if we look a few verses forward. He tells us, for instance, that in consequence of the plague of murrain, "*all* the cattle of Egypt died."‡ He means certainly that we should understand, that there was mortality among all the cattle of Egypt,—that there was a prevailing fatal pestilence; for when he presently relates subsequent visitations, he says, that they respectively fell "upon man and upon *beast*, throughout all the land of Egypt."§

* vii. 19.

† This view is strongly corroborated by the remark, (verse 24,) that "all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink," for certainly not all the Egyptians lived on the bank of the river Nile. Many lived in the interior; upon the Oases, and elsewhere; and, if all who dug for water dug by the bank of that river, it seems to follow, that no water except that of the river had been rendered unfit for use.

‡ ix. 6.

§ ix. 9, 19. Compare also ix. 25, with x. 5.

And, finally, that the expressions in question, comprehensive as they are, were not designed to be taken without limitation, is very evident from this consideration; that, so taken, they would call on us, in some cases, to understand, that the land of Goshen itself, the peculiar dwelling-place of the Israelites, was not exempted from the visitation of the pest. The land of Egypt, understood in its widest sense, undoubtedly comprehended that territory. No exception is made of that territory, in the account of the transformation of water to blood; "there was blood throughout *all* the land of Egypt"; and in some other instances, the historian is not careful to make the discrimination.* No one supposes, that, in those instances, the Israelites shared in the general calamity, as the words, taken without qualification, indicate. Yet he who, in one instance, holds that a qualification, not expressed, ought to be adopted, of course allows that the mere fact of the absence of express qualification in the language, does not forbid it to be made in interpretation.

I return to the course of the narrative. The water of the river having been turned into blood, so that "the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink," we are told that the magicians of Egypt "did so with their enchantments."† The nature of the imitation, which they exhibited, is sufficiently apparent from the circumstances. The transformation of the vast rolling mass of water in a river into another substance, is evidently a result attainable only by supernatural agency. The immense scale upon which the work was performed, rendered it incapable of any delusive imitation, and at the same time precluded the attempt at any such imitation. The mass of waters in their neighbourhood being already changed, all that

* See viii. 6; ix. 9.

† vii. 22.

the wise men had to practise their impostures upon, was a limited quantity obtained by digging along the river's bank. That, with the preparation which they had made in consequence of Moses and Aaron's having threatened the act beforehand,* they should be able, with a small quantity of water, so obtained, and produced in a vessel, to exhibit, by means of some red infusion, a copy of what had been done, on the small scale which alone was possible, is a statement, which, it would seem, ought to occasion us no surprise.

In respect to the third miracle related, the same facts are again to be observed; viz. those of opportunity for preparation on the part of the wise men, in consequence of its having been previously threatened, and of the small scale, (divesting it of its most extraordinary character,) on which, from the necessity of the circumstances, the imitation was to be exhibited. "Frogs came up" at Aaron's command, from the river, "and covered the land of Egypt." "They shall come up," Pharaoh had been admonished, "into thine house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs."† In this state of things, the most that could be done by the wise men, when, in the precincts of Pharaoh's court, they pretended to copy Aaron's act, was to practise their imitation on a small space of ground, artificially cleared of the presence of the offensive reptile for that purpose. Precisely what they were undertaking to produce, was already existing in noxious abundance all around them. What they proposed to bring in was with difficulty kept out; and it is ascribing little, under these circumstances, to their knowledge of pharmacy,‡

* vii. 17.

† viii. 3, 6.

‡ The Septuagint (viii. 7) calls their acts φαρμακία.

to suppose them able to use some substance to attract into a vacant space some specimens of an animal, whose habits are so well known.

It seems, from the next circumstance mentioned, that the wise men must have disclaimed the power to remove the evil, under which Pharaoh and his court were suffering, pretending to nothing further than to produce some imitation of it. For, incommoded by it as he was, the king did not look to them for relief, but “called for Moses and Aaron, and said, ‘Entreat Jehovah, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people, and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.’” * Moses takes a course, to make the withdrawal of the plague as public and conspicuous as had been the infliction. “‘Glory over me,’” he says; that is, assume authority over me, so far as to name a time when this shall be done; “‘when shall I entreat for thee and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?’” And he said, ‘To-morrow.’ And he said, ‘Be it according to thy word, that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God.’” † — From the answer which the king makes, “‘To-morrow,’” it might be inferred that the evil, how serious soever, was not so intolerable as is generally thought, else there would have been more impatience to escape it. But I do not urge this observation, on account of the degree of indefiniteness which attaches to the Hebrew word.

The obstinacy of Pharaoh still continuing, Aaron is directed to stretch out his rod, and “smite the dust of the land,” and bring a plague of *gnats*, as the word (signifying, without doubt, some small insect) is probably best rendered. “And all the dust of the land became

* viii. 8.

† viii. 9, 10.

gnats throughout all the land of Egypt”;* that is, either, gnats were found even in the driest places, or, it seemed (so numerous were they) as if every particle of dust had become a gnat.

On this occasion, for the first time, we are not told of a summons having been sent to the wise men, or of warning given them of any other kind; so that now they had no longer the advantage of preparation for carrying on their fraud. Further, the size of the insect, which, if they were to proceed in an imitation of Aaron’s work, they were to appear to produce in some space cleared for the purpose, was such, that, to discern it, the eye of the spectator would have to be brought close to the scene of their operations, increasing the difficulty of deluding the sense. Under these circumstances, after a pretended attempt, designed to sustain the appearance of a confidence, on their own part, in the arts they professed, the wise men were fain to give up the contest (which they did not afterwards venture to resume), and own that there was superhuman power at work. “The magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats upon man and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, ‘This is the finger of God,’” or of the gods.†

In the account of the next infliction, that of some venomous fly,‡ the most remarkable particular is that given in the following words; “I will separate, in that day, the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no flies shall be there, to the end that thou mayest know, that I am Jehovah in the midst of the land”;§ that is, that thou mayest know, that this is a work of the Hebrew Deity, since the Hebrew territory is spared.

* viii. 16, 17.

† viii. 18, 19.

‡ The Septuagint renders it *κυνίμυια*, *dog-fly*.

§ viii. 22.

This is the first instance, in which, from the mention of the exemption of a district distant from the capital, it is made to appear that the sphere of miraculous operation was extensive. And in this connexion I would repeat, that, for any thing that can be shown to the contrary, it is likely that the inflictions, recorded previous to this, were of limited extent. It is reasonable to imagine, that the means first resorted to would be addressed to the monarch and those immediately about his person, and would accordingly be of a local character. When he resisted the influence of these, others were employed, suited to exert an influence on his mind through the minds of his people at large, as in the sequel they actually did.* And accordingly we find the later plagues to be of a description less limited to place than the earlier. The frog and the gnat are not migratory animals. The fly and the locust, on the contrary, multiplied by whatever means in one spot, would naturally diffuse themselves throughout a region. The meteoric phenomena, described in the latter part of the ninth chapter, are also of a nature to take a wide range; and epidemic diseases, whether of man or beast, tend to diffusion, as their name imports.

Pharaoh is described as now relenting so far, as to consent that the Israelites may absent themselves to hold a solemn sacrifice, but it must be "within the land." To which Moses replying that this will not be safe, as they will have to sacrifice "the abomination of the Egyptians," (rather, what the Egyptians venerate, † viz. oxen, goats, and sheep,) the king reluctantly goes one step further, and agrees that they may

* See x. 7.

† תועבת.

retire into the wilderness; “only,” says he, “ye shall not go very far away.”*

The infliction withdrawn, he fails to keep his word; and the next visitation is that of a mortal disease, spreading among the flocks and herds, but sparing those of the Israelites. “All the cattle of Egypt died;” † rather, there was mortality among all the cattle of Egypt; or every kind of cattle in Egypt died; there was no kind which did not share in the desolation.

The king continuing contumacious, Moses is directed to denounce a plague of ulcerous eruptions; and, for a token that it is by the power exerted through him that they are sent, to throw upwards some handfuls of ashes in Pharaoh’s sight. “It shall become,” he is told, “small dust in all the land of Egypt”; ‡ that is, the pestilence which it was intended visibly to connect with an agency of Moses, should be as extensive as if this sign were exhibited throughout the realm, instead of in the royal presence alone. Here there is no mention of any exemption for the Israelites, though this was doubtless intended to be understood.

The plagues of tempest, locusts, and darkness, follow, from the first of which, and apparently the last, § the Israelites are related to have been miraculously

* viii. 25–28.—There is no authority for supposing, that any disingenuousness was intended to be practised, in the form of the request, (verse 27,) “We will go three days’ journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto the Lord.” Had that proposal been assented to by Pharaoh, it is to be presumed, that Moses would have led the people back again, agreeably to the implied engagement. In their retiring together once into the wilderness to sacrifice, a useful precedent would have been established, and an important first step taken towards ultimate liberation and nationality.

† ix. 6; compare ix. 9, 25.

‡ ix. 9.

§ See ix. 26; x. 23. I say, in the latter case, “apparently,” because it might be argued, that the Israelites, being forewarned of the coming darkness, provided themselves with artificial light.

preserved, while, in relation to the second, that fact is not recorded. They are, for the most part, attended with the same circumstances as those which immediately preceded them, and I pass them over with a few remarks.

They are prefaced by the assurance that God would now proceed so to work, as to satisfy Pharaoh that there was no God like him in all the land,* and that he had no ground to hope for protection from his idol deities. "For this cause," it is said, "I have raised thee up," [rather, "I have preserved † thee alive" in the midst of all these disasters,] not because I could not at once have compelled thy obedience, but "for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the land;" that, by the repetition of my works, my power may be more illustriously exhibited.

We read, that "the flax and barley was smitten" by the hail; "for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten; for they were not grown up." ‡ This is one of those texts, which have a bearing on the authenticity of the composition in which they appear, the more satisfactory on account of their unobtrusive character. The fact here mentioned is not of such importance, that tradition would be in the least likely to preserve it, or a historian of a subsequent age to introduce it. In an eyewitness of the scene, excited as his mind was by its whole aspect, it was natural to record such particulars. It would have been unaccountable in a writer otherwise circumstanced.

After the invasion of the locusts, Pharaoh consented to allow the adults of Israel to go and sacrifice,

* ix. 14.

† ix. 16. The Septuagint reads, *διετηθήσῃς, thou hast been preserved.*

‡ ix. 31, 32.

provided they would leave the children of the nation behind; intending, as it would seem, to keep them as hostages for their parents.* After the miraculous darkness, he went so far as to propose that the flocks and herds only of the nation should be left, to afford him the same security.† This proposal being rejected by Moses, he is ordered to prepare for the final and decisive manifestation of Jehovah's power. "All the first-born in the land of Egypt," it is declared, in the words of our version, "shall die." ‡

The great question upon the following passage, relates to the extent of the mortality inflicted. What I have already said, perhaps, leaves nothing to be added, with a view to show, that the writer, while he uses language of an unqualified character, indubitably meant it to be taken with limitations of sense. It is impossible to deny this principle, in relation to some statements which have come under our notice; and, this being so, it is of course impossible to argue, that, in the case before us, language not expressly limited in its terms demands to be expounded in its widest possible extent of signification.

Interpreting, then, the words of the present narrative in the same manner as it is unavoidable, from the context, to interpret similar expressions in others which have preceded, we shall understand the declaration, "All the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth on his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of beasts," to be

* x. 8-10.

† x. 24.

‡ xi. 5. It is added, (verse 7,) "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast." It would be better rendered; "Among all the children of Israel, not so much as a dog," not even the most worthless animal, "shall protrude his tongue," that is, in dying. The destroyer shall touch neither them nor theirs.

equivalent to this; "There shall be a remarkable mortality among the first-born of men and beasts."

But "there was not a house," we are told, "where there was not one dead."* If we take the expression in its utmost amplitude, which, however, for the causes above enlarged on, would be quite unreasonable, it remains to be asked; "one" *what* was dead in every house? Not certainly, one first-born *man* was dead in every house; for each house or family, whichever word we prefer for the translation, contained but one first-born man, and if it was intended to say that every family lost its oldest son, the language would unquestionably be, "There was not a house where *the* first-born was not dead." Upon this interpretation, which it appears to me is not to be gainsaid, there is nothing to forbid our understanding, what antecedently is altogether probable, that the mortality, (even if it should be supposed to have reached every family; and taken away from each some one spoil, either of human or of animal life,) swept away a much larger proportion of victims of the latter class than of the former; and then any appearance of cruelty in the visitation is abated to a most material extent.†

But, to do it away altogether, I suggest, that we are by no means informed that the mortality, on the night in question, was any greater, as to numbers, than in any other night in the history of the realm of Egypt. It may have been so, or not; this is a point, which the

* xii. 30.

† Further; the word translated "dead," is מָת, the participle (present) of the verb מָוַת, *to die*. Of course it means, most literally, "dying," or in a dying state, a word applied, naturally and usually, to cases of apparently extreme sickness, though death does not actually ensue. It is the same word, which the Egyptians actually use of themselves (verse 33). It is urging it, then, altogether too far, to insist on it as declaring, that in every house some death, even of an animal, actually took place.

narrative does not determine. Independently of any extent of the desolation, (greater than usual, or less,) the intervention of a divinity was manifest in the extraordinary selection of the victims. There could be no night, when many thousands of men and animals would not die in the populous Egyptian territory. For aught that appears to the contrary in what we are told, the gates of death were no more crowded in that night than in any other. But at other times, the proportion of first-born of men and cattle who perished, was no greater than that of the same number of later-born. Now, the mortal shaft was aimed marvellously at the former, while the latter seem to have been passed by. And here was the evidence of the intervention of a God, and the cause of the people's consternation. Disease, drawing in slow or rapid stages towards its fatal close, was at all times, everywhere, in Egypt. On that night, the destroyer quickened his steps for the first-born, who had been marked for his prey; while, over others, the hand, that had seemed uplifted to strike, was suspended till that day had passed.

I may add, that, in the common order of providence, it is the nature and course of national sins to draw down national judgments. The sin of holding in slavery the Israelites, who had trusted themselves to their hospitality, was chargeable upon the Egyptian nation as well as upon its monarch. He was no doubt countenanced and encouraged in it by their concurrence. It was a national sin, which, as far as justice is concerned, it was as fit that the Judge of all the earth should punish by some miraculous work, as by some merely providential infliction; and when the judgment was extensively inflicted, and one family was feeling it in its property, in the loss of some animal, and another in some nearer bereavement, it is natural

to presume, that it was made to fall heaviest upon those, who had most provoked it by soliciting the monarch to persevere in his tyranny, or by cruelties of their own to those whom they held in unjust bondage.

Preparatory to the final departure from the Egyptian territory, which was now about to take place, the Israelites receive a direction from Moses, which has been made the subject of much misconception and causeless complaint. Moses is made, by our translators, to say to the people, under the divine direction, "Let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver and jewels of gold." Here, in the word "borrow," meaning to ask and receive under a pledge of repayment, is conveyed an implication of the Hebrews' being directed to act dishonestly. But this idea is altogether without support, in the language of the original narrative, as every one who reads Hebrew knows. The word is an extremely common one, and means simply "to ask." A natural and unobjectionable interpretation of the text would be, that the Israelites were directed to ask and reclaim, before their emigration, such portion of their own property as they might have lent to their neighbours; or to ask, that the payment of what might be due to them might be made in light and valuable articles, suitable for convenient transportation in their approaching journey. Or even, if they were directed to ask gifts of such as from motives of private friendship might be disposed to bestow some token of good-will at parting, still there is no recommendation of discreditable conduct. At all events, no such idea as that of borrowing, out of which the whole question grows, is involved in the original word.*

* The word is לָשָׁב (xi. 2.) The remark applies equally to xii. 36. It is there added by our translators, that the Egyptians "lent unto them

In the first twenty verses of the twelfth chapter, we read of the original institution of the feast called in our version, "the Passover."* Like the Christian rite of the Last Supper, it was ordained previously to the actual occurrence of the momentous event, whose memory it was to keep alive, through coming ages. Designed to be the great national festival of the Israelites, to commemorate the deliverance now wrought for them by their Almighty Protector, and their introduction to an independent national existence, the solemnities, with which it was to be observed, were directed to be such as to call up vividly, in the mind, the remembrance of that event. As each house had had its own special deliverance, so in each there was to be a domestic celebration. As on the night of the emancipation, no Israelitish house, which, agreeably to the divine command, had been marked with the blood of the slain lamb, had been invaded by death, so the sprinkling of a lamb's blood on the door-posts of every Jewish dwelling was to make, through all time, a part of the commemoration. As the people had hurried forth from the land of their bondage, so they were to meet around

such things as they required; and they spoiled the Egyptians." The word here rendered *lent*, is merely the Hiphil form of the same word, and, literally translated, would be, *made them ask*; hence, they *allowed them to ask*, that is, listened to them favorably, when they asked, which I take to be the true meaning. נִנְצְלוּ, translated *they spoiled*, is, as pointed by the Masorites, the Piel form of the verb, and thus would be properly rendered, they *freed* Egypt, that is, of their presence. But I would rather point it as Niphal, or Pual, נִנְצְלוּ, or נִנְצְלוּ, and render it; "they were freed as to Egypt," that is, emancipated from Egypt.—For this use of אָת, see 1 Kings xv. 23; 2 Kings xiii. 14.

* פָּסַח, from פָּחַח, "he passed over"; or, "he rescued," exempted, delivered. Perhaps, as Michaelis proposes, we should rather adopt the last-named meaning of the word, and render פָּסַח (instead of "passover,") "deliverance," or "deliverance day," as we call our national anniversary festival "Independence day." See Isaiah xxxi. 5.—For language similar to that in Ex. xii. 12, see 1 Chron. xxi. 12.

the table of this festival in the attitude of haste, their sandals bound upon their feet, their girdles round their waists, and their staves in their hands, as if ready for the toils of travel. They were, for the same reason, to throw away the bones of the lamb, without breaking them, as usual, to taste the marrow; and they were to eat unleavened cakes, in remembrance of the urgent circumstances which, on that memorable night, had not permitted their fathers to use bread prepared in the usual manner. Different regulations appear to have been intended to guard against the danger, that idolatrous practices might creep in among the ceremonies of such an exciting time.* And to make the season in all respects august, it was ordained, that henceforward the month in which it occurred should be reckoned the first of the national religious year.† From this time, accordingly, in ecclesiastical computation, the year began in the month Abib, or Nisan, (March — April,) while the civil year continued to be reckoned, as it had been, from Tisri (September — October).

Such were the directions prospectively given to Moses and Aaron respecting the commemoration of an event which had not yet befallen. Of course, they were not at present to be given to the people, who could not as yet understand them, and, at all events, were in a condition to do, at present, a part only of what was ultimately required.‡ Meantime, the arrangements for the memorable night proceed. The Israelites are directed to remain from evening to morning within their own doors, both to insure that families should be collected when the hour for departure should arrive, and perhaps also to prevent the Egyptians from attaching to the people any suspicion of personal agency in the desolation which was impending. To impress upon

* xii. 9, 10.

† xii. 2.

‡ xii. 15.

their minds, with the utmost distinctness, the truth, that Jehovah could and would protect his obedient people, and to give to the ceremonies of the commemorative rite, which had been devised, the liveliest power over the imaginations of the coming generations which were to observe it, the people were directed to put a mark upon their dwellings, and assured that all of them, who should do that first act of allegiance, God would recognise for his own, and so that, while ruin was raging all around them, it should pass no portal distinguished by that sign.* The night came, and the consummating wonder was done. The cupidity of the Egyptian monarch and his people could hold out no longer against the experience and the terror of such judgments; the arm of the oppressor was broken, and the oppressed went out free.†

“Six hundred thousand on foot, that were men,” ‡ constituted, at this time, the effective force of the nation. The men of full age are commonly computed to compose one fourth, or one fifth, part of a population. If we assume the latter proportion to be correct, the population of Israel, at this period, amounted to three millions of souls. This increase from seventy persons, who composed the family of Jacob, at the time of his migration, has sometimes been represented as incredibly great. An easy computation, however, will show, that, supposing the population to have doubled once in twenty-five years, (which is not so rapid an increase as has been witnessed, independently of emigration, in the United States,) four hundred and thirty years, the

* xii. 26, 27.

† “Bless me also,” says Pharaoh, (verse 32,) in our translation, when he bids them depart; בִּרְכֶתֶם אֹתִי; that is, “Give me a parting blessing”; “Take your leave of me,” “Begone.” — מִשְׁאֲרֵתָם, (verse 34,) their *platters*, rather than “kneading-troughs.”

‡ xii. 37.

time declared* to have intervened between Jacob's emigration and the Exodus, would have raised it from seventy persons, not to three millions only, but to more than ten. There is no sufficient ground for questioning the correctness of the chronology, as thus represented; though the reading of the corresponding text in some copies of the Septuagint version, and the interpretation put on a passage in the New Testament, have created an impression that the period of the Israelitish sojourn in Egypt was actually no more than two hundred and fifteen years.

* xii. 41. The statement is confirmed by Acts vii. 6, and by Gen. xv. 13, with only the difference that it is made in these last passages in round numbers. The question of reconciling the passage in Galatians (iii. 17), with these, belongs to the interpretation of the New Testament rather than of the Old. It may be proper, however, to remark, that Paul's argument, in his Epistle to the Galatians, did not at all require exactness in a computation of time. He was only concerned to show, that, as Moses was after Abraham, the law given by the ministry of the former, could not invalidate the promise made to the latter. This was equally true whether there was an interval of four hundred and thirty years between Abraham and Moses, or between Jacob and Moses; and if the copies of the Septuagint, which were in the hands of those to whom he was writing, presented the former view, there was no reason why he should not refer to it as it stood, instead of interrupting his discourse to enter into a chronological argument.—Further, I would ask, whether we should not do well to render Paul's words, (though without the definite article in Greek,) "after the four hundred and thirty years"; that is, the famous four hundred and thirty years;—the well-known four centuries of primeval servitude? This would relieve his statement of all apparent inconsistency with the representation in Exodus.—If it be said, that Moses (Ex. vi. 16–20) was only the fourth in descent from Levi, a fact hardly consistent with the supposition that they lived four hundred and thirty years apart, the obvious reply is, that nothing is more common, in Scripture genealogies, than the omission of steps in the series; and that, in the present instance, Joshua, the contemporary of Moses, is actually related (1 Chron. vii. 23–27) to have been the tenth in descent from Joseph, brother of Levi.

*It would have increased "in their time"
to ratio to 11,010,048 persons*

LECTURE VII.

EXODUS XIII. 1.—XVIII. 27.

THE JEWISH CONSTITUTION CALLED A THEOCRACY.—MEANING AND OBJECT OF THE MOSAIC REPRESENTATION OF GOD, AS KING OF THE JEWS.—PREPARATION FOR A NATIONAL WORSHIP.—INCOMPLETE AND PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF SOME PROVISIONS OF THE LAW.—AGENCY OF MOSES IN THEIR ARRANGEMENT.—POSTPONEMENT OF THE INVASION OF CANAAN.—NATURE OF THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FLAME.—PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.—STATUTE GIVEN AT MARAH.—MIRACULOUS SUPPLIES OF QUAILS, OF MANNA, AND OF WATER.—BATTLE WITH THE AMALEKITES.—THE LAW GIVEN ON SINAI A CODE OF STATUTE LAW.

AT the period at which we have now arrived, the Jews, rescued from the servitude of Egypt, begin to constitute a distinct nation, regulated by a government of their own. To this government, the name *Theocracy* has been applied. The prevailing idea founded upon that name, has been, that, in a manner corresponding to that by which human monarchs superintend the concerns of their respective jurisdictions, the Supreme Being administered the affairs of the Jewish people; and it has even been commonly understood, that this immediate superintendence was continued to a late period of the Jewish history.

It will, however, I think, appear, on a more careful examination, that there was nothing in the relation which God sustained towards this people, to affect permanently their condition in respect to being governed, like other nations, by a political organization. The word *Theocracy* is of no older origin than the writings of Josephus,* and is not to be suffered to

* Contra Apionem. Lib. 2, § 16.

confuse our speculations upon the subject to which it relates.

The simple account of that subject I take to be as follows. In the time of Moses, God called himself the King of the nation, chiefly because he was its lawgiver. It had thrown off its allegiance to Pharaoh, and for the present had no earthly monarch. Moses was its guide and legislator, but he was only such under the divine miraculous direction. As other nations took their law from their respective governors, the Jews took theirs from the Divine Being, by the ministry of Moses. Other offices, for which communities commonly look to their head, were performed for this nation by God, by constant superintendence, and frequent supernatural interposition. Kings are the leaders of their people in migrations and in war; God, by the ministry of Moses, guided the marches of the Israelites, and gave them victory. It belongs to kings to inflict punishment on offenders; God inflicted it by miraculous agency in such cases as those of Miriam, Nadab and Abihu, and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The founder of a state is by virtue of that service its monarch; God in an obvious and peculiar sense was the founder of the Jewish state, and, in that character, he expressly and repeatedly claims the obedience of the people.* The owner of a territory, who gives to others permission to settle on it, is its lord; and this view is urged in respect to the Jewish occupation of Palestine.† The appointment of inferior magistrates belongs to royalty; and this prerogative God had exercised in various particulars. Finally, the people, renouncing all other allegiance, had expressly professed to take Jehovah for their sovereign and lawgiver.‡ The reason of their

* E. g. Deut. vi. 10, 23.

† E. g. Lev. xxv. 23.

‡ Ex. xix. 4-8.

profession being taken in this form, and the chief reason why God is repeatedly represented to them in the character of their monarch, I conceive to be no other than this; that, when, by their own solemn act, they had acknowledged themselves his subjects, it would be obvious to them, that disobedience to his law would become opposition to the government of the state, and be liable, as such, not merely to visitations of God's displeasure, considered as the governor of the universe, but to civil penalties; and further, that worship of any other deity would then become the highest political offence, and be punishable in its character of high treason. Every one knows, that it was a leading part of the Jewish system to train the people to a religious obedience by the threat of civil penalties. A man was bound to render a prescribed devotional service, under pain of being dealt with as an offender against the commonwealth. But to furnish a basis for such procedure, it was plainly fit, that he, for whom the religious homage was demanded, should at the same time be presented as the head of the commonwealth.

When I add, that the divine acknowledgment of this relation was also an honor to the people, which would naturally be accompanied with a sense of responsibility on their part, I think we have a complete account of the reason why Jehovah is exhibited to the Jews, not only in the character of their divine disposer, as he is of all men, but in the peculiar character of their national ruler. I have admitted, that in Moses' time, while the nation was establishing, other prerogatives of royalty are, with much propriety of language, ascribed to God. But, after that time, there was, in one form or another, a complete organized government, not differing from the governments of other nations in any such way, as to justify its being called by the name *theocracy*, or

any like it; and, whatever opinion may be entertained concerning the time when miraculous interposition in the affairs of the nation ceased, there seems no good reason for doubting, that, after the government was once arranged, it was mainly trusted, as are other governments, to the management of human agents.

The first step taken in the new organization of the people is, an arrangement for the support of the worship of Jehovah; and this is so made, as to be a memento to them of the circumstances of their emancipation from Egypt. As, when a divine judgment had been executed upon the Egyptians, the first-born of man and beast were the victims, while the ravage was not permitted to extend to the Israelites, the nation, in token of their gratitude, were now to sequester their first-born to God's service; yet not so, that the first-born of all the families were actually to be taken for priests, and the first-born of all animals to serve as victims, but that, they being held liable to be so used, the nation should the more cheerfully acquiesce in an arrangement, more convenient to itself, by which the whole tribe of Levi, as was afterwards directed, should be substituted for the sacred office in the place of the first-born of all the tribes, while (with reference to a distinction which we are by and by to consider) the first-born of unclean animals, being unfit for sacrifice, were to have their places supplied by victims of other species. And as this seems to be in the nature of an incomplete and progressive arrangement,* it affords a

* I have spoken of the arrangement in xiii. 1-16, introductory to that in Numbers i. 47-54, as being in the nature of a progressive arrangement. But it was so only in a qualified sense. It is at least doubtful, whether Moses' original intention was to form a priesthood from the first-born of every family, an intention afterwards relinquished in favor of the tribe of Levi. The language (verse 2) is "*Sanctify to me all the first-born among the children of Israel, both of man and*

convenient opportunity to make two remarks on the nature of such arrangements, which sometimes seem to be viewed as being unsuitable for God to make, inasmuch as he knows from the beginning all that will ultimately be found necessary or fit.

It is true, in the first place, that “God does not make himself wiser by trying experiments.” But it is also true, that his administration always has regard to the benefit and satisfaction of those whom it concerns; and that (for a like reason to that, for which a more complete law was given in Christianity than in Judaism, viz. because there was a more mature preparation for the former than for the latter) it was fit that the same generation should be led on, by successive arrangements, from one step to another, each preparing the way for that which was next to follow.

But, in the second place, I apprehend, that when a law is announced, prefaced by such words as “the Lord spake unto Moses,” it is by no means necessary to understand the arrangement to have been originated (so to speak) in the Divine Mind, and then dictated to the Jewish leader, to be by him promulgated. In my view, the force of the language is equally well met, if we understand, when other considerations would incline us so to do, that the plan was a plan of Moses, who, by

beast.” But “sanctify,” קִדְּשׁ, means simply *to sequester*, particularly to a sacred use. The first-born might well be said to be “sanctified,” sequestered, set apart to God, if, from the first, the intention was to cause them to provide a sacred order by a substitution of the Levitical family, in their place. Ultimately, the first-born of men, thus sequestered, were exchanged, so to speak, for the Levites, and the first-born of unclean animals were exchanged for clean animals, that is, those which were fit to be used as victims. (xiii. 13; compare Numbers xviii. 15.) Unclean animals were certainly not intended, in the first arrangement, to be “sanctified” in the sense of being used as victims. No more can it be argued, *ex vi termini*, that the first-born were intended to be so sanctified, as to be employed as servants of the sanctuary.

being encouraged to act on this kind of responsibility, would be in all respects better qualified for his office as leader of the people; that, having been devised by him, it was submitted for the divine approval; and that (this approval obtained) it was announced, in such words as I have quoted, as resting on the divine authority.

This view of the force of those prefatory words is fully borne out by a comparison of two passages in the Pentateuch. In the book of Numbers we read, without any qualification, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 'Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan.'"* Arguing from these words, as is commonly done when they occur in other places, we should understand the arrangement to have been dictated in the first instance by God to Moses. But, where the same incident is related in Deuteronomy, we find quite a different aspect put upon it. There we see Moses represented as saying to the people; "Ye came near unto me every one of you and said, 'We will send men before us, and they shall search out the land';—and the saying pleased me well, and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe."† There is no discrepance between the two statements. The people proposed the measure to Moses. He waited for leave to execute it; and when such authority had been given, then he properly announced to the people, "The Lord said unto Moses, send men" &c. If such, by a subsequent explanation, is shown to have been the case, on an occasion where the words, taken alone, are naturally supposed to indicate that the arrangement was first communicated by God to Moses, there is no good reason to doubt that such was the process in other

* xiii. 1.

† i. 22.

instances, where no similar explanation has made it known to us.

An incident leading to the same conclusion occurs in a later part of the passage, which is the subject of this lecture.* An arrangement, of the most important character, relating to the people's social condition, is declared to have been made by Moses at the original suggestion of Jethro, his father-in-law; an arrangement amounting to no less, than the separation (in great part) of the office of judging from that of legislation, except in cases of appeals. Jethro, finding Moses too much burdened by the cares of administration, advises him to commit questions of minor concern to the discretion of inferior magistrates selected by him for the purpose, reserving only the more weighty matters for his personal cognizance. And it is remarkable that Jethro adds, "If thou shalt do this thing, and *God command thee so*, then thou shalt be able to endure." The implication is, that, though a suggestion of his own, it might and must become a divine command, before it could be carried into execution.

We have here then specific cases, in which measures, spoken of as adopted under divine direction, appear, on further observation, to have had their original source in human sagacity. The principle of interpretation, thus ascertained, is of obvious importance. When we read, "The Lord said unto Moses, 'Establish and promulgate such or such a law,'" if that law appears to us trivial, or not thoroughly well devised to meet its end,—if we find even that it actually requires afterwards, on experiment, to be qualified, or extended, or repealed,—we are not debarred from supposing, that it had its origin in the imperfect wisdom of Moses, and that he was but permitted to adopt it in order

* xviii. 13—26.

that he might perceive its imperfections, and learn the political wisdom, which his station demanded, in seeing what defects it had failed to supply, and how a better measure was to be devised. It would seem, that, by such a course, he would be subjected to precisely the discipline, which was desirable for his own improvement, and the people's good. To be permitted to initiate measures, would exercise his sagacity, and deepen his sense of responsibility. It would heighten his interest in his work, and in the people. It would cause him to be more intimately acquainted with the spirit, the uses, and the bearings of the law he was to administer. And, in view of these facts and considerations, I see no reason whatever against supposing the case actually to have been, that, while the leading purposes and principles of his law were subjects of original and direct divine communication, the details were in many instances left to his own judgment, subject to the divine approval; an approval, which might, without doubt, be fitly given, for the time, even when it was foreseen that an arrangement proposed would prove insufficient to its end.

The people having been emancipated from Egypt, we might expect to find them immediately conducted into the promised land of their permanent habitation, which they might have reached in a few days' march.* But "God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, though that was near; for God said, 'Lest peradventure they repent, when they see war, and they return to Egypt.'"† It was, no doubt, within the resources of divine power to give them at once a supernatural courage; to inspire them with a mature national spirit. But it is not thus that God educates either men or nations. The very idea of education

* Deut. i. 2.

† Ex. xiii. 17.

embraces progressive voluntary action of the human reason, and struggles of the human will. The Israelites were as yet only a crowd of emancipated slaves, without character, without national unity or sympathy, without mutual confidence, without subordination; of course without power of organizing or maintaining a state, except under circumstances of seclusion and security. The first object was to give them a system of government, which should be the basis of a national identity, and then allow them undisturbed opportunity for consolidating their institutions, and thus preparing themselves for that energy of action, which would be needed when they should come to invade the territory they claimed, and establish there an independent state. For this reason they were now arrested in their progress, to receive a law; and events were afterwards so disposed, that they were withheld from the prosecution of the great contemplated enterprise for forty years, till the pusillanimous generation of Egyptian bond-men had died, and a race born in freedom, and imbued in some measure with the spirit of the institutions they were to perpetuate, had succeeded to their places.*

“The Lord went before them,” the history proceeds, “by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.” † The word “pillar,” or column, is the same which is used in the book of Judges, ‡ where certainly no supernatural object was intended. Nor can I allow it to be

* “The children of Israel went up *harnessed* (חֲסֻסִים) out of the land of Egypt”; (xiii. 18); rather, they went up “in bands of fifty”; though Gesenius, referring to an Arabic root, would have the word mean “eager,” “brave.”—In verse 19 is a reference to the fact, recorded in Genesis i. 24, 25.

† xiii. 21, 22.

‡ עֲפֹרָה. Judges xx. 40; compare 38.

as evident as has been supposed, that the historian designed to represent the pillar of cloud and fire which marshalled the Israelitish journeyings, as being of that character. When masses of men were moving through the vast plains of the East, we know that it was anciently the practice for their movements to be regulated by a fire near the leader's person, whose flame would be visible in the night-time, and its wreath of smoke by day, marking the spot where his tent was pitched when encamped, and the road which he was taking when on the march.* It at least deserves careful consideration, whether the verse which I have quoted was intended to declare that the Lord went before the people in a flame and smoke, in any other sense, than that he was always in communication with their leader; he was always present in the smoke and flame, which, according to convenient and prevailing custom, were the artificial signal of the leader's presence.† And this view appears to derive confirmation from the fact that Hobab was subsequently engaged by Moses to be his guide, as one acquainted with the intricacies of the wilderness.‡ If he had already supernatural conduct, there seems no reason why he should have sought such offices from Hobab.

Nor do I find any thing in the circumstances of the narrative which next follows, to show that the smoke and flame, which accompanied the marches of the Isra-

* "Perticam, quæ undique conspici posset, supra prætorium statuit, ex qua signum eminebat, pariter omnibus conspicuum. *Observabatur ignis noctu, fumus interdiu.*" Quintus Curtius de Alexandro, lib. 5, cap. 2, § 7. See also, Vegetius "de Re Militari," lib. 3, cap. 5; Frontinus "Strategematicōn," lib. 2, cap. 5, § 16.

† "He took not away," says our version, "the pillar" &c. But *הָיָה* means "he departed"; "he abandoned." Therefore, rather, "he left not," "he did not desert," the signal, or (as we should say) the standard, of Moses.

‡ Numbers x. 29, 32.

elites, were ordinarily of a supernatural character. The passage of the Red Sea was a miraculous incident, obviously most effectually designed, and most seasonably applied, to satisfy the Israelitish nation (for their own use and that of their posterity), that they might confide in the protection of him who had called them to be his servants; and to satisfy the Egyptian nation, that it would be at their utmost peril, if they undertook again to assail their now emancipated bond-men, in their undisciplined and exposed state in the wilderness. And part of the miracle of that time is related to us in two verses of the fourteenth chapter.* When the leader, as was fit, now that a hostile force was in close pursuit, took his post of observation in the rear of his army, the usual signal of his presence was for the time endued with supernatural properties. "The angel of God," (that which proved in this instance to be a miraculous divine instrument,) "removed and went behind. And the pillar of the cloud was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these." On the side turned towards the favored people, it was all guiding and cheering radiance, while it rolled over the devoted heads of their enemies its dense volumes of blinding and threatening smoke. Such was its peculiar miraculous agency on the present occasion. But this by no means proves it to have been, at other times, a supernatural phenomenon.

When Pharaoh heard that the people had turned their left † side to the Red Sea, and taken their march towards the south, his inference was that they had lost their way, and that the protection of their divinity, which

* Verses 19, 20.

† xiv. 5. So Michaelis and others, on the authority of an Arabic root, well render the word בָּרַח. It was no news to Pharaoh that the people had "fled."

had hitherto secured them against his power, was withdrawn. He pursued them accordingly, and encountered the miraculous discomfiture, which was designed to confirm the confidence of the Israelites in their deliverer, and to discourage their oppressor from any further attempts.*

At Marah, where, under providential, or miraculous guidance, Moses is enabled by the infusion of a leaf or herb, to prepare the bitter waters for the people's use, we are told that God "made for them a statute and an ordinance." † Agreeably to a well known Hebrew idiom, this might suitably be rendered, "*a* [or the] great ordinance," "the important statute." What statute it was, we are not told; but the accompanying circumstances of solemn injunction show, that it was regarded as of special consideration, and it has been suggested, (with strong probability as I think,) to have been the sabbatical institution. We shall presently find

* xiv. 18, 31. "Dry land" יַבֵּשָׁה (xiv. 22) is land sufficiently bare of water to walk on. Compare Genesis i. 9.—"The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left"; (ibid.) that is, the deeper waters on either side were a *defence* to their flanks. Compare 1 Samuel xxv. 16. It is true that (xv. 8) we find the image presented, which is commonly received from the historical statement. But this latter text occurs in the midst of an impassioned lyric.—'The Lord (25) "took off their chariot wheels"; their chariots were shattered in driving over the rocks in the bed of the river, over which, in consequence of the miraculous act which had been done, they had been led to attempt a passage.—"The waters returned (28) and covered all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them." It is not declared that the waters overwhelmed them all, but כָּסַף, *concealed* them, swept them out of sight, either beneath the surface, or back upon the shore.—"There remained not so much as one of them." That is, none remained embattled, or in pursuit. We are by no means told that every individual perished. Moses relates what he saw. "There remained not so much as one of them" in his view. The stronger representation given in xv. 5, requires, as before, allowance for the license of the most animated and adventurous form of poetry, that of the Ode. Compare xv. 12.

† Exodus xv. 25. See Stuart's Grammar, § 438, a. note.

that institution referred to as one, respecting which the Israelites had received previous instruction; * and elsewhere † an historical connexion seems to be assigned to it with the deliverance from Egypt.‡

In the sixteenth chapter, we read, that the people, having advanced in their journey as far as “the wilderness of Sin,” were distressed for want of food, and were miraculously supplied with quails and with manna. The impression is, I believe, not uncommon, that the supernatural provision of quails, during the journey through the wilderness, was frequent. We are, however, only told of its having been made on two occasions.§

In respect to the provision of manna, the opinion which prevails (entertained, no doubt, with different qualifications by different minds,) is substantially as follows; that the food miraculously furnished was made to descend from the sky; that it made the only, or, at least, the chief food of the Israelites, during their forty years’ pilgrimage; that none was supplied on the sabbaths, while twice the usual quantity was furnished on every Friday;

* Ex. xvi. 23. Compare Ex. xvi. 4, 5, where a previous institution of the sabbatical rest seems to be implied.

† E. g. Deut. v. 15; Ezek. xx. 10–12; Neh. ix. 12.

‡ “Miriam the prophetess,” (xv. 20,) מִרְיָם; in this instance, Miriam the *songstress*. Compare Judges iv. 4; v. 1; 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2, 3.—“Miriam answered them, ‘Sing ye unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea’” (21); that is, Miriam and her women responded by singing the whole Ode; as we should say, “Miriam sang ‘Sing unto the Lord,’ and so forth.”

§ Viz. those referred to in Exodus xvi. 13, and in Numbers xi. 31.—“Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness,” said they, (xvi. 3) “to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” “Ye shall know,” replied Moses and Aaron, (6,) promising them relief, “that *the Lord* hath brought you out from the land of Egypt.”—Verse 10, I understand in connexion with verses 11 and 12. While Aaron was addressing the people, (10,) they, for the greater impression on their minds, were made to see, at a distance, a glorious cloud, from which Jehovah (11, 12) gave his directions to Moses.

and that, during the Sabbath, what was laid up for that day was miraculously kept from putrefaction.* On each of these particulars I am briefly to remark.

Manna is a substance well known in natural history. "At this day," says Calmet, "manna falls in several places; in Arabia, in Poland, in Calabria, in Mount Libanus, and elsewhere. The most common and the most famous is that of *Arabia*, which is a kind of condensed honey, found in the summer time on the leaves of trees, on herbs, on the rocks, or on the sand, of Arabia Petræa. It is of the same figure as Moses describes. That which is gathered about Mount Sinai has a very strong smell, which it receives from the herbs on which it falls." This being so, the supposition of the miraculous creation of a new substance appears to be entirely gratuitous. The case seems to have been the same, so far, with the manna as with the quails. Both were alike natural productions. The miracle consisted in the seasonable provision of such quantities of them on this occasion.

Nor can any different inference be safely drawn from the mention of the manna's having been rained † from heaven, nor from that medicinal property of the sub-

* So our learned countryman, Dr. Harris, in his "Natural History of the Bible," p. 292. "It fell every day except on the Sabbath; and this only around the camp of the Israelites. Every sixth day, there fell a double quantity, and though it putrefied and bred maggots when it was kept any other day, yet on the Sabbath there was no such alteration. It fell in so great quantities during the whole forty years of their journey, that it was sufficient to feed the whole multitude of above a million of souls." Some even go so far as to suppose, that there was a miraculous superintendence of the Israelites in their collection of this food, so that no man, through any accident, gathered either more or less than an omer. But this is distinctly contradicted by verse 17, which requires us to explain verse 18 as meaning, that, after the collection of an omer had been made according to each man's best judgment, the quantities were equalized by measurement.

† xvi. 4.

stance now known under that name, which some have supposed to render it unfit for food. — As to the latter, no fact in physiology is better established, than that the system easily accommodates itself to an influence of this kind. Calmet quotes an authority to the point, that “the country people about Mount Libanus eat the manna found there, as others would honey”; and the property in question would even, it is probable, render this food particularly salutary for persons living, as the Israelites were now, in circumstances resembling the unnatural habits of a camp. — As to any force of the former expression, any thing which is sent in abundance, is said, by a natural figure, to be *rained*. Such a use of the word is not considered violent even in our own language; * still less can it be reckoned so in the simplicity of the Hebrew. † And *Heaven*, by an easy metonymy, is frequently, in Scripture language, used for *God*, ‡ so that to say that the manna was sent from Heaven, is simply to ascribe its provision to a divine agency.

The supposition that manna made the only, or the chief food of the Israelites during their journey through the wilderness, has still less plausibility. It supposes a permanent need, which, to all appearance, did not exist. The Israelites were not journeying through a mere waste of unproductive sand. Such is by no means the

* So Shakspeare;

“*Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear.*”

But particularly, how natural such a form of speech is, in respect to an abundant vegetable product, the source of which it is not intended to describe with technical accuracy, is apparent in the article of Calmet, quoted above. “At this day,” he says, “manna *falls* in Arabia,” but when he proceeds to treat of it more exactly, he describes it as exuding from a tree. Late discoveries seem to show that it is obtained by the puncture of an insect. See Gesenius’s Lexicon, Art. 17.

† See Psalm xi. 6; Job xx. 23.

‡ Matthew xxi. 25; Mark xi. 30, 31; Luke xx. 4, 5; Dan. iv. 23 (26.)

import, either in the Old Testament or the New, of the words translated "wilderness." On this point, it is enough to say here, that their marches through the wilderness brought them to many cities, or posts, which are named,* and that they were accompanied by their cattle, which, on the one hand, must have found grazing ground, for the manna was not suitable food for them, and, on the other, might have served their owners for part of their food. The thirty-fifth verse, as far as I know, is the only authority, which could be appealed to in behalf of the opinion of a standing miracle in this instance. But even if it was written by Moses,† it can by no means be safely affirmed to signify more, than that such use as the Israelites made of manna, whether more or less frequent, was discontinued after they passed from the wilderness into Palestine. That they did use other food than manna during this time, is also a necessary inference from a passage in Deuteronomy.‡ And had it been otherwise, one might ask, why it was, that, on the first-related provision of manna, Moses issued a command from the Lord, "Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread, wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness." If the provision was constantly repeated through forty years, it might rather be supposed, that the time for a specimen of it to be laid up for preservation, would be when the supply was about to be discontinued. It is true, that in the eleventh chapter of Numbers,§ we read of manna

* See Numbers xxxiii. 6—37.

† I make this qualification, because there can be little doubt, in any mind, that verse 36 is one of those texts, which are to be understood as inserted after the time of Moses. He would hardly have set down the definition of a measure, which was in common use in his day. And if he did not write this verse, it is natural to adopt the same opinion concerning the preceding, which, like it, has the appearance of a gloss, and is intimately connected with it.

‡ ii. 6.

§ Verses 6—9.

as being still in use at a little later period of the history. But nothing there said of it indicates the supply to have been of a miraculous nature, either as to time, quantity, or any other particular. Once more, the supply of manna is spoken of in the same terms as that of quails, which latter there is no reason whatever to regard as having been permanent, or frequent.*

Again; the idea of a permanent suspension of the supply on the Sabbaths, and a miraculous distinction in its quantity between Fridays and other days, will not, I think, be found capable of bearing examination. Manna being a substance liable to putrefy, if kept in its natural state, the Israelites were directed to gather no more of it than a convenient specified quantity, and not to keep any portion by them. But this rule was suspended for the day preceding the Sabbath; and "it came to pass that on the sixth day *they gathered* twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses." What the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses was, not that more manna had been furnished and might be gathered on that day than on the preceding days, but that more *had actually been gathered* by the people. For aught that appears, they might, as far as the quantity accessible to them was concerned, have gathered a double quantity as well on the preceding days as on this. So I take the sense of the words, "He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of

* Ex. xvi. 8. — I have expressed freely the doubts, which occur respecting the supposed purpose of the writer to represent the supernatural provision of manna as having been permanent, and not merely occasional. But, after all, it may have been necessary for the poorer portion of the people to be permanently provided for; and if so, there could be no more unexceptionable way of affording the supply, than by a constant supernaturally increased production of a natural product of the wilderness.

two days," to be; he *alloweth* to you, he *permitteth you to take*, on that day a double portion.*

But, it will be said, we are expressly told, that "there went out some of the people, on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none." † We are told this; and so much, and no more, I think it was probably intended that we should understand. We are told, that, on one occasion, at the time to which it properly belonged to enforce the obligation of a strict observance of the Sabbath, this remarkable distinction was made between the Sabbath and other days. The lesson, once given in this striking manner, it is not to be presumed would need repetition in the same way. And to suppose a weekly repetition of such a miracle through forty years, is to make a supposition equally without apparent support in the reason of the case, or in the letter of Scripture.‡

Again; that it was not by a miracle, but by a culinary process, recommended by Moses, that the manna reserved for use on the Sabbath was kept from corruption, is, I conceive, sufficiently apparent from the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses. We gather from them, that though preferred in its natural state, either on account of the greater palatableness, or on account of the trouble of preparation, yet, as it could not be kept in that state, and as it must not be gathered fresh on the Sabbath, some way of preparing it was to be prescribed, in which it would remain a little time fit for use. Accordingly, as soon as it was reported to Moses,

* xvi. 19, 20, 22, 29. I add, that, if no manna could be obtained at any time on the Sabbath-day, there would be no place for the trial of obedience spoken of in xvi. 4, 5.

† xvi. 27.

‡ "Ye shall not find it," (25,) is very properly interpreted, "ye shall not go to find it"; and "in it there shall be none," (26,) is equivalent to "there shall be none gathered."

that his direction respecting the collection of a double quantity had been observed, he proceeded to give the further order respecting the method of its preservation. "Bake that ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe;" — bake or boil what ye wish to keep; for it cannot be preserved without such preparation.

The miraculous production of water by Moses, to supply the people's thirst, is the subject of a simple narrative in the first part of the seventeenth chapter. — In the latter part of that chapter, we read of a skirmish between the Israelites, headed by Joshua, and the Amalekites, a roving tribe of the wilderness, by whom they had been assailed.* We are told, that, on this occasion, when Moses' hands, weary and feeble, drooped by his side, no longer holding up the staff by the extension of which he had wrought his wonders in Egypt, and which was the acknowledged symbol of his divinely delegated authority, then the hostile force prevailed; but that when they were sustained by Aaron and Hur, the host of Israel triumphed. The fitness of this divine arrangement (so to term it) will appear to us on a moment's consideration. The object of the miracles connected with the ministry of Moses, after the departure from Egypt, was primarily to establish his authority over the minds of the people. But this the mere acts would not do, unless there were some outward sign to connect them with his agency, and make them bear testimony to him. A miraculous rending of the earth, for instance, without any word or other sign of Moses, would obviously no more prove his divine legation than it would prove that of any other man. But, when the people saw the banner of the Lord in his hand, (for so the rod is called in the evident allusion

* xvii. 8-16. The assault of the Amalekites was perhaps to obtain possession of the copious supply of water.

to it in the words "Jehovah nissi," "the Lord my banner,") always insuring to them victory, as long as it was raised, and leaving them to defeat when it sank, they took an impressive lesson concerning the power which he was authorized to exert over them, and the divine protection which he enjoyed, shared by themselves as long as they yielded to his guidance. This act connected Moses with their success against the Amalekites, as much as the extension of Moses' rod over the Red Sea connected him with their miraculous passage of that flood, or as our Lord's declaration, "So be it done unto thee," connected him with the cure of the centurion's child.* — The sense of the last three verses appears to be; Acquaint Joshua both in word and writing, that he must prepare himself for a continuation of this war, which he has now so successfully begun. It is not to terminate with this generation. The people, whose future leader he is to be, must expect to prosecute it in the next and in others still more remote.†

On the eighteenth chapter I make no other observation than one, to which I shall presently have occasion to recur.‡ Before the people received at Sinai what we technically call their Law, a *Common* or consue-

* Matthew viii. 13.

† The text is doubtful in this place, the versions varying in their authority; and one is tempted to think that there was originally a paronomasia between the words נִסִּי and נִסִּי , which is now lost by a change in the former word, of י to נ , or in the latter, of נ to י .

‡ To "inquire of God," (xviii. 15,) is probably understood by most interpreters of Scripture, as indicating an application to the Divine Being for some supernatural communication of knowledge. But it is evident that Moses here uses the word respecting the people's resort to him to be instructed in their rights and duties. They "inquired of God" when they came to Moses for his arbitration on disputed questions; he pronounced judgment agreeably to established principles of equity, such as God is understood to approve; and this he called (16) making them "know the statutes of God, and his laws."

ordinary Law was already in force among them. Moses administered justice to the people, before he was in possession of the divinely prescribed code for his rule. That code, when it was promulgated, took the place of what is called in these times *statute law*. Accordingly we are not to expect, as is perhaps commonly done, to find in it a complete system of jurisprudence, determining all the obligations of men in all their relations. Should we examine it under this prepossession, we should be obliged to own, that it left many chasms; that there are many important questions, belonging to the province of law, which it does not touch; many particulars of the relation between man and man, which it does not regulate; many of the essential wants of every society, for which it does not provide.

LECTURE VIII.

EXODUS XIX. 1.—XXIII. 33.

CONSTITUTION OF THE HEBREW STATE, BEFORE AND UNDER THE LAW. — THE ISRAELITES AN AGRICULTURAL PEOPLE. — CONFEDERATION OF THE TRIBES. — JEWISH OFFICERS IN EGYPT. — MAGISTRACY IN THE WILDERNESS. — PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF THE LEGISLATION, CONNECTED WITH THE JOURNAL CHARACTER OF THE RECORD. — SECULAR CHARACTER OF SOME OF THE LAWS. — CONTENTS OF THE DECALOGUE, AND OF THE REST OF THE CODE ANNOUNCED UPON MOUNT SINAI. — INCOMPLETENESS OF THE SYSTEM. — MINUTE AND RUDE CHARACTER OF SOME PROVISIONS. — THE MANNER OF PROMULGATING THE LAW, SUITABLE TO GIVE IT AUTHORITY.

THE Israelites within three months after leaving Egypt, as soon as they could become in some degree accustomed to their new condition, are conducted to Mount Sinai, to receive, with suitably impressive accompaniments, the Law, which, through their whole future national existence, was to be the basis of their civil and religious institutions. It is proper that we should here attend to some important general characteristics of the Mosaic legislation; and I would preface my remarks upon these with a few observations on the constitution of the Jewish society, as the Law found it, and as the Law was designed to shape it.

The constitution of any community, in respect to the relations which its members bear to one another, is perhaps determined by nothing so much, as by the prevailing occupations of that community.

The Jews were an agricultural people. — At no period of their history did they gain their subsistence, like

the aborigines of this country, by the chase; an unsettled mode of life, which forbids the growth of civilization, and the organization of a well regulated society. — At no early period of their history were they addicted to those pursuits of commerce, which, leading to extensive intercourse with other nations, tend to destroy a people's individuality, and, by causing large accumulations of wealth in the hands of successful adventurers, produce inequality of ranks. — At no period were they extensively employed in mechanical arts, an occupation which is apt to make a people quiescent and unwarlike. To whatever degree they exercised these arts in Egypt, it appears to have been by a temporary necessity of their enslaved condition. Artisans they had in the wilderness, but the way in which they are spoken of, in the thirty-first chapter, is alone enough to indicate, that their occupation was peculiar to a few; and, even at much later periods, such incidental references as we have to the subject,* indicate that the needful manufacturing processes were carried on only in families.

The Jews were, through their whole national history, graziers and agriculturists. Their three great patriarchs led a nomadic life, as we read at length in the book of Genesis. When Jacob went down into Egypt, his family was established in a fixed residence in Goshen, for the advantage of pasturage for his flocks and herds; † and, when they were transferred from Egypt to Canaan, that territory was divided among them in such a manner, as to make every man a permanent landholder; and the inclination to commercial employments, which their central position might else have encouraged, was effectually checked by some specific enactments for that purpose.

* 1 Chron. iv. 21; Prov. xxxi. 24.

† Gen. xlv. 10; xlvii. 1 et seq.

Both the arrangements last named, designed to make and keep the Jews an agricultural people, will hereafter attract our more particular attention. At present I have but to remark, that they laid (particularly the former) the basis of the Jewish social state, in the principle of equality among the citizens. Every citizen was the possessor of an entailed inalienable landed property; every cultivator was himself a proprietor; a principle, which, under whatever varieties of formal administration, would seem most effectually to secure the spirit and essence of a republic.

At the time of the Exodus, we find the aggregate nation made up of a confederacy of twelve tribes or clans, named after their respective ancestors, the twelve sons of Jacob. These formed together a federate sovereignty, which may be compared to the districts of Greece in ancient times, or more correctly, though still imperfectly, to the Cantons of Switzerland in our own day, to the late States of Holland, to the clans of Scotland before the union, or to the United States of America. We shall presently read of the tribes having their several princes, their separate military organization, their distinct encampments, and eventually their respective territories in the Holy Land. We shall read, in the sequel of the history, of single tribes, or alliances of them, carrying on war on their own account,* and we shall have occasion to explain some of the most important political movements, on the ground of jealousies and rivalships between these sections of the nation.

From the little that is told us of the period intervening between the settlement of Jacob in Egypt, and the emancipation of his posterity under Moses, we do not learn how far the people were trusted with any administration of their own affairs. It may be sup-

* Josh. xvii. 14-18; Judges iv. 10; 1 Chron. iv. 41-43; v. 18-22.

posed, that, dwelling together, as for the most part they seem to have done, in one community, their convenience would dictate arrangements, which would be prescribed, authorized, or tolerated by their rulers, for investing suitable individuals of their own number with some kind of official prerogative. Accordingly, as early as the time when the first movement towards emancipation was made, we find certain Israelites, sustaining this relation to the people, made instruments of Pharaoh's oppressions.* Beside these, we are not expressly told of any Jewish officers before Moses' appointment of Judges agreeably to Jethro's advice. It is highly probable; however, that there was already, or soon after, something in the nature of representative government; so far, at least, as to allow of convenient mutual consultation on matters of common concern. Moses is said to have assembled and addressed "all the congregation," † by which can hardly be meant the whole congregated people, (for they were too numerous to be addressed at once,) but rather persons authorized to listen and act in their behalf. In another place he is represented as speaking "in the ears of all the congregation of Israel"; ‡ but in the second preceding verse, he is only said to have collected, in order to this communication, "all the elders of their tribes, and their officers." § This last text, where it speaks of the "elders" of the tribes, confirms a supposition,

* Called in Hebrew שִׁפְטֵיִם; a word which our translators commonly render "officers," but generally, on the authority of the Septuagint, (γραμματῖς) "scribes."

† Lev. viii. 3-5.

‡ Deut. xxxi. 30.

§ So too Deut. xxix. 2. Compare 10, where, however, the sense is obscured in the English version by the interpolation of the italicized word, *with*. In Numbers i. 16, xvi. 2, Michaelis even proposes, with some plausibility, at least, to render קְרִיבֵי, קְרִיבֵי, instead of "famous," and "renowned," *called*; that is, called of the congregation, or deputed.

which independently would be extremely natural, that whatever representation existed was not so much of formal institution, as of a conventional patriarchal character.*

That *progressive* character of the Jewish Law, on which, assuming its existence, I have heretofore made some remarks, here forces itself upon our notice. The establishment of the code in all its details was a work of time. Supposing it even to have proceeded entirely and immediately from the Divine Mind, still it was fit, for the people's sake, that they should first be made acquainted with its leading principles; and subsequently, and by degrees, with their forms and modes of particular application. Supposing, on the other hand, the agency of Moses in respect to it to have been such as I suggested on a former occasion,† then we should expect, that its outline would be first conceived and promulgated by him, and that, by the benefit of further experience, it would be amended, retrenched, and enlarged. And in either case we should expect, for obvious reasons, what we are actually to find, as we proceed; viz. that in many instances laws would be first announced when an incident occurred to call for them, and that exceptions and alterations would be made, from time to time, agreeably to changing circumstances.

We may accordingly clearly distinguish, as I think, in the last four books of the Pentateuch, three separate editions, so to call them, of the Law. The final revision appears in the book of Deuteronomy, where, the people being about to occupy a settled habitation, whatever in the Law was peculiar to the exigencies of a wandering life in the wilderness, lost its use, and

* The same is the inference to which we are led by Exod. iv. 29, xix. 7.

† pp. 145–148.

whatever had reference to the condition of a more regulated society, rose in importance. Through the books of Leviticus and Numbers, on the other hand, which contain the nation's history at the first stage of its political existence, we have modifications and additions, particularly to the religious laws, but also to others; we have, in short, the original outline of the Law filled up, by degrees, after the manner which has just now been hinted at. That outline itself was given in the passage now before us; viz. in the twentieth and the three next following chapters. The Law promulgated from Mount Sinai did not comprehend the whole Mosaic legislation; but essentially it was an epitome of the whole. The Jewish people, now formed into a social state, were to be apprized, from the beginning, on what leading principles their society was to rest; and of this they were to be informed under such circumstances as would strongly impress their minds for the time being, prepare them to receive whatever further communications should be made through Moses' ministry, and form a striking record of divine revelations for the conviction of their descendants.

Such was the occasion, and such the character, of the first compendious Law announced upon Mount Sinai. And here, with this portion of the narrative before us, I would pause a moment, to recall attention to what strikes me as an important bearing which it has upon the question of the authenticity of the books which exhibit it. I can imagine no reason, which could have influenced a writer, not contemporaneous with the promulgation of the Law, to write it down in the disjointed shape in which it has descended to us. Let us place ourselves in the time of David, or of Hezekiah, or of the Judges, or any other time subsequent to that of Moses, and ask whether there is any conceivable

state of mind, in which we could have been induced to commit to writing, in such an arrangement, either what we had received as the ancient code of our nation, or what we had ourselves devised, and intended to impose upon the faith of others, in that character. Can there be any doubt, that, under such circumstances, we should give the Law as a whole, either as it had been actually received, or as we desired that it should be; digested, at least, into one system, and probably with some formal disposition of the parts? On the other hand, attribute the writing to Moses, and all is perfectly natural. It was fit that the Law should make successive advances towards completeness and precision; that it should not all be made known and fixed at once, but be gradually modified and enlarged according to the growing and altering wants, intelligence, and experience of the people; and that as, step by step, it approached its mature condition, so, step by step, the record should be made.

We have here, then, I think, one of the striking instances of that *journal* character of a large portion of the Pentateuch, which makes it so exceedingly difficult to attribute its composition to any age, subsequent to that of the occurrence of the events which it records. Supposing the composition to have proceeded from Moses, we have a satisfactory account of the form which it has taken. He would write down events as they occurred, and laws as they were delivered. If some incident called for a new enactment, the enactment and its occasion would be both set down together. If some provision was qualified or suppressed, the change would be added to the record, but the original provision would still keep its place. But who, in a later age, after a law had been abrogated and disused, would think of any such embalming of its memory?

Is it said, that all this was but the artifice of a forger, who designed, by such an arrangement of his work, to provide a basis for the argument, which I am urging? I submit, on the contrary, to any candid mind, whether the fact is not one of that unobtrusive class, which never would be devised to sustain a fraud, since it is so little suited to attract attention, on the part of any but the studious and careful;—whether it is not one of that description of facts, (so powerfully urged by Paley in his “*Horæ Paulinæ*,” for their bearing on the authenticity of part of the New Testament,) which, notwithstanding their reality and importance, are so latent as to preclude the supposition of their having been devised in aid of an imposture.

Another remark to be made upon the Jewish Law, relates to what I may term its *secular* character. Accustomed as we are, and rightly, to think of the Mosaic system as one designed for religious uses, we naturally enough come to suppose, that the positive enactments of its code will all be found to bear on the individual's religious illumination and discipline. In a certain sense, no doubt, they all do; for when a divinely approved rule has, for any purpose, been given, the individual's duty and improvement are concerned in obedience to it. But, in the sense in which the supposition is commonly entertained, a very little examination shows it to be erroneous. We shall see at greater length hereafter, but already we may partially see, in this first epitome of the Law, that, while many of its provisions related to the nation's religious security, or the individual's religious improvement, others belonged rather to the class which the civil and criminal codes of all nations embrace, while others again had nothing to do with abstract duty even in this form, but were merely

matters of police regulation, in the nature (for instance) of health laws.

The question then is naturally presented ; With what propriety are laws, which do but tend to the ordering and security of a prosperous commonwealth, embraced in a system, designed, as that of Moses has been represented to be, for a religious use ? And the proper and sufficient reply I take to be as follows. The operation of the laws in question, secured what, humanly speaking, was an indispensable means to the great end proposed. In order that the Jewish nation should fulfil the office, for which it was set apart, it was necessary, that, for a time at least, it should retain its individuality and independence. Overrun and subdued, at least at any earlier time than when recollections of past national glory might sustain the captive in adherence to his faith, the nation would inevitably lose the treasure of religious truth committed to its keeping. But, in order to its continuing independent, it needed to be made capable and desirous of maintaining its liberty ; it needed, in other words, to become numerous, prosperous, patriotic, united, and strong. Thus all arrangements, which go to build up a powerful state, — even such as regarded the general health, such as tended, within suitable limits, to the increase of wealth and population, such as would generate a national fellow-feeling, and such as would make the public resources available for the public security, — assumed an important relation to the great end proposed, and came within the contemplation of the Jewish Law. And, further, not a few particulars of what might most strictly be called domestic institution, will be found to have reference to the peculiar position which the Israelites occupied, and to have been designed to place

them in circumstances to execute the religious trust they had received for the world.

When we come to examine the Law in this its primitive shape, we find its contents to be actually such, as, on the ground of the views above presented, we might expect. Along with precepts touching the relation which it was designed that the Jews should bear peculiarly to God, it embraces provisions suited to meet any community's first and most pressing wants, and principles, which, carried out into their applications as they were designed subsequently to be, embrace a wide field of civil legislation.

In the Decalogue, the part of the Law announced earliest, and under circumstances of peculiar solemnity, we immediately remark two great divisions. The first division relates directly to the great purpose of the Jewish institution, the establishment of a pure and unparticipated worship of the One True God;—the first commandment prohibiting the acknowledgment of any other deity;* the second forbidding any address even to Him through that medium of sensible symbols,†

* "Thou shalt have no other gods *before me*"; (xx. 3;) that is, not in preference to me, but *in my presence*. I am present with the nation of Israel. Let me not be offended by the acknowledgment there of any other God.

† "Thou shalt not make to thyself,—thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them;" (4, 5.) that is, in the simple Hebrew idiom, Thou shalt not make them for the purpose of bowing down and worshipping them. The command does not forbid the mere representation, whether by sculpture, painting, or embroidery, of animated objects existing in nature. The brazen laver of the temple stood on sculptured oxen. Figures of animals were embroidered by divine command on the hangings of the tabernacle, and cherubim were erected even in the most Holy Place.—"I the Lord thy God am a *jealous* God" (5); rather, I think, *zealous, determined*, a well-ascertained meaning of the word אֲנִי, and better corresponding with the context.—"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (ibid.); that is, in national calamities. If the parents apostatize, and, deserting my service, and neglecting my laws, in which

to which the mind of man, in all ages, has been so prone to have recourse, to aid the weakness of its conceptions of an unseen Divinity, but which so easily tends to a substitution of the sign for the thing signified, as the object of the worshipper's faith; the third, securing to the name, and so to the idea, of the Divinity, the reverence which it rightfully claims, and which it so concerns the worshipper to cherish; the fourth, demanding a solemn weekly recognition on the part of the nation, and of each one of its citizens, of the religious character which they bore.—In the Second Table, as it has been called, of the Decalogue, we find the elements of social duty distinctly and emphatically enforced. The great human interests of the human being, which all regulations made by him for security in his social state are designed to protect, are life, liberty, property, and reputation. The first of these is the subject of the sixth commandment. The second is at the mercy of all abuses of government, but, in the form in which in that age it was most endangered, it was vindicated by the eighth commandment.* The sacredness of property, to which, as far as the subject now under examination is concerned, the integrity of domestic relations belongs, is asserted in the seventh and eighth. The wickedness of assaults on character is denounced in the ninth; while, through the exertion of a more general influence, touching all points of a community's well-being, the seventh takes care of that prevailing purity without which there can be no public

are the elements of their national prosperity, suffer that prosperity to decline, let them remember that they will not be the only sufferers. Their unoffending posterity will, according to the invariable course of human affairs, pay the forfeit of their unfaithfulness. The consideration should warn and check them. They should feel for their offspring, if they are regardless of me.

* Compare Exod. xxi. 16.

virtue or greatness, any more than individual worth; the fifth lays the foundation of the citizen's virtues in the order of that smaller community, the domestic circle;* and the tenth, by forbidding the allowance even of those desires, which tempt to wrong, meets and checks at their spring those impulses from which encroachments and disorders, of whatever form, commonly proceed.

The Decalogue is scarcely more than an assertion of general principles. These principles, being the basis, on which all subsequent discipline was to rest, might well deserve to be singled out from other communications, as they were, and announced with accompaniments of peculiar impressiveness. The rest of the Law given on Mount Sinai occupies the two next following chapters, and the greater part of a third. Without stopping to remark at length on the sense and bearing of its several provisions, I would pass them here in review, that it may be seen how far they correspond with the description given above of their design.

A subject on which a people accustomed, like the Jews, to bondage, would probably need as early instruction as on any other, is that of the relation of master and servant; and with this accordingly (after a few

* "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (xx. 12.) This is not, I suppose, what it is commonly understood to be, the extraordinary promise to dutiful children of a certain enjoyment of long earthly life. Jewish history gives us no evidence of its having been fulfilled in this sense. I understand the promise to be addressed to the nation, not to the individual. The national life would be long, if it should be a nation distinguished for the prevalence of filial piety, the foundation of all other social virtues. If it be said that this interpretation supposes a diversity, in the same sentence, in the use of the pronoun of the second person, singular number, since the individual is there called on to show filial piety, that the nation's life may be long, I refer, among other analogous instances which might be cited, to Deut. xvi. 1-8, 18-20; xxiii. 15, 16.

directions of a strictly religious character,*) the compendious code before us is introduced, while, a little further on, the free citizen's right to his liberty is guarded by the heaviest penalty, denounced against the invader.† The subject of criminal and excusable homicide, which, of course, would be one of immediately imminent concern, is next somewhat largely treated.‡ Directions respecting minor personal injuries follow, having reference to their aggravation.§ Property is protected by various detailed provisions; || and the citizen is made responsible for consequences of his negligence in all the three last-named respects.¶ Laws against impurity are next provided.** Respect for parents and magistrates is enjoined, a sentiment always needful, and never more so than in the present partially organized condition of the new commonwealth.†† The duties of equity in judicial transactions,‡‡ and of humanity and mutual support and aid are urged; and the latter movingly enforced, in the fit cases, by considerations of the people's own recent need of the mercy they were now called upon to show.§§ One short direction |||| seems to have had reference to a danger to which they were exposed in consequence of their irregular supplies of food. All the other precepts ¶¶ relate to the principles or the observances of religion.

* xx. 23–26. Verse 24 is a direction to abstain from erecting any permanent and expensive altar, which might tempt them to remain in one place. The object of the provision in verse 26, is obviously to secure the reverence belonging to an act of religious worship from being disturbed by what, according to the views of the age, would have been an indecorum.

† xxi. 1–11, 16.

‡ xxi. 12–14, 18–21; xxii. 2.

§ xxi. 15, 22–27.

|| xxii. 1–5, 7–15.

¶ xxi. 28–30, xxii. 6.

** xxii. 16, 17, 19.

†† xxi. 15, 17; xxii. 28.

‡‡ xxiii. 1–3, 6–8.

§§ xxii. 21–27; xxxiii. 4, 5, 9.

|||| xxii. 31.

¶¶ Viz. in xxii. 18, 20, 29, 30; xxiii. 10–19.

It might be remarked of a small number of these laws,* that they seem little suitable for the people's observance under their present unsettled circumstances. To this, it appears to me a sufficient reply, that there is no reason, in the nature of the case, why the knowledge of institutions and practices which were designed for the people's permanent observance, should be reserved till the favorable time for such observance arrived. On the contrary, as far as we can see, it would be altogether fit and useful, that their obligation should be announced beforehand, and kept in prospective view. Further, nothing would seem more suitable to enforce the obligation of practices of a given kind, which there was already opportunity to observe, than to add that there were others of the same class and tenor, which would be demanded as soon as opportunity should permit; and such, it will be seen, on reference to the passages in question, is actually the connexion in which they are found.

Respecting the obvious *incompleteness* of the Jewish Law, in its most mature state, when compared with the extent and variety of relations and exigencies in social life, for which law is intended to provide, there is room for no further remark, than that such is the universal character of Statute Law, which the code of Moses has been already observed to be.† In every nation, established practices provide the basis of practical jurisprudence, constituting that Common Law, as it is called, into which Statute Law does but introduce modifications and additions, as occasion calls for them; the latter being accordingly, of its nature, an imperfect system, when viewed apart. The Jewish code being (as far as matters of mere civil regulation are concerned) a collection of statutes, is, for that

* See xxii. 5, 29; xxiii. 10, 11.

† p. 161.

reason, when regarded alone, incomplete. It is not all the law which the nation possessed, since, where the current law was good and useful, there was no need of a change, and therefore no need of a statute; and even when it was not good or useful in a high degree, still it might be tolerable, and therefore left undisturbed. And, further, that such was the fact, we shall find indirect proof, (which is all, that, from the nature of the case, we can expect,) when we come to read of some positive directions recognising or modifying existing rights and customs, as in the case of the Blood-avenger, of Nazarite consecration, and of Divorce.

I proceed to a quality of the Jewish Law, which perhaps has gone as far as almost any other to create a distrust of its divine original. I refer to its *precise, circumstantial* character. To some persons it seems unworthy of the Divine Mind to interest itself in such minute, and, as it seems to them, undignified details. Is it credible, they would ask, that the Majesty of Heaven and earth will ascribe any importance to the materials and the manner of erecting and furnishing a house for his worship; the attitudes and the costume of the worshipper; discriminations of places, times, and food, and other such minor matters as the Jewish Law is largely concerned in regulating; or that he should condescend to require numerous peculiar personal observances, of which the reason is to be sought neither in their intrinsic usefulness, nor in any permanent obligation?

It seems to me that there lies at the basis of this argument, an error, which is also carried into various other applications. We judge of the Almighty too much by ourselves. Our estimate of the divine greatness is formed too much upon our notion of that human greatness, which never can do better than to

choose between different forms of power and action, because all varieties of power and action at once are not within its competency. No man, however efficient, can do all things. The most effective men, accordingly, are naturally appointed to, or assume, the weightier, more comprehensive, and therefore, as we say, more dignified tasks; while the less effective are devoted to plans and agencies of a less extensive, and, accordingly, as we account them, a meaner character. Through their partial power, the men who are equal to the more imposing cares, and therefore are assigned to such, find it necessary to relinquish the less important, and devolve them, for the most part, on persons of less capacity and pretension. Accordingly, occupation in, and concern for, mere details, comes to seem to us inconsistent with the idea of human greatness; and, transferring this view to the Divine Being, we come hastily to conclude, that such occupation and concern would be also unworthy of him.

I suppose that it is chiefly through this way of reasoning, or rather through this impression, that the great doctrine of a particular Providence labors under a prejudice. Many men think it unworthy of God to take care of the little, as if it were not the greatest glory of the greatest intelligence to be able and disposed to take care of the great and the little both. But does any reflecting mind doubt, that what is so often considered a concomitant and character of human greatness, is itself a result and sign of the impotence and limitations of that greatness? Would not the mind, which could dispose the most largely of both principles and details, be the greatest mind; and to object to an administration which developes both of these characters, that it cannot, for that reason, proceed from God, is not this to find an argument against his opera-

tion, in one of the very signatures of an agency, to which, in its fullest extent, he alone of all beings is competent?

From this preliminary remark, I go on to submit, that the fact, which has given rise to it, so far from impeaching the divine origin of the Mosaic institutions, is in reality a contribution to the evidence in its favor. It is not to be supposed, that the reasons which existed for those apparently minute provisions can be fully ascertained at this distance of time; but one hazards nothing in saying, that the more they have been judiciously investigated, the more satisfactorily have they appeared to be parts, wisely designed, of a law, which was to rescue a barbarous and irreligious people from universal barbarism and idolatry, to fix them in the worship of one God, and to form them to be the instruments of introducing a true theology into the world. They were the expedients of a suitable discipline for effecting that general civilization, out of which a high personal religious culture was ultimately to grow.

My point then, is, that the circumstances of the Jewish nation, when it received the Law, were such, that the appropriate instrument of their discipline was necessarily, as far as we can see, a ceremonial and precise system; a system which should prescribe a ritual of worship, and a course of conduct in common life, with great fulness and exactness. At the time when Moses' Law was promulgated, we know not that there was any thing deserving to be called religion in the world, except what little might be said to exist among the Jews themselves; and among them we have no knowledge that any religious rites were practised, except that of sacrifice, which had been observed from the earliest antiquity, and that of circumcision, which had been prescribed to Abraham, but, in the reverses of his descendants, had probably fallen almost into disuse.

Wherever society existed near them, whether among the wholly savage Canaanites, or among the more polished, rather than more cultivated Egyptians, it was in a state of extreme debasement. And the chosen family were no longer what they had been, when they went down into Egypt to share the splendid fortunes of Joseph. Ages of miserable servitude had broken their spirit, and brought them to that condition of mental imbecility, which is the worst effect of oppression and of bodily hardships; nor do we know that, surrounded as they had been by the corrupting idolatry of Egypt, they had preserved among themselves any acquaintance with religious truth, beyond a remote tradition that Jehovah had revealed himself to their fathers as their patron God.

This rude, depressed, degraded people, were to receive a pure theology, that so they might be instrumental in preparing the world for further revelations of divine truth. With them a course of discipline was to be begun; and the point, from which it was to raise them, was a low condition of intellectual and moral debasement. This being understood, let us ask what course human wisdom would have resorted to, to effect the object. Would a sagacious human legislator, desiring to civilize a barbarous tribe, begin by giving them a system of laws (however good in other respects), so general in their terms, that much exercise of judgment would be necessary in the application of them? Or would he see, that, should he do so, their stupidity, and the very wrong biases which it was his purpose to correct, would make such a labor vain; and that the only effectual way to confine them to the right path was to forbid, in a careful enumeration, such external practices, as would, in any way, have an influence to keep them in their existing state, and enjoin with equal par-

ticularity, those actions, the doing of which would have a tendency to withdraw them from that state? Would he reverse the natural order of instruction; or would he follow the example of the parent, who, while his child's comprehension is as yet immature, educates him in certain outward formalities of conduct, that, by their natural influence on his mind, the qualities he ought to acquire may be formed in him, long before he is able to understand the nature of those qualities? Would a wise legislator give to such subjects at once the best possible law; or would he see, that, in order to learn ultimately to respect proper limits, it was needful that they should first learn to respect *some* limits? Would he expect them, at once to adopt comprehensive principles of self-restraint, and devise, for their own government, rules founded on those principles, and adapted to their existing condition; or would he perceive that his prospect of restraining them was the better, the more definitely he declared to them what particular things they should do and forbear?

We have found these questions answered in every successful attempt, of which we may have read, to civilize a barbarous people. And that which it is wise in man to do, is it not wise in God to do more completely? Was it an acknowledged proof of the wisdom of a sovereign, who, in the last century, reclaimed from barbarism a nation now unrivalled in power, that he adapted his laws to the rude state in which those laws found his subjects; * and is it not consistent with God's

* For an account of some reforms of Peter the Great, see Perry's "State of Russia under the present Czar," pp. 194-203; Voltaire's "Histoire de l'Empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand," Tome i. chap. 10. In Coxe's "Travels," Book 4, chap. 4, may be found a remarkable set of minute directions prescribed by that monarch for the regulation of social intercourse. — The point might be largely illustrated from any collection of the laws of a people, judiciously guided in taking the first

wisdom, that, by means of a system only differing from this in being far more elaborately and thoroughly adjusted to its end, he saved a people from that idolatry which seemed the almost unconquerable sin of the ancient world, and prepared them to fulfil the great office with which they were intrusted for mankind?

Particulars of this fitness and efficacy of circumstantial laws will offer themselves to our attention, as we proceed. I close this lecture with a few words on the manner of giving the Law.

As far as we could undertake to form any judgment on the subject, we should expect to find such a form of annunciation selected, as would tend to make a profound and effectual impression; an impression both of the obligation of the Law, as then prescribed, and of Moses' authority in whatever he should further declare. Such, in the highest degree, was the manner of annunciation adopted in the audible utterance of the Decalogue from the flaming and smoking top of Sinai; and that the reason of its adoption was what I have suggested, is not only probable; it is likewise expressly declared.* The impression could hardly have been made stronger,—it might probably have been weakened,—by a continuance of the sublime phenomenon; and accordingly, through Moses, whose authority it had attested, the rest of the communication is made.† The impression would be still further increased, by commanding the people, on their part, to observe the fit

steps towards civilization. See Gladwin's "Ayeen Akbery, or Institutes of the Emperor Akber;" Wilkins's "Leges Anglo-Saxonicæ." In Turner's "History of the Anglo-Saxons," Book 11, is an account of the Saxon legislation, showing it to have been marked with the character under our notice. Specimens of that legislation, of the same purport, may be found in Henry's "History of Great Britain," No. 3 of the Appendix to Book 2.—See also Montesquieu's "Spirit of Laws," Book 19.

* Ex. xix. 9, xx. 20.

† Ex. xx. 19, 21, 22; xxi. 1.

demonstrations of that awe, with which the miraculously manifested presence of God should inspire them; and such is the obvious design of some other directions.*

* xix. 10-15, 21-24. Another object of the arrangement in verse 12, might be to give its full effect to the exhibition of the phenomena presented, which were of such a nature that they might best be seen at a distance. A cloud, for instance, is not visible to him whom it envelopes.—“There shall not (verse 13) a hand touch *ú*,” תִּגַּע בּוֹ; rather, touch *him*. The offender is not to be pursued within the barrier to be slain, else the pursuer would himself repeat the offence; “He shall surely be stoned, or shot through,” that is, with a javelin, from a distance.—“Let all the priests also, which come near unto the Lord, sanctify themselves” (verse 22). Who were these priests? Those contemplated by the Law were not yet consecrated. There might have been some temporary priesthood. Compare iii. 18; xxiv. 5. But I prefer to understand the word בְּהִנְיָם, to mean *chief men*, as the Chaldee paraphrasts often render it. Compare 2 Sam. viii. 18; 1 Chron. xviii. 17.—“Behold I send an angel before thee” &c. (xxiii. 20); מַלְאָךְ, a *messenger*, a deputy, a representative, as the word in its etymology, and *usus loquendi*, imports; apparently, in this instance, Moses; and agreeably to this, verse 21 should, I think, not be rendered “Provoke him not, for he will not *pardon* your transgressions,” &c. but according to the strict meaning of the verb נָסַח, “It is not he who will have to *bear* with your transgressions,” but I, whose commission he bears; “*my* name is in him.” Compare xix. 9. Possibly, however, we should rather understand by the *angel*, according to another use of the word, that manifestation of the divine presence and power to the Israelites, which from time to time was to take different forms, as different occasions should dictate.—“I will send *hornets* before thee” (28). Our translators have given this version without any good authority. The word צְרִיגָה occurs nowhere else, except in Deut. vii. 20, and Josh. xxiv. 12. The etymology would make it mean a plague, or torment, of any kind.—“From the desert to *the river*,” (31,) that is, the Euphrates, *the* river by eminence. So the Euphrates is constantly denoted.

The passage here last commented on (xxiii. 20-32,) assures the Israelites of the favors of Providence which their nation would secure by obedience to the rule now promulgated, and the ruin they would incur by its violation. Making needful allowance for a figurative style in one or two verses, (25, 26,) such prosperity is promised as would naturally follow on a nation's observance of a law perfectly adapted to its wants.

LECTURE IX.

EXODUS XXIV. 1.—XXVII. 21.

ENGAGEMENT OF THE PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THE LAW.—MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE MAJESTY TO THE JEWISH ELDERS.—RETURN OF MOSES TO MOUNT SINAI.—NATURE OF THE REQUIRED OBSERVANCE OF A WEEKLY SABBATH.—ITS DESIGN, A COMMEMORATION OF THE EMANCIPATION FROM EGYPT.—PERIOD OF THE INSTITUTION.—EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES UNDERSTOOD TO REFER IT TO THE TIME OF THE CREATION.—NATURE AND USE OF THE THREE ANNUAL FESTIVALS.—RITE OF CIRCUMCISION.—ARRANGEMENTS FOR A PLACE OF NATIONAL WORSHIP.

THE outline of the Law, as it has been described, having been delivered to Moses, he is directed to go and communicate it to the people, and obtain their express engagement to take it for their national code. This having been pledged, he proceeds to cause the Covenant, as it is thenceforward called, to be ratified by them in a solemn manner, by sacrificing victims, and sprinkling their blood over the people, when the "book of the covenant" (that is, of the covenanted law just received) had first been deliberately read in their hearing.*

This done, the next step was to select some of those, who, from the station which they already held, or that to which they were to be raised, were capable of exerting a peculiar influence over the people, and to distinguish them from the mass, in a manner both to impress their own minds with a sense of responsibility, and give

* xxiv. 3-8. The "book of the covenant" (7) was not the two stone tablets (compare 12), but the record which Moses had written (4) of the communications that had been made to him in the mountain.

them consideration and authority in the people's view. To this end, Aaron, who was to be high priest, Nadab and Abihu, his two eldest sons, and seventy Israelitish elders, were called up to an acclivity of the mountain, to witness a glorious manifestation of Jehovah's majesty. They themselves were not to "come near," that is, to that top of Sinai where a cloud had rested, and fire had blazed, and a voice had been uttered; for a difference was still to be observed between Moses and them. But they were to ascend to the precincts of that spot, which the people at large might not approach; and there a vision was presented to them, of a nature to give them impulse for the work assigned to them, and confidence in Moses, under whose guidance they had come thither, and under whose supervision they were to act.*

Such preliminary arrangements having been made for the people's government, Moses, devolving his authority for a time on Aaron and Hur, retired into the solitude of the mountain to pursue further his meditations, and receive further instructions, respecting the economy of the state which had become his charge. Here we are told that he remained "forty days and forty nights." Independently of such use as this pro-

* xxiv. 9-11. As to the glorious appearance in the sky (10), in which, as before to Moses in the flaming bush, God betokened his presence, the Septuagint has a different and more satisfactory reading. "They saw the place where the God of Israel stood, and under his feet," &c. That is, they saw a splendor in the sky, above all earthly things, and were made to know, that there, in heaven, Jehovah, the God of their nation, had his place and government. — "Upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink" (11). That is, so far from being distressed and panic-stricken by the vision of God, as might have been supposed, they kept a festival for the honor and happiness they were enjoying. Or, perhaps better; on them "he laid not his hand," — he made no direct communication to them, as to Moses; so that they "did eat and drink," differently from Moses, who received, fasting, the communications made to him.

tracted seclusion might have for himself, in enabling him, free from interruption, to mature his own knowledge and his own plans, it is evident, that the arrangement was suited to make the people feel the importance of the ritual then instituted, and regard it with the more veneration. It would have been manifestly unfit, that they should look upon the establishment of their national worship in the light of a sudden and perfunctory arrangement. For a time, it would appear, he was left, at this interesting crisis, to pursue his own meditations. While a bright cloud covered the mountain-top whither he had gone, indicating to the people below, that he was in the presence and audience of Jehovah, six days of silence were given him to collect his thoughts, and on the seventh the instruction, which he had been summoned to receive, began to be communicated.*

The step which we should expect to find first taken, in this posture of things, would be the provision of a suitable place for the national worship. Till this was done, the religious ritual could not go into operation, nor would there be any central point of interest, to which the religious and patriotic feelings of the people might turn. We accordingly find this provision next directed to be made, with such costliness and show as the means of the people permitted, and their susceptibility of impressions from such a source made fit; and in the form that was dictated by the wandering life, which they were for some time to lead. "Let them make me a sanctuary," it is said to Moses, "that I may dwell among them;" † and very minute directions are given, through three chapters, respecting its construction and furniture.

To these I am presently to give particular considera-

* xxiv. 12-18.

† xxv. 8.

tion. But first, having arrived at the period at which the religious polity is reduced to form, it will be convenient for us to retrace our steps, in order to take some more distinct notice of those preceding fundamental religious institutions, the weekly Sabbath, and the three annual high festivals, which are brought together in one view, in a portion of that original publication of the Law, to which we were lately attending. The rite of Circumcision connects itself with the same subject.

Under the head of the Sabbath, the three great questions for consideration, are those of the manner of the celebration, the design, and the period of the institution.

The manner of celebration was simply by *cessation from labor*. It is an erroneous idea, which ascribes to the Jewish Sabbath the use of the Christian Lord's Day, as being a season for religious improvement, through public and private devotion.* A Jew who should sit perfectly unemployed, or even who should sleep, through the day, would have kept the Sabbath with a punctilious observance. "In it thou shalt do no work," says the command in the Decalogue; and this is the length and breadth of all which it enjoins. So in the sequel of the law published on Mount Sinai; "On the seventh day thou shalt rest."† So again in the repetitions of the command, in connexion with the building of the Tabernacle; "On the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord; whosoever doth work therein shall be put to death."‡ And so in every text where the subject is treated. Accordingly,

* It has been common to draw an inference, inconsistent with this statement, from 2 Kings iv. 23. But nothing is said or implied there, of worship, or other religious services. The Sabbaths and the new moons were both holidays, and therefore suitable for the offering of presents and the visiting of friends; and accordingly the question is asked, why a day should be chosen for visiting Elisha, which was not the customary day.

† Ex. xxiii. 12.

‡ Ex. xxxi. 14, 15; xxxv. 2, 3.

in the passage where we read of the punishment of a sabbath-breaker, we find that it was simply for doing menial labor that he was punished.* And the same is the offence rebuked, in connexion with the account of the sending of manna.† It is true, that there were two other subordinate distinctions of the day. One was, that a particular sacrifice was to be offered upon it;‡ but this did not distinguish it from many other days in the calendar; and what is more important to be remembered, this fact in no degree affected the individual citizen's solemnization of the day, inasmuch as the sacrifice in question was only one national sacrifice, to be offered at the one place of national worship. The other peculiarity of the day was, that there was to be upon it "a holy convocation,"§ by which appears to be meant no more, than that there should be an assemblage of such as might be within convenient distance, to witness the sacrifice just spoken of, or perhaps that there should be festive meetings of friends, a use to which we know that the day was actually put.|| That there were any Sabbath meetings in the early Jewish times for religious worship and instruction, corresponding to those of Christians at the present day, there is no ground whatever for believing. At a later period, indeed, there were such meetings in the synagogues. But they were no provision of the Law, which says nothing even of synagogues. They appear to have originated after the captivity, when the people, ignorant of their sacred language, needed some such resource for obtaining an acquaintance with the requisitions of their faith.

This view of the nature of the sabbatical observance guides us, as I think, to a right apprehension of its de-

* Numb. xv. 32 et seq.

† Numb. xxviii. 9, 10.

|| See Luke xiv. 1; Hos. ii. 11.

† Ex. xvi. 27, 28.

§ Lev. xxiii. 3.

sign. It was intended for a weekly national commemoration of the national deliverance from Egyptian servitude. The gratitude, which the people owed for that deliverance, was designed to operate with them as a motive to the obedience required by their deliverer; and, accordingly, an important object was, by reviving impressively and frequently the memory of the deliverance, to excite anew the gratitude which was due for it. As far as we may presume to judge, there could be no more appropriate way of doing this, than by a frequent periodical cessation from all labor whatever, presenting the strongest contrast to the rigor of those labors under which they had formerly groaned. So in fact the Sabbath is represented in a later passage of the Pentateuch.* And repeatedly we find it spoken of as *a sign between God and the children of Israel*, as well as mentioned among the institutions incident to the deliverance of the nation.†

And here, of course, I am met by the remark, that there are other texts of the Pentateuch, which speak of the Sabbath in a quite different relation; viz. as having been instituted at the beginning of earthly things, and designed not for a commemoration, by the Jewish people, of their deliverance from Egypt, but for a commemoration, by all people, of the creation of the world. This view, and its grounds, it is my duty to consider; in doing which, I ask to have it remembered, that, as far as our remarks have hitherto been pursued, we seem to have proceeded on satisfactory testimonies of Scripture; and that he who should adopt any different, or any further views, necessarily assumes the task either of disproving those which have been presented, or of

* Deut. v. 15.

† Ex. xxxi. 13-17; Ezek. xx. 10-12; Neh. ix. 14; compare 9-21.

showing how they can be reconciled with such others as he finds cause to entertain.

The first text which would be referred to in this connexion, is that which occurs at the beginning of Genesis. "So God finished on the seventh day his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made; and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God created and made."*

There are material views, bearing upon the interpretation of this passage, which I am unable at the present time to urge, inasmuch as they involve principles of exposition, relating to the whole structure of a book, at the examination of which we have not yet arrived. When we have advanced to the reading of that book, I shall be better understood, when I say, that, supposing the latter half of the second verse, and the third verse, to be genuine, it is by no means clear that any institution whatever was here intended to be spoken of by the writer. What is said is, that "God *blessed* and *sanctified* the seventh day." He pronounced a *blessing* upon it, — he commended it, — because (this is agreeable to the whole anthropomorphic cast of the passage) it was for him a day of leisure after six days of toil. "And he *sanctified* it." How? By making it a holy human institution? This is the gloss put upon the word, by force of an opinion derived from some subsequent texts, but the word itself implies no such thing. It signifies merely "to set apart," "to sequester," to some distinctive use, just as we might speak of *dedicating* or *devoting* a day to amusement, to leisure, to study.† And I

* ii. 2, 3.

† We should perhaps hardly speak of *consecrating* a day to any but a religious use. But the French freely use their corresponding word with all the latitude which we give to "dedicate," and "devote."

submit with confidence, that, if we were not biased to a peculiar interpretation of this text, by views preconceived from other sources, we should not think of regarding it, as speaking of the appointment, at any time, or in any way, of a religious institution for man. We should understand it but as declaring, (agreeably to two familiar meanings of that Hebrew conjugation, in which the verbs are found,) either that God (for himself, and not for man,) *made* the last day of the first week (for the time being, and not for future time,) happy and sacred, peculiar, distinct from the days which had preceded, by resting upon it; or that he *called* that day a blessed and a holy, distinguished day, on which he thus found repose from labor.—That God enjoyed his own rest, is recorded; but not that he now established for men any periodical rest whatever.

But it will be said, that, attached to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, we find in Exodus the following words; “For in six days the Lord made Heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it;”* and that these words are part of God’s own annunciation from Mount Sinai.

I would ask, whether any one can compare this verse carefully with its parallel in Deuteronomy, and then be confident in the opinion that it did make an original part of the Decalogue. In Deuteronomy we find no such words, but instead of them the following, which accord entirely with the view of the institution first given above; “And remember that thou wert a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence with a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out

* xx. 11.

arm; *therefore* the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.”*

Will it be said, that one of these texts cannot be used to invalidate the other; inasmuch as the reason given in Exodus, and that in Deuteronomy, were both good, and not mutually inconsistent, reasons for the institution; that they were both accordingly announced on Sinai, and that in Exodus the mention of only one was preferred, in Deuteronomy only of the other? I apprehend, that, under the circumstances, this view is altogether untenable. What the writer of the Pentateuch is doing in both these instances, is not prescribing an institution, and assigning reasons for it. In that case he might, no doubt, with perfect propriety, select, from among good reasons, one to be urged at one time, and another at another time. But what he has undertaken to do, is to relate to us a fact; to tell us what God declared, by a supernatural voice, at a certain place and time; and these too, I may add, a place and time when every word was to be chosen, to make the most effectual impression. Under these circumstances, can it be maintained, that Moses, designing to act the part of a veracious narrator, in acquainting us with specific *words which God spake*, could give important words in one place, then omit them in another, where he is relating the same occurrence, and give us other important words, significant of a quite different cause of a material provision of his Law, in their stead?

I have said, that Moses undertakes, in these two texts, if he wrote both, to apprize us of *words which God spake* in the people's hearing; and yet they differ from each other. But we are told still more respecting the specific character of the words in question. God “wrote them,” it is said, (that is, wrote the words recited

* v. 15.

in the context,) “in two tables of stone.”* If he wrote the precise words recorded in Deuteronomy as the Decalogue, — those words, and no other, (and under the circumstances, it seems unavoidable to interpret with all this precision,) — then the Decalogue did not contain the words attached in Exodus to the fourth commandment, in which that precept is said to be founded on the event of God’s creation of the world. And, as if to preclude all doubt upon the point, it is even declared, in the passage last quoted, that no other words were used, than the words which it specifies. “These words the Lord spake, — *and he added no more* ; and he wrote them in two tables of stone.”

If then, under the circumstances, the essential character of an exact narrative precludes the supposition of both these passages having been written by Moses, which is to be regarded as having proceeded from his hand? Certainly no reasons appear why the authenticity of that in Exodus should be asserted to the prejudice of the other ; and, if the question had to be left altogether in suspense, I apprehend that the remarks which have been made would show it to be altogether unsafe to argue, from the passage in Exodus, that the sabbatical institution was contemporaneous with the creation of the world. But further ; in comparing the claims of the two passages to be considered authentic, one to the exclusion of the other, we cannot lose sight of the fact, that the passage in Deuteronomy presents the same view of the Sabbath with that exhibited so fully in the texts quoted above ; a circumstance which affords strong presumption of its superior authority.

These views, I think, dispose one strongly to the conclusion, that the verse of Exodus in question was

* Deut. v. 22.

not written by Moses, but by some later hand.* Nothing could be more natural, than for some possessor of his writings, struck by an apparent coincidence between the command to keep the Jewish Sabbath, as inserted in the Decalogue, and God's reposing on the seventh day as related at the beginning of Genesis, to have recorded his remark as a gloss in the margin of his book, whence, as is known to have been the case with some of the most important interpolations of the Bible, it subsequently found its way into the body of the page. And I will not disguise my opinion, that the history of the text in Deuteronomy was probably the same, though it presents what I believe to be the true view of the Sabbath. I have argued that both texts could not be genuine. I think it most likely that neither is so; and my chief reason for this persuasion is, that, supposing the genuineness of either, it presents a fragment, differing, in its tone and structure, from all the rest of the Decalogue, since the Decalogue, in every other case, studying the utmost brevity, deals only in laws and their sanctions, without exhibiting the reasons on which they were founded; a topic which seems foreign to its purpose.

And the same view, I think, is to be taken, perhaps with even greater confidence, of the only other important text bearing upon this point. It occurs a few chapters further on, at the close of the directions respecting the tabernacle.† I will not say that this text is rendered

* If written by Moses, it would remain to be argued, that it was not recorded by him as part of the divinely uttered Decalogue, (which Deut. v. 15, compared with v. 22, forbids us to suppose,) but was inserted parenthetically as an *argumentum ad hominem*, for such as received, as literal fact, the narrative which he has preserved in Gen. ii. 2, 3. But I take no ground respecting the reasonableness of such an interpretation, (liable, without doubt, to objection, at first view,) so strongly am I persuaded of the spuriousness of the passage.

† Ex. xxxi. 17.

suspicious by the abrupt change of persons, which it exhibits, indicating the second clause to be but a gloss, though certainly its structure is strikingly consistent with that view. But, if I mistake not, the second clause, which is all that concerns us in this inquiry, is a palpable contradiction to the first, such as strongly to discredit the supposition that Moses was its writer. "The children of Israel," it is said, "shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant; it is a *sign between me and the children of Israel* for ever." And why were the *children of Israel* to observe this *sign*, which was a token of *their covenant with God*? "For," the text goes on, "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."* That is, for a sign between me and themselves, they are to keep a day, in which all the world, as much as themselves, has an interest.—I can scarcely entertain a doubt, that the last clause of the verse in question, was, in the first instance, a note upon the passage, to which we now find it attached, suggested by the reading of the related passage in the second chapter of Genesis.

I have thus submitted what seems to me good reason for believing that neither of the two texts, quoted from the Law to prove the ante-Mosaic origin of the sabbatical institution, originally made part of that document, and for adhering accordingly to the conclusion, that the Jewish Sabbath was simply a Jewish festival. The course which I take might be more questionable, were it not precisely the same, which reasons of the case,—scarcely, I think, more urgent than those which have application here,—compel us to take with respect to several texts, for which the mere external evidence is as complete, as it is for any part of the Pentateuch, but which, notwithstanding, no one can deny to be

* שָׁבַת וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ ; "rested and took breath."

spurious, provided he is of opinion that Moses wrote the book which contains them.* There is no other alternative. We must either refer the whole Pentateuch to a later age, or we must allow, that, after Moses had composed that volume, it shared in some degree, the lot of other books, and received occasional interpolations, originating often in marginal comments, which later copyists, supposing them to have been first accidentally omitted in the manuscript, and then inserted in this manner, ended by incorporating into the page. Believing that we have sufficient proof of Moses' having written the books, we accordingly adopt that theory, along with its necessary incident of the spuriousness of certain parts; and this we do the more readily, because often a little observation shows us, that these parts are of a parenthetical character, not breaking, by their removal, the continuity of the sense, and so presenting precisely the appearance which glosses of foreign origin would naturally wear.

The correspondence, then, between the two cases is this; and it seems to me fully to justify the adoption of the same course in the one instance, which is inevitably adopted in the other by friends to the theory of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. The genuineness of a considerable number of texts, the external evidence for which has no defect, is denied by this latter class of critics, because, 1. From their structure, they may well have been parenthetical glosses; 2. Their genuineness cannot be maintained by any one, who allows force to reasons which seem to prove the general authenticity of the writings.—I question the genuineness of two

* E. g. Gen. xiii. 18; Gen. xiv. 14. (compare Judges xviii. 29.); xxiii. 2. (compare Josh. xiv. 15.); Gen. xxxvi. 31–43 (see Kennicott's "Remarks on Select Passages of the Old Testament," p. 35; compare 1 Chron. i. 43–54.); Ex. xxx. 13; Deut. iii. 11, 14; xxxiv.

other texts, on the grounds, that, 1. From their structure, they may well have been parenthetical glosses; 2. We cannot maintain their genuineness, and yet defend what otherwise appears a sound and necessary interpretation of other texts relating to the subject, and reject what otherwise seems an altogether indefensible theory; while, further, the first of the texts in question breaks the unity of plan in the Decalogue, and the second contains matter ill suiting the connexion. I have assumed above, that the text in Genesis, often referred to, is a genuine part of Moses' composition, and argued merely, that, whatever else it means, it says nothing of any sabbatical institution. But, whether genuine or not, it was extremely likely, when read subsequently to its insertion, to give birth to such glosses, as I believe the two other texts to have originally been.

But it will be said, that the Sabbath must have been instituted previously to the time, when the people are related to have gathered a double quantity of manna on the sixth day of the week.* Without allowing that the interpretation which leads to this inference is certainly correct, I yet think it extremely plausible. But an institution of the Sabbath, prior to this date, is far from implying an institution of it contemporaneous with the creation. The supposed earlier time, when a command to observe a sabbatical rest was given, may have been a near time, as probably as a remote one. And particularly, as was suggested on a former occasion, it is likely that we ought to refer it to the period of the halt at Marah.†

* Ex. xvi. 22, 23; compare xvi. 5.

† See p. 152.—I have not undertaken to present all the considerations, which go to show the character of the Jewish Sabbath, as contemporaneous with the other positive regulations of the Law, and destined like them to be temporary. Every careful reader of Genesis must have been struck with the fact, that no hint of any such observance occurs in its accounts

I have referred only to the design of the Sabbath as a frequent periodical commemoration of an event, which, as often as it was remembered, called powerfully upon the Jewish people for gratitude and submission to their Divine Benefactor. I might proceed to speak of the social, moral, and economical uses of an institution which provided a salutary refreshment for mind and body, by securing to every citizen a weekly respite from his toils, and admitted even the brute creation to a share in the indulgence. But these make a subject of frequent remark; and I pass at once to some observations on the great Annual Festivals.

These were three in number; viz. the Passover, the Pentecost, and the Tabernacles.* Two of them at least,

of the adventures and journeyings of the patriarchs; and on the other hand, St. Paul's language is very explicit, where (Col. ii. 16, 17) he places the "sabbath-days" on the same level with other obsolete ritual institutions. — It would be out of place here to speak of that entirely different institution, the Christian *Lord's Day*. While I think, that it is by a mere error, and that a comparatively modern, and a very unhappy one, that the latter institution has been confounded with the Jewish Sabbath, I regard it as standing on perfectly sufficient and solid grounds of its own. Rest from labor, (which may be mere indolent repose,) I find to be the essence of the Jewish observance; of the Christian, I understand rest from labor to be but an incident, though an incident indispensable to the securing of that quiet and retirement, without which the appropriate devotional exercises and studies of the day could not be pursued, as they should be, with an undistracted attention of the mind. — In my view, he who should have proved the perpetual obligation of the Jewish Sabbath, would have proved simply that we were bound to keep every Saturday as a holiday; while the Christian Sunday would still make its own distinct claim on us to devote it to higher uses.

If any reader thinks that I have used undue freedom in questioning the authenticity of texts bearing upon this argument, I request him, in connexion with the views presented in this Lecture, to reconsider the statements in the first half of Lecture III. — It is not the text of the New Testament, which I am treating; and it is a mere confusion of ideas, which causes any one to suppose, that the readings of the Old and New Testaments, received by us under such different circumstances, are to be dealt with alike.

* I speak only of *Legal Festivals*. The Jews, in later times, kept

(for in respect to the Pentecost, the fact may be doubted,) were commemorations of important events belonging to the early history of the separation of the Jews to be a peculiar people for God's service, and were designed to keep alive the memory of those events in the minds of the people through all time, and so to be to them a perpetually recurring excitement of gratitude, and admonition to obedience. I need not say, that the observance of such annual commemorations of important events in a people's history has its foundation in human nature. This is proved by the practice of most nations, even at the present day; perhaps of all nations, advanced enough to be able to reckon a year, or have any history to preserve. In ancient times, when the art of reading, and consequently the use of those historical documents which we most value, were far more limited than now, the need of such commemorations was still more manifest and urgent. And the more solemn, imposing, and exciting were the appropriate observances which attended their celebration, the more fully, so far, would they execute their office.

We have already read of the original institution of the Passover, in connexion with the emancipation of the Israelites from Egypt.* In the Law delivered on Mount Sinai, a peculiar additional direction is given respecting it, in connexion with the two other weekly

other annual commemorations; the Feast of Dedication (John x. 22) was instituted by Judas the Maccabee, for a memorial of the cleansing of the Temple after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes, in the second century before our era, and was kept in the month of December with very ceremonious observance. The feast of Purim, (Esther ix. 26—32,) instituted in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews in Persia from the plot of Haman, was celebrated yearly in the month of February. There also appear to have been other holidays of the kind, peculiar to portions of the nation, as tribes, cities, or single families. Instances of such occur in Judges xxi. 19; 1 Samuel xx. 29.

* See page 137.

feasts, then for the first time instituted. "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God";* that is, in the place of the national worship. It is probable, that, through the years passed in the wilderness, this law was intended to have a rigid interpretation; as a manifest important use of it would be, to keep the nation together in one body, by enforcing a periodical reunion, and calling back at regular intervals those who might have strayed to a distance from the camp, in search of pasture for their flocks and herds. In subsequent, and more settled times, it would be a serious inconvenience for all the males of the nation to leave their families without their protection and aid, and then there would be opportunity for the rigor of the law to be relaxed; nor is there, I think, any thing in its letter to forbid its being construed with much latitude. A man might well be said to have virtually executed this duty, who appeared "before the Lord" with his offering, sent by the hand of a friend, as a suitor is said, in our common speech, to appear in a court of justice, when he is represented there by his attorney. Nor, independently of this, do the words "all thy males" appear to be conclusive to the point of a literal universality of the convocation. We speak somewhat freely of "all the men," and "all the people" coming together, when we have nothing in our mind, except a general assembling of them.† The terms of the law appear to be such as to admit of its being more or less strictly enforced, as circumstances might require.

The two other annual feasts, prescribed in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus in connexion with the Passover, are there mentioned in a single verse, under the names of "the feast of harvest," and "the feast of in-

* Ex. xxiii. 17.

† See Acts iii. 11.

gathering.”* The latter is the same which is commonly called the Feast of Tabernacles, from the form of its observance, prescribed at a later period.† The celebration of the former, best known by the name of the Pentecost,‡ began fifty days after the Passover, and accordingly occurred at the end of the month of May. It was a thanksgiving-feast for the return of the corn-harvest, the first-fruits of which were then presented. From the fact that the Law on Sinai appears to have been given fifty days after the first Passover,§ it has also been thought, that the Pentecost was intended for a commemoration of that event; and the opinion has strong probability, though it is not confirmed by any express declaration. The Feast of Tabernacles, which occurred at the end of September, at the close of the fruitage and vintage, was observed in a manner to keep alive the memory of the wandering life, which the people had led in the wilderness.

On the first day of the Feast of Pentecost, and on the first and last of that of Tabernacles, abstinence from labor was interdicted by laws given at a later period, as it had been in respect to the first and last days of the Passover, at its original institution.|| But it is a mistake to suppose that the whole of a festival week was necessarily withdrawn by the whole nation from the processes of industry. This might well be practically the case to a considerable extent, as most of the attendants at the feasts were absent, for that purpose, from their homes; but the prohibition of labor on the first and last days implies an allowance of it on the others. The festivals, as we are hereafter to see more

* Ex. xxiii. 16.

† Lev. xxiii. 39–43.

‡ Πεντηκοστή, from πενήκοντες, *fiftieth*.

§ Compare Ex. xix. 1, 16.

|| Ex. xii. 16; Lev. xxiii. 21, 35, 36, 39. The Feast of Tabernacles, as appears from these two last texts, was kept through eight days.

at large, were occasions of patriotic festivity, and of individual hospitality and benevolence. The Jew, at the same time that by his offerings at the sanctuary he was reminded of the Divine interpositions in behalf of his nation, and admonished of the returns of gratitude and duty which it owed, was also recalled to a sense of the relation which he bore to his brethren of every tribe of the descendants of Jacob; while by the bounty, which, according as his means might be, the Law called on him to exercise, or authorized him to expect, he was made to remember the equal place which he held with others, in social obligations and privileges, — in the cognizance and the care of the united commonwealth. The infallible efficacy of such an institution to nourish a national spirit is manifest. And its actual operation of this kind strikingly appears in the course, which was taken by Jeroboam after the revolt of the ten northern tribes. “‘If this people go up,’” said he, “‘to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord, at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah.’ Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt;’ and he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. . . . And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah.”*

* 1 Kings xii. 27-32. — Josephus urges this effect of intercourse at the feasts to cement the political union, in his paraphrase of Moses' last discourse to the people. *Antiq. Jud.*, lib. 4, cap. 8, § 7. — While the feasts would naturally be used for meetings of friends, inhabiting distant parts of the country, they would also become convenient occasions for the transactions of internal commerce, like the annual fairs in many cities of Europe. And Michaelis (“*Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*,” B. 4, chap. 3, part 5) urges their usefulness in respect to corrections of the calendar.

No person could partake of the Passover, till he had first been a subject of the Jewish rite of Circumcision. With the exception of the mention of this rite in the account of the return of Moses from Midian to Egypt, the first reference to it in the book of Exodus is in connexion with the institution of the Passover. The subjects of it were all the males of the nation; viz. 1. native Jews; 2. their slaves; 3. foreigners, who became proselytes to Judaism.* Without it no one could be, either by birth or adoption, a Jewish citizen.

The origin of this practice among the Israelites was much more ancient than the time of Moses. In the book of Genesis we read that Abraham had been commanded to observe it, for himself and his family, as a token of their allegiance to Jehovah, from an early period of his establishment in Canaan.† It has been made a question, whether it was adopted by the Hebrews from other nations, or by other nations from them, or whether, as existing among the Hebrews and elsewhere, it had in each case an independent origin. It is a question not easy of solution, and a satisfactory examination of it would require more space than its importance would justify. The view, which on the whole I think most probable, is as follows. At Abraham's visit to Egypt, soon after his first settlement in Canaan,‡ he found the rite already in use among the Egyptian priests; for, that it was practised among that order from an early antiquity, there appears to be suffi-

* Ex. xii. 44, 48.

† Gen. xvii. 9-14, 23-27. — It was transmitted in each line of Abraham's descendants. Jerome, (on Jer. ix. 24, 25, Vol. 5, p. 287,) writing in the second century before Mohammed, says; "the Saracens, who inhabit the desert, are circumcised." This is the origin of the practice among the Mussulmans, being adopted from the Ishmaelites, the nation of their prophet. It is not prescribed in the Koran.

‡ Gen. xii. 10-20.

cient reason to believe. As a characteristic usage of a dignified and famous priesthood, an idea of sanctity naturally became attached to it in his mind; and accordingly, when afterwards* he was taught to consider himself and his race as sacred to Jehovah, or as it is elsewhere expressed, “a *kingdom of priests*, and an holy nation,” † the observance of this rite was prescribed, to be a memento to them, through all time, of the sacredness of the relation to which they had been received. ‡

* Gen. xvii. 1 et seq.

† Ex. xix. 6.

‡ That circumcision was not newly introduced at the time spoken of in Gen. xvii., Michaelis (“Commentaries” &c., B. 4, chap. 3, part 1) argues, from the fact that more than three hundred (compare Gen. xiv. 14; xvii. 23) were circumcised in one day, showing that the method of administration was before well known.—The questions of the origin and uses of circumcision are largely discussed by Spencer, in his treatise “*De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus*,” lib. 1, cap. 4, § 2, 4, 6. Herodotus says, (lib. 2, § 36,) “The Egyptians practise circumcision”; and, more particularly (§ 104), “Alone of all men, the Colchians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians originally used this rite; but the Phœnicians and *Syrians of Palestine* say that they learned it from the Egyptians. As to the Egyptians and Ethiopians, I cannot say which learned it of the other; for it appears to be an ancient usage.” Diodorus Siculus (lib. 1, § 28), and Julian the Apostate (Cyril. cont. Julian., p. 354, Paris edit.), speak of the Jews having derived it from Egypt; and Celsus (as quoted by Origen, I. 609) says, that the Egyptians and Colchians observed the usage earlier than that nation.

The second of the passages of Herodotus, above referred to, is undoubtedly the best authority in the case. Though in both of them he speaks in general terms of the existence of the usage among the Egyptians, it appears that he intended to represent it as peculiarly a custom of the priests, of whose practices he is speaking at large in the section first above quoted, and in that which follows; and Origen, more explicitly, a native Egyptian himself, writes on Romans ii. 13; “*Sacerdos apud eos [Ægyptios], aruspex, aut quorumlibet sacrorum minister, vel, ut illi appellat, propheta omnis, circumcisis est.*” (Benedictine edition, Vol. IV. p. 495.) A curious passage to the same effect is quoted from Horipollo. See Spencer, Vol. I. p. 31.

The representation, which I have given above of the purport of the rite of circumcision, exhibits an important analogy between it and our Christian rite of baptism. It was the individual’s consecration to God, through an emblematic observance, having reference to the ideas of the time. Various subsidiary uses of it have been pointed out, both by modern com-

I return to the consideration of the first directions given to Moses, after the delivery of the Law. They respected the provision of a place of national worship.

The Tabernacle, as the present circumstances of the people required that it should be, was a movable structure. It was nothing else than a pavilion, of costly materials, and elaborate workmanship, so contrived as to be set up in the midst of the camp of the Israelites, when they were at rest, and to be struck like any other tent, and conveyed from place to place, according as their destination might be.

The Tabernacle was ordered to be erected thirty cubits long, ten broad, and ten high. That is, according to the most approved computation, its length was about fifty-four feet, and its width and height each eighteen. The sides were composed each of twenty, and the west end of eight upright planks of shittim-wood,*

mentators, and others, as ancient as Philo, who wrote a separate dissertation on the subject. Without going further into the inquiry, I collect the following list from different parts of Spencer's treatise. 1. "Signum erat distinctivum in eum finem ordinatum, ut sanctus populus à reliquis mundi gentibus discerneretur"; 2. "Signum erat memorativum, quo fœdus cum Abrahamo initum, in frequentem memoriam revocari posset"; 3. "Signum erat figurativum utpote quæ rei spiritualis figuram et imaginem præferbat; ἀπόδειξις ῥύπου σαρκός"; 4. Ritu illo in cultum Phalli Ægyptiaci contemptus injiciebatur; 5. Ritu illo morbo occurrebatur, cui partes illæ, in Oriente præsertim, obnoxie credebantur; 6. Ritu illo Judæorum natio magis habilis et idonea ad sobolem procreandam reddebatur. The last two reasons are urged by Philo, (Vol. II. p. 211, Bowyer's edition.) Michaelis (ubi supra) proposes others, similar.

* Our translators have but given here the Hebrew word. The authors of the Septuagint version did not know what the tree so denoted was, and have rendered ξύλα ἀσσηνα, *incorruptible wood*. Jerome (in Joel iii. ad calc., Vol. VI. p. 70) says, that the shittim-wood "resembles white thorn in its color and leaves, but not in its size; for the tree is so large, that it affords very long planks. The wood is hard, tough, smooth, and extremely beautiful; so that the rich and curious make screws of it for their presses. It does not grow in cultivated places, nor in any other part of the Roman empire, but only in the deserts of Arabia." It is thought to be the same with the *Black Acacia* of that region.

overlaid with gold, fastened together by staves passed horizontally through rings of the same metal, and standing upon a foundation of a hundred pedestals of solid silver, each of a talent's weight, or about a hundred pounds. The entrance, at the end which was always placed towards the east, was composed of a richly embroidered curtain, festooned over five columns overlaid with gold.*

Upon this frame were hung four coverings. The lowest, or that which was seen within, was composed of fine linen, embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet, the breadths of the cloth being fastened together with loops of blue, and clasps of gold. Next above, was a hanging of a sort of mohair, its breadths also joined with brazen clasps. Over this was thrown a curtain of leather of rams' skins, died of a scarlet color, and over all, to exclude the weather, a more substantial casing made of badgers' [or seals'] skins.† We may presume that there was some temporary frame with a slanting roof, used as occasion might require, to protect the Tabernacle still further from dew and rain.

In the interior arrangement and furniture of the edifice, we see distinct traces of the relation which the Jews were taught to regard God as sustaining towards their community. The Tabernacle was the palace of their king, as well as the temple of their Deity. When they rested, the regal tent was pitched in the midst of their encampment. While they journeyed, it accompanied the march, surrounded by the monarch's selectest retinue. Within, it was divided into two apartments, the one answering to a sovereign's presence-chamber, the place of his own residence and retirement, the hall of his throne; the other, to an ante-room, with its light always burning, and its food and incense always ready

* Ex. xxvi. 15-29, 36, 37; xxxix. 27.

† xxvi. 1-14.

for use. These rooms were divided from each other by a rich curtain,* suspended at a distance probably of two thirds of the length of the Tabernacle, from the entrance.† The two apartments were called respectively, the “Holy Place,” and the “Holy of Holies.”

The room called the “Holy of Holies,” or “Most Holy Place,”—a cube, measuring eighteen feet each way,—the most sacred of all earthly spots, in the mind of a Jew, had no furniture but the Ark, the seat and symbol of the Deity’s own presence. The Ark was a chest made of shittim-wood, richly plated with gold, about five feet long, three wide, and three high.‡ In it were deposited the tablets of stone, of which we are presently to read, giving it the name of “the Ark of the Covenant,” and in later times, “the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded.”§ Its lid, of pure gold, was what, in our English version, on very doubtful authority, is called the “mercy-seat,” the idea conveyed in that term being, that God was mercifully pleased to sit upon it, as a throne, in the midst of his chosen Israel. Upon it were two cherubim of beaten gold, one at each end, in a standing posture, turned towards each other, with their faces bent partly downwards, and stretching their wings towards one another so as to meet over the Ark.|| What the cherubim were, is an unsettled question, the etymology of the word being obscure, and no sufficient light being thrown

* Ex. xxvi. 31–33.

† I say “probably,” because such (as we read in 1 Kings vi. 2, 20), was the proportion of the two rooms in the Temple, in which (though twice as large as the Tabernacle), other proportions of the latter structure were preserved, and it is natural to suppose that the same was true of this.

‡ xxv. 10–16.

§ Hebrews ix. 4.

|| Ex. xxv. 17–22. Probably, תַּכְרֶכֶּת meant simply *lid*, from כָּרַךְ, to cover. Our version is from the Septuagint *πλαστήριον*.

upon its meaning from the contexts in which it appears.*

The "Holy Place," the other room of the Tabernacle, (of the same dimensions with the "Holy of Holies," except in its length, which, as has been observed, was probably twice as great,) contained three pieces of furniture. These were; the Altar of Incense; the Golden Candlestick; and the Table of Shew-Bread. The Altar was two cubits high, and one cubit square at its top, of shittim-wood overlaid with gold. It was placed at the western end of the apartment, directly before the veil which separated it from the Most Holy Place.† The Golden Candlestick stood on the south side. It was made of a talent's weight of beaten gold, with one principal light and six branches, the pattern of which (that is, as it was renewed for the second Temple, in the sack of which it was carried away by the Romans) is still preserved, so complete as to indicate the whole figure, on one of the sides of the arch of Titus at Rome.‡ On the north side was the Table of Shew-Bread, two cubits long, one wide, and one and a half high.§ On this, always stood, in two piles,

* From the fact that the figures, which Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 28,) set up in Bethel and Dan, are called, by the Jewish historians, "calves," an inference, which, on other grounds, is not without probability, has been drawn, that the figure of the cherubim over the Ark was that of oxen. Jeroboam, it is to be presumed, would imitate, for his subjects, after the revolt, the symbols and forms of the worship to which they had been accustomed. If he set up at Bethel and Dan, copies of the cherubim, as they were understood to be shaped, and if they had the shape of oxen, his images would be very likely to receive from the Jewish writers, in contempt, the name of "calves," *quasi*, Jeroboam's pet oxen.

† Ex. xxx. 1-6.

‡ xxv. 31-39.

§ לֶחֶם פְּנֵים; "bread of faces," or "bread of presence." The English translation has no meaning, nor is it easy to fix on a satisfactory one. The Septuagint calls the loaves, ἀρτοι ἐνώπιος; the Vulgate, "panes propositionis"; that is, bread exposed, set out from week to week, as is directed to be done in Lev. xxiv. 5-9.

twelve new loaves of fine flour, with dishes, spoons, and bowls, as if for a feast.* The loaves were renewed every Sabbath, and the stale loaves, at the same time, were devoured in the sanctuary by the priests.

Such was the interior structure and furniture of the place of Jewish worship. The Tabernacle stood, when pitched, in the midst of a rectangular enclosure, a hundred cubits long by fifty wide, (that is, about a hundred and eighty feet by ninety,) made for it by a hanging of "fine twined linen," supported by columns, five cubits high and surmounted by silver capitals, which stood upon brazen bases, at distances of five cubits from one another.† The entrance to the court, twenty cubits wide,‡ was at the eastern end, corresponding to the entrance into the Tabernacle.

Besides the Tabernacle, two other structures stood within this court; viz. next the Tabernacle, towards the east, the Brazen Laver, perhaps formed of that metal, that the priests might use it for a mirror, to perform their ablutions the more thoroughly;§ and the Altar of Burnt-Offering, between the Laver and the entrance to the court. This was hollow, made of planks of shittim-wood, plated with brass. It was five cubits, or nine feet square, at top, and three cubits high. It was furnished with four brazen rings, into which staves were fitted for its conveyance, and at each corner was what is called a "horn," for the purpose of confining victims.||

* Ex. xxv. 23–30.

† xxvii. 9–18.

‡ xxvii. 16.

§ xxx. 18–21; xxxviii. 8.—Our translation in xxxviii. 8, though countenanced by ancient versions, has no good authority. It would be better rendered, "He made a brazen laver, with a brazen cover, ornamented with beautiful figures, such as adorned the gate of the Tabernacle of the congregation." See Dathe, ad loc. Respecting the dimensions of the Laver, we are not informed.

|| xxvii. 1–8; compare Ps. cxviii. 27.—The common opinion is, that the fire on this altar was never suffered to go out; (see Lev. vi. 13;) and

The cost of these structures was furnished from two sources; 1. from what we should call a *poll-tax* of a half-shekel for each male citizen of full age,* an exaction which, small in itself, was probably intended to operate on that well-known principle of human nature, which causes a man to feel an interest in that which he has given his money to procure; 2. from the voluntary contributions of the richer sort.† The gold and silver, employed upon the structure, independently of the brass, wood, skins, linen, and labor, have been estimated at the value of nearly a million of dollars.‡

the ingenuity of the commentators has been tasked to show how it could be kept up while the host was on the march. (Compare Numb. iv. 13, 14.) I think it probable, that Lev. vi. 13, refers to the perpetual daily succession of morning and evening Burnt Offerings. By the time one was consumed, another was to follow. Such is the connexion. See verses 9; 12. Compare i. 7. See also Ex. xxix. 38, 39, 42.

* Ex. xxx. 13–16. A shekel was about half a dollar.

† xxxv. 20–29.—In this description of the Tabernacle and its furniture, I have, for perspicuity's sake, adopted a different order from that of the record of the directions received by Moses. The latter will be found to be as follows; the Ark, Ex. xxv. 10–22; the Table of Shew-Bread, xxv. 23–30; the Candlestick, xxv. 31–40; the Tent, xxvi; the Altar of Burnt-Offerings and Court, xxvii. The Altar of Incense and Brazen Laver were subjects of subsequent directions, viz. in xxx. 1–10, and xxx. 17–21. They belong to the class of improvements on the original plan, of which so much has been said.

‡ See Jennings's "Jewish Antiquities," Vol. II. p. 7. The estimate, made agreeably to Bishop Cumberland's scheme, in his "Essay towards the Recovery of the Jewish Measures and Weights," is founded on Ex. xxxviii. 24, 25.

LECTURE X.

EXODUS XXVIII. 1.—XL. 38.

INSTITUTION OF A PRIESTHOOD.—HABIT OF THE HIGH PRIEST.—MITRE.—EPHOD.—BREAST-PLATE.—URIM AND THUMMIM.—ROBE.—HABIT OF THE INFERIOR PRIESTS.—CEREMONIES OF CONSECRATION.—FURTHER DIRECTIONS RESPECTING THE TABERNACLE.—THE LAW GIVEN ON TABLETS OF STONE.—OFFENCE OF THE PEOPLE IN MAKING A GOLDEN CALF.—INFERENCE FROM THIS ACT, RESPECTING THEIR FAITH IN JEHOVAH.—RETURN OF MOSES TO THE CAMP.—DESTRUCTION OF THE IDOL, AND PUNISHMENT OF THE OFFENDERS.—REQUEST OF MOSES TO BEHOLD A VISION OF THE DEITY.—RADIANCE OF MOSES' FACE ON COMING DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN.—ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE; AND ARRANGEMENT OF IT FOR FUTURE RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

DIRECTIONS having been given respecting the provision of a place of worship, the next step is to institute a priesthood, to minister in the solemnities, of which it was to be the scene. Moses is commanded to appoint his brother Aaron, and Aaron's four sons, to the office; and minute instructions are given respecting the dress in which they should perform their sacerdotal duties, with a view manifestly to the effect to be produced on the minds of a rude people, in creating in them a sense of the dignity of the priestly office, and such a reverence for it as would naturally be transferred to the object of that service which the priests conducted.

The habit of Aaron and his successors in the high-priesthood, was directed to be distinguished from that of the other priests, by the addition of three articles; the ephod, the breast-plate, and the robe. Instead also

of the turban worn by inferior priests, they were to be crowned with a mitre of peculiar magnificence.

The ephod was a part of the dress, of which we are unable to obtain an entirely distinct idea. It was, however, a garment apparently without sleeves, divided beneath the arms, and hanging down before and behind, from the throat nearly to the knees. Its material was fine linen, richly embroidered with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet. It was confined with a girdle of like material and fashion, around the body, and fastened by buckles of onyx-stones set in gold, one on each shoulder, each inscribed with the names of six of the tribes of Israel. From these descended golden chains, which were fastened to the sides of the breast-plate.*

The breast-plate was to be formed of twelve costly jewels, set in gold, arranged in four rows, and each inscribed with the name of one of the tribes. It was to be attached to a piece of embroidered linen, like that of the ephod, and so fastened by blue cords, passed through golden rings, to that ornament.† “And,” or “so,” it is added, “thou shalt put in the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart when he goeth in before the Lord.” ‡ The superstitions invented by Jewish dreamers respecting the Urim and Thummim, and repeated by Christians of the same character of mind, it would be a mere waste of our time to discuss. The words “Urim” and “Thummim,” (אֲוִרִים, תְּמִיִּם,) mean “lights” and “perfections.” I take them to be simply a name given to the twelve magnificent jewels of the breast-plate, which might well be called “Perfect Radiance.” The words occur in only four texts of the Law, neither of which countenances in any degree the extravagant notions which have obtained currency upon

* Ex. xxviii. 6-14.

† xxviii. 15-29.

‡ xxviii. 30.

the subject. The first is that which I have just quoted. The second, in Leviticus, is as follows; “He put the breast-plate upon him; also he put in the breast-plate the Urim and the Thummim”;* where the last clause should rather be translated, “when he had put in the breast-plate the Urim and the Thummim”; that is, when to the linen *substratum* of the breast-plate he had attached its jewels. This text, which speaks of the Urim and Thummim, and says nothing of jewels, is parallel with one in the book now before us, where the jewels are specified by name, and no Urim and Thummim are mentioned.† — The next text is in Numbers. “Joshua shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask for him, after the judgment of Urim before the Lord;” ‡ that is, the high priest shall offer prayers for him, according to those most solemn and ceremonious forms, which require the priest to put on his breast-plate, along with the rest of his most sumptuous apparel. — The fourth is in Deuteronomy. “Let thy Urim and thy Thummim,” Moses says to the tribe of Levi, § “be with thy Holy One, whom thou didst prove at Massah,” and so on; that is, Clothe thyself in thy richest sacerdotal vestments to serve and propitiate him, whom thy former unworthy conduct so provoked.

The robe, which though mentioned in this passage after the ephod, was to be worn beneath it, || is not particularly described, the name probably being sufficient to mark a known fashion of the times. It was to be put on by dropping it upon the shoulders over the

* Lev. viii. 8.

† Ex. xxxix. 10–13.

‡ Numb. xxvii. 21. It may be thought a corroboration of the view which I present, that in this text we read of the “*judgment* of Urim,” a similar expression to what is used in Ex. xxviii. 15, 30, of the breast-plate.

§ Deut. xxxiii. 8.

|| Compare Lev. viii. 7.

head, and its hem was to be hung around the feet with alternate golden bells, and pomegranates of some material dyed blue.* — The mitre was to be distinguished from that of the other priests, by a golden plate over the forehead, engraven with the words, קִדְּוֹת לַיהוָה, “Holiness to Jehovah.” †

Such was the distinctive magnificence of the high-priest’s attire. The inferior priests were also to wear a tunic, a girdle, and a turban, costly from their materials and embroidery. ‡ These garments, it is to be presumed, were national property. At all events, that they were not worn except when the priest was officiating in his office, may be inferred from various texts. § — Nothing is said of any covering for the hands or feet. The former would have been inconvenient in the performance of the priest’s duties; the latter would have been inconsistent with the ideas of reverential deportment, entertained among eastern nations. ||

The forms of consecration for the priests are next described, being such as would tend to impress on their own minds, and those of the people, a sense of the dignity of their office. ¶ After bathing, they were to be clothed in their sacerdotal attire, and anointed with the sacred oil; a ceremony of institution to the highest offices, which we shall find to be also in use in later times, in the case of teachers and of temporal rulers. The ceremonies were then to proceed with the sacrifice of a bullock for a sin-offering, a ram for a burnt-offering, and another** for a peace or thank

* Ex. xxviii. 31–35.

† xxviii. 36–38.

‡ xxviii. 40–42; xxxix. 27–29.

§ xxviii. 43; Ezek. xlii. 14; xliv. 19. This remark explains Acts xxiii. 5.

|| Mohammedans enter their mosques barefoot. Compare also Ex. iii. 5; Joshua v. 15.

¶ Ex. xxix. 1–37.

** The right ear, right hand, and right foot of the priests was to be

offering. The distinctive nature and import of these sacrifices we shall presently see in another connexion. It may, however, be remarked here, that, from the manner in which they are first introduced in precepts of the Law, it seems probable, that they were already in use, and their names and general applications familiarly known.* These sacrifices were to be repeated daily through a week, at which time the ritual of consecration was to be complete, and the priesthood fully established in its charge and jurisdiction.

In the thirtieth chapter, we first find those directions respecting the altar of incense, the brazen laver, and provision for the cost of the tabernacle by means of an equal tax, which, for convenience' sake, have been already mentioned.† Directions are also given respecting the composition of the ointment to be used in the ceremonies of consecration of the tabernacle and the priests, and of a perfume sacred to the precincts of the Most Holy Place.‡ Questions naturally arise respecting minute provisions of this nature, to which, as well as to others of different kinds, I designed remarks, made in a former Lecture, to apply.§ Whatever gave peculiarity to the ritual, gave it additional sanctity in such a people's view, — an object which their good required should be pursued; and this is the evident principle of the severe prohibitions of any imitation of what had been devoted to a sacred use.

The thirty-first chapter records nothing but a desig-

touched with the blood of the ram of the peace-offering. Considering the habit of early times, in respect to conveying instruction by symbols, it is natural to suppose, that this was designed for an admonition to the priest, that he should be attentive and obedient to truth and duty, diligent in his work, and heedful of his ways. Ex. xxix. 20.

* Compare x. 25; xxiv. 5.

† Pages 207–209; xxx. 1–10, 17–21, 11–16.

‡ xxx. 22–38.

§ Pages 176–181.

nation of the artisans who were to execute the directions above detailed ;* a repetition of the law respecting the Sabbath, introduced here, I suppose, lest those who had the important work of the tabernacle in hand, should imagine that its importance dispensed them from the observance of that rest ; † and the relation, that God “gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” ‡ “The finger of God” is well understood to denote any direct agency of his.§ It would seem, in this instance, that, while Moses was himself left to record the details of the Law, || its fundamental principles, to the end of causing them to be regarded with greater veneration, were committed to his hand, already engraven on durable stone tablets, a material used for important writings in the early period of the art. These principles, as I before suggested in the proper place, are set forth in the Decalogue ; and that it was, the Decalogue, and not the more extended Law, which was engraven on the tablets, I take to be apparent from several passages. ¶

In the thirty-second chapter we read of what might naturally have been expected in the present unsettled circumstances of the people ; a neglect of one of the important directions which they had lately received, amounting to a mutiny against the authority of Moses, and accordingly punished as such with the exemplary severity of military execution.

The offence actually committed in this instance should be understood, lest, through misapprehension of it, erroneous inferences should be made. “The contempora-

* Ex. xxxi. 1 – 11.

† xxxi. 12 – 17.

‡ xxxi. 18.

§ See viii. 19 ; Luke xi. 20. Compare 1 Chron. xxviii. 19.

|| Ex. xxiv. 4.

¶ xxxiv. 28 ; Deut. v. 22 ; ix. 10 ; x. 4.

ries of Moses and Joshua," says Gibbon, "had beheld with careless indifference the most amazing miracles; and, in contradiction to every known principle of the human mind, that singular people seems to have yielded a stronger and more ready assent to the traditions of their remote ancestors, than to the evidence of their own senses." * — The distinct statement of the objection here proposed, divested of its form of irony, is this. If God had really wrought before the eyes of Moses' contemporaries such miracles as in the history are ascribed to him, it is incredible that they should have called in question his being and sovereignty. That they did call these in question, appears from their idolatries, related in the same books which record the miracles. The miracles, therefore, were not performed. — The reply is, that the idolatries charged were sins against the second, and not against the first commandment; and therefore, though they were highly blamable, and were severely punished, they in no degree implied a denial or doubt of Jehovah's sole and undivided sovereignty, and accordingly have no weight to establish the objection urged.

A careful reader will not fail to see the case before us to have been as follows. The people, excited by the novelty of their situation, exulting in their just-acquired nationality, anxious to see their institutions matured, and perhaps moved by superstitious fears at the thought of not having, in the midst of them, some visible symbol of the divine leader, to whom they looked for guidance out of the mountainous solitude in which they found themselves embosomed, were impatient at the prolonged absence of Moses, on whom they had relied for the arrangements they were desiring. Under this impulse, they come in a tumultuous manner to

* "History of the Decline and Fall," &c., chap. 15 ad init.

Aaron, with a proposal, which, however, conveys no intimation of a wish to renounce the authority under which Moses had hitherto been communicating with them. "Come," say they to him, as their language may properly be paraphrased, "since this Moses, who undertook to be our leader, and to whom, if he were present, we would address ourselves, delays his return to us so long, make thou for us an image, through which we may address worship to the God whom we have taken for our guide." The proposal, as has been remarked, was an infraction of the second of the commandments, which had been audibly addressed to them on Sinai. But as clearly, it was disobedience to, not denial of, Jehovah; and, further, it is to be remembered, that of that commandment they had as yet no written record; that it was but recent, and not yet familiar; and that, having been but once pronounced in their hearing, it is likely that by many of them its sense was but imperfectly apprehended. Aaron showed, on the occasion, a culpable, but not an extraordinary weakness. And yet his answer seems to have been dictated by policy, and to have been conceived in the hope, that, if he could not, by interposing the force of selfish motives, arrest the progress of the scheme, he might delay its consummation, till Moses should return, and by his authority stay further proceedings. He proposed what would require of the people a sacrifice which he hoped they would not be willing to make, and what, at all events, could not be accomplished without some expense of time. "Break off the golden ear-rings," said he, "which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me."* The impetuosity of the multitude was not to be thus quelled, and

* Ex. xxxii. 2.

they did as was proposed. Aaron, on the other hand, had now involved himself in an implied engagement from which he had not courage enough to recede, and he proceeded to cause to be made a symbolical representation of the divinity, in the form to which they had been used in Egypt.* But still every thing shows, that, in these measures, whatever criminal haste, or inattention, or infatuation, or insubordination was implied, there was no renunciation of Jehovah. When the people received the image, they hailed it but as a symbol of the self-same God of their fathers, who had “brought them out of the land of Egypt,” and still more expressly, Aaron, in appointing its consecration-feast, said, “To-morrow is a feast unto *Jehovah*.” †

Meantime Moses, divinely apprized in the mountain of what has been passing below, intercedes for the forgiveness of the people with God, who seems to put his disinterestedness to the trial, by proposing to him to abandon them, and elevate himself and his posterity to the privileges which they should lose. ‡ The proposal, if we are so to call it, seems to have been made, — or,

* Joshua xxiv. 14; compare Deut. xxix. 16, 17. — In treating of the manufacture of this ox, or calf, as it is called in contempt, and of its destruction by Moses, the folly of Jewish commentators, and of Christian commentators with Jewish intellects, has had ample range. One of the lowest conclusions drawn by them from the account has been, that Moses had such “arch-chemic” skill, that he could both decompose gold by combustion, and make it potable, (xxx. 20.) The statement in the text is sufficiently plain, to this effect. The body of the image was carved in wood, and then covered over with gold plate. See Is. xl. 19; compare Ex. xxxvii. 10, 11, with xxxix. 38; xl. 5. When Moses destroyed it, he burnt the wooden frame, and sprinkled gold dust, filed from the plating, upon water, of which he caused the people to drink, thus professing their contempt for it, as the Egyptians would have done, had they eaten of the flesh of their animal gods. — As to the last point, however, it might be a question, whether, by his “making them drink of it,” is meant any thing more, than that he threw the fragments into the stream to which they had recourse for water. Compare Deut. ix. 21.

† Ex. xxxii. 4, 5.

‡ xxxii. 7–14.

if I may venture on a different form of expression, which I think better represents the truth, the case appears to have been supposed,—in order to exercise and confirm that public-spirited devotion of Moses, which was to be so important to him in his future cares. The answer, likewise, which it naturally and actually prompted him to make, pledged him for the future to practise a forbearance towards the offending people, like what he had interceded with God to manifest, and engaged him not to be much disgusted and discouraged by perversity of theirs, which a justly provoked deity could pardon, and had actually pardoned, on his solicitation. And we see the more the usefulness of such a lesson and pledge, when we observe the excited state of mind in which Moses was, as developed a few verses further on.* The threat also was one which would benefit the people, alarming them with the thought of desertion on the part of their Almighty friend, and attaching them to Moses, who had refused to be himself benefited at their expense; and accordingly we naturally understand it as having given force to what he soon after says to them, that, after sinning as they had done, and deserving to be abandoned, he still hopes to obtain their pardon.† Does any one object, that it was impossible that the event threatened, (or, as I would rather state it, the case supposed,) could occur, inasmuch as an abandonment of the people would frustrate the Divine counsels previously revealed? I reply, that this circumstance renders it none the less fit to be proposed for such uses as have been mentioned. When we read, for instance, of the Divine direction to Abraham to sacrifice his son, no one imagines, that, at any period of the transaction, it was actually the Divine purpose that he should consummate the sacrifice; nor does

* Ex. xxxii. 19.

† xxxii. 30.

any one conceive, on the other hand, that this fact has any thing to do with the fitness of the proposal, as a means of proving and illustrating the patriarch's faith.

As Moses descends from the mountain with the tablets, inscribed with the Ten Commandments, in his hands, and accompanied by Joshua, they hear from a distance the shouts of the people's festivity.* Approaching nearer, and unable any longer to contain his indignation at the miserable signs of disobedience, of disorder and license, which now he witnessed, he threw down violently on the ground the divinely given record of the Decalogue, and broke it in fragments, as if testifying, that they who could so soon and so insolently violate God's law, were no longer worthy of its possession, and the consequent privileges. The first step he took was to destroy utterly the idolatrous image, and disperse its materials as far as fire and water could scatter them. The next was to expostulate with Aaron, whose reply is in the highest degree natural under the circumstances, expressive as it is of shame and fear, casting all the blame possible upon others, and describing his own agency in that carefully selected general phraseology, which means nothing but that he who resorts to it is self-convicted. "Thou knowest this people already," says he; "thou knowest them, and how unmanageable they are. For it is they who are to blame. They proposed to me to make a god. I would have put them off, by bidding them bring me gold. But they brought it; I put it in the fire, and behold! that calf came out." †

* We have here one of those little touches, which mark a historian, drawing from fact, recording from nature. Joshua, all whose character was military, when the distant murmur from the valley catches his ear, thinks of nothing but a hostile assault on the encampment. Like Job's war-horse, "he smelleth the battle afar off." "There is a noise of war," he says, (xxxii. 17,) "in the camp."

† xxxii. 15—24.

The incident had been one of the worst example, in respect to the great object for which the people had been set apart. It was also a high-handed act of insurrection against Moses; not to say, that it had probably been instigated by persons, who were desirous of supplanting or obstructing him in the authority, which, for all the great national objects, it was needful that he should exert. Accordingly, for the same wise and ultimately merciful reasons, which cause governments to visit, with inflictions of memorable severity, offences which peculiarly threaten the common good; for the protection and benefit of all, who in after times should be in danger of falling into a like offence; for the establishment of that authority of the lawgiver, on whose regular and undisputed exercise, such vast interests depended; for the people's security against a recurrence of disorders, which left them "naked among their enemies," and exposed to fall easy victims to any sudden inroad of the tribes among whom they were wandering,—a signal punishment is decreed against the offenders. Moses called upon all, who were for upholding the divinely appointed state of things, to rally around him. His family retainers, "the sons of Levi," having obeyed the summons, he directed them to pass through the camp, and put to the sword the most prominent offenders, or those who continued pertinacious, sparing neither for ties of blood nor kindred, in such a fearful exigency of the state; "and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men."*

Moses having thus provided for the people's future subordination, by the influence of a wholesome terror, returns to the mountain to obtain their forgiveness.

* Ex. xxxii. 25-29.— Verse 35 is a summary comment on this whole transaction, and not the narration of a subsequent judgment. "So [not and] God punished the people."

“Unworthy as they are,” he says, in the language of passionate entreaty, “they are still my brethren, the people to whom I am devoted, for prosperity or woe. Forgive them, or renounce me. Restore them to the privileges they have forfeited, or else exclude me too from those privileges; me, who have deserved no such privation.” “It is enough,” is the reply, “to summon those to the forfeiture, who have committed the crime. You have committed none. Go you, and fulfil your office. As to those who may further deserve punishment, it will be inflicted on them at such time as to my own wisdom shall seem fit.”* “But,” the communication goes on, “let it be distinctly understood by the people, on what terms they are to proceed. Go thou, and lead them to the country to which I promised to their fathers to give them safe conduct. But let them say, whether they will have me in the midst of them as they go; whether, setting up my tabernacle in their camp, I shall appear among them as their king; whether there is not danger, that thus in virtual presence accompanying their march, I shall be provoked by some disloyalty of theirs, (stiff-necked people as they are,) and that, outraged by affronts, aggravated by being thus offered, as it were, to my face, and by unfaithfulness to engagements voluntarily assumed, I shall be tempted to consume them in the way. Let them say, whether it is not safer for them to go without such immediate guidance, than to take the risk of provoking me under such peculiar aggravations, by that perversity which they so continually manifest.” †

* Ex. xxxii. 30–34.

† xxxiii. 1–3. — I think that the exposition of the phrase *God's angel*, mentioned above, (page 182,) which represents it as a designation of Moses, derives some confirmation from xxxii. 34, and xxxiii. 1, 2. The import of the former verse, I take to be “Go lead the people, to whom I spake concerning thee, ‘Behold, mine angel shall go before thee,’” &c. And the

This form of remonstrance was obviously suited to move the minds of the people to the result, which we actually read to have been accomplished by it. “The Lord had said further unto Moses, ‘Say unto the children of Israel, I *might* [not I *will*] come into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee. But, outraged as I have been, I will take no such summary vengeance. Put off your ornaments, and assume the signs of the self-condemnation which becomes you. Manifest the penitence which you ought to feel, and I will then announce how I will proceed.’” — The people accordingly mourned, and put off their ornaments; and the lesson needful to be learned by them having been sufficiently enforced, their penitence was accepted.*

What we next read of is, I think, the sign which God gave that he was reconciled, and that he consented to take his place in the midst of the people. Moses, we are told, took a tent, and pitched it outside the camp, at a distance, and called it the Tabernacle of the Congregation.† By placing it at a distance from the encampment, he tested the question who those were, who, in the character of God’s faithful, were disposed to resort to it. “Every one who sought the Lord” accordingly came thither; and, this question tried, they

latter passage, I understand as follows; “Go *thou* up [addressed to Moses] with the people which *thou hast brought* up out of the land of Egypt; go thou up with them unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, &c. when I said unto them, ‘Unto thy seed will I give that land, and will send an angel to give thee guidance to it.’ Be thou, Moses, the guide, the angel, whom I then virtually promised.” — But it is an interpretation, for which I am not strenuous.

* Ex. xxxiii. 4–6.

† xxxiii. 7. — The Tabernacle, properly so called, was not yet constructed. The Tent of the Congregation was either so named, because it had been hitherto in use as a place for meetings within the camp; or, more probably, because now set up for the first time, as the place where God’s faithful people were to distinguish themselves by assembling.

appear to have returned to their tents, in order that, standing each in his own door, they might the better see what was to follow. Their penitence having been thus evinced, the sign of its acceptance succeeded. "The cloudy pillar," the column of vapor which had hitherto betokened the Divine presence on the top of Sinai, "descended" thence, in the people's view; and now, for the first time, God, who had hitherto but manifested his presence on the distant summit, took his place, as King, in the midst of Israel. "And the Lord talked with Moses," purposing by this display of familiarity with him, in the people's sight, to impress on them further a conviction of his authority. The Tent of the Congregation continued to stand there, till the Tabernacle, properly so called, was set up; Moses occasionally resorting to it for directions, which there awaited him, while, during his absences, Joshua, for the more security, or the more dignity and state, remained by it, as its guard.*

It is enough to make one weep, to think of the absurd and offensive use, which has been made by Jewish annotators, and Christians, no wiser and more inexcusable than they, of the interesting and instructive passage which next follows. The mind of Moses had not yet been elevated to the conception of a purely spiritual deity. How should it be? How can we represent to ourselves the probability of such an immense

* Ex. xxxiii. 8-11; compare xxiv. 16.—The cloud on Sinai had betokened God's presence on that height. Its transfer to the Tabernacle of the Congregation was now a symbol of his presence there. "The cloudy pillar descended" (9); the language is the same as that which had been used of Moses' coming down from Sinai, (xxxii. 7, 15.)—Is it fanciful to suggest, that nothing was more fit to banish from the minds of the Israelites the idea of making a material image of the Deity, as they had lately done, than for him to manifest himself in the midst of them by a cloud, a wreath of vapor, a shape all vague, indefinite, mutable, unsubstantial?

progress having been made by him beyond the universal apprehensions of his age? What was the training, by which his mind had been made receptive of such a revelation? And, if his mind could have embraced it, where is the record that any such revelation had been made? Moses could have had no idea but of a deity with a body; a body glorious, indeed, but definite, limited, and visible. The deity he adored had held intimate communication with him; had signalized him with peculiar favor; had appointed him to an honorable office; but as yet, had only appeared to him in manifestations which were not himself; in flame, in vapor, in thunders, by a voice. He was moved with a strange desire to look on the imperial form; to gaze, though it should be but once, on the present mystery of divinity; and he ventured to hope, that, when so much had been shown and been given to him, not even this would be denied. At first, as if oppressed by the awe which might well accompany such a proposal, he made it timidly and cautiously; and when, no notice being taken of it, he proceeded to urge it in less equivocal words, he was answered by the magnificent declaration, that the Deity was only to be seen in his doings; and that it was enough for Moses and his people to know him in the works of mercy, in which he designed to appear in their behalf.

Of this sublime passage, I need not explain what hideous havoc has been made by bad translation, and (if worse could be) worse commentary. Let me follow it, with a few remarks, from verse to verse. Moses begins, circumspectly and reservedly, by saying; "Thou hast appointed me to the high office of guide of this people; but thou hast never yet made me know him, whom [*or that, which*] thou designest to send with me; [the language is intentionally general and indirect, but

Moses understood that God designed to be the people's companion, and the reference could only be to him;] thou hast never *brought me to his* [or its] acquaintance, though thou hast assured me of thy peculiar confidence and friendship, and hast said, '*I have known thee* by name, and thou hast favor in my sight.'* Now therefore, if I *have* found favor in thy sight, give me proof of it, by showing me thy way, [rather, thy *step*,† thine own movement, which implies visible presence;] that *I* too may know *thee*, [having seen thy form,] and may truly enjoy that favor which thou hast assured me, that I possess; and further, consider that this nation is thine; [intimating, that it was fit therefore that God should reveal himself to their delegated guide.] ‡ The language of Moses has hitherto been all indefinite and timid, as that of a person urging such a suit might be expected to be; and the answer merely is, "As to my presence, be assured of it, till you are brought to a place of repose." § Not discouraged, Moses proceeds; "Truly, if that were not so, we had best advance no further. || But [*not* for] how am I, and how are thy people to know, that thou art our friend, when we are separated from all other nations, and without thy guidance should be forlorn? Is it not by thine own presence being with us?" ¶ — words which indicate his continued hesitation to express the wish which occupied his mind.

* Ex. xxxiii. 12.

† For הוֹרַעֲנִי אֶת־דַּרְכְּךָ, the Septuagint has, *ἠμφάνισόν μοι σιαυτόν*, and the Vulgate, "ostende mihi faciem tuam."

‡ xxxiii. 13.

§ xxxiii. 14.—Readers acquainted with Hebrew will not fail to observe the humble, shrinking tone of Moses' request, which the translation very imperfectly conveys; אֶסְבֵּן אֶת־פָּנָי וְלֹא אֶרְאֶה אֶת־פָּנֶיךָ.

|| xxxiii. 15. Or; "If that were not so, *thou* wilt not lead us up hence," and thy promise to do so will not be kept; intimating, that the mere fact of God's presence among the people was a thing already understood.

¶ xxxiii. 16.

The reply is still to the same effect; “You have found favor with me, and you *shall* have my presence, which you speak of; do not fear but I will conduct you as I promised.”* Then Moses ventures at last to propound his request, and with the abruptness which so naturally succeeds to hesitation from such a cause. “I beseech thee,” he says, “show me thy glorious self.”† The reply is; “In your blindness, you sue for an impossibility; you cannot see my face; you may not, no living man may, look on that. Let it suffice you to see me *in my goodness*; I *have* proclaimed the name of the Lord before thee; [I have disclosed myself in my attributes;] and I will continue to be gracious and merciful to you and yours as heretofore.‡ And the Lord said; Behold, there *is* with me a place [that is a place of favor for thee], and thus thou hast been set as on a rock.§ But still, as to any sensual view of my glorious presence, that is not even for thee. When my glory passes before thee, I have placed thee, as it were, in a dark cleft of that rock, and veiled thy vision with my hand.|| Yet, so far as this I have taken away my hand, — so far I have removed that veil, — that thou hast seen of me *that which comes after*, that which follows in my train;” viz: what are my purposes for the future,¶ [which in fact had been revealed, through God’s special favor to Moses,] or, perhaps, what are the *results*, what is the *sequence*, of my present, though invisible agency.

It has been remarked, that the descent of the vapory

* Ex. xxxiii. 17.

† xxxiii. 18.

‡ xxxiii. 19, 20.

§ xxxiii. 21. See Psalm xxvii. 5. xl. 2.

|| Ex. xxxiii. 22.

¶ xxxiii. 23. The word is often used for futurity. See Is. xli. 23, xlii. 23. Compare 1 Kings i. 24; Eccles. x. 14, where one vowel point is different. — In the last three verses, I request it may be observed how the sense is cleared by a literal translation of the præter tense, which stands in the Hebrew, instead of rendering it as future.

column from the top of Sinai to the Tabernacle of the Congregation, appears to have been designed as significant of God's acceptance of the people's penitence, and of their restoration to his favor. It was, however, accompanied by no explicit declaration to that effect. This was probably reserved, and the anxiety, into which they had been thrown,* protracted, in order to give them further time for reflection and remorse, and for fortifying themselves with better resolutions against future temptation. In the next chapter we read of that reconciliation being formally announced to Moses, accompanied with a repeated admonition of the terms, on which the continuance of its benefits was to be secured. He was directed to come again into the mountain, unattended, and bring with him two tablets, to be inscribed anew with the precepts of the Decalogue, and preserved in the place of those which he had broken in his anger. Having arrived there, and been addressed, for his encouragement, by a voice which proclaimed God's immutable designs of mercy,† he offered, prostrate on the earth, his supplication for his people, that they might be pardoned their iniquity and their sin, and reinstated in their place as God's inheritance,‡ and was answered by the annunciation of observances, all previously enjoined, which, thus reinstated, they would be required to keep; observances, all of them, let it

* Ex. xxxiii. 5.

† xxxiv. 5-7. This is, I think, Moses' summary statement of that assurance of God's renewed favor to the people, given at length in 10-27. In form, the statement refers to xxxiii. 19. וְגַמְרָה לֹא יִגְרָה means, "will by no means utterly destroy." Zech. v. 3.

‡ xxxiv. 8, 9. Moses had lately asked (xxxiii. 13), "If I have found favor in thy sight, show me thy way." He now desists from this request, having been taught better, and urges his suit only for the people; "If I have found favor in thy sight, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us." He repeats parts of God's words in xxxiii. 3, and prays that the threat there held out may be revoked.

be remarked, having special reference to their protection against that sin of idolatry, into which, by making a material representation of the true God, they had lately exposed themselves to fall.*

Having now received all the directions necessary to the immediate institution of divine worship, Moses

* Ex. xxxiv. 10-28. — "I make a covenant"; (v. 10;) that is, I promising to dispossess the idolatrous nations, and the people promising not to harbour them. — The direction in verse 12, was called for by the late exhibition of the people's fickleness; and the same is true of verse 17. — The omission in verse 13 of any mention of temples, points to an earlier time, than that in which temples for worship were in general use, and so bears on the question of the Mosaic origin of the book. — With 18-26, compare xxiii. 13-19. The provisions are the same. The repetition of rules, intended for protection against idolatry, was called for by the recent lapse. — In xxxiv. 20, as in xiii. 13, what is said of the ass, is meant to apply to all unclean animals. See Numb. xviii. 15. — "I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year." (24.) This has been commonly understood as if, during the three weeks of every year, that the Jews should be assembled for the solemnities of the great festivals, at their capital city, their country should be miraculously protected. Michaelis, by way of explanation, appeals to a practice of the Orientals, of the nature of a conventional truce on such occasions. But I submit whether the first part of the verse does not fully explain the last. The humbled neighbours of the Jews would not even venture to attack their homes, when left for a time defenceless. — Moses was himself to make the record of this communication, though, for distinction's sake, he received the Decalogue already written. (27.) — Some critics have thought that, as the directions in 12-26 are ten in number, verse 28 relates to them. But compare Deut. x. 1-4.

Of the passage xxxiv. 29-35, in the uncertainty respecting the two principal words מִקְּרָה (translated *veil*, but used nowhere else, and not explained by its etymology), and קָרַן (translated *shone*, but found only in one other place, Ps. lxi. 32, and there rendered *to have horns*, as it is also, in this passage, in the Vulgate version), it seems unsafe to say any thing more, than that, as part of the arrangement for impressing the minds of the Israelites, Moses, when he came down from the mountain, was made to carry his commission visibly about him, by some extraordinary token of his having just stood in the Divine presence. Even this is by no means clear. It is better to say at once, that we cannot translate the passage. It is one of not a few cases in the interpretation of these books, in which a confession of ignorance is at once most fair, most modest, and most safe.

descended from the mountain, and communicated them to the people, renewing the command, not to work on the Sabbath day, which otherwise, in their zeal for the speedy execution of a sacred work, they might have supposed they were justified in doing.*

I have before proposed the question, how, if the author of the book of Exodus had written, while the Tabernacle stood in its completeness, or at a time when memory, or tradition, or history, retained the record of its appearance, it is natural to suppose, that he would have described that structure. I will not venture to reply, that he would certainly have contented himself with merely delineating the proportions, and descanting on the effect of the one finished whole; that he would have stopped short in a picturesque description. What he might have done, and the very extent, I think, of what it is supposable that he would have done, is indicated to us in the account actually given, by a writer so circumstanced, of the erection of Solomon's Temple. That operation too is regarded by its narrator with the utmost interest; and accordingly he records every step and method of it with great particularity. But he records them only once. How different the account in Exodus; and how difficult to conceive that it should have proceeded from any writer, except one circumstanced as Moses is described to have been. Before any thing had been done towards the building of the Tabernacle, — while all, in relation to it, was future, — minute directions respecting that edifice are conveyed to him. All of them were important; and that no one might be lost from his memory, or misunderstood, he records them successively as they are given. The

* Ex. xxxv. 2, 3; compare xxxi. 12–17. The opportunity seems to have been used to improve upon the rule, by prescribing (3) a stricter domestic observance than as yet had been required.

record is at length completed, and is preserved in its finished state, in what are now, according to our division, the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-seventh chapters of Exodus. Next, its contents are communicated to the artisans, and the work is begun. Another subject of interest now occurs. It is, the correspondence of the work, as it proceeds, with the directions which have been given relating to its several parts. These parts are successively brought to Moses, as they are finished; and as they are brought, they are, for greater exactness and security, compared with the directions for them, and a note of their correspondence, in all particulars, with those directions, is made. Thus grows up an inventory of the Tabernacle and its furniture, which, in its terms, is little more than a repetition of the original orders, and which we have, in its complete state, in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters:—Under the circumstances, in which Moses is represented to have been, it was the most natural thing possible, that he should thus first record his directions, and then record severally, successively, and circumstantially, the manner of their execution.* But who can conceive of the state of a mind, which, in a later age, would produce a composition in such a form? †

It is obvious that similar remarks apply to the directions given respecting the attire and consecration of the priests, compared with the later record of their execu-

* Compare Ex. xxxix. 32–43.

† As we have seen above, what, if I may use such language, looks like the Order and Account Book, so, who does not recognise the form of journal-entry in xxxvi. 4–7?—Again; in the heading of the passage, beginning xxxviii. 21, we seem to trace the entry by Moses, in its place, of a written report, “by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest,” of the state of the property which he had been appointed to inspect. The word *יָבֵקֵץ* (*to visit*, hence *to inspect*) used in this verse, with its derivative noun, is peculiar.

tion.* We must needs go further, however, and observe, that the argument is cumulative. That such a phenomenon should occur once, must be allowed to be extraordinary. That it should be seen repeatedly, is at least a fact of exceedingly great weight, if I may not call it a conclusive one.

The fortieth chapter relates to us that great event, the first institution of the Jewish worship, by the setting up and furnishing of the place of its solemn ceremonial. "In the first month, in the second year, on the first day of the month," that is, one year, within fourteen days, after the people's escape from Egypt, the Tabernacle was erected by Moses, and the sacred objects, which it was to enclose, were installed with proper observance in their respective places.†

In respect to the statement, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle," ‡ I am at a loss, such is its brevity, to decide whether or not it is intended to describe a supernatural phenomenon. On the one hand, it is entirely natural to suppose, that a miraculous recognition of the Tabernacle, now first set up, as God's future dwelling, should be exhibited to the people's view.§ On the other hand, it seems to me, that a cautious critic will hardly feel authorized to deduce confidently from the words more than the following sense; that the fire, which betokened the leader's presence, was now for the first time kindled at the Tabernacle, its smoke ascending over that structure, in the people's view, and thenceforward the Glory of the Lord, the Divine Majesty, the Heavenly Presence, occupied its prepared abode.|| If

* Compare Ex. xxviii. xxix. with Ex. xxxix. and Lev. viii. ix.

† The remark in the last two paragraphs may here be repeated. Compare xl. 1-11, with 16-30.

‡ xl. 34.

§ Compare xxxiii. 9.

|| נָּבַל , commonly translated *cloud*, is from the verb נָּבַל , *to cover*, and

it be remarked, that this exposition scarcely accounts for the statement in the next verse, that "Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle," I submit, that these words are very naturally understood to denote, that Moses was withheld by a becoming awe from approaching what he henceforward regarded as the Divine abode; or, more particularly, (an exposition which I believe will be sustained by all that we know of Moses' relations to the worship and people,) that, having now arranged the Tabernacle, and prepared it for the occupation of its Divine tenant, his office there was closed, and that, being no priest, but only a common Levite, he might not thenceforward venture to pass its portal.*

But, if we adopt the first-mentioned and more commonly received view of the cloud here spoken of, and regard it as a miraculous appearance, — an interpretation, for which there is certainly some color, — I con-

appears to be equally susceptible of being used of a vapor raised by combustion, or smoke, as of that collected by evaporation, or a cloud. Compare Lev. xvi. 13; Ezek. viii. 11. Psalm cxlviii. 8, shows how freely such words are interchanged. The word there properly rendered *vapor* (קִטּוֹר) is almost always used, though not here, for the vapor produced by flame.

* Further; I propose a different translation of verses 33 and 34, as follows; "So Moses finished the work, and *he covered* the tent of the congregation with a cloud," that is, lighted a fire, as the consummating act, from which smoke floated over the Tabernacle. For instances of the verb כָּסָה, in the Piel form, governing two accusatives, see Ezek. xvi. 10, xviii. 7, 16. — Such a text as Lev. ix. 23, proves nothing to the contrary of what I have suggested of Moses' right to enter the sacred edifice. Our translation is altogether more definite than the original, which would be very well translated; "Moses and Aaron went *to* the Tabernacle." When they "came out," it was from the court where the Tabernacle stood, and where, from its small size, "the people," whom they "blessed," could not have been collected. The preposition which in this verse our translators have rendered "into," is אֶל, the same which is used in Numbers xii. 4, and there properly translated "unto," since it was plain that Miriam, at least, could not enter the Tabernacle. Compare Deut. xxxi. 14.

ceive, that it would be altogether rash to attribute, on that ground, the same miraculous character to the cloud, related in the last three verses to have been permanently seen above the Tabernacle. On that supposition, what the writer tells us I understand to have been as follows ; By a miraculous manifestation, the Divine Majesty took first possession of the sacred tent prepared for it. He visited and occupied it with the sign of a prince's and a leader's presence. And thenceforward it was always acknowledged as his abode, by "the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys"; insomuch that, according as its motion or rest was indicated by the smoke or flame of the fire kindled in its precincts, the march to follow it was marshalled, or the encampment around it remained undisturbed.

LECTURE XI.

LEVITICUS I. 1.—IX. 24.

TIME OCCUPIED BY THE EVENTS RECORDED IN LEVITICUS.—THE WORSHIP OF THE HEBREWS CONSISTED OF OFFERINGS.—QUESTION WHETHER THE WORSHIP OF OFFERINGS WAS ORIGINALLY OF HUMAN OR DIVINE INSTITUTION.—THE MOSAIC CODE FOUND THE PRACTICE EXISTING.—MATERIALS OF OFFERINGS PRESCRIBED BY THE LAW.—MANNER OF PRESENTING THEM, AND OBJECTS DESIGNED TO BE SERVED.—PLACE WHERE THEY MUST BE PRESENTED, AND PURPOSE OF ITS DESIGNATION.—REVENUES OF THE PRIESTHOOD.—FORMS OF CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS.—ENTRANCE OF AARON ON HIS FUNCTIONS.

THE titles of the books of the Pentateuch, as they stand in the Hebrew Bible, consist of the first words of those books respectively. The names by which we know them, intended to be descriptive of their principal subjects, are of Greek origin, having been first used in the Septuagint version, from which they were adopted into the Vulgate.*

The time occupied by the transactions recorded in the book of Leviticus, is one month.† We shall find it to consist chiefly of a record of the publication of various laws; laws, which it seems probable that Moses had received authority to promulgate, during his second prolonged stay in the upper mountainous region.‡ When

* *Γένεσις*, Genesis, *Creation*, our translators have retained unaltered; to *Ἐξόδου*, *Departure*, and *Λευιτικόν*, relating to the *Levitical Law*, they have only given a Latin termination, following the Vulgate; *Ἀριθμοί*, Numbers, they have translated like that version; and of *Δευτερονόμιον*, *Second Law*, they have but Anglicized the form of the two last syllables.

† Compare Ex. xl. 17, Numbers i. 1.

‡ Ex. xxxiv. 28; Deut. ix. 18.

the first time he had been absent from the camp for several weeks, it was to receive directions respecting the arrangements for a place of worship and a priesthood.* Of the revelations made to him during his second absence, we have no full account in connexion with the recital of the fact.† When, immediately after the erection of a place of worship, we find him announcing rules, many of which could not, from their nature, be observed, till that had been prepared, while all, by their publication from its sacred precincts, would give and receive sanctity through the association, it is natural to regard them as the same, which were the fruit of his meditations, and the subject of revelations received by him, during the period of his retirement. Nor are we at a loss for a reason, why the publication of that portion of them, which might have earlier gone into effect, was delayed through the few months before the Tabernacle was finished. During that time, the attention of no small portion of the people must have been engrossed by the work. The excitement which undoubtedly was created, as it went on and drew towards its conclusion, must have favorably prepared the way for the reception of further revelations; and, after reflecting and practising for a little time upon the compendious law which they had already received, the people would be the better prepared to understand the spirit and uses of regulations designed for its improvement.‡

* Ex. xxiv. 18; compare xxv—xxx.

† The brief record in Ex. xxxiv. 10—27, will not be thought to invalidate this remark.

‡ The divine communications to Moses had been hitherto made, for the most part, on the mountain. Henceforward they are made “out of the Tabernacle,” i. 1. But how “out of the Tabernacle”? In reply, an unauthorized inference is commonly drawn from Ex. xxv. 22. When Moses, standing anywhere within the Tabernacle precincts, received supernatural communications, God was properly said to commune with him from that mercy-seat, where he was represented to have taken up his

The Legal Worship of the Hebrews was Offering; —not prayer, said or chanted, nor instrumental music, nor any like form of devotion, — but the presenting to the Deity of articles of food and drink. And the fundamental directions respecting this ritual are given in the passage now before us.

It is certain, that the institution of this kind of worship did not originate with Moses. From the earliest times, Offerings have made the prevailing form, in which the spirit of devotion has endeavoured to express itself. That the practice was well known to Moses as having existed in ages anterior to his own, is evident from not a few passages of his first book.* And the first directions of his Law concerning Offerings are introduced in a way, which indicates, that he was not propounding a new form of devotion, but regulating the ritual of one already understood and used. “*When any man of you,*” says he, “shall bring an offering to the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd and of the flock.”

The question, formerly much moved, whether the Worship of Offerings was originally of human or Divine institution, is one, which, in the absence of sufficient historical data, it seems impossible peremptorily to decide; though the burden of proof may be thought to lie on those who maintain the latter view.† It is not a

abode. Compare xxix. 42.—The fact of his thus receiving successive directions to publish laws, (i. 1; iv. 1; vi. 1, 8 et seq.) is in no sort inconsistent with the view, above presented, of his having received authority respecting those laws at a previous time. On Mount Sinai he had been instructed concerning them; from the Tabernacle he was told how, in due order, to make them public.

* E. g. Gen. iv. 3–5; viii. 20; xii. 7; xiii. 4; xv. 9–11; xxii. 13.

† I cannot argue against the latter view, as some have done, from such texts as Psalm xl. 6, l. 8–14, li. 16, Is. i. 11, Jer. vi. 20, vii. 22, Amos vi. 20, Hos. vi. 6, Mal. i. 10. They appear to me only to declare the worthlessness of outward observances, when compared with internal purity.

question to be settled by authority; else such authorities as those of Maimonides, Ben Gerson, and Abarbapel, among the Jews; Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Cyril,* among the ancient fathers of the church; and Grotius, Spencer, and Warburton, among modern Christian writers, all of whom have maintained the human origin of the observance, would certainly be entitled to great consideration. Nor can the very extensive, not to say, universal prevalence of the custom from the first, be interpreted as proof of its having had its foundation in some early divine precept, provided one can show that it may naturally have had its rise in some essential tendency, or universal habit, of the human mind.

Accordingly, those who hold to the human origin of this form of worship, insist that the problem of its prevalence is fully solved by well-known tendencies of universal human thought and feeling. It is the most natural expression, say they, to an unenlightened mind, of those sentiments of devotion to which it would give body and utterance. Touched with a sense of blessings received, it would make a present to its deity to evince its gratitude. Oppressed with remorse or fear, what it would first think of would be, to propitiate him by a gift. Anxious to obtain a good in prospect, it would urge its suit by an act manifesting its attachment and reverence. To these ends, the worshipper would give what he had to give. In a primitive state of society, property would chiefly consist in the flocks and herds which its possessor had tended, or the fruits which his culture had produced; and these he would present by sequestering them from common use, and leaving them exposed where he would think his deity might find them;

* For particular references to these writers, see Spencer "De Legibus Hebræorum," lib. 3, diss. 2, cap. 1, § 2.

or he would send them up, on a column of flame, to the upper region of the air, which his deity was understood to inhabit. The more ample and costly were such offerings, the greater, of course, the evidence they would afford of self-renunciation, of submission, of strong emotion and earnest desire of whatever kind; and hence holocausts and hecatombs. In its highest excitement, coupled with conceptions of the Divinity as being sanguinary and vindictive, the feeling would lead, as it actually did, to the enormity of human sacrifices, and even to the selection of victims the most dear to the state, or the individual, who offered them.*

Though, to my mind, these views sufficiently explain the origin of the practice, rendering unnecessary the hypothesis of a Divine precept prescribing it, still I cannot urge this conclusion, as at present of great importance in any view. On the contrary, I must own, that the question appears to me to have been agitated with a warmth, altogether disproportioned to any intrinsic interest which it possesses. If of human institution, the usage was prompted by such feelings as have been described. If of Divine institution, it had reference to such feelings, being designed by him who "considereth our frame," as a suitable means, which it would be, under proper regulations, for their gratification and ex-

* Some writers, who hold to the human origin of sacrifices, as Mede (Works, book 2, chap. 7), Cudworth (Discourse on the Lord's Supper), and Sykes, give a different account of their origin, regarding them as what they call a "federal rite." This expression is explained by the last-named writer, (Essay on Sacrifices, p. 73,) where he says, that the origin of sacrifices may be accounted for on the ground, that "eating and drinking together were the known ordinary symbols of friendship, and were the usual rites of engaging in covenants and leagues." Dr. Magee (On the Atonement, Vol. ii. p. 22,) well objects to this theory, that at most it accounts only for those sacrifices called "peace-offerings," of which the offerer took a share, and not at all for those which consisted, as did many in use among idolaters, of animals not used for food.

pression. The fittest forms of worship, at any given time, are undoubtedly those, which most appropriately indicate, and most effectually cherish, the devout feelings of the worshipper. What these will be, at any time, will depend on the worshipper's mental habits; on the degree of his intellectual cultivation, and of the correctness and liveliness of his apprehensions of God. For the same reason, then, that God calls on us Christians to address him in words of prayer, which in our state of culture make the natural and approved expression of internal feelings of devotion, he might be expected, with a like adaptation to a less advanced state of the worshippers' minds in earlier ages, to call on them to address him with the offering of that service, with which all their religious feelings would be naturally associated.*

Whether its remote origin, then, were in human or Divine arrangement, the presenting of offerings was, at the time of the delivery of the Jewish Law, the accustomed and established form of the expression of devout emotions. Assuredly it would have been no wisdom to condemn to disuse those outward acts, which made up, for every man, the habit of devotion; — those acts, which, through the infallible power of permanent associations between acts and feelings, (a power which makes itself felt, even when such associations are accidental and arbitrary in their origin,) kindled, as they were performed, a devout fervor of the spirit. It was wisdom, to take up these observances, with all their holy and profitable influences, and make them do for the worshipper, in all respects, the work which his religious improvement required, by

* The better ancient critics understood this. Says Chrysostom; *Θεὸς οὐ κρίνεται, οὐ μεταβάλλεται, οὐδὲ ἀφ' ἑτέρας εἰς ἑτέραν μετατίθεται γνώμην. Οὐ ποτὶ μὲν τοῦτο δοκιμάζει, ποτὶ δὲ ἕτερον. Ἄλλ' αὐτὸς μὲν ἂν ἄτριπτος, καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος, ἀρμόζεται πρὸς τὴν ἀσθίνουσαν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην. Πάλιν ἰ Θεὸς, καὶ νομοθετεῖ πελάγαις, οὐχ ὡς αὐτὸς δύναται, ἀλλ' ὡς ἡμεῖς ἀκούειν δυνάμεθα.* Homil. in Psal. 95. (Opera, Tom. I. p. 917, Eton Edit.) Compare Ez. xx. 25; Mat. xix. 8.

regulating them in such a manner as to deprive them of power to mislead into error, and to invest them with power to suggest truth and awaken a sense of duty; and to lead the thoughtful mind away from the mere outward observance, to the sense and feeling it was designed to embody and excite, by giving them, in their several definite forms, a substantial and affecting use and meaning.

These, and other similar objects, relating to individual improvement, and to the national well-being, the laws of Moses respecting worship were actually adapted to promote. The spirit and intent of these laws is in many respects sufficiently manifest; and, in not a few, we find occasion to admire the fitness of an arrangement to accomplish, along with some great leading object, a variety of others, not only subordinate, but distinct. In considering others, it is no wonder if we are sometimes at a loss in respect to the end contemplated. Under the circumstances, it could not fail to be so. For the regulation had in view the correction, and (in order to be effectual) often the indirect correction, of errors of a state of society, which has not only long since passed away, but which has left no record, except in these very laws of which we are seeking the interpretation.

In treating of the Mosaic ritual in respect to offerings, it may be well to consider severally; 1. Their materials. 2. Their manner and object, which are so connected that they are most conveniently treated together. 3. Their place.

1. Their materials. These are to be classed under two general divisions; the bloody, or animal offerings; and the bloodless, or vegetable.

Animal offerings were either of beasts, or of birds. There is no instance, or intimation, of any kind of fish being used for the purpose. The birds appointed for

sacrifice were turtle-doves and pigeons,* both of which species abounded in Palestine. Of quadrupeds, the prescribed kinds were the ox, the goat, and the sheep, all of them victims easily obtained, and all deities of the Egyptian mythology.†

Offerings of the other class consisted of what our version calls “Meat Offerings,” viz. corn not ground, meal, or bread prepared in three different ways; ‡ or of libations of wine.§ Salt was also to be mixed with the Meat Offerings in every instance,|| and oil in all but two.¶ Frankincense was largely used,** and leaven and honey were forbidden.†† In every instance, for the greater decency’s sake, the best quality of whatever was to be used in sacrifice was required.‡‡

* Lev. i. 14; xiv. 22.

† i. 2, 3, 10.

‡ ii. 1–16.

§ Ex. xxix. 40; Lev. xxiii. 13.

|| Lev. ii. 13.

¶ ii. 1, 4, 7, 15, &c.; v. 11; Numb. v. 15. The omission of oil as well as frankincense, in the case specified in v. 11, was an indulgence to the poverty of the worshipper.

** ii. 1, 15.

†† ii. 11.

‡‡ E. g. “A male without blemish,” i. 3, 10. “Fine flour,” ii. 1, 5, 7. —The discrimination between different kinds of cakes is, I suppose, to be understood merely in reference to the convenience of the worshipper. He was permitted to present whichever kind he was accustomed to prepare. —Respecting the injunction to use salt in every instance, we obtain light from verse 13, where it is called *קֶלַח כֶּרִית*, “salt of the covenant.” Anciently the use of salt together, by any two parties, was a token of friendship, and sanction of an agreement between them; and the practice still prevails in the East. (For authorities, see Sykes’s “Essay on Sacrifices,” page 91). The worshipper was thus reminded, at every sacrifice, of the covenant relation in which he stood to God. Compare Numb. xviii. 19; 2 Chron. xiii. 5. —Oil perhaps was to be used to make that part of the offering, which was burnt, consume the better. The use of wine and oil in the sacred and festive rites is urged by Michaelis, (“Commentaries” &c., book 4, chap. 3, part 2,) as having been intended to wean the Israelites from Egypt, which did not furnish those products in any abundance, and attach them to Palestine, of which they were staple commodities. —“Frankincense,” says Maimonides, (*More Nebochim*, pars. 3, cap. 46, p. 482,) “was employed on account of the agreeableness of its odor, where there was a stench from burning flesh.” —Leaven, (probably on account of the process of its production, viz. fermentation, which is a

2. Of offerings, considered in relation to their manner and object, three principal kinds are distinguished; Burnt Offerings; Sin and Trespass Offerings; and Feast, or, as they are called in our version, Peace Offerings. The first and last of these kinds were distinguished from more ancient times.* Sin and Trespass Offerings, for aught we know to the contrary, were an original institution of the Law.

The Burnt Offering, or Holocaust, a voluntary service, in most instances, might be of a quadruped, or of birds, at the worshipper's option. In the former case, the victim was to be "a male without blemish," "of the herd or of the flock"; that is, a bullock, a he-goat, or a ram. Beasts were to be immolated on the north side of the altar, and birds on the eastern side, towards the gate; arrangements which probably tended to no other use than the convenience of the officiating priests. All of the former was to be consumed, except the skin, and of the latter, except the crop and feathers.†

The Burnt Offering is habitually spoken of by the commentators, as having, like the Sin and Trespass Offering, an expiatory import. But this view, I suppose, rests on no better authority than that of some texts, which represent it as "making atonement"; ‡ an expression, which by no means conveys unequivocally the sense supposed; but, on the contrary, may well be understood to apply to a solemn act of devotion, by

kind of putridity,) appears to have anciently suggested the idea of corruption, and therefore to have been excluded from religious offerings, where all ought to be pure. See Matthew xvi. 6; 1 Cor. v. 6-8. — To forbid honey was to make a marked distinction between the Jewish and heathen offerings, in which latter it was very freely used. See Spencer, "De Legibus," &c. lib. 2, cap. 9, § 2.

* See Ex. xx. 24; xxiv. 5; xxxii. 6.

† Lev. i. 1-17. Some understand differently the provision last mentioned above, reading, in verse 16, "the intestines and their contents."

‡ E. g. i. 4.

which a suppliant seeks the Divine favor in any posture of his mind. I understand the distinction of the Burnt Offering to consist in this; that it was the most pompous, solemn, and costly of the different forms of sacrifice. No valuable part of the victim was withheld for any use of the worshipper or of the priest. The gift to the Deity was made without reservation. On the other hand, the Law was not unreasonably exacting. It knew nothing, for instance, of a sacrifice of hecatombs.

The Burnt Offering, the most imposing form of the Jewish ritual of sacrifice, was, from its costliness, only within the reach of the opulent. But the considerate and benignant spirit of the Law did not design, that the poor devotee should be mortified and discouraged by inability to present a tribute of similar import. To this end I conceive it was, that the arrangement for what are called Meat Offerings was made. The humble worshipper, who, under any circumstances of experience or feeling, found himself impelled to present his tribute of devotion at the temple, was invited to do so in a way corresponding with his means; at the same time that, being in a way not capable of operating as a pecuniary mulct, or serving purposes of hospitality, it was not suitable (as we shall presently see) to be employed for Feast Offerings or Sin Offerings. It was, however, accepted as the Sin Offering of the extremely indigent.* While in the Burnt Offering, the whole victim was consumed, except the skin, which was the officiating priest's reward for the fulfilment of his function,† of the Meat Offering, on the contrary, only a small portion was to be burned; the rest belonged to the priest.‡ The reason of this readily suggests itself.

* Lev. v. 11.

† vii. 8.

‡ ii. 2, 3, 9, 10, 16.

The whole offering was of so little value, that the cupidity of the priest, unless a large portion of it was to remain his own, would too often have frustrated the worshipper's pious purpose, sending him away from the sacred precincts with his errand unaccomplished.

One cannot but remark the admirably considerate and condescending spirit of the Law, as exhibited in this instance. It would have no man, however humble, excluded from the pleasures and benefits of devotional observance. While it summoned the affluent to bring of their abundance, to give an imposing character to the service of the Most High, it invited the poorest too to bring an offering, proportioned to his means, though it were but a barley cake, or a measure of parched grains of maize, and assured him that his tribute, presented in a becoming spirit, was no less acceptable in the sight of him, who "is no respecter of persons." Still more effectually to prevent his being disturbed by the meanness of his oblation, even the high priest, with all the resources of his exalted station, was to present, morning and evening, a Meat Offering, on the very days of his consecration, thus adopting for himself, to do it honor, the offering of the poor.*

The subject of Peace Offerings is treated in the third chapter. This name is rather a literal translation of the corresponding Hebrew word, than a just and significant description of the kind of sacrifices for which it was used. The Septuagint calls them "Rescue" or "Safety Offerings." † "Thank Offerings" they are sometimes termed. Michaelis denominates them "Feast Offerings," and this phrase has the advantage of conveying a good intimation of the distinctive manner of their observance. In Feast Offerings, the benevolent, humanizing

* Lev. vi. 19-23; ix. 4, 17.

† *Θυσίαι σωτηρίου.*

(shall I say, sociable?) spirit of the Jewish Law was most clearly manifested. The offering might be of an ox, a sheep, or a goat, and these either male or female.* The offerer having laid his hand, as in the case of the Holocaust, on the victim's head, thus intimating that he manumitted it, when he gave it to God, it was slaughtered by the priest, or under his direction,† “at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,” that is, in the eastern area of the tabernacle court. The altar was then sprinkled with some of its blood, and a small portion of the carcass, consisting mostly, if not wholly, of parts unfit for food, was consumed. This was all of the animal which was put to a specifically sacred use. The rest was then withdrawn, to be devoted to the purposes of festive hospitality. And, in respect to this employment of it, the worshipper had no option. He could not, with a churlish parsimony, take it home, and make it last as long as might be, for the support of his family. Having given from it to the officiating priest his prescribed perquisite,‡ he was bound to take care to have all the rest devoured in that day, or the following, accordingly as the occasion was of a more or less festive character.§ If, by accident, there remained any till the third day, in the case where most liberty was given, it was then to be burned, and so lost to its owner. The consequence unavoidably was, that whoever presented a Feast Offering, kept hospitality, for the time, inviting in relatives, or friends, or the needy, to share his cheer.

* The offering was to be so divided, that small birds would not answer the purpose.

† Who slaughtered the victims, at this time, does not appear. Very probably it was the offerer himself, though this cannot be shown from i. 5, where it might be said that the verb is used impersonally. When the ritual was further elaborated, this duty would naturally fall to the Levites. Compare 2 Chron. xxx. 17; xxxv. 10, 11.

‡ Lev. vii. 28-34.

§ vii. 15-17.

And the better to accomplish this object, the rule went so far as to demand, that rich cakes should also be provided, to add to the attractiveness of the repast.*

For Sin and Trespass Offerings, which make the subject of the fourth and fifth chapters, and part of the sixth, the victim was to be, in different cases, male or female; but in either case, for the sake of attaching all venerable associations to the rite, it must be, as in Burnt and Peace Offerings, free from any bodily defect. It is needless to urge, that a lame or blind animal, which would have excited ridicule or contempt on the part of spectators, was unfit for the use in question. In Sin Offerings, the value of the victim was proportioned to the dignity of the offerer. For a Sin Offering of the whole people, or of a priest, a bullock was sacrificed; for that of a ruler, a he-goat; and for that of a common citizen, a female of the same animal.† In Trespass Offerings, the same distinction is not observed; but the circumstances of the suppliant are alone considered. If rich enough, he is to present a female lamb or kid; if too poor to afford one of these, then two turtle-doves, or, more penuriously still, two young pigeons, or, if not equal to so much as this, then the tenth part of an ephah of flour.‡ Of the victim dedicated by a priest for a Sin Offering, the whole is to be burned, part on the altar of Burnt Offering, part by the heap of ashes, which has been collected without the camp, so that no portion shall remain, for his use, of the animal which his own fault has occasioned to be sacrificed. And the same course is to be taken with a Sin Offering for the whole congregation, to the end that the priest may have in no degree his personal interest advanced by any public sin.§ The silence which is observed respecting any

* Lev. vii. 12, 13.

† v. 6, 7, 11.

‡ iv. 3, 4, 13, 14, 22, 23, 27, 28.

§ iv. 10—12, 19—21.

such course, when the Sin Offering presented is for a ruler or a common citizen, is explained, when we come to read, that all of Sin and Trespass Offerings, which is not expressly directed to be burned, is to be a perquisite of the priests; * a circumstance, let me remark, which could not have failed to have an influence, useful to the public, (if not acting through a personal motive of the most elevated kind,) in making the priesthood vigilant for the detection of crimes, and assiduous in exhorting offenders to take the appointed steps for the expression of their penitence.

The female lamb or kid of Trespass Offerings, was to be treated in the same manner as the same animal in Sin Offerings. † If two turtle-doves, or two pigeons were presented instead, one was to be burned whole, the other, when cleansed from its blood, appears to have belonged to the priest. ‡ If a Meat Offering were brought for the purpose, again all was his, except one handful which he burned. § Thus Sin and Trespass, like Burnt Offerings, were “most holy”; an expression which means that no part of them belonged, as part of Peace Offerings did, to the worshipper.

The distinction between Sin and Trespass Offerings, though as definitively presented and carefully preserved in the original as in our version, has not, as far as I know, been satisfactorily pointed out by any commentator. That which is made by Michaelis, viz. that Sin Offerings were presented for offences of commission, and Trespass Offerings for those of omission, has, of late, perhaps, been most approved. But I think it will not bear

* Lev. vii. 6, 7.

† v. 6.

‡ v. 9, 10; vi. 26; vii. 7.

§ v. 12, 13. “The priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar.” The handful was a *memorial* in the sense of a memento, a recognition of it, as having been offered for a sacred use.

examination ; for some offences mentioned among trespasses* are as much of a positive nature, as any of the transgressions indicated in a general way as requiring to be expiated by Sin Offerings, and the very occasion of a Trespass Offering is described in the language which most strictly applies to a positive violation of law.† Nor can we make the distinction consist in the offence having been committed unawares in the one case, and not in the other ; for if the person, bound to present a Sin Offering, is uniformly described as one who has “sinned through ignorance,” the same too is the character of transgressions mentioned in connexion with Trespass Offerings.‡ This only is manifest ; that, as the word rendered “sin,” is of stronger sense than that translated “trespass,” so the sacrifice in the former case was more costly, in other words, the virtual penalty was heavier, than in the latter ; and that in some instances, at least, of the latter case, provision is made for indemnity to one who has been wronged by the trespasser, of which we see no appearance in the former.§ In view of these two circumstances, I suggest the following hypothesis ; that it was discretionary with the priest, having looked at the aggravating or mitigating circumstances of an offence which had been committed, and perhaps, too, at the personal circumstances of the perpetrator, to class it with Sins or Trespasses, and demand a sacrifice to be presented accordingly. Offences, abstractly of different degrees of criminality,

* See Lev. v. 2, 3.—I may conveniently remark here on a peculiar expression which occurs in this context ; “if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing [of adjuration], and is a witness, if he do not utter it,” &c. The reference is to the Jewish form of a legal oath, which was an adjuration by the magistrate. Compare Prov. xxix. 24, Matthew xxvi. 63.

† Lev. v. 17–19.

‡ v. 2, 3, 15.

§ See v. 16, which relates to the priest's having been defrauded in his perquisite ; vi. 5.

would demand, abstractly, to be punished by the imposition of heavier or lighter burdens. The same offence, in the same person, would be more or less criminal, when attended with different accompaniments, and would demand a more or less expensive expiation. The same offence, under the same circumstances, committed by different persons, would, in justice, be atoned for at greater or less cost; since what would be a heavy fine for a poor man, would be scarcely felt by his opulent neighbour. And, once more, I am inclined to think, that, when the offence was one which admitted of indemnity, then the policy of the law was to account it technically a Trespass, and so treat it with little severity; since, in such cases, it was a necessary accompaniment of the offering, (without which, the worshipper obtained no reconciliation,) to make compensation to whomsoever he had injured, adding an amount equal to a fifth part of what he had fraudulently taken or withheld, in order to indemnify the injured for his trouble and anxiety, and be a discouragement to himself from the repetition of the offence.

The excellent uses of such a system are sufficiently manifest. If an offence were committed in ignorance, the offender, it is true, would not be culpable, except for having neglected to inform himself concerning the character of his act. But his sin done unawares might injure his neighbour as much as if it had been committed against light; and society is interested in preventing that ignorance of the law among its members, which allows them to do it harm. He who had unintentionally transgressed a law, then, being called on, as soon as he came to know the illegality of what had been done, to put himself to expense because of it, found himself addressed by a motive to avoid such a mistake in future; in other words, to acquaint himself

with the law. The presumptuous offender was punished, in the form of a Sin or Trespass Offering, by a fine, by which he "made atonement," just as in our day, a man has made his atonement, or his reconciliation, with the society whose laws he has violated, when he has served out the time of his sentence in prison, or paid the prescribed pecuniary penalty. To a man who had offended without detection, except by his own conscience, the system would have an admirable application. It would never suffer his conscience to sleep, till he had informed against himself. It would be perpetually addressing him with the offer to restore him to a fair standing, and to self-respect, as soon as he would come forward, avow his offence, present his offering, or (to phrase it differently) pay his fine, and make restitution to those whom he had injured, if the case was such as to admit of this being done. And, once more, the system was of excellent influence in putting the legal penalty of fine in the form of a religious offering. The wrong-doer, while he gave satisfaction to the state, and paid the fine of his delinquency, was thus reminded, that it was not only against the state that he had offended, and was at the same time made to express the penitence of his heart to God.

The names "Wave Offering," "Heave Offering," and the like,* apparently adopted from more ancient use, I understand to refer merely to the gestures, by which those parts of the victim that belonged to the priest were claimed and set aside by him for his own. He lifted and waved them upwards, to denote that, in a sense, they were consecrated to God, and then put them by as the appointed portion of God's ministers.

In all offerings, the whole of animal victims was

* Ex. xxix. 27; Lev. vii. 14, 34; viii. 29; x. 14.

burned, except the portions designed for food. None was thrown aside, to putrefy; and especially those parts were consumed, which might have served the superstitions of diviners.

Drink Offerings, of which little is said, do not appear, in any case, to have been presented by themselves.* Part of the wine brought for a libation was probably poured upon the head of a victim, or, as Josephus says, merely at the foot of the altar.† The rest may have belonged to the officiating priest.

3. The place of sacrifices was always the Altar of Burnt Offerings, by the gate of the Tabernacle. This is insisted on with great reiteration and emphasis.‡ And the leading reasons for the arrangement occur to the mind at the first view. Whatever sacrifices the law allowed, were to be offered to Jehovah; and however right might be the previous state of the worshipper's mind, they would not have their full effect upon it, unless presented at the place where his peculiar presence was understood to reside, and surrounded by all the moving associations of that spot. Further; this rule insured that whatever sacrifice was offered at all, was offered under responsible public superintendence, and thus prevented the very act of devotion from being abused to idolatrous uses.§ If an Israelite might sacri-

* E. g. Ex. xxix. 40; xxx. 9; Lev. xxiii. 13.

† Antiq. lib. 3, cap. 9, § 4.

‡ E. g. i. 3, 5; xvii. 1–9. Repeatedly, as in these passages, directions are given to “sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar”; and in the Sin Offerings for the high priest and the congregation, some of it was to be put “upon the horns of the Altar of Sweet Incense,” the rest to be poured “at the bottom of the Altar of Burnt Offering.” iv. 7, 18. Since blood would coagulate, unless used when fresh and warm, such provisions, whatever other import they may have had, secured the point of place.

§ xvii. 7. The word “devils,” here, is a bad translation, that term belonging to a mythology with which the Jews were not yet acquainted. שְׂעִיר means a *goat*, and the reference is to the goat-worship of Egypt, one of the forms of its idolatry. Compare Amos v. 25, 26.

fice at his home without a priest's presence, idolatry might become rife, without detection. If he might sacrifice at his home in a priest's presence, the danger would be less, but still it would be serious; since the priesthood, in different parts of the territory, might insensibly run into different practices, and thus the unity, and so the purity and interest, of the national worship be gradually impaired.

The necessity, under which an Israelite was, on all occasions of formal religious duty, to repair to the central spot occupied by his nation, caused a circulation of the people, which brought them acquainted with one another, made every individual acquainted with, and concerned for, the common concerns, and in every way tended to cherish the sentiment of love of country.

Could an Israelite have presented his offering wherever he would, there would have been no security for the collection of the sacred revenue. If the national worship was to be supported, it must be by the actual reception of the revenues designated for that purpose. These were, in great part, specified portions of victims sacrificed, which would be liable to be extensively withholden, if sacrifices might take place anywhere but under the eye of him to whom, or to whose fraternity, the proceeds of such imposts belonged.

I think it probable, again, that, in the crowded state in which the Jews were living together in the wilderness, the rule in question had the effect of a health law. The flesh and offal of slaughtered animals might breed a pestilence, if not disposed of with proper care, such as the priest was required to exercise.*

* An Israelite might eat animal food at other places than the Tabernacle. But it was not till the people were going into Palestine, and were no longer to live in a crowded camp,—in short, till the danger just referred to was over, and other reasons for the prohibition were less urgent,

Once more; the rule had obviously the all-important effect of preserving the unity and integrity of the nation. In the care of their flocks and herds, there can be no reasonable doubt that the Israelites often wandered far from the central camp. It was of the first consequence that there should be methods of occasionally recalling them, lest the nation should be annihilated by dispersion. The roving shepherd, as often as he proposed to perform one of the solemn acts of devotion, was required to appear in the midst of his brethren for the purpose. On his distant expedition, he might taste freely such animal food as the chase afforded, but as often as he desired to vary his diet, or enjoy more sumptuous fare, he was drawn back to the central spot of the people's temporary occupation. And, I add, that, as the camp itself was shifting its place from time to time, such arrangements were the more necessary, both to keep the citizens within reach of its protection, and to prevent them from losing its track.

The last three quarters of the sixth chapter, and almost the whole of the seventh, relate to the sacrificial ritual, and comprehend particulars, which, for the most part, have already come under our notice in the earlier portion of this Lecture, in connexion with the different kinds of offerings.* We have not yet arrived at that

that they were permitted to eat tame meat at their homes. (Compare Lev. xvii. 3, 4; Deut. xii. 15, 20–22.) The animal food, which, from the first, they might eat, while absent from the Tabernacle, was game; wild-meat, “the roe-buck, and the hart”; and this was food which they would only make use of on hunting excursions;—that is, when, being out of the way of a crowd, no one could be harmed by their carelessness. And wild animals were never used in sacrifices.

* The division between the fifth and sixth chapters is not the same in the English as in the Hebrew. But here, as in other cases of such difference, my references are made to the English, for the convenience of the general reader.—The provisions in Lev. vi. 28, and vii. 22–27, connect themselves with subjects of the next Lecture.—vii. 13, is no contradiction

part of the Law, which made complete and permanent arrangements for the support of the sacerdotal order. But it may be well here to observe, that the system only grew up by degrees to its final wholeness, or at least was communicated gradually to the people, and that we have already read of some of the sources of the sacred revenue. The priests were to have a present from the first-fruits after harvest and vintage, the quantity being probably left to the discretion of the giver, and thus a motive addressed to them to execute their office in a conciliatory manner.* They were to have the avails of fines for neglects of religious observances; a circumstance which would make them watchful to detect such neglects.† They were also to have the skins of Burnt Offerings, and large portions of Feast, Sin, and Trespass Offerings, respectively.‡ And most of these they were directed to eat without other society, and only “in the court of the Tabernacle of the Congregation,” an arrangement which secured, both that they should be on terms of familiar intercourse together, and that they should only enjoy the fees of office while actually present for the execution of its duties.§

to what has been said of the exclusion of leaven from offerings. In the offering, strictly so called, unleavened cakes were used. Those prepared with leaven belonged to the provision made in Feast Offerings for hospitality.

* These did not make a proper offering, as no part of them was to be burned, Lev. ii. 12.

† v. 14–16.

‡ Some Meat Offerings were to be thrown into a common stock. vii. 10. Others, with the avails of Burnt, Sin, and Trespass Offerings, belonged to the individual priest officiating, vi. 26; vii. 7, 8, 9. The same was true in respect to Peace Offerings, (vii. 14, 33,) unless the omission of an explicit statement in vii. 30, 31, should lead us to suppose, that the Wave-Breast was distinguished in this respect from the Heave-Shoulder.

§ vi. 16, 18, 26, 27, 29; vii. 6. On account of the peculiar character and object of Feast Offerings, the rule in respect to these was different.

After the institution of Aaron in the pontificate, Moses would have had no right to assume any sacerdotal function; on the contrary, I suppose that, with all his dignity, he would then have been chargeable with the same offence for which Saul and Uzziah were in later times so severely blamed and punished. But it belonged to him, through whom the Divine Being made his communications, to induct Aaron into the station which afterwards no man might invade, and to guard against all future mistake by exhibiting to his view, as well as explaining to him in words, the proper manner of performing his sacrificial duties. Accordingly, on the first day of the week, during which the solemnities of Aaron's inauguration lasted, we find Moses going through the forms of the sacrificial ritual,* when he had first bathed, clothed, and anointed Aaron and his sons,† after the manner prescribed in the twenty-ninth and fortieth chapters of Exodus.

For the sake of greater pomp, and of giving to the priests a greater familiarity with their duties, and perhaps also to exhibit these first observances of the ritual to a larger number of the nation, the same cere-

The priest might take his share of them to any "clean place," and admit the female members of his family to the repast, Lev. x. 14.

* viii. 14–29. The precise time of the consecration week is not recorded. The Tabernacle, we have seen, was erected on the first day of the first month. If we suppose the rest of that week to have been occupied in promulgating the regulations in i.–vii. the consecration week began on the eighth day of the month. Accordingly, it ended on the fourteenth; and, on this scheme, Aaron assumed his trust on the very day, on the evening of which the first Passover was to be killed. This view presents an interesting coincidence.

† viii. 6–13. I understand 10–12, in the following sense; "Moses took the anointing oil, *with which* he had anointed [literally, *and* he had anointed] the Tabernacle and all that was therein, (compare Ex. xl. 9, &c.) and he poured of that same anointing oil upon Aaron's head," &c. The same form of reference to an incident before related, occurs a few verses further on. See Lev. viii. 30; compare 12.

monies were repeated through six days more.* The eighth and last day of the solemnities having arrived, Moses calls on Aaron, who had meanwhile kept “the charge of the Lord,” that is, retained the trust of the Tabernacle, to execute, for the first time, his pontifical functions, in the presence of the assembled magistracy and people. Under Moses’ direction, the new high priest first immolated a calf and a ram, for a Sin Offering and Burnt Offering for himself, and then brought, in the people’s behalf, a Sin Offering of a goat, a Burnt Offering of a yearling calf and lamb, a Meat Offering, and a bullock and ram, for Feast Offerings, presenting to the people’s knowledge, in those sacrifices, and the ceremonies with which they were accompanied, a complete specimen of his future duties. The ceremonies of that momentous day, when a divinely constituted priesthood was given to Israel, being finished, “Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the Sin Offering, and the Burnt Offering, and Peace Offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into [rather, had gone to] the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and [now they] came out and blessed the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the Burnt Offering, and the fat; which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.”

It satisfies the imagination to suppose, that here was a miraculous confirmation of Aaron’s investiture, by the descent of fire from heaven to kindle the flame on the

* Lev. viii. 31–36; compare Ex. xxix. 35–37. By “all the congregation,” which was assembled on the first day, it is natural to understand, according to an exposition before given, (see p. 165,) a representation of all the tribes. One may conjecture, that on each of the six following days, a larger delegation, from two tribes on each day, was invited to witness the proceedings. — In verse 31 (compare Ex. xxix. 31) *בָּשַׁל* needs not to be translated “boil”; it signifies *to cook*, in general.

altar where he was thenceforward to minister; and certainly the acceptance of the first rightly presented offering seems to us a worthy occasion for one of those miracles, by which the Mosaic system was undoubtedly established. But, when one remembers, that in the preceding chapter, and several preceding verses of this, the offerings are said to have been consumed as they were prepared, one is obliged to doubt, whether the historian designed to declare more, than that the people saw and owned "the glory of the Lord," as manifested in these imposing ceremonies; * and that, when, standing without the court, where they could not discern the altar itself, they saw the flame blaze up from it, from before the place where Jehovah had taken up his abode, while their prophet and priest, the former in his simplicity, the latter in his gorgeous array, presented themselves side by side to their view, the enthusiasm, which the circumstances of the occasion might well excite, made them shout, and then fall prostrate on the earth.

* Lev. ix. 23; compare 4, 6.

LECTURE XII.

LEVITICUS X. 1.—XV. 33.

FATE OF NADAB AND ABIHU. — JEWISH POLICE LAWS. — FOUR PRINCIPAL OBJECTS CONTEMPLATED IN THESE PROVISIONS, — TO WITHHOLD FROM IDOLATROUS PRACTICES, — TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL HEALTH, — TO PROMOTE CIVILIZATION, — TO MAKE RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS ALWAYS PRESENT TO THE MIND. — PROHIBITED AND PERMITTED KINDS OF ANIMAL FOOD. — PROHIBITIONS OF THE USE OF BLOOD AND OF FAT. — CLEANLINESS IN RESPECT TO VESSELS. — UNCLEANNESS OF PERSONS. — PRECAUTIONS AGAINST LEPROSY. — LEPROSY OF GARMENTS AND HOUSES.

IN the first chapter of this passage, we have an account of a miraculous punishment of a sacrilegious violation of the newly-established ritual, on the part of those whose official charge it was to maintain its sacredness. It needs not to be urged, that at any time this would have been a serious offence. But the special importance of protecting the ceremonial at the present juncture, when it was just going into operation, from any thing which should bring it into disesteem, fully explains to us why it was, that the occasion demanded a supernatural interposition. It would appear from what follows in close connexion, viz. a perpetual prohibition to the priests of the use of wine, when engaged in their official functions, that it was in a state of intoxication, that Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's two oldest sons, had committed this desecration of the ritual.*

* Lev. x. 9-11. — The offence of Nadab and Abihu was probably that which is forbidden in the first clause of Ex. xxx. 9; compare Ex. xxx. 34-37.

“There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them.” The supposition that this fire was lightning, probable in itself, is confirmed by what we presently after read, of the clothes of Nadab and Abihu remaining unconsumed.*

The occasion gave opportunity to Moses to enforce on the father and brothers of the dead the obligations of public duty, as limiting the indulgence of private feeling. Eleazar and Ithamar, consecrated as they were to the Divine service, were not to adopt the usual signs of lamentation, nor so much as to suspend the offices in which the calamity found them engaged. Lest a relaxation of the precision of the ritual on any account, at this early time, before habit had made it familiar, should be looked on as a dispensation for future negligence, they were even to go on, and finish the feast, which made a part of the present ceremonial. To the deeper feelings of the bereft father more allowance was shown. The goat of the Sin Offering, instead of being partly consumed, and part reserved for use, as was directed, had been wholly consumed, perhaps because, the grief of the distressed family not permitting them to assemble for a repast, they knew no better way to dispose of it. Moses remonstrated with Eleazar and Ithamar on the negligence; but Aaron said, that, after what had befallen, he had no heart for feasting, and he could not think that such a service would be demanded or accepted by the Lord; “and, when Moses heard that, he was content.” †

* Lev. x. 2, 5.—In verse 3, I understand a reference to Ex. xix. 22.

† Nadab and Abihu were to be buried in their pontifical vestments (Lev. x. 5), costly as they were, because they had been defiled by the touch of dead bodies, and still more by the sinful act of the wearers.—Our translation does not convey the true sense of x. 16–18. Nadab and Abihu had been overtaken with punishment in the midst of their function, and part of what had been left undone by them is the subject of the direction in

We have now arrived at a series of directions, extending through five chapters, which present the basis of what has been denominated the Private Police Law of the Jews.* They relate to impurities of food, of other things, and of persons. The two last-named classes of provisions, different as they are in their subjects, may yet, on account of the similar relation which they bear to the main question, be most conveniently treated together.

I have called these provisions, *Police Laws*. Some of them will be found to have a directly religious bearing, and all have some of those relations, more or less immediate and perceptible, with the great ultimate object of the Jewish Law, which were the subject of remark in a former Lecture.† But he who should undertake the investigation of these rules, with a view to find in them all some direct connexion with the individual's religious duty and advancement, would place himself on a track of inquiry in which he would find little satisfaction.

Four great leading objects, not now to speak of others more miscellaneous, will be owned by a careful observer to have been contemplated, and wisely pursued, in this system of minute regulations.

verse 12. Also, either through their misconduct, or, as I have suggested above, in consequence of their death, the whole of the goat of the Sin Offering, presented the day before, had been consumed on the altar. See Lev. ix. 15; compare vi. 26. It was not with this Sin Offering, says Moses, (x. 18,) as with those the blood of which ought to be brought within the holy place. (See iv. 17, 18.) Of them, indeed, no part is to be reserved for food (see p. 247); but as to this, "Ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded." We have kept on, says Aaron, (verse 19,) with our duty as to offering, notwithstanding what has befallen. God would hardly insist that I should eat too, when I was so afflicted.

* The name is given by Michaelis. "Commentaries" &c., Book 4, chap. 4.

† See pp. 169–171.

1. There was the paramount object of withdrawing and withholding the people from idolatry; an object to be accomplished both by direct prohibition of practices belonging or leading to idol worship, and by regulations tending to break up all social intimacy between them and idolaters, such as should give opportunity for the exertion on them of hurtful personal influence. The fitness of regulations of the former class admits no enforcing. As to the latter, too, it is plain, that intimacies, which would expose the Jews to evil solicitation, could never exist between them and others with whom they could not reciprocate the offices of hospitality. From persons who eat and drink what we have been taught in childhood to abhor, we are likely to feel a strong alienation. At all events, the man at whose table we may not sit, nor he at ours, will hardly acquire a strong hold on our minds. Nothing more than their difference in this class of practices tends to keep nations apart.* A principle so simple, so easy of application, yet so sure in its results, has not failed to be largely employed in the system, of which we are treating; and the object had in view is expressly declared.† We read of at least one instance, in which, this separating wall being overleaped, idolatry actually and immediately followed.‡ And, on the other hand, the prescription of a diet, which, while it admitted of sufficient variety, was yet, within specified limits, the same, and the observance of which was a point of national honor and duty, was one means of binding the Israelites together in a closer union and sympathy.

2. Many of these regulations were to be regarded in a different point of view; that of Health Laws. The care of health is, unquestionably, for the individual, an

* Gen. xliii. 32.

† Lev. xx. 25, 26.

‡ Numb. xxv. 2, 3.

obligation as near to a religious duty, as any which is not commonly enforced in that character. But, beside the danger of neglecting the duty, it is not every one, with the best intentions, who knows how to take that care; and the legislator, who should wisely and effectively direct the citizen in this respect, would deservedly be accounted a public benefactor. But all well-administered communities have been in the habit of applying their legislation to cases of epidemic and contagious disease; and it is with these, principally, at least, that the code of Moses concerns itself. Further; the situation of the people, whom he was ruling, created a peculiar exigency in this respect. As long as their wanderings in the wilderness lasted, the encampment was not only in the condition of a crowded garrison, but of a garrison without the secure shelter which permanent habitations afford. The most exact care was necessary to escape the unwholesome tendencies of such a situation. A violent epidemic disease, not arrested at its beginning, might prove the extirpation of the race. Nor were such laws merely designed, though they were peculiarly requisite, for immediate security. For, even when settled in Canaan, the Jews were still to be a very compact population, inhabiting a territory so small in proportion to their numbers, that every man's care of what would affect the general health became a matter of extreme interest to the rest.*

3. Habits of cleanliness, independently of their relation to physical health, have a very intimate connexion with civilization of manners, and refinement of mind; and herein, I apprehend, we are to remark a very subtile,

* I might add, that, if there be any thing in national tendencies, the filth which one sees in the lanes of the Jewish *Ghettos* in the cities of Europe, is an intimation that the fathers of the race needed to be subjects of a rigid legislation of this kind.

pervading, and efficient influence of the institutions of Moses. He had undertaken the management of a people, who had their self-respect and their mutual respect to learn; a people, who had been slaves longer than the Greeks of our own times; who, from the little that we know of their history, between the time of Jacob and the Exodus, appear to have known servitude under some of its circumstances of bitterest aggravation, and who, from what we see of their conduct, when emancipated, seem to have been broken down to a miserable pusillanimity; a people, who had yet to be taught the spirit and the forms of a generous and beneficial social intercourse. Accordingly, the legislation of Moses condescended to the task of first instituting, (in many particulars,) and then maintaining, the decencies of daily life. It went with the citizen to his labor, and his recreation, and his rest, and told him how to demean himself everywhere, so as to make a fit part of the one well-ordered community. If any reader is offended at the minuteness with which this is done, let him answer, whether first steps are not indispensable steps; whether any other can follow, till these have preceded; whether, if such particulars still remained unregulated, as the promulgation of the laws implies to have so remained, they did not absolutely require regulation.

Further; *uniformity* of customs is a necessary preliminary to a complete social amalgamation; to the mutual good understanding, and sympathy, and respect of citizens making a community together. And, accordingly, general laws of the kind of which we are speaking were important to the individual, not only in respect to the formation of suitable personal habits, (which, perhaps, some other like arrangements might form as well,) but as bringing him into resemblance to others. And this leads me to say, that should we find

some of the regulations of this class to be based on what is, in our view, no better than an arbitrary connexion of what they enjoin with essential proprieties of personal observance and deportment, this is no objection whatever to their usefulness. Many such things, no doubt, are merely conventional, in every state of society. But education, and habit, and common consent, have formed a close association between them and delicacy of mind; so that he who neglects them defies and revolts others, and has a sense of grossness on his own part, as real as if, philosophically considered, his act had much more of that character. Refinement implies a degree of deference even to others' known prejudices, when those prejudices are not hurtful; still more, to the exactions of a judgment or taste, which both parties understand (even though it should be erroneously) to have a good foundation. And he who would lead on a community to civilization, can by no means do less than condemn the unnecessary act, whatever it be, which that community is agreed in accounting a violation of decorum.

4. Once more; by force of a system of rules of the kind we are considering, religious obligation was made to be a subject always present to the thoughts. The habit of regarding the divine will in whatever is done, is the distinctive habit of the religious mind. The precept to Christians is given in more general terms, suitable to the more advanced condition of those to whom it was addressed; "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." For the Jew, just emerging into a faint consciousness of his religious nature, much more was necessary than the mere inculcation of an abstract principle; and to him the Law, which followed him with its positive discriminations into all his daily business and enjoyments, was

a constant admonition of the religious relation in which he had been called to stand, and furnished the effectual discipline for the higher exercises of a virtue, which owns God's ever-present inspection and authority, and submits the whole life to his direction.*

From these preliminary remarks, I proceed to some particular statements and observations upon the class of rules under our notice.

The eleventh chapter, which introduces the subject of ritual impurities, specifies the prohibited and the permitted kinds of food.† In respect to this distinction, we are carefully to bear in mind, that to declare an animal to be clean or unclean, was merely to pronounce it fit or unfit to be eaten.‡ There was nothing contemptuous in the use of the epithet *unclean*, in this connexion. The horse and the lion were unclean animals. Man was the most unclean of all creatures, in the contemplation of this code; for no one would violate it in so odious a manner, as a cannibal.

Again; it would be a great mistake to suppose that unclean animals must be avoided. Many domestic animals were of this class; for instance, the ass and the camel.

A clean animal, I repeat it, was an animal whose flesh an Israelite might lawfully eat; an unclean animal, one which he must not taste. In respect to this distinction, the directions of Moses are extremely precise. As to

* So says Justin Martyr, almost using the Apostle's own expression; *Βρωμάτων τινῶν ἀπίχισθαι προστάξιν ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῷ ἰσθμῷ καὶ πίνῃν πρὸς ὀφθαλμῶν ἰχνητι τὸν Θεόν.* (Dialogus cum Tryphone, p. 237. Edit. Paris.)

† Aaron having now been inducted into his office, we read that "the Lord spake unto Moses and to Aaron," (Lev. xi. 1,) instead of "the Lord spake unto Moses," simply (iv. 1; v. 14; vi. 1, 8, 19, 24, &c.); and this language is sometimes afterwards repeated, where directions are given, which particularly concern the priesthood and its duties. See, e. g., xiii. 1; xv. 1.

‡ xi. 47.

quadrupeds and fishes, these distinctions are entirely intelligible at the present day, being made in the way of general definitions based upon familiar facts in natural history. All ruminating mammalia are clean, if, at the same time they have feet completely cloven. Beasts wanting in either of these marks are unclean.* Fishes, whether of river, lake, or sea, which have both scales and fins, are clean; none others are so, the whole class of shell-fish being prohibited.† The distinction in respect to birds is, on the other hand, given in a particular enumeration of such as may not be eaten.‡ This, in the disuse of the Hebrew language, and the consequent uncertain sense of many of the terms, has occasioned to the later Jews much perplexity and dispute; and it is the opinion of some of the best critics, that in respect to important particulars of domestic economy, their actual practice is in violation of their law. Winged insects, with four exceptions, designated by names, the sense of which is uncertain, are unclean; § as are also reptiles of all the three kinds, of which the serpent, the lizard, and the centipede, are specimens.||

It would be quite unreasonable to expect, that, destitute as we are of any contemporaneous comment, we should be able, at this distant time, fully and precisely to explain a class of regulations, having reference to the tastes, the prejudices, and the physical well-being of a people under peculiar circumstances, and to those habits of private life, of which history is not accustomed to take note. It is probable that many of them were intended merely to promote a uniformity of domestic usages, and a decency of manners, according to the most approved standard of the time and place. A remark which has been made, in a more general form,

* Lev. xi. 2-8, 26-28.

† xi. 9-12.

‡ xi. 13-19.

§ xi. 20-25.

|| xi. 41-43.

holds good especially in respect to the distinction of practices and tastes as to food. In their origin, they are in a great measure arbitrary; but they constitute a rule, which it is a violation of good sense and good manners, and of one's own sense of propriety, to infringe. A French soldier will easily eat horse-flesh, and would eat it oftener if it were not too dear; a thing, which a German will hardly be induced in any emergency to do. The thought of eating frogs and snails disgusts most of us who have not tasted them. They make, however, the choice and costly luxury of the Parisian *cuisine*, the best in the world. We should loathe the sight of a dog upon our tables; a Sandwich islander cannot set out his ceremonious feast without it. The rat often feeds upon the best of our granaries, while we keep the swine for our scavenger; yet we could not endure the flesh of the former, while that of the latter is reckoned a delicacy. Now whatever might have been the standard in this respect, to which old custom, originating in whatever accident, had given an approved authority among the Israelites, to that standard, for reasons which have been urged, it was a legitimate and important object of the Jewish Law to enforce a uniform adherence. If the eating, for instance, of camels or hares, of mice or of tortoises, which are among prohibited articles, was, according to the best current sentiment of the nation, a violation of delicacy and good breeding, there was good reason why a legislator, who aimed at the equal civilization of the people, should expressly forbid it to any who might otherwise be tempted to forfeit their self-respect by indulging appetite at the expense of decorum.

A second reason of these laws, and perhaps a more manifestly important one, — upon the principles of which, however, I have already dwelt at sufficient length, —

was to keep the Israelites from contamination through social intercourse with idolaters; a reason actually announced, as was before remarked, in explicit terms.* The Egyptians also had a strict code of rules in relation to food; and, differing as it did widely from that of Moses, there existed, as long as both were observed, an impassable barrier between the two communities.† On the other hand, the Israelites were probably restrained from intercourse with their nearest and most dangerous neighbours, the Canaanites, by the interdict laid on dog's flesh,‡ as they were from intimacy with the descendants of Ishmael, by the prohibition of the flesh of the camel and the hare, the former of which (though not known to us like the latter) is said to afford food equally wholesome and palatable, and both of which were in common use with those tribes.

Some of these laws, in the third place, clearly had their origin in reasons of dietetics.§ It is likely that this is true of not a few, concerning which it cannot now be proved, or concerning which proper investigation has not been made; for diet connects itself with

* Lev. xx. 23–26. Compare xi. 45–47, where I take the sense of verse 45 to be; By these observances you shall keep yourselves a peculiar subject people to me, as I am a peculiar tutelary divinity to you.

† For some particulars of the Egyptian law on this head, with authorities, see Spencer, "De Legibus" &c., lib. 1, cap. 5, § 3. The Egyptians, for instance, ate no fish whatever; they rejected only carnivorous birds; and their distinction between quadrupeds was different from the Jewish. For various citations from ancient writers, showing that this system of rules actually made a separation between the Jews and other nations, see Spencer, *ibid.*, § 5.

‡ The Carthaginians, at least, ate dog's flesh, as Justin (*Hist. Philip.*, lib. 19, cap. 1) relates that Darius Nothus summoned them to desist from this practice, among others; and it is probable that they brought the custom from Canaan, the cradle of their race.

§ It is natural to understand such declarations as those in Deut. vii. 12, 15, xxviii. 15, 27, 35, 60–62, so as to connect them with the class of laws now before us.

other habits of regimen, and with climate, in such a manner, that what is innocent or salutary in one region, or state of society, would be noxious in another. But it can hardly be questioned, that we are thus to account, in part, at least, for one important provision; viz. the prohibition of swine's flesh. All accounts agree, that the use of this food favors the spread of cutaneous disorders, where any circumstances of predisposition exist; and against this class of diseases it was necessary to use all precautions, among a people crowded together like the Israelites, and accustomed chiefly to the use of woollen garments, not frequently changed, instead of the linen, which is so important an aid to cleanliness and health, in our different state of society. Especially, there appears to be no doubt, that the diet forbidden favored the spread of the leprosy, a disease which is presently to come before us in a different connexion, and which was of so shocking a nature, that too severe precautions could not be used to arrest it.*

Animals dying by disease were not to be eaten by the Israelites,† for the same reason probably that they are rejected by ourselves; that is, the unwholesome condition of their meat. The same was the case with animals killed by other animals,‡ the danger here had in view being very probably that of hydrophobia, the contagion of which might have been communicated by a rabid dog, fox, wolf, or jackal. But it would seem that both these provisions were rather matters of indulgence to a common feeling, than of essential importance, or at least that the danger against which they were de-

* It is likely also that this rule respecting swine's flesh had a relation to that partly arbitrary sense of propriety and refinement of which I have spoken. Herodotus says (lib. 2, cap. 47) that the Egyptians (from whom the Jews must have chiefly derived their notions of this kind) regarded this animal with extreme disgust.

† Lev. xi. 39, 40.

‡ Ex. xxii. 31.

signed to guard, was not esteemed considerable, as the penalty of their violation went no further than the inconvenience of bathing one's person, and washing one's clothes, and remaining apart from others till the evening of the same day.*

The use of blood and of fat for food was forbidden under all circumstances whatever; the prohibition respecting the former being urged with peculiar strictness and repetition, and being even extended to strangers sojourning within the realm of Israel.† Its reason is to be found in the fact, that the eating, or rather drinking of blood, was a custom commonly observed among the Pagan nations of Asia, in their sacrifices to idols, and in the taking of oaths.‡ Upon the other prohibition we are able to obtain less light. It is probable, that it had its origin in considerations of a dietetical character, all sorts of gross food being, like swine's flesh, which has been already mentioned, unwholesome for a people, among whom cutaneous diseases were endemic.

A vessel, into which dead vermin had chanced to fall, became unclean, so that no food contained in it could be tasted.§ The vessel itself, if earthen, was to be

* Lev. xvii. 15.

† iii. 17; vii. 22-27; xvii. 10-14.

‡ See this point largely proved by Spencer, "De Legibus" &c., lib. 2, cap. 11, who also argues (*ibid.*, § 3), that the eating of blood connected itself with the pretended arts of magic. Compare xix. 26. Michaelis, in his "Commentaries" &c., book 4, chap. 4, part 1, § 5, has the following language; "This, indeed, was so much an Asiatic, and, in a particular manner, a Phœnician usage, that we find the Roman writers taking notice of it, as something outlandish at Rome, and peculiar to those nations; and as, in the Roman persecutions, the Christians were compelled to burn incense, so were they in the Persian, to eat blood." This is entirely to the point, but one wishes that he had given his authorities.

§ xi. 29-33. The kinds of vermin by which dwellings were most infested, and by contact with which, vessels would be made unclean, are specified by name. They had before been themselves proscribed as food under the more general descriptions. The name "creeping things," (שָׂרָצִים,) is shown by the context to include short-legged animals.

broken, and if of other materials, was to be carefully cleansed.* In the latter case, the water used in cleansing the defiled vessel became unfit for any other use.† The strictness of the law was even carried to that extent, that whatever might, in cooking, come in contact with a vessel used to contain food, was itself defiled by the touch of such a carcass; water was rendered unclean by it, except in a running stream, where any possible taint would presently be conveyed away; and, for the greater inducement to use all precautions against the multiplication of the nuisance, the seed which had been brought by the husbandman into his dwelling, to be there immersed in water for use, must be thrown away if the same casualty had befallen it.‡

In respect to all this class of regulations, I will say no more, than that the rigid observance of them, which the Law was careful to enforce, was manifestly inconsistent with irregular and slovenly habits of mind, as well as of domestic administration. Let us imagine a filthy tribe of our North American Indian hunters brought under the actual government of such a code of rules, and how obvious is it, that their savage license would be by that very act abandoned, and a new character impressed on the whole current of their lives, and fabric of their hitherto dislocated society. In the state of things brought about by such rules, if sufficiently observed, and by the rest of the code of which they make a part, “the life of man” could hardly be, what a con-

* Compare Lev. vi. 28. The best account, which occurs to me, of this distinction, is, that earthen vessels would be chiefly in use among the poorer sort, upon whose habits of neatness less dependence could be placed. The loss of an earthen vessel, mean though it was, would be considerable to them, and so, for fear of having to break it, they would take care to keep it covered; while the more careful and luxurious habits of such, as could afford more costly vessels, made a less severe penalty necessary in their case.

† xi. 34.

‡ xi. 34—38.

dition of social derangement has been described as making it, "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."*

From distinctions between what was pure and impure in food, we come to similar rules relating to impurities of other things, and of persons, which I proposed to treat together. I premise the same remark concerning them, as concerning the laws discriminating between clean and unclean food; that it would be obviously unreasonable to expect to obtain satisfaction respecting the purpose of all their provisions.

An unclean person was one who must not touch, nor be touched by another person. To be ritually unclean was no crime and no disgrace. A physician, who touched his patient, for instance, to count his pulse, became unclean by that act.† So did whoever was employed to bury a dead body; and the consequence was even incurred by serving in some sacred offices.‡ But to omit the duty of purification according to the prescribed ceremonial, was a crime of serious magnitude.§ Some acts made a person unclean, and condemned him to separation from others, for a day only; others, for a week; others, for a longer time. And the ceremonies of purification were, in different cases, more or less complicated and prolonged, and of course more or less inconvenient and costly; some requiring only certain ablutions, when the time of sequestration had expired; others demanding appropriate sacrifices at the Tabernacle, and fees to the priest. He who touched the body of an unclean animal, for example, or of a clean animal which had died a natural death, became unclean till the evening, when he was purified by merely washing his clothes; || while a woman, after parturition, was to be

* Hobbes's "Leviathan," part 1, chap. 13.

† Lev. xv. 7.

‡ xvi. 26–28; Numb. xix. 7–10.

§ Numb. xix. 20.

|| Lev. v. 2; xi. 27, 28, 39, 40.

unclean for forty days, if she had borne a son, and eighty days, if a daughter, and at the end of her time of retirement was to present a Burnt Offering and a Sin Offering at the Tabernacle.*

Without undertaking to expound the spirit and intent of all these laws, where, for want of authenticated facts sufficiently numerous and precise, there is so much temptation to conjecture, it is plain, that rules of this class were suited to accomplish, in general, two objects. In the first place, where substantial injury was threatened by the contact or presence of an insalubrious object, the mischief was guarded against by positive statute regulation, enforced by the urgent power of religious sanctions. In the second, where mere transgressions of decorum, a thing which opinion regulates, were had in view, it is probable that the inconvenience of the condition incurred, though not oppressive, would, in most cases, afford a sufficient safeguard against violations of good breeding. And, in both cases, there would be a reflex action of the law, in which perhaps its most salutary virtue would consist; as, in the apprehension of its

* Lev. xii. 1—8. A peculiar retirement was prescribed of a week in case of the birth of a son (at the end of which, agreeably to ancient practice, he was to be circumcised, xii. 3; Gen. xvii. 12; Luke i. 59; John vii. 22); and of a fortnight after the birth of a daughter. The reason of the difference made, according as the birth was of one or the other sex, has not been entirely explained. I submit, whether it may not have been merely intended to conciliate the greater respect for the mother of a male child, having reference to that studied recognition of the superiority of this sex, which pervades the Mosaic institutions. In regionibus septentrionalibus, lochia rubra post parturitionem plerumque per septem dies durant; lochia alba, quæ subeunt, per viginti seu triginta. Dicunt medici Græci, post partum sæmininum diutiùs morbo puerperam laborare, quam post virilem. Ἡ κάθαρσις γίνεταί τῆσι γυναῖξι μετὰ τὸν τόκον, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ ἐπι μὲν τῆ κούρη ἡμερῶσι τισσαράκοντα καὶ δύο . . . ἐπὶ δὲ τῆ κούρη ἡ κάθαρσις γίνεταί ἡμερῶσι τριάκοντα. (Hippocrates, Opera, Edit. Fœs. p. 238.) Negant scriptores regionum temporumque nostrorum. In plagis diversis, hujusmodi res diversè se habent. Quærant viri docti in Egipto Syriâque de re, quæ institutioni Mosaicæ facem præbere valeat.

penalties, occasions by which they might be unintentionally and accidentally incurred would be guarded against and removed by timely precautions. Individuals would naturally use vigilance and forethought to avoid what would cause their company to be shunned by their neighbours.*

But in respect to one prominent case, there is no obscurity whatever. A person, in whom appeared any mark, which might prove to be a symptom of leprosy, was bound to present himself to the priest for examination. If, in the priest's judgment, there was ground for apprehension that this was his disease, he was to be shut up apart for a week, and then to undergo a second inspection. If no alteration meanwhile had taken place, another week's seclusion and a third examination succeeded. If the symptoms had disappeared, or if, at the first view, they were found to furnish no cause for alarm, he was declared clean, on an authority, which would satisfy all doubts; and, without fear of being any longer suspected and shunned, might return to his accustomed associates and occupations.† If, on the contrary, the indications of leprosy, which are

* Lev. xv. 1–15 de Gonorrhœâ Virulentâ plerumque explicant interpretes, quæ contactu qualicumque facillimè propagatur. E versu 8 argumentatur Michaelis, medicos antiquos, sive mercurium dulcem, sive aliud tale medicamentum salivam proritans, in hujusmodi morbis sanandis adhibuisse. Hæmorrhoides tamen hæc præcepta spectare vult Car. Aug. Beyer. Vide Rosenmülleri Comment. ad loc. — Vers. 16–18, contra polygamiam nimiam cautum esse, quam leges Mosaicæ non prorsus vetant, (Marc. x. 5–8,) consentiunt docti. Ex. xxi. 10, Israelitæ novas nuptias facienti, concubitum debitum uxori prius adhibitæ negare vetitum est. Sed quid sit “concubitus debitus”? Sine dubio, definivit temporis illius opinio. Rabbiorum de hac re commenta lectores mei fastidirent. Certè vir toties pollutus, quoties debitum, certis temporibus solvendum, solverit, multas novas nuptias inire nolisset. — Vers. 19–30 de Catemeniis et Menorrhagiâ fusè disseritur. Vers. 24 non idem facinus, quòd Lev. xx. 18, sed lecti cum immundâ societatem castigat. (Compara 21.)

† xiii. 1–6.

described with great minuteness,* should prove to be further developed after the delay, or if they should be manifest from the first, he was to be pronounced unclean, and, from that moment till he was restored, if that should be his good-fortune, he must dwell without the camp; and even there, lest any should come near enough to him in their walks to reach the contagion, he was required, as a notice to them, to go abroad only in tattered clothes, with his head uncovered, wearing a badge upon his face, and to warn them by crying out, as they approached, "Unclean, unclean." †

Should he recover, the priest visited him without the camp to ascertain and announce the fact, accompanying his restoration to society with a formal ceremonial. First, two healthy clean birds were to be taken, with a quantity of cedar wood, scarlet wool, and hyssop. One of them was to be killed over an earthen vessel, filled with fresh water, which, being thus stained with blood, was to be sprinkled seven times over the leper. Having shaved and bathed, he might again associate with others; the living bird being at the same time let loose to join its fellows, probably in token of his readmission into society. For greater caution, however, he was still not allowed to go to his own tent for a week longer. ‡ At the end of that time, having repeated his personal purifications, he was to go through certain other ceremonies, in order to his full restitution, and permission to resort again to the Tabernacle. A he-lamb was to be

* Lev. xiii. 9–44.

† xiii. 7, 8, 45, 46.

‡ xiv. 1–8. For conjectures concerning the reason of the use of the blood-stained water, and of "cedar-wood, scarlet, and hyssop," which are obscure, see Patrick's "Commentary" ad loc. also Bochart's "Hierozoi-con," pars 2, lib. 1, cap. 22. The ancients ascribed to cedar-wood and hyssop a sanative virtue in cutaneous disorders. See Le Clerc's "Commentary" ad loc. For some account of the scape-bird, see the next Lecture, p. 288, note.

presented in the manner of a Trespass Offering; another as a Sin Offering, and a ewe-lamb as a Burnt Offering, each being accompanied with a Meat Offering of flour mixed with oil. In case, however, of the poverty of the leper, a single lamb for the Trespass Offering, with the corresponding Meat Offering, and two turtle-doves or young pigeons for the Sin and Burnt Offerings, sufficed. In either case a small quantity of oil was to be added,* of which the priest was to pour a portion into his left palm, and, with one finger dipped in it, to sprinkle some drops in the direction of the Tabernacle, and touch the right ear, hand, and foot of the leper, after having, in like manner, touched them with the blood of the animal slain for a Trespass Offering. Then pouring what remained of the oil on the leper's head, he declared him to be wholly reinstated.†

If there are parts of this ceremonial, the significance of which we are now unable to explain, it is natural to suppose that some had their origin in practices anterior to the Law. But, in general, we see that its extent and complexity tended to impress on the mind of the priest a sense of responsibility for the careful exercise of a discretion on his part, so important to the public safety; and that the deliberation, with which it caused him to pronounce his decisions, tended to relieve the individual, when examined and discharged, from further suspicion, and the people from further uneasiness respecting meeting with him in society. The reasons for the extremely solicitous attention to this disease, are made apparent by a little attention to its malignant nature.

* The "log" was the smallest liquid measure; about half a pint.

† Lev. xiv. 9-32. The ceremony of touching the right ear, hand, and foot, we have already seen used on a different occasion. See page 213. "Upon the blood of the Trespass Offering," (verse 17,) means, *in addition to, over and above*, that blood, which had been already sprinkled. Compare verse 23.

Of this, I will but mention a few particulars, among those which have been collected by writers on the subject, from the testimony of different travellers in the East.

The leprosy, a disease common in Asia and Africa, and not unknown in Europe, from which, however, it has mostly disappeared since the fifteenth century, is one of the most distressing maladies to which the human frame is subject. The body becomes covered with hard, rough tubercles, which finally terminate in ulcers, that penetrate till they produce a *caries* of the bones. The voice becomes hoarse, resembling the sound well-known among us, as produced by the croup. The eyes project, and are with difficulty turned to the right or left. The tongue swells, and becomes dry and discolored; and the blood is black, with a putrid odor. The joints of the extremities become affected, swell, and mortify, till they successively separate and drop off, without pain, and the wound granulates and heals. Throughout, there is no acute suffering; but the patient feels a numbness in his hands and feet. The misery of the disease is aggravated by its slow progress, which often occupies twenty years and more, till, in its last stage, the sufferer "becomes a hideous spectacle, and falls in pieces." It is extremely difficult of cure; predisposition to it is hereditary; and it is actively contagious.*

In connexion with this subject, we find directions given respecting what is called the leprosy of houses, and of garments. Various considerations show that the term "leprosy" is not here intended to be used of the

* Further particulars may be seen in Jahn's "Archæologia Biblica," cap. 12, § 188, 189; and in Michaelis' "Commentaries" &c., book 4, chap. 4, part 2, § 2-4. The latter writer gives full extracts from the Report of M. Peyssonel, a physician sent by the King of France, in 1757, to Guadeloupe, to observe the leprosy imported, some years before, from Africa, into that island.

disease which affects the human system, but has a sense originating in a figurative application, as agriculturists speak of the "cancer," for example, in trees;* and that, accordingly, the introduction of the subject here is to be accounted for on the grounds of the association suggested by the name, and of the similarity, in some respects, of the ritual prescribed in relation to the leprosy of the different kinds. For instance; the leprosy in a garment is capable of being seen, and of affecting either the warp or woof in woven cloth, while it leaves the other part unharmed; † neither of which circumstances could occur with a garment, which was merely the medium for communicating a human malady. And, in the case of houses, it is equally clear, that no leprous infection was dreaded; for then the last course which a wise legislator could have taken, would be to order, that men should expose themselves to it by entering a suspected house to remove all the furniture previous to its examination. ‡

Accordingly modern commentators are for the most part agreed in receiving the term "leprosy," in these passages, in the figurative acceptance which I have suggested. In the directions respecting the leprosy of garments, they find rules of the economical class, having in view the suppression of the fraudulent practice of employing unsound materials in linen or woollen fabrics, or in preparations of leather. Whoever found himself in possession of a damaged article of either of these kinds, was not only punished, for his carelessness in making the purchase, by its inferior serviceableness and more speedy decay, but, when the defect was ascer-

* So, inversely, the word "rot," is used with us, for a disease of animal life, by a transfer from its primitive sense of decomposition of dead matter.

† Lev. xiii. 49-51.

‡ xiv. 36.

tained, and was still found to be extending after the removal of a portion, he was compelled to forfeit the whole; otherwise, when it had been carefully cleansed, he might resumé its use.* When the loss to the owner was in such cases so unavoidable and so serious, great caution would necessarily come to be exercised in manufacturing for one's own use, and in purchasing from others; and those, on the other hand, who manufactured for sale, would be placed under a strong motive to honest dealings, and to a careful selection of their materials and supervision of their workmen, in view of the discredit and loss of business, which, when their customers were made such sufferers by their neglect, would immediately ensue. If it should be said, that the prevention of the sale of goods of inferior quality is a matter with which law does not commonly interfere, being content to leave it to the care of him who would be the loser by their purchase, it might be replied, that, among an ignorant and inexperienced people, law may advantageously do not a few things, which, under different circumstances, are better trusted to individual discretion. But the truth

* Lev. xiii. 47–59. Neither in this case, nor in that of houses, does Moses drop any hint, that the leprosy by which they were affected could be communicated to man. Says Michaelis, (“Commentaries” &c., book 4, chap. 4, part 2, § 5,) “In regard to wool and woollen stuffs, I have consulted the greatest manufacturer in the electorate of Hanover, and he informs me, that what he has read in my German Bible, at this passage, will be found to hold good, at any rate with regard to woollen articles; and that it proceeds from what is called *dead wool*, that is, the wool of sheep that have died by disease; and that, according to the established use of honest manufacturers, it is unfair to manufacture dead wool into any article worn by man, *because vermin are so apt to establish themselves in it*, particularly when it is worn close to the body, and warmed thereby.” This shows how the case presented by Moses, of leprosy being found in the warp and not in the woof, and *vice versá*, would be likely to occur, good wool being used for the one, and bad wool for the other. The circumstance of a tendency to harbour vermin also acquires a special importance, in the case of a people, who, like the Jews, wore woollen next the skin, and who lived in such a compact society.

is, that these simple arrangements of the Mosaic code have a striking analogy with those Inspection Laws of modern times, by which communities provide for the honest conduct of some branch of commerce, and for keeping up its credit, when it is an important source of the public wealth. The institutions of Moses, in this particular, chiefly differed from those laws in virtually constituting every citizen, who either manufactured or purchased, a public inspector; and in compelling him to execute the office carefully, under a penalty which would presently be sure to reach him, and which would convey to him an effectual lesson for the future. I add, that the rule in question would connect itself with neatness and propriety of attire, and so with health, decency of manners, and ultimately a higher civilization, in ways, which, at this distance of time, it is not to be supposed that we should be able to enumerate. A stained, squalid garment, exposed the wearer presently to remark and suspicion. It might be merely foul, and not such as was forbidden by the law. But, the suspicion once excited, the only way to remove it was, to have the article inspected by the priest, who, if any doubt existed on his mind, was to keep it a week for further examination, and then, if he returned it, to see that it was first thoroughly cleansed. Rather than subject himself to all this trouble, every one would see that the better way was, to go abroad attired in such a manner, as to attract no unfavorable observation from his neighbours.*

The passage, which gives directions respecting the

* I think it highly probable, that the metaphorical word "leprosy" was the rather used in this passage on account of the disgusting ideas, which, by association with the human disease, the view of a blemish in clothing, called by the same name, would excite in the mind. And this hint will also help us to account for the connexion in which these directions occur.

leprosy of houses, is understood to relate to a saline efflorescence, spreading in stones and plaster, and rendering them offensive and unhealthy.* It is commonly called *salt-petre*, and, as known in modern times, corresponds in most particulars with the Mosaic description. It causes walls to become mouldy, till at length, as the corrosion extends, they are so weakened as to fall in. It damages articles placed near it, if liable to injury from dampness and acids, and communicates to the atmosphere an unwholesome taint, so as to render apartments unfit for occupation. If only part of the stone affected by it is removed, it always effloresces anew.

In case of any appearance, which might prove to be of this character, being remarked in any Israelitish dwelling, the law required that it should be reported to the priest, who should cause the house to be, in the first place, emptied of its furniture, in order to a thorough examination. Having then made his observations, he was to close the house for a week; at the end of which time, if he found that the stains had spread, he was to order the substitution of other stones in the place of those affected, the latter being cast "into an unclean place without the city," and the whole house within being cleansed by scraping its stones and plaster-

* "All the houses of Malta, says Dolomieu, are built of a fine-grained lime-stone, of a loose and soft texture. There is a circumstance which hastens its destruction, and reduces it to powder, viz. when it is wetted by sea-water. After this, it never dries, but is covered by a saline efflorescence, and a crust is formed some tenths of an inch thick, mixed with common salt, nitre, and nitrated lime. Under this crust, the stone moulders into dust, the crust falls off, and other crusts are successively formed, till the whole stone is destroyed. . . . Nor does it stop there, but after some time affects all the neighbouring stones in the wall." Kirwan's "Geological Essays," p. 148.—Michaelis describes the *salt-petre*, and its effects, as known in Germany, in his "Commentaries," book 4, chap. 4, part 2, § 5. The reddish color of spots, mentioned by Moses, is observed in that country. The "greenish" (verse 37) may have been a peculiarity of the stone, or of the climate of Palestine.

ing it anew.* If, this done, no other stones were found discolored, the house was pronounced clean, when the same ceremony had been gone through which made part of the ritual in the case of a leprous man.† If, on the other hand, the same appearances should be found to have returned, the dwelling was to be torn down, and its materials conveyed out of the city, “into an unclean place,” where no one would go in search of them to apply them to any further use.‡ A person who ate or lodged in the house, or who even entered it during the time that it was under examination, contracted legal uncleanness; but, not to extend this penalty too far, to such as had had no warning, it was not incurred till the priest had entered on the scrutiny.§

The spirit of these laws will be understood from what has been said on the analogous subject of the leprosy of garments. Serious casualties in our cities, occurring from time to time, in consequence of unfaithful building, admonish us that an Inspection of Buildings, by public authority, might not be a useless institution. The Law of Moses, with reference particularly to one danger, incident probably to the climate, and to the materials in common use, made every man his own inspector, and by subjecting him to certain trouble and expense, in case of the soundness and stability of his dwelling becoming at all questionable, influenced him prospectively to great care in the selection of materials. And when we remember, that what was the rule for the individual was the rule for the nation, we perceive, not only how great might be the security to life thus afforded, but how extensive would be the ultimate saving of labor, in consequence of the permanency of family habitations, to say nothing of the additional interest given by this

* Lev. xiv. 1-42.

† xiv. 48-53.

‡ xiv. 43-45.

§ xiv. 36, 46, 47.

circumstance to the associations of home. If the destruction of a house seems to us a severe punishment for want of sufficient care in its erection, we may call to mind, that the dwellings of the Israelites were of very inferior costliness to ours, and that the purpose of the severity of the penalty was, to teach precautions which would prevent its execution. Moreover, as a mere economical arrangement, it may have been often for the advantage rather than the injury of the individual proprietor, who would do better to sacrifice his house, though, if left to his own discretion, he might be reluctant so to do, than have the more valuable property, which it contained, destroyed by its humid atmosphere. And, after all, it is not unlikely that the rule, as to its principal operation, is to be reckoned in the class of Health Laws. It tended to secure to every Israelite a dwelling free from one noxious kind of humidity; and, in this view, the arrangement may have had peculiar consideration for slaves, and other inferiors, to whom the least eligible accommodations of a house would be likely to be assigned. We may further remark, that, though the rule is not for houses in cities alone, yet some of the prescribed details of purification show that it was these which were chiefly had in view.* In cities, containing a number of contiguous houses, affected in the manner in question, the surrounding atmosphere would be vitiated, and the health of a large population might be brought into danger.

The similarity of the ritual prescribed for the cleansing of a leprous house, to that used in the cleansing of a leper, I am disposed to believe was intended, by force of a natural mental association, to excite a degree of disgust in reference to the former case, similar to what

* Compare Lev. xiv. 34, with 40, 41, 45, 53.

was unavoidably felt in relation to the latter, and so to secure more attention to the subject; while, on the other hand, the scrupulous precautions taken against all which but bore the name of leprosy, would tend to strengthen the strong feeling entertained against that pestilent human taint, to which the name most properly belonged. The provision, that, after a priest had been sent for, uncleanness should not be contracted by entering the house till he had proceeded to his examination,* was the law's encouragement to the householder to give seasonable information respecting the suspicious state of his premises; for if, concealing the fact, he waited till the symptoms were no longer doubtful, and then some accident should betray their existence, all the furniture which the house contained became unclean along with it, to his own damage.

* Lev. xiv. 36.

LECTURE XIII.

LEVITICUS XVI. 1.—XXVII. 34.

DAY OF ATONEMENT.—SCAPE-GOAT.—REPETITION OF SOME PREVIOUS LAWS.—RULES RESPECTING MARRIAGE.—MISCELLANEOUS LAWS HAVING REFERENCE TO IDOLATRY,—AND ENFORCING HUMANE DISPOSITIONS.—SPECIFICATION OF SOME PENALTIES.—RULES DESIGNED TO EXCITE REVERENCE FOR THE SACERDOTAL OFFICE.—REPETITION OF RULES RESPECTING THE SABBATH, THE FAST, AND THE FESTIVALS.—CARE OF THE CANDLESTICK, AND OF THE TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD.—CRIME AND FATE OF THE SON OF SHELOMITH.—CONTINUATION OF LEGAL PENALTIES.—THE SABBATICAL YEAR.—THE YEAR OF JUBILEE.—EXPOSITION OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE.—LAWS RESPECTING VOWS.—INSTITUTION OF THE PAYMENT OF TITHES.

THE last twelve chapters of the book of Leviticus present the conclusion of the Mosaic code, as established at Mount Sinai. From their nature, as designed to supply chasms in the previous legislation, and to carry some of its provisions into further detail, so as to furnish a kind of completion of the law, before the organization of the people, their contents are so miscellaneous, that the most convenient way to treat them is by following the order of the chapters.

The sixteenth chapter is supplementary to a previous cursory notice of the annual day of Atonement, the only legal fast.* It is now declared, that on that day alone, of all the year, viz. on the tenth day of the seventh month, or Tisri, the high-priest may enter the Holy of Holies, and that then (to the end, no doubt, of exciting a greater reverence on his part, and that of the

* Ex. xxx. 10.

people) he must enter it with peculiar ceremonies.* On that occasion, having bathed and arrayed himself in the habiliments of a common priest, he was first to offer for himself a young bullock for a Sin Offering. He was then to bring two kids, one of them designated by lot, to be sacrificed as a Sin Offering for the people, the other, called the "Scape-Goat," to be let loose into the wilderness, after Aaron had laid his hands upon its head, and confessed over it "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins." The service concluded by the sacrifice of a ram as a Burnt Offering for the people, and another for the priest. The day was intended to serve the appropriate uses of a fast. It was a day of national humiliation and repentance for sin. And the ritual was accordingly of a nature to excite thoughtfulness and contrition. The confession of the people's sins by the high-priest, with the accompanying formalities, must especially have had an effectual tendency to this end.†

* Verse 1 seems to intimate, that this further precaution was consequent upon the irreverent behaviour of Nadab and Abihu.—The last clause in verse 2 is rendered by our translators, "I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat." I would render it more literally; "for [or but] with a cloud [that is, the cloud of incense which the priest was to raise,] I will be seen [that is, visited] upon the mercy-seat." The meaning is, not that there should be any miraculous manifestation of the Divine Being to Aaron, but that Aaron must not come into that which was His virtual presence, without observing those forms of which the burning of a cloud of incense made a part. Compare verse 13. What we read in various books about what is called the "Shekinah" upon the Mercy-Seat, I take to be all unauthorized imagination.

† The word "atonement," (verses 10, 11,) which, from its use in technical theology, has come to have a different significance attached to it, denoted, at the time when our translation was made, simply *reconciliation*, of whatever kind it might be, between whatever parties, by whatever means effected. This was agreeable to its etymology; *at-one-ment*, that is, putting *at one*. Such was the use of the old writers. So Shakspeare says;

"He seeks to make *atonement*
Between the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers."

The seventeenth chapter contains four laws, the first two relating to the slaughtering of animals for food at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and nowhere else; and the third and fourth, to abstinence from blood, and from the flesh of animals dying a natural death. But they are not, therefore, mere repetitions of the previous commands on the same subjects. The previous direction respecting the slaughtering of animals, had perhaps had reference only to such as were designed to be used in sacrifice, and it had been obligatory hitherto only on the Jewish people. It was now, for greater security, extended to strangers sojourning among them, and to the killing of animals intended to be used as food, a portion of every one of which (when of a suitable description) was now required to be presented as an offering.* The obligation of the third and fourth

Accordingly, in the use of the Mosaic Law, atonement is said to be made for whatever is reconciled to God, in the sense of being *set right* with him,—*placed in a state of favor* and acceptance with him. So things may be atoned for, as well as persons; it being a mistake to suppose, that there must be previous sin, in order to create a necessity for “atonement” in the Scripture sense. See Ex. xxix. 37; Lev. xiv. 53; xvi. 16, 18.—“Eastward,” in verse 14, means “on the east side” of the mercy-seat, viz. that side which faced the Holy Place.—The ceremony of the “Scape-Goat,” in which commentators have so generally found a type of a doctrine of the Christian religion, appears to be but the continuation, with some change, of a custom with which the Israelites had become acquainted in Egypt. See Herodotus, lib. 2, § 39. A similar custom prevailed among the Persians. See Clasenius’ “Theologia Gentilis,” pars 1, cap. 7, § 2. And among the Hindoos, with whom the victim was a horse, instead of a goat. See Halhed’s “Code of Gentoo Laws,” Pref. p. 16–20. To the same class of figurative ceremonies, which, with a substantial agreement, might be expected to present differences in the details, manifestly belongs the ritual described in Lev. xiv. 7, 53.—When the ceremonies of the day drew towards a close, it has been inferred from verse 24, that the high-priest was to clothe himself in his peculiar pontificals, having hitherto worn the dress of a common priest (verse 4) in token of humility, and for greater convenience in performing his sacrificial function.—In verse 29, we find the language customarily used concerning fasts. Compare Is. lviii. 5.

* To reasons for this provision, above enlarged on, (pp. 252–254,) I may

commands was also now extended, for the first time, to strangers, for the better securing of the Israelites against injury from the example of any of their neighbours, holding a different faith.*

The eighteenth chapter defines the law of chastity, with a special enumeration of the most heinous offences against it, and an express reference to the corrupt practices of the neighbouring nations in this particular, as requiring the more circumspection and strictness on the part of the Jews.†

In respect to domestic alliances, it is an error to suppose that the Jews might not contract them with women of other nations. The severest restriction of this kind which occurs, relates only to the seven nations of Canaan.‡ Polygamy, as is well known, was not forbidden; § but it was subject to obligations which kept it within limits,|| and, finally, as the state of things in our Saviour's

add the following; It was desirable that these valuable animals should multiply, so as to stock the country of Canaan, when the people should arrive there; a result, which would be promoted by the inconvenience of having to repair to the Tabernacle of the Congregation to slaughter them, when they were slaughtered at all, and to devote a portion of them to sacrificial use. A herdsman, at a distance from the central camp, would, for the most part, deny himself the luxury of feasting upon them, sooner than obtain the gratification at such cost and trouble.

* Verses 11–14 I understand as follows; viz. "I who quickened the principle of animal life, — in other words, who caused the blood to flow, — have a right to say how it shall be used; and I do accordingly prescribe to you a rule respecting it. I have given you the blood of animals for only one use (11); the sacred use of an offering on my altar. Beyond that use, you have no control over it. Dispose of it then as I direct. Do not taste it yourselves (12); and what you may not offer upon the altar, put carefully out of the way of others (13)." — The substantial reason of the prohibition has been already mentioned. See p. 271. The form chosen for its enforcement (14), has reference to the same view which is set forth in Gen. ix. 4–6, where God, as the giver and sovereign of all life, animal and human, is represented as demanding that the blood, that preserves it, shall be respected as belonging to him.

† Lev. xviii. 2–5, 24–30. ‡ Ex. xxxiv. 11–16. § Deut. xxi. 15.

|| See page 275, note. — The expressions, "I Jehovah," and "I Jehovah your God," (Lev. xviii. 4, 5,) in the form of a royal signature to an edict,

time shows, fell almost into disuse. In respect to the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, two or three provisions demand particular attention. A man is not forbidden to marry his wife's sister, except in his wife's lifetime; the latter provision having in view, as is distinctly intimated, to prevent a relation so tender as the sisterly, from being embittered by jealousy.* On the other hand, a woman might not marry her husband's brother, even, as appears, after her husband's death.† The reason of this arrangement is to be sought in the constitution of Jewish society. Brothers, and of course their wives, being members of the same family, attachments of a dangerous nature, encouraged by the hope of a future union, might come to be cherished, leading even to plots against the husband's life, unless the law placed its severest reprobation upon them, by declaring, that such a union would be no better than incestuous, even if the wife should be left at liberty by her husband's death.‡ Again; for aught that appears, a man might marry his niece, but not either his paternal or maternal aunt; § a distinction for which no more probable reason presents itself, than the general unsuitableness of such connexions from disparity of age, while at the same time the natural influence, exercised in the relation in question, over a youth's mind, might, unless the union were positively forbidden, be employed to bring it about.||

occur frequently henceforward in this book, and a few times in that of Numbers, (as Numb. iii. 13, 45; x. 10.) Compare Gen. xli. 44.

* Lev. xviii. 18.

† xviii. 16.

‡ We shall see, by and by (Deut. xxv. 5), that, in one case, a provision so absolute was made to yield either to an urgent reason of public policy, or, what is perhaps more likely, a fixed taste and habit of the people.

§ Lev. xviii. 12, 13.

|| Also, the usual greater intimacy with an aunt than with a niece, might, in that unformed state of society, make this rule important, as an additional security against seduction under a promise of marriage.—

The nineteenth chapter contains a variety of laws, some of which we have previously met with in different connexions, while others were now promulgated for the first time.* The question why those belonging to the former class were selected from others, to be merely repeated, without variation or addition, would be one, which, from want of acquaintance with the circumstances of the time, we should be at a loss to answer. But that some reason should have existed for that course, is certainly nothing to surprise us. Nothing is more common, than for proclamation to be made of laws, which some occasion has arisen for bringing distinctly to a people's notice.†

Some of the new laws in this chapter appear, more or less clearly, to have had reference to heathen customs, being intended as further safeguards for the purity

Verse 11 has perplexed the commentators, because of their supposing it to be a mere repetition of 9. But I think it is not so. In a case of such importance, it was necessary to use every precaution against dishonest casuistry, for the same reason which justifies the verbosity of indictments and other legal instruments of the present day. Accordingly, the law-giver having forbidden (verse 9) an alliance with the daughter, legitimate or illegitimate, of father or mother, repeats the prohibition, in verse 11, in respect to one who was daughter at once of father *and* mother. — Verse 21 is explained by 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31; xxxii. 35; and Diodorus Siculus, (lib. 20, cap. 14,) and Quintus Curtius, (lib. 4, § 15,) allude to the same enormity among the Carthaginians. But the question remains, how the precept came to be introduced here, where it does not seem to be in place. I think that question cannot be satisfactorily answered. But it is very doubtful whether we have the genuine reading of the passage. The Septuagint version presents a different sense from the Hebrew, and the Syriac reading is materially different from both; and each repeats its own variation in Lev. xx. 2.

* xix. 3-8, 11, 12, 26, 30.

† Also, I think it may be remarked, that, in some instances, an old command is repeated, in order to introduce a new one, the spirit and principle of which are the same. E. g. in verse 11, the command of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt not steal" is repeated, in order to give it the wider extension of prohibition of other kinds of fraud; and, in verse 30, upon the older precept to keep the Sabbath is superinduced another, resting on similar grounds.

of the faith. The sowing of a field with mingled seed, for example, was a practice of idolaters, who supposed that they should thus bring down a blessing from their deities; and garments of linsèy-woolsey, forbidden in the same verse, were the appropriate dress of the priests of the Zabian idolatry at their devotions.*

Another portion of this chapter deserves particular attention, presenting, as the laws contained in it do, a manifest advance upon the tone of all, having a similar purpose, which have yet come under our notice. These laws do not stop short in the prohibition merely of what is mischievous. They prompt to acts of usefulness, and generous dispositions. They breathe the spirit of a thoughtful and delicate humanity. The Israelite is taught, that in his harvesting and vintage, he must leave the gleanings "for the poor and stranger"; † that he must not withhold a laborer's wages so much as a day beyond that when they have been earned; that he must not revile the deaf, who cannot hear his insult, nor put

* Lev. xix. 19. See Maimonides, "More Nebochim," pars 3, cap. 37, pp. 447, 451; Spencer, "De Legibus" &c., lib. 2, cap. 18, § 2, cap. 21, § 3. The same writer (cap. 20) puts a similar construction on the first clause of xix. 19; but the view is in this case not so well sustained by authorities. Foster, "De Byssò Antiquorum," (pp. 92–100,) explains the last precept in this verse by reference to costly Egyptian garments, embroidered with superstitious hieroglyphics. — The derivation of the word, in verse 26, rendered in our version "enchantments," points to a kind of divination in use in ancient times, founded on the movements of serpents, respecting which, see Bochart's "Hierozoicon," pars 1, lib. 1, cap. 3, p. 21. The latter part of the same verse seems to refer to auguries drawn from observation on the heavenly bodies. Compare Jer. x. 2. All kinds of divination and magic connected themselves with idolatry, and to this class of rules also belongs verse 31. — For explanations of the four prohibitions in verses 27, 28, showing that their object was of the same kind, see Spencer, "De Legibus" &c., lib. 2, cap. 12, 13, 14, 25. Compare Herod. lib. 2, § 36, lib. 3, § 8; Jer. xvi. 6; xli. 5; xlvi. 37. — Verse 29 forbids the service of prostitution at idol temples. For authorities, showing the extent of that practice, see Spencer, lib. 2, cap. 22.

† Lev. xix. 9, 10.

any obstacle in the way of the blind, who is defenceless against his mischief; that, in a sternly upright administration of justice, he must neither be moved by compassion for the poor, nor reverence for the great; that he must avoid being the cause of those dissensions, which are bred by a heedless volubility of tongue; that he must be honest enough to testify friendship by the unwelcome office of reproof;* that he must “rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man;” that he must not use his power to vex a stranger, but remember the past condition of his own people, and learn to regard a stranger as a friend; that he must be scrupulously honest in his dealings; that, finally, he must propose to himself the highest standard of social morality, aiming to love his neighbour as himself.† It is impossible to give the slightest attention to these rules, and still maintain any such error, as that the Jewish Law was a mere code of outward observances, having no reference to the cultivation of a benevolent spirit, or the harmony and happiness of the social state.‡

The twentieth chapter does not contain a mere repetition of laws previously announced, as might, at first

* Lev. xix. 13-17.

† xix. 32-36, 18.

‡ Verses 20-22 merely prescribe the punishment of adultery with a bond-woman or concubine. Compare xx. 10, which treats of the case of adultery with a wife.—The passage, 23-25, is of uncertain sense. Maimonides, “More Nebochim,” pars 3, cap. 37, pp. 449, 450, testifies to an idolatrous practice, to which he understands this law to be opposed, of dedicating part, and eating another part, of the first-fruits which a tree bore, in the temples. See also Spencer, lib. 2, cap. 24, § 2.—Michaelis finds here only an economical arrangement. If, he says, the proprietor is not allowed to eat the fruit of a tree while it is young, if, to use the Mosaic expression, it is to him “as uncircumcised,” he will pinch off the blossoms, and this is a practice of modern agriculturists to give a tree strength (compare verse 25). The command has a prospective view to the settlement in Canaan (23), but Moses was never to enter Canaan himself, and we might naturally expect to find him giving such directions beforehand, whenever they occurred to his mind. See Michaelis “Commentaries” &c., book 4, chap. 5, § 4.

view, appear. The appropriate subject of the chapter is, the denunciation of penalties against the violation of those laws respectively. A crime, for instance, simply forbidden in the last chapter but one, is now declared to be punishable with stoning.* Reverence for parents, had been before inculcated; outrage offered to them is now declared to be a capital offence; † and so in other instances. ‡ On the nature of the punishments specified, I shall remark in another place. I only observe further here, that there appears a great propriety in the order adopted; viz. the prohibition of certain acts in the first instance, and then, when there had been a little time to reflect on their nature and criminality, the specification of punishments which were to follow upon their commission.

The purport of the regulations in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters, is obviously to secure the decency of public worship, and so attach a greater reverence to the sacerdotal character and office, and the religious ceremonial. In his peculiar consecration to public cares, the priest must not allow himself in indul-

* Compare Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2. Verses 3–5 I understand as follows; Whoever is guilty of this sin, thus offering an affront to my Tabernacle, which is in the midst of the nation, and dishonoring my name, I command that he shall be cut off; and if his family, or his neighbours, instead of informing against his crime, and taking part in its punishment, should connive at, and conceal it, I declare them to be accessaries, and command that they be cut off also.

† xix. 3; xx. 9. In this instance, however, we have but a repetition of Ex. xxi. 17.

‡ Upon the peculiar provision in verses 15, 16, Priestley well remarks as follows; “Every thing connected with the idea of the crime was to be removed out of the way, and with every sign of detestation.” “Notes” &c., p. 248. — “They shall die childless,” Lev. xx. 20, 21. These words might be interpreted; Do not suffer the children of such an unlawful union to live; take care that the very memory of it shall perish. But I understand them to mean simply, that the parents of only such children shall be without offspring, that can be registered as theirs; in other words, that such children shall be illegitimate.

gences of private feeling, which are suitable for other men; and only on the death of his nearest relations, may he retire from his sacred functions for the ceremonies of mourning,* taking care then not to fall into practices in use among idolaters on such occasions.† The duty of the high-priest is stricter still. He is all consecrated to Heaven. On no occasion whatever may he contract the ritual impurity incident to mourning, even though his bereavement should have been of father or mother.‡ A priest must not marry an unchaste or a divorced woman; and of such public concern is the reputation of his family, that his daughter who should disgrace him by impurity is to suffer the severest penalty known to the law.§ The high-priest, further, must not marry a widow; and any personal blemish incapacitated for the priestly office; a rule necessary, in the existing degree of culture of the people, to prevent degrading or ludicrous associations from impairing the solemn impressiveness of the ritual.|| To engage in sacerdotal functions, or so much as feast upon the offerings, when affected with any ritual uncleanness, is a crime punishable with death.¶ So separate from others are the sacerdotal families to be, that no guest or hired servant of a priest may partake of the offerings which supply his table; and, if a priest's daughter marry into another tribe, not only may she not bring her husband to his table, when furnished with the "holy things," but she may not come to it herself, during her married state, nor even in widowhood, nor after divorce, unless, being

* Lev. xxi. 1-6.

† A similar prohibition had been before addressed to the people at large. See xix. 27, 28.

‡ xxi. 10-12.

§ xxi. 7, 9.

|| xxi. 13-24. The priest, however, did not lose (22), through his personal misfortune, his hereditary right to a share of the sacerdotal perquisites.

¶ xxii. 1-9.

without children, she is in a condition to withdraw entirely from the ties of her matrimonial alliance, and resume all the relations of her youth.* On the other hand, as these laws against the eating, by unqualified persons, of what had been offered in sacrifice, were liable to be unintentionally violated, provision is made for the acquittal of the person who should have committed such an error, when he should have restored an equivalent to what he had consumed, and added a fifth part more, to teach him greater caution for the future.† Victims must be without personal blemish for a similar reason to that; which had dictated the same regulation respecting the priest.‡ In this connexion, a further extension is given to a rule before announced respecting victims, calculated to teach the sentiment of compassion for the brute creation.§ And, lastly, a rule already given respecting the consumption of Thank Offerings before the third day, is here repeated, apparently for the purpose of urging its observance in a still stricter form upon the priests, who are directed to take care that none of it shall be left even till the day subsequent to the sacrifice.||

The twenty-third chapter has something of the same character which was ascribed to part of the nineteenth, containing a republication of certain laws. The laws

* Lev. xxii. 10–13.

† xxii. 14–16.

‡ xxii. 17–24. But an animal not fit to be sacrificed, (23,) might be fit for a present to the priest. — Verse 25 supposes the case of offerings presented at the Tabernacle by strangers sojourning in the nation, as a mark of respect to the divinity, whose protection they were enjoying.

§ xxii. 26–28. Compare Ex. xxii. 30. On verse 28 Maimonides remarks, that it was designed to prevent the slaughter of the young “in the presence of the dam; because this occasions to animals extreme grief; nor is there, in this respect, a difference between the distress of man and that of the irrational creation.” — “More Nebochim,” pars 3, cap. 49, p. 496.

|| Lev. xxii. 29, 30. Compare vii. 16.

relating to the annual fast, the feast of trumpets, and the three great annual festivals, are here all brought together in one view, in their chronological order, along with the law of the Sabbath; and additions to the ceremonial, as before prescribed, are interspersed. It is now ordained, that each day of the passover week shall be solemnized by a Burnt Offering, and a peculiar service is appointed for the second day of the feast.* Every Israelite, after the settlement in Canaan, is to bring to the priest a single sheaf of the first-fruits of his harvest; and until he has made this dedication, he may appropriate no part of his produce to his own use. Again; the manner of determining the day of Pentecost, which before had only been hinted at,† is explained, and the appropriate ceremonies of that festival are prescribed in much fuller detail.‡ The offering of the citizen is then to be two leavened loaves of fine flour.§ The Burnt Offering of a lamb, with its Meat and Drink Offering on the first of these occasions, and the Burnt Offering of seven yearling lambs, a bullock and two rams, with the same accompaniment, the Sin Offering of a kid, and the Peace Offering of two yearling lambs, at the Pentecost, were to be presented by the priest, at the public expense, to give greater solemnity to the occasion, and not required of each citizen.¶

* Lev. xxiii. 3–14. The "Sabbath," mentioned in verse 11, is the first day of the Passover, which was to be kept like a Sabbath, (compare verses 7, 32,) with one only exception. (Compare Ex. xii. 16; xxxv. 3.) The sheaf (10) would be of barley, that being the grain which ripens first in Palestine. Compare Ex. xxxiv. 26.

† Ex. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22.

‡ Lev. xxiii. 15–21. — Verse 22, a repetition of xix. 9, 10, seems very properly placed here, to give the citizen an annual admonition, at the season when his harvest labor was beginning.

§ That is, made from the first-fruits of the wheat-harvest, xxiii. 20. Compare Ex. xxxiv. 22.

¶ I do not know that the opposite opinion has ever been entertained.

—The Feast of Trumpets, commonly so called, was now for the first time instituted, being merely a holiday commemoration of the beginning of the civil year, sanctified by the offering of a holocaust.* — The ceremonies of the Day of Atonement, before enlarged upon, are now more briefly described, with a specification of the hour when it was to begin and end, and of the punishment which was to follow on a violation of its sacredness.† — And finally, the purpose and the solemnities of the Feast of Tabernacles, which, as well as that of Pentecost, had before been no more than mentioned,‡ are described at length. Towards the end of every year, the Israelites, for one week, the third week of the month Tisri, corresponding to our September, were to dwell in booths, in memory of the migration from Egypt; while every day Burnt Offerings were to be presented at the place of the national worship.§ The picturesque accompaniments of this festival, independently of its historical associations, must have rendered it an occasion of the strongest interest. The reason of the commemoration being placed at the close of the fruitage and vintage would appear to be, that this was a time of general leisure, and would naturally be a time of prevailing disposition for festivity, which it was on all accounts fit that the national religion should regulate, and turn to its own uses.

The beginning of the twenty-fourth chapter is occu-

The enormous cost, and unmanageable number of victims, which it would imply, alone present a consideration sufficient to refute it. — Also; if each citizen was bound to render such an expensive tribute, the arrangement which places his gifts of a single sheaf, in the one case (10), and two loaves in the other (17), before his richer presents, would be altogether unnatural. — Once more; it is said of the priest (11), “*he shall wave,*” &c., and to him (12), “*ye shall offer, when ye wave,*” &c.

* Lev. xxiii. 23–25.

† xxiii. 26–32. Compare xvi.

‡ Ex. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22.

§ Lev. xxiii. 33–43.

pied with directions respecting the keeping up of the flame of the lamp, which, as the Tabernacle had no window, afforded its only light, and the weekly exhibition of the shew-bread in the holy place. From the sacredness of the place, the former (and I think also the latter, though this is not so clear) was now ordained to be the high-priest's own charge;* whether by personal service, or by responsible supervision merely, does not appear; the latter may be thought most probable. The particulars of the use of the table of shew-bread, are now first mentioned.† It is probably called "the pure table," in distinction from the altar of incense standing near, which was also covered with pure gold, but was spotted, according to the ritual, with the blood of victims.

In the next passage, we have one of the very few portions of history, which are found in the book of Leviticus, being the first which has occurred, since the relation, in the tenth chapter, of the sin and punishment of Nadab and Abihu.‡ The son of an Israelitish woman, but of an Egyptian father, had, in his passion, blasphemed Jehovah's name. For a person, to all intents a foreigner, to blaspheme the God and King of the nation, whose hospitality he was enjoying, would have been an act of the boldest outrage, and of the most pernicious example; and, even had it been otherwise, the individual in question, being descended from the Israelitish race,

* Lev. xxiv. 1–4. Compare Ex. xxvii. 20, 21.

† Lev. xxiv. 5–9. They have been already described; see pp. 207, 208. Compare Ex. xxv. 30. The bread, when stale, was to be eaten by the priests, the servants of the place, as being too sacred to be thrown away, or put to any common use. It is probable, that the burning of the frankincense (7) took place when the pile of bread on which it stood was removed, in order to a weekly purification of the air.

‡ Lev. xxiv. 10–16. It will not escape remark, that the occurrence of such historical passages, in the midst of a code of laws, is a fact according with the *journal* character which I have ascribed to these books.

and, as such, living among them, was manifestly enough subject to all obligations under which that people lay. I cannot, therefore, think that the reason of the delay in the proceedings against him was the existence of any doubt respecting the aggravated character of his offence. The points upon which Moses desired still to ascertain "the mind of the Lord," were, in what manner he should be put to death, and with what formalities his execution should be attended, in order to give it the most effect as an example; and respecting these, accordingly, he received instructions.* The first punishment, as far as we know, which had occurred for this offence, naturally brought up the question, how a foreigner should be dealt with, if he were guilty of it; and thereupon the law was promulgated, that, while a person not an Israelite, who should curse his God, should bear his own sin, that is, incur whatever responsibility his own conscience or his associates might enforce, (the Mosaic Law having no concern with him,) the person, stranger as well as Israelite, who should speak irreverently of Jehovah, should be stoned to death by the assembled nation.† The connexion, with this incident, of the following passage,‡ a connexion which is not altogether obvious at first view, I take to be this; that in other particulars of criminal law, as well as that lately brought into question, the relations of a foreigner and a native were to be the same. The penalties prescribed for the protection and the restraint of the citizen, were to affect equally a stranger within the Israelitish borders. The assertion of that principle naturally leads to a brief recital of some of those penalties; but they belong to a subject which is to come before us in another connexion.

* Lev. xxiv. 14.

† xxiv. 16.

‡ xxiv. 17-22. The connexion which I suggest, is indicated in verse 22.

Two remarkable institutions, the latter, especially, having large relations to the whole frame of the Jewish social state, make the subject of the twenty-fifth chapter; viz. the Sabbatical Year, and the Year of Jubilee, occurring at the close of every half-century. In respect to the first, it has probably been the common opinion, that, as long as the Israelites should be faithful in the observance of the institution, it was designed and promised by God, that through their whole national existence, every year preceding the sabbatical should be distinguished by a miraculous fertility. A different view, adopted by several modern commentators, has been, that the sabbatical year was chiefly designed for an economical arrangement, to guard against any possible pressure of famine, in a period when commerce could do little by way of providing supplies in an unexpected emergency, and among a people for whom it was further designed that commerce should do nothing. Even in these modern times, when commercial interchanges do so much towards averting any such calamity, communities are in danger of a scarcity of provisions, the consequence of an unfavorable year. In most well-organized societies of a dense population, provision is carefully made against such a disaster at the public cost. In the great capitals of Europe, granaries are to be seen, where the superfluity of one season is laid up against the possible exigencies of another. That which modern governments do very inadequately, with great cost in the provision, and great waste of the thing provided, in consequence of its exposure to injury in large accumulations, the Mosaic law, it is thought, did, by a simple provision, economically, effectually, and universally. Looking forward to a year never distant, when his religion would forbid him to continue the labors of tillage, the Jewish farmer would be always practising a certain

frugality in the use of his annual produce, that he and his might be the more abundantly provided against that coming time. The stores thus laid up on every estate, would not only, in a time of scarcity, be found universally diffused, precluding the necessity of cost in their transportation, but, in these more numerous smaller collections, and under the management each of its own owner, they would be protected in a thousand ways against occasions of waste, which no care of public superintendence would sufficiently obstruct. Habits of forethought, calculation, industry, and thrift, again, could not but grow up, under the operation of such a motive, which would extend their influence over the whole character. When the sabbatical year came, the land, untilled, would recruit itself for a more vigorous fertility;* and meanwhile, the year would not be altogether barren; for the vine and the olive, for instance, two great products of Palestine, are not the products of a single season, nor would the supplies of "milk and honey" be affected.

All the influence which would be exerted by such an institution on individual and social habits, could only be known through a much better acquaintance than we possess with the customs and tastes of the nation. I may remark, however, that it by no means follows, that because the proprietor must not till, he must, therefore,

* So, at least, understood the Jewish commentators. E. g. Maimonides ("More Nebochim," pars 3, cap. 39, p. 454) mentions, as one of the uses of the institution, "ut terra ita deserta et relicta tantò uberiores fructus proferat." And the same was the opinion of Philo, as expressed in a passage which is too long to quote, but which may be found extracted by Eusebius, in his "Præparatio Evangelica," lib. 8, cap. 7, ad calc. But I am not agriculturist enough to know, whether this view can be maintained, particularly as the method of *fallowing* by ploughing and manuring, as practised before the introduction of the now more approved system of *rotation of crops*, may be thought to be inconsistent with the direction in verses 6, 7.

be unoccupied. He might not only employ himself, during this reserved season, in other labors for the improvement of his estate, but on every account it might be desirable that he should have an uninterrupted opportunity for such employment. It is likely that the comparative leisure would be devoted by many to a variety of salutary pursuits, of a nature to re-invigorate the strength, to unbend, cultivate, and civilize the mind, and knit stronger the social ties. A use of this latter kind could not fail to be served, by the liberty now enjoyed by all alike to take their share in what they found growing spontaneously; while this freedom could not but excite in the minds of all a feeling vigorously promotive of love of country,—the feeling, namely, that the whole Israelitish soil was in some sort a common domain.*

* I find no difficulty, in the view of the institution, presented above, arising from any inadequacy of the produce of six years to afford sustenance to the people for seven. To say that this was intended, would merely be to say, that the design was, that the consumption of each year should only amount, on an average, to six sevenths of its produce. In such an arrangement, it cannot be thought, that there was any thing impracticable. There are States of this Union, which export yearly more than half their produce, and subsist, substantially, on the remainder, their imports consisting mostly of luxuries. Again; in England nearly three quarters of the families are engaged in commerce, manufactures, professions, and unproductive pursuits; the whole population is fed by the agricultural labors of less than one third of its number. But, in Judæa, every man was a producer of food, with the advantage of a fine climate and rich soil. The division of the land into small farms required a careful agriculture, which, accordingly, we find to have been practised, cultivation having been carried high up the sides of mountains. And what it produced was mostly food for man, the climate requiring less clothing than is necessary in the northern latitudes; the demand for fuel being so small as to require little land to be reserved, for that supply, from tillage; and the horse, which consumes so large a portion of the products of the soil in Europe, being very little used in that country.

Nor would corn be exposed to any great waste, from being kept as this theory supposes. Of course, the cultivator, who proposed to use, from year to year, only a portion of his crop, would make his arrangement to consume the stores which lay by him, in such succession as to obviate

In the institution of the Jubilee year, again, is to be seen the strong hold of a universal freedom and equality. Even if the citizen became a slave, at the beginning of that year his liberty was restored. Even if, falling into

the danger of natural decay. If his plan was, for instance, to consume, each year, six seventh parts of what he could command, he would take on one year five sixth parts of his provision from the produce of that year, and one sixth part from the produce of the preceding; on the next, he would take two third parts from its own harvest, and one third from the preceding, and so on; so that the grain, which at any time lay by him, would be of recent growth, and none be kept long enough to spoil.

Says our version (21), "I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth food for three years." Michaelis, ("Commentaries" &c., book 3, chap. 2, § 74;) who thinks that the meaning was, that the produce of *six years*, and not of *the sixth year*, should furnish the needed supply, supposes the text of Moses to have been in this place corrupted. But I see no occasion for that supposition. The following is a perfectly justifiable version of the words, as they stand. "*At [or against] the sixth year, I will have commanded my blessing upon you, and it shall afford [that is, by its accumulation] food for three years.*" To any one acquainted with Hebrew, it would be unnecessary to say, that that language, like the Greek, has no forms corresponding to our compound tenses; so that, in saying, "*I shall have done*" a thing, the phrase is the same, as if the meaning were, "*I shall do*" it. Compare Deut. vi. 10.

It has been further thought, that the regulations of the Sabbatical Year would tend to invite back game (7), which the careful agriculture of the other years might otherwise have entirely expelled; to encourage emigrants from Judea to return, through the facility of obtaining provisions to meet their immediate wants; and, by relieving the expense of journeying, to lead to habits, which would bring the tribes to a better mutual acquaintance, and amalgamate them into one state;—all which views seem to be not unreasonable.

But, after all, I cannot forbear to express the doubt which I entertain, whether the ground of these different speculations is solid. I find myself unable positively to conclude, from the brief notices of this institution, (Ex. xxiii. 10, 11; Lev. xxv. 1–7, 20–22,) that tillage was forbidden by the Law on every seventh year. With diffidence, as I have nowhere seen a hint of the kind, I submit the question, whether the rule was intended to go further than this; that, on every seventh year, the proprietor should resign the *exclusive* occupation of his land; that on that year he should not *alone* till it and reap its harvest; that it was to be so far in common, as that the use of part of it must be granted to others who might ask the privilege, to servants, for instance, to strangers, to returning emigrants, as well as that, in the generous spirit of the season,

poverty, he had alienated his patrimonial estate, he or his posterity infallibly recovered it, as soon as that year arrived. Here is the Jewish law of entails. Every Jewish citizen was, by virtue of his citizenship, a proprietor. He could, by no possibility, estrange his landed property any further than by what we, in these days, should call a lease; a lease which could not, in any event,

animals, domestic and untamed, should be allowed their share of its productions. According to a well-known rule of Scripture interpretation, an ellipsis of the word corresponding to "only," is often to be understood. See Glass's "Philologia Sacra," lib. 3, tract. 5, can. 22. Compare Matt. x. 20; Acts v. 4; Eph. vi. 12. And this is clearly the case in part of the rule before us. It is not said more positively (4), "Thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard," than it is said (5), "Thou shalt not reap." Yet in this latter case, it is clear that we are to understand, "*Thou shalt not reap*" alone, *exclusively*; for we presently read (6), "The sabbath of thy land shall be meat for you." If we must needs understand such an ellipsis in the latter case, why not in the former?

I wish I had space for a more detailed examination of these passages, as I think I could present considerations giving much probability to the view last suggested. רָקַץ, for instance, in Ex. xxiii. 10, I would represent as an emphatic word, taking it in its primitive sense of "to scrape together," *quasi* "to hoard penuriously," and thus as antithetical to the liberal communication which was the distinction of the seventh year. So, in the next verse שָׁבַט and שָׁטַט have not so much the sense of "to let rest, and lie still," which is but a translation adapted to the common theory, as of "to release, and abandon," or *communicate*, or *permit*. So it is by force of the general interpretation which has been put upon the passage, that קָפַח, in Lev. xxv. 5, is rendered, "that which groweth of its own accord." It is a noun derived from the verb קָפַח, *he poured out*, and is naturally understood of profuse production of any kind; nor can the idea of spontaneous growth be safely inferred from any of the contexts in which it appears. Compare Lev. xxv. 11; 2 Kings xix. 29; Is. xxxvii. 30; Job xiv. 19. — Again; there is a peculiar expression in Lev. xxv. 5, עֲבֵי נְזִירָה, which has much perplexed the commentators. It means, literally, "the grapes of thy *Nazarite*," or "sequestered," "devoted," "appropriated." On the scheme which I propose, the phrase is easily explained; the proprietor was, for the time being, not to regard his estate as sequestered, appropriated, sacred, to himself. — How natural, also, to hold out as a motive to liberality to servants, among others, on one year (xxv. 6), the greater productiveness of the land during the other six (xxv. 19, 21). Grateful for the indulgence they had experienced, laborers would toil to enrich their master with a cheerful and effective service.

run beyond fifty years, and would be in force for as many years less than that term, as had passed from the last Jubilee to the time of the alienation. Thus, on the one hand, every one had a provision, and a stake in the commonwealth, such as even the vice and improvidence of parents could not deprive him of; and, on the other, property was prevented from accumulating in masses, dangerous to liberty. The successful adventurer, who had gone on adding house to house, and field to field, gained no permanent advantage over his fellows. The fiftieth year was always approaching, with silent but sure speed, to relax his capacious hold. And the Israelite, whom accident had carried abroad, never needed to remain a wanderer, for want of a home of his own to welcome him. A home there always was, would he but choose the proper time to reclaim it.*

The sense of the twenty-sixth chapter, I take to be a distinct confirmation of the view which I have formerly presented; viz. that the Law was in part intended and

* Lev. xxv. 8-17, 23, 24, 39-46, 54, 55.—As the Jubilee year was to begin on the Day of Atonement, (9,) it is likely that the Sabbatical years, the computation of which had reference to the computation of the Jubilee, (8,) began at the same time. In respect to agricultural labors, the rule was the same for both celebrations (11, 12).—From verses 24, 26, it would appear that the proprietor might at any time pay off his mortgage, (as we should phrase it,) and recover his estate, before the Jubilee came round.—The peculiarity of the regulation in verses 29-31, permitting houses in walled cities to be sold in perpetuity, I suppose had reference to the case of foreigners proposing to settle in Judea. It was the policy of the Law to invite in foreign artisans, agriculture being the proper employment of native Jews; and the proper place for the habitations of artisans was the cities. On the other hand, the city dwellings of the Levites came under the jurisdiction of the general law, (32-34, in which last verse the "but" of our version should rather be *and*), because the Levites were to have no real estate except in cities and their suburbs, and it was not designed that they should ever be dispossessed.—The provision in verses 35-38, may better be considered in another place. See remarks on Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. And the same is true of the rules in verses 25-28, 47-53. See remarks on Numb. xxxv. 9 et seq.

framed to qualify the Jewish nation to perform its religious office, by means of securing its temporal prosperity, and its social union and strength.* If it obeyed the Law, so wisely devised for its good, it would attain to wealth and power; it would be prepared to defy its enemies, and maintain its independence; the land would be fruitful, the population would be numerous and safe.† If it disregarded this divinely prepared instrument of its growth and greatness, national poverty and imbecility, desolation, disunion, famine, subjugation, captivity,‡ and all the miseries which were wont to fall on conquered nations in those barbarous ages, would be its bitter, but well-merited lot. I find no intimation throughout the chapter, of a miraculous superintendence, to be continued after the national independence and the national institutions had been miraculously established.§ For aught that I can perceive, the nation then was to be left to its own guidance, and its own responsibility. It was through the people's experience of the natural consequences of obedience or disobedience to a law supernaturally adapted to their condition and wants, that God designed to reward or punish its observance or infraction.

The rules relating to consecrations of things and

* See above, pp. 169, 170.

† Lev. xxvi. 7, 8; 4, 5, 10; 9; 6.

‡ xxvi. 19, 20, 16, 36; 22, 31—35; 37; 26, 29; 17, 25; 33.

§ If verse 4 be thought an exception to this remark, I submit that its meaning would be well expressed thus; "Then, when I have given you rain in due season, the land," &c. Such is a not unusual Scripture phraseology. Compare Matt. xi. 25, where, though our version is literally correct, no one doubts that the meaning is, "I thank thee, because *when* thou hast hid," &c.—The language in verses 16, 26, is as plainly figurative as that in 8, 19.—The sense of verses 40—44 is, that wherever the lately offending but now contrite Israelite should be, God would look on him with favor. In this, there is nothing indicated of a permanent miraculous administration. But I should prefer to begin a verse with the last clause of verse 42, which I think is connected in sense with the following; "I will remember the land, and the land shall be left," &c.

persons, and the conditions, on which, in certain cases, vows of consecration might be remitted, are introduced, at the beginning of the twenty-seventh chapter, in a way, which shows that it was not the purpose of the Law to enforce the practice, but merely to place a natural impulse of devotion under useful regulations.* If an Israelite, under such an impulse, should bind himself or his child by a vow, to be a servant of the sanctuary, he might commute that service by paying a specified pecuniary equivalent, varying with sex and age, into the sacred treasury; and, if he were too poor to pay the prescribed sum, it was in the discretion of the priest to fix on some other, proportioned to his means.† If the vow related to the gift of an animal, it must, by all means, be offered in sacrifice, if suitable to be so offered; and whoever was detected in attempting to substitute for it one of inferior worth, was punished by the forfeiture of both. If it were an unclean animal that had been consecrated, the owner might still retain it, if, on reflection, such was his wish, on the payment of one fifth more than the priest declared to be its value.‡ On the same condition, a house or a farm, consecrated as a religious offering, might be redeemed. The estimation of the value of an estate so consecrated was to have reference to the length of the interval between the time of the consecration and a Jubilee year, at which time it reverted to its owner; and this provision held

* "When a man shall make a singular vow," (2,) i. e. shall wish to signalize himself by a voluntary act of piety. — On the expression "*thy estimation*," in the same verse, the commentators have disputed, whose estimation was intended; whether the estimation of the priest, the ruler, or the worshipper, to be made from time to time. Clearly, I think, it was neither. A permanent estimation was determined by law (3-7). It is the people that is addressed (2), and "*thy estimation*" means the estimation *for thee*, for thy government. — We have seen forms of will-worship referred to in Lev. vii. 16; xxii. 23; xxiii. 38.

† xxvii. 2-8.

‡ xxvii. 9-13.

equally good, if the estate consecrated was one of which the devotee was only a tenant.* Firstlings of whatever description were no subjects for voluntary vows, inasmuch as they were already consecrated by a standing law; but, if the firstling was of an unclean animal, it might be redeemed at the same rate of commutation as was prescribed in the cases just now named.† There was one form of consecration, called by a peculiar name, sometimes rendered in our version, “devoting,” and sometimes “cursing,” which was of such solemnity, that to prevent its frequent use, it was declared to admit of no remission.‡

The twentieth and twenty-first verses of this chapter are obscure, and I have seen no good account of them. It has been proposed to understand, that, though other estates reverted unconditionally to their owners at the Jubilee, those consecrated could only be recovered at any time by the payment of a ransom. But this, I think, is certainly inconsistent with other provisions.§ I suggest, that we have here a supplement to the laws respecting the Jubilee, (designed to prevent its fraudu-

* Lev. xxvii. 14–19, 22–25.

† xxvii. 26, 27. Compare Ex. xiii. 11–13; xxxiv. 19, 20. The present rule of redemption is a modification of that previously promulgated, which compelled the owner to lose a firstling unclean animal, unless he redeemed it in kind with a clean one.

‡ Lev. xxvii. 28, 29. In these verses, we find the case supposed of a man being made a חֲרָם, and so doomed to death. It has been strangely imagined that this might be done by private will. The simple account of the fact I take to be, that the connexion, treating as it does of a form of devoting which admitted no restoration, suggested the analogy of a man devoted to death by public authority, whose punishment might not be remitted. Concerning such criminals, the word חֲרָם is actually used. Compare Deut. xiii. 15, 17; Josh. vi. 17. The connexion is natural. Some things consecrated may be redeemed. Lev. xxvii. 13, &c. Others are חֲרָם, and may not be, xxvii. 21, 28. Some criminals too may ransom their lives. E. g. Ex. xxi. 30. Others, more guilty, so as to be חֲרָם, may not. E. g. Numbers xxxv. 31.

§ See Lev. xxvii. 16–19.

lent evasion,) to the following effect; If a man not only will not redeem his estate himself, but has conveyed it to another person, to the intent of alienating it permanently, he shall not be allowed to compass that unlawful design, but at the Jubilee it shall be forfeited to the sacred treasury. — The priests, it is true, could not hold it, but they would sell it to some other proprietor, selecting no doubt some one of the same tribe, and having reference to the rights of the nearest kinsman.*

The institution of Tithes, which relates to one of the subjects of the next Lecture, is naturally introduced in this place, because, except in the case of sacrificial animals, it was to admit of commutations similar to those upon which we have been remarking.

* See Lev. xxv. 25 *et seq.* — Another way of understanding this difficult passage, would be to view it as declaring the forfeiture, at the Jubilee, of landed property, which an Israelite had so far disregarded the spirit of the national institutions, as even to lease to a foreigner, "another man." Compare xxv. 30. — From a comparison of xxvi. 46, with xxvii. 34, it seems natural to infer that Moses, when he wrote the former text, supposed that this series of revelations was there to close.

LECTURE XIV.

NUMBERS I. 1.—X. 10.

CENSUS OF THE PEOPLE.—EXPLANATION OF ITS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE ENUMERATION IN EXODUS.—ARRANGEMENT OF THE TRIBES IN THE CAMP.—CENSUS OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI.—ARRANGEMENT OF ITS DUTIES AT THE TABERNACLE.—ITS POSITION IN THE CAMP.—CONTRIBUTION OF THE SUPERNUMERARY FIRST-BORN.—DUTIES OF THE LEVITES IN LATER TIMES.—THEIR REVENUES.—PROPRIETY OF THE SELECTION OF THE LEAST NUMEROUS TRIBE FOR SACRED OFFICES.—EXTENSION AND MODIFICATION OF SOME PREVIOUS LAWS.—ORDEAL OF THE “LAW OF JEALOUSIES.”—RULES RESPECTING THE VOW OF NAZARITESHIP.—BENEDICTION PRESCRIBED FOR THE HIGH PRIEST’S USE.—DONATIONS OF THE PRINCES OF THE TRIBES.—ARRANGEMENT OF THE LIGHT IN THE HOLY PLACE.—CONSECRATION OF THE LEVITES, AND NEW RULE FOR THEIR TIME OF SERVICE.—NEW DIRECTION RELATING TO THE PASSOVER.—PROVISION OF THE SILVER TRUMPETS.

THE national worship having been instituted, and a full code of ritual and civil laws promulgated, the next step was to take a census of the people; which was done according to tribes, and by means of the smaller family divisions of the tribes respectively.*

This census was made, or at least was begun, under the superintendence of one chief man from each tribe, on the first day of the second month of the year, the month Jiar. It included all males, except of the tribe of Levi, “from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel.”† To keep good the number of twelve, along with the omission of the tribe of Levi, the descendants of Ephraim and Ma-

* Numb. i. 2, 4.

† i. 45, 47–51.

nasseh, the two sons of Joseph, were reckoned as two tribes.* The tribe of Judah proved the largest, numbering seventy-four thousand and six hundred warriors; that of Manasseh, the least, numbering thirty-two thousand and two hundred.† Ephraim and Manasseh together, composing the posterity of Joseph, were, within two thousand, as numerous as the posterity of Judah; these two rival families considerably exceeding any other in numerical force.

The whole number of men of full age proved to be six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty; the same number with that which is declared, several months before,‡ to have paid the half-shekel to Eleazar and Ithamar towards the building of the Tabernacle. The question has accordingly been raised, whether the same census was not intended in both places; the mention of it being either anticipated in the passage in Exodus, or retrospectively alluded to in the passage before us. The careful indication, however, of time in both cases, would seem to preclude either supposition. And when another fact is brought into view, the difficulty arising out of the exact coincidence of numbers may appear to be done away. All the enumerations of all the tribes in the first chapter of Numbers, present even tens. The unavoidable conclusion is, that a perfectly exact enumeration was not intended. It contemplated a military organization of the people, which, in different parts of the Old Testament, we learn was made with reference to decimal numbers.§ Units not being counted, the similarity between enumerations, made at periods of time so near to one another, is no longer matter of surprise; particularly if we suppose, what is in the highest degree probable,

* Numb. i. 32-35.

† i. 27, 35.

‡ Ex. xxxviii. 26.

§ See Deut. i. 15. Compare Ex. xviii. 25.

that the second was not so much a distinct counting, as a more formal verification of the first. When Eleazar and Ithamar had already so recently made out their enumeration of the people for one purpose, it is altogether unlikely that their lists would be disregarded, and a work so onerous be gone through, a second time, *de integro*. It is safely to be presumed, that the list first made would be put into the hands of the officers who were to superintend the new enrolment; and that, as the number, supposing it to have been accurately stated in the first instance, could not have become materially different in so short a space of time, the main purpose would be to authenticate it, without disturbing it any further than to count, instead of each individual of any company who had died in the interval, the name of some one who had grown up to full age.* For the object had in view, such a course of proceeding would have been sufficiently precise. To aim at a greater exactness, would have been no better than a fastidious nicety.† And the particular and repeated mention of the agency of the prince of each tribe in the taking of this latter census, may be thought to show, that its object was to satisfy each prince, that his tribe was subject to do military duty to the extent indicated by the census of Eleazar and Ithamar.‡

* Compare Numb. i. 18.

† I might urge further this view of a census only in round numbers having been intended. In all the tribes but one, (25,) the sum is given in even hundreds; and in that, there is an even half-hundred. It is likely that in different tribes the reckoning was made with different degrees of precision.

‡ i. 4-16, 44.—I cannot forbear another suggestion on the perfect suitableness of the arrangement of this double census. The religious revenues were to consist, in great part, in tithes. It was fit, then, that the priests should know what amount of tithes was to be expected. Accordingly, advantage is taken of a particular measure, to make an enrolment under their direction. On the other hand, to satisfy the party which

The organization having been in this respect completed, the position of the several tribes in the camp is next determined. On each side of the Tabernacle, east, south, west, and north, three tribes are to pitch their tents "afar off," each tribe under its own general, and each division of three tribes, with one exception,* to be under the command of the general of the most numerous of the three. In the arrangement of these divisions, we see a regard paid to family affinities, and (if I may use the expression, in the qualified sense which will suggest itself,) to considerations of policy. The tribes of Judah and Joseph are encamped in the front and rear of the Tabernacle, so as to occupy the posts of honor and danger, and at the same time, by being as far as possible from each other, to avoid interferences which might lead to collision. The tribe of Judah leads the host; a distinction due to its superior numbers, and at the same time, perhaps, designed to counterbalance the advantage of the family of Joseph, in having the military leader of the whole people, Joshua, from its own number. The secondary tribes of the camp of Judah were those of Issachar and Zebulun, whose ancestors were both, like Judah, children of Leah, Jacob's first wife. The arrangement of the western camp presents an

was to be taxed, that there had been no over-statement, which might be the ground of extortion, advantage is soon taken of another occasion to verify the list, under the auspices of other persons, whose interest was that of the tax-payers. And while each is thus made a check on the other, this is not ostensibly the case, so as to excite any jealousy or pride; but each seems to be doing his own proper business, the priests collecting a religious tax, the princes arranging a military levy.—Once more; the weaker party, the priests, make out the first list. Had the order been different, the stronger party would have been less manageable, had there been found any error to correct.—Here is one instance, I think, of that consummate wisdom of Moses' administration, which is constantly revealing itself to a careful attention.

* Numb. ii. 10, 11; compare 12, 13.

equally close family alliance. It consists of the posterity of Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, and of Benjamin, the only other son of Rachel; the tribe of Ephraim, the most numerous, having here the precedence. The tribes of Reuben and Simeon, descendants of Leah, it might be natural to expect to find associated with Judah. But it is likely that, being both descended from an older son of Jacob; they would ill have brooked that direct control on the part of the posterity of Judah, which the latter, on the other hand, on account of their greater numbers and power; (as well as their claim to the birth-right,* which we are to consider hereafter,) would have been still more discontented to relinquish. Accordingly, the wounded pride of the Reubenites is soothed, by being placed at the head of a camp of their own; a distinction, which (though it is the only departure from the rule of the most numerous tribe in a division being its leader,) the Simeonites, whose census was greater, would be willing to concede to them, in consistency with the principle which made the ground of the jealousy, entertained by both tribes, of that of Judah, viz. the priority of their ancestor's birth. Four tribes remained to be arranged; Dan and Naphtali, descended from Rachel's slave, Bilhah, and thus, in some sense, according to the conceptions of the time, of Rachel's family; and Gad and Asher, descended from Zilpah, the slave of Leah. Of these, Dan was much the most numerous; and besides, as descendants of Leah commanded in two divisions, it may be supposed that there was a propriety in giving to the family of Rachel a predominance in the two others. Dan is accordingly made the leader of the northern division, and Naphtali, of the same parentage, assigned to the same quarter. There remain Gad and

* Gen. xlix. 8.

Asher, both descended from Zilpah, to fill the two yet vacant places in the southern and northern divisions of Leah and Rachel. To the former of these, the more numerous of the two, is allotted the place, with Reuben and Simeon, to which domestic affinities assign it; while Asher is placed, not after, as we might have expected, but between Dan and Naphtali; an arrangement, which, perhaps, it is not going too far to suggest, may have been intended to overawe any discontent which may have been felt at its isolated position.

The tribe of Levi, excepted from the general reckoning, is now enumerated.* The nature of the claim upon the first-born of all the families of Israel, to be consecrated to the service of Jehovah, (in consequence of their exemption when the first-born of Egypt were slain,) received our attention in a former connexion.† By an arrangement, obviously tending to a better organization of the sacerdotal order, as well as advantageous alike to both parties, — to those who were adopted, and those who were dispensed, — the tribe of Levi are now consecrated to that service, in the place of the first-born of all the tribes.‡ This tribe consisted of three families, descended from Levi's three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Its census exhibited only twenty thousand

* "These also are the generations of Aaron *and Moses*," Numb. iii. 1. Only the names of Aaron's children follow, in the immediate context. To explain this, it has been suggested, that, as Moses' sons were children of a foreign mother, they could not be reckoned among Levites; and accordingly his nearest kinsmen after these, his nephews, are reckoned as his family. But this is asserted without authority, and the contrary is declared, 1 Chron. xxiii. 14. I find no difficulty in the text. Verse 1 is the title of the whole chapter. Moses' children are included in the description in verse 19. And they are mentioned expressly in verse 1, in order to call the reader's attention more distinctly to the fact, that to Aaron's children the priesthood was assigned, while those of Moses, though he was leader of the people, only took the rank of common Levites.

† pp. 144, 145.

‡ Numb. iii. 11–13.

three hundred males over a month old,* the family of Kohath being most numerous, and that of Merari least.†

These families were henceforward devoted to the service of the Tabernacle, in respect to which, each,

* This is the sum of the enumerations of the three families in verses 22, 28, and 34. But verse 39 states the sum at twenty-two thousand, and this latter census is adhered to in the context, under circumstances demanding accuracy. (Compare 46 with 43.) In the early writing of the Hebrews, it is probable (see p. 56) that the alphabetical signs were used in numerical notation, as they are still, where brevity is studied; and accordingly, with characters so nearly resembling each other as do many of the Hebrew, it is impossible to rely, in such cases, on the integrity of the text. Kennicott accordingly conjectures, that in verse 22, instead of γ , denoting 200, some copyist wrote γ , used for 500, which would reconcile the numbers. Houbigant and Michaelis, without resorting to the hypothesis of alphabetical notation, account for the discrepancy by the accidental omission of a letter in verse 28, by which means $\psi\lambda\psi$ three, became $\psi\psi$ six. — After all, it seems likely, that, agreeably to the principle of the arrangement, the *first-born* of the Levitical family were to be deducted from the gross census of the tribe; and their number, if, in the same proportion as the first-born of the other tribes, would not have been so much over three hundred as to make it unsuitable to estimate the residue at twenty-two even thousands.

Another difficulty arises out of the small number of *first-born*, above a month old, among the whole people. It is stated (43), at 22,273. Respecting this, it has been remarked, that, 1. where the first child was female, no first-born was reckoned in a family; 2. first-born sons, who were themselves heads of families, did not come into the census. But I do not find authority for the first assertion, and the second I could not adopt without qualification. The truth I take to have been, that, in the patriarchal way of living of the Jews, two, three, and four generations composed one family; and that in each domestic establishment, however large, there was reckoned only one *first-born*, who was the head of the family after the common ancestor, and the delegate of his authority.

† From the fact that the census in Numbers, from which the Levites were excluded, (Numb. i. 47–49,) resulted in the same number with that in Exodus, (compare Numb. i. 46; Ex. xxxviii. 26,) it follows, that in the first census also no account was made of the Levitical tribe; from which we further infer, that, as early as the time of the first census, the designation of the Levites to their sacred trust, referred to retrospectively in Numb. i. 47–51, had been made known, at least in some general way. In Lev. xxv. 32–34, we also find this designation alluded to, as an arrangement understood. It is natural to regard it, either as a consequence of the act of the Levites, recorded in Ex. xxxii. 26–28, or as having been even of an earlier date, and as having prompted their zeal on that occasion. Compare also Ex. xxxviii. 21, and Deut. x. 8, 9.

under the direction of its own chief,* had its separate charge, to be executed by its males "from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old."† The Kohathite servants of the Tabernacle, two thousand seven hundred and fifty in number, were, under the oversight of Eleazar, the eldest son of Aaron, to have the charge of the furniture of the sacred edifice, when on the march, removing and replacing it when the camp was broken up and formed. The two thousand six hundred and thirty Gershonites were to take care of the coverings and hangings of the Tabernacle and its court; while to the three thousand two hundred Merarites, were committed the more solid parts of the edifice. The two last parties were to be under the direction of Ithamar, Aaron's younger son,‡ while the whole were to be under the supervision of Eleazar,§ to whom also a personal trust, of special responsibility, was committed. The Kohathites were charged, on pain of death, not to touch, or so much as look at, the sacred utensils, till they had been packed by the priests, and prepared for removal.|| In the camp the Kohathites were to pitch on the south side of the Tabernacle, the Gershonites on the west, and the Merarites on the north; while the tents of Moses and the priests were to be "before the tabernacle, towards the east."¶ The encampments of the Levites were of course near to the Tabernacle, which was their charge, and within the area formed by the encampments of the other tribes. But it is equally evident that they must have been, principally, at least, on the outside of the Tabernacle Court. The tents of Moses and the priests, it is to be presumed, were within the enclosure; and the same thing is probable of a small portion of each of the Levitical families detached

* Numb. iii. 24, 30, 35.

† iv. 35.

‡ iv. 28, 33.

§ iii. 32; iv. 16.

|| iv. 15, 20.

¶ iii. 23, 29, 35, 38.

to serve as a guard within the sacred precincts. But an area of only a hundred cubits by fifty, partly occupied too by the Tabernacle, the altar, and the laver, afforded no sufficient accommodation for the whole.

The number of the male first-born of all the tribes being ascertained to be greater, by two hundred and seventy-three, than that of the males of the Levitical family, for whom, to use the appropriate language, they had been exchanged, each individual of this residual number was called upon to pay five shekels, under the name of a bounty for this dispensation from the sacerdotal service. The chief use of this arrangement, I conceive to have been, to furnish the precedent of a permanent tax, intended to be laid on the first-born in after times, as one of the perquisites of the priesthood.* In the first instance, it could not have been onerous, the number of supernumeraries, on whom it was assessed, being so small, and the whole amount being probably levied on all the first-born, since one had no better right than another to consider himself redeemed by the substitution of a Levite in his place. Once established, the tax would be one likely to be cheerfully paid, both on account of the interesting associations belonging to its original institution, and the happy circumstances under which a parent would be called on to pay it for his heir. On the one hand, it would furnish a perpetual revenue to the priesthood, considerable in amount; while, on the other, it would come from those, whose domestic expenses were not yet such as to render it burdensome.

At this early period, then, we find the tribe of Levi formally separated for the service of the national religion. At present, their duties were very simple, as was needful, while the institution of their peculiarity was

* Numb. iii. 51; xviii. 14-16.

still recent. When a sense of responsibility had been first impressed by the position which they were called to fill, and each man had come to feel something of the spirit of his order, they still needed to be educated for the duties which it was designed that they should discharge. Along with the priests, their leaders, and their fellows of the same tribe, they appear to have been intended to constitute a balance in the state, of the nature of a learned aristocracy; and, in this view, Michaelis has compared them to the Mandarins of China.* It would be an error to suppose, that the priests and Levites were ministers of religion in any sense known to Christianity. Of public prayers we know nothing in the early ages, unless we give that name to the confession of the people's sins by the high-priest over the scape-goat's head, or his blessing upon the people, recorded a few chapters further on. Nothing so near to preaching, as public expositions of the Law, appears to have been practised earlier than the time of the captivity; and even music, whether vocal or instrumental, seems to have owed its introduction among the services of worship, to the magnificent taste of David. The Levites, too, congregated in their colleges, for such in effect their forty-eight cities were, were not so placed as to admit of any such relation to the people, as is sustained by the pastors of Christian congregations.

The Levitical institution appears to have resembled one, with which the Israelites were already well acquainted, from their residence in Egypt. The office of the inferior classes of the priesthood in that country consisted, not only in rendering services in the solemnization of the national worship, but in the culture of numerous branches † of science and art. They formed,

* "Commentaries" &c., book 2, chap. 5, § 6.

† Respecting the Egyptian orders, called by the Greek historians

in short, the learned, as well as the sacerdotal body, devoting themselves to the study of astronomy, natural history, mathematics, jurisprudence, history, and medicine, and being looked to by the community for the performance of such duties, as required knowledge and skill in these departments. In Egypt, too, as in the Levitical order, the office in question was hereditary; a method resorted to in many countries, especially in antiquity, in order to secure a succession of functionaries adequately accomplished for the public service, by education in the science or art to be exercised.

To the Levites, accordingly, in after ages, when the system became more developed, we find that various duties were actually assigned, requiring the wisdom and accomplishments which only culture can bestow. Part, indeed, performed the menial offices of the ritual, but even to those a great responsibility belonged; another part devoted their skill in the art of music to the increasing of the attractions of the Temple service; and others held the important trusts of collectors and guardians of the sacred treasury, scribes, and judges.* They were probably the transcribers, from which it would naturally follow, that they would also on many occasions be expositors, of the Law of Moses, the only written Israelitish code. Their relation to the Tabernacle effectually constituted them the military guard of that structure, and of the worship there conducted, assigning to them a service, when occasion should demand their intervention, similar to what they had actually performed at a previous time;† and there is a distinct appearance of a military organization of theirs,‡

παύλας and *ισογυμναστῆς*, see Jablonski's "Pantheon Egyptiacum," Proleg. cap. 3, passim; præsertim §§ 39—45.

* 1 Chron. xxiii. 4, 5; xxvi. 26, 29; 2 Chron. xix. 8; xxxiv. 13.

† Ex. xxxii. 26.

‡ 2 Kings xi. 4 et seq.

at a later period. Finally, their position between the priests and the people was such as to qualify them to exert an influence upon each, salutary to both, and conducive to the common good.

These facts being weighed, the rich revenues of the tribe will no longer be thought matter of surprise. The males of the tribe of Levi were only twenty-two thousand in number. Supposing twelve thousand of these to be of full age, that body, through its title to one tenth part of the income of six hundred thousand Israelites, received five times as much as the same number of men belonging to any other tribe of the nation. In consideration of this, however, they relinquished their claim to a share in the common territory, which, in the proportion of their numbers, would have been one fiftieth part, leaving in reality their income at only four times the amount of the average income of other men, a sum certainly far from excessive, when considered in relation to the services which it bought, if the practice of any nation may decide the question. To provide for the exercise of the learned professions, for so many functions of magistracy, and so many subordinate departments of the public service, at an expense for each individual not exceeding four or five times the average of the income of other citizens, would undoubtedly require an economical administration.

In this connexion we cannot but be struck with the relation of the Levitical tribe to the rest, in point of numbers. A tribe very much less numerous than either of the others is chosen to be devoted to the services of religion. Of the twenty-two thousand male Levites over a month old, supposing twelve thousand to be of mature age, which is thought to be a reasonable calculation, the Levites were but a little more than a third

more numerous than the children of Manasseh, who constituted the smallest of the other tribes. I think, that, independently of other reasons for the selection of this tribe for the sacerdotal office, we may see that it was rendered fit by the circumstance now under our notice. The sacred authority was a balance in the commonwealth, which must not be suffered to become a preponderating weight. It furnished great advantages for political usurpation, if other circumstances should favor. Accordingly, it was most safely committed to that division of the people, which was much the least formidable through its numerical force. Again; a dispensation of one of the more numerous tribes from the payment of tithes, and from ordinary military service, would have occasioned too large a deduction from the religious revenues and the military force; and still more, on the other hand, the division of the national tithes among a large number of servants of the sanctuary, would have lessened the dignity of the station, both by detracting from the distinction implied in it, and by affording to each individual a less generous support. And it may even be thought probable, that an additional reason for the seclusion of the Levites in separate cities, while the other tribes had the free range and the hardy habits of an agricultural life, was not only, that, through a direct and intimate mutual influence, they might impel each other forward in that learned civilization, of which compact communities are the natural seat, but also that, agreeably to well-ascertained principles of political economy, their increase of population might be less rapid than that of the other tribes.

The direction at the beginning of the fifth chapter,* that persons affected with certain ritual impurities should be put without the camp, had been already given,† in

* Numb. v. 1-4.

† Lev. xiii. 46.

respect to lepers. It is now repeated concerning them, in order to be extended to other cases of uncleanness, which had before been treated, but subjected to a less rigid regulation.* It would seem that the previous provisions concerning these latter had not completely accomplished the object. The people, having been led by a little experience to see this, and having been already brought into a degree of subordination and method by the operation of the first rule, would now bear a stricter one more readily than if the latter had in the first instance been enforced.

The next law † is but an extension of that recorded at the beginning of the sixth chapter of Leviticus. It had been there directed, that, besides the Trespass Offering to be presented in certain cases, the faulty person should make restitution to whomsoever he had wronged, with an addition of one fifth part of the amount of the injury done. ‡ But if the other party were dead meanwhile, particularly if he had left no legal representative, a case would arise which remained to be provided for. It probably had arisen in some instance, creating occasion for the present law, which is simply, that, under such circumstances, the wrong-doer should not be dispensed from his obligation, but should pay to the priest the amount of restitution which he owed. This rule, analogous in some degree to those modern usages, by which the state claims the property of those who leave no heirs, was useful as bringing another perquisite to the priesthood, and still more, as securing, in all cases whatever, the exaction of a rightful penalty.

The direction which next follows, I understand to be to this effect; that the votary, who should bring the offering just mentioned, might make his own choice among the priests, to which of them he would present

* Lev. xi. 39, 40; xv. 1–13.

† Numb. v. 5–8.

‡ Lev. vi. 6, 7.

it.* The effect would be to make it the priests' interest to conciliate individually the people's favor, and, still more, to encourage the people to present such offerings, through the additional motive of the satisfaction experienced in making a donation to a friend. That they should be favorably disposed towards such offerings, was, on all accounts, desirable, particularly in respect to Sin and Trespass Offerings, as these would often imply the acknowledgment of faults which could only be brought to light through the transgressor's own confession.

The passage which occupies the rest of this chapter, relating to the "law of jealousies," presents one of the instances, which would be the most confidently appealed to, in support of the theory of a permanent supernatural administration of the Jewish affairs. It would be said, that we there read the permanent menace of the punishment of a certain crime, which punishment could only be made to fall on the criminal through a miraculous divine interposition. I submit, however, that there is no proof, of a sort to justify a careful reasoner in the adoption of an inference of such vast importance.

It is altogether probable, that it is no new process of investigation, which is here by divine authority enjoined; but, on the contrary, the restriction of an ancient and inveterate custom within limits, necessary to guard it against the horrible abuse, to which, except under responsible supervision, it would obviously be subject. National, as well as individual education, is a process, not an instant result. Many things were accordingly permitted to the Jews for a time, on account of the "hardness of their hearts"; the Law aiming at no more for the present, than to check their worst evil conse-

* Numb. v. 9, 10.

quences, and lay a basis for their ultimate complete removal. A practice, similar to the present, is known to have existed in other countries.* It probably existed anciently among the Jews; and the connexion in which it comes before us, following immediately as it does upon passages occupied with the duties and prerogatives of the priests, indicates, to my mind, that all that was now done, was to place it within the watch and control of the priestly authority. To do this was evidently a great step of security against the mischiefs, to which, under less responsible management, it would be likely to lead. For as long as the superstition lasted, and the trial might be made without such intervention, there was nothing to prevent a husband, excited by jealousy, or pretending to be so, from administering a poisoned potion, and then, when it took effect, pretending that it was the supernatural penalty of his guilty partner's crime.

Nothing of this kind could take place under the law before us. The water of jealousy could only be administered by the priest, who would naturally be interested rather in favor of, than against, a helpless stranger, subjected to so dreadful an ordeal on grounds of mere suspicion. He might, it is true, be bribed; but so might some other ruffian be bribed to commit a murder, at less expense, and under circumstances much less perilous to the perpetrator. It would hardly be worth any one's while to tamper with him for the commission of such an act, when he must commit it, if at all, under circum-

* Proof of the use, in antiquity, of ordeals of this kind, may be seen in Philostratus, "De Vitâ Apollonii," lib. 1, cap. 6, p. 7, (Edit. Leip.) Pausanias, "Græciæ Descriptio," lib. 7, cap. 25, ad calc. Mungo Park found practices somewhat similar in Africa. See his "Travels" &c., pp. 176, 251. (New York Edit.) See also Geddes' "Critical Remarks," p. 365, note; and Oldendorp, "Geschichte der Mission der Evangelischen Brüder," buch 3, absch. 5, s. 296.

stances of the greatest publicity, involving vastly more chances of detection than would accompany its commission at the husband's home, in some remote part of the country, where he was surrounded only by inferiors and dependents. Who, plotting against another's life, would think of consummating his crime in the most public place of his country, under the attentive eye of its hierarchy, in the sanctuary of God?

The adjuncts, here attached to this practice, seem to have been designed to accomplish its disuse; and, in this connexion, it is a fact worthy of notice, that, throughout the subsequent history, not a single instance is recorded of the ordeal in question having been applied. The arrangements, prescribed in such detail, appear, indeed, to have taken away from a jealous husband all motive for resorting to the process. If he had proof of his wife's guilt, of course there was no occasion for resorting to it. She was then to be stoned immediately on conviction. If he could find no better basis for the charge, than in his own uncharitable imagination, he would, on all common principles of action, sooner suppress it, than expose his fancied dishonor in the most public manner possible, and, at the same time, subject himself, in order to do so, to burdensome expenses; for at least he must make a journey to the sanctuary with his wife, even if the expenses there of the pompous process he had demanded, amounted to no more than the cost of the "offering of jealousy." If he believed or fancied her guilty, but without proof, he had an easier, cheaper, and on all accounts more satisfactory remedy in a simple divorce, for which, effected by his own unquestioned act, sufficient liberty was allowed.

On the other hand, the public manner in which the trial was now directed to be made, if made at all, added to the superstitious view already entertained by the

people of its efficacy, would tend, almost unavoidably, to prevent its use. The apprehension of being subjected to it, operating on sensitive minds, would go far to prevent any freedoms of behaviour, which might excite a jealous feeling. And a guilty woman would hardly allow herself even to be brought to the trial; for, apart from the fear of the actual supernatural infliction, she could not flatter herself that she would be so far proof against the awful solemnities of the scene and ritual, as not to betray her guilt; she could not be sure, that through a designedly complicated and protracted ceremonial, so arranged in all respects as to work upon her fancy and her fears,—her face, contrary to all Oriental habit, exposed to public view,—her courage would hold out to carry her through such a scene, not betraying her guilty secret by a faintness or a blush. She would sooner, by a timely confession of the crime, throw herself on the mercy of him whom she had wronged. She would then, at worst, only meet a little earlier, and with much less exposure, the death,* which in any event must be her doom; while, if she became her own accuser, there would be some hope of forgiveness, and of that concealment of her crime, which, if detection were to follow on a public investigation, would be no longer possible.†

* I am not even certain that death could be inflicted for any crime merely confessed by the perpetrator. The Law required, as we shall see, that, in capital execution, the witnesses should take the lead.

† Further, submission to this ordeal was, for aught that appears, an entirely voluntary act on the woman's part, and such has in fact been the view of the later Jews. Of course, a person conscious of guilt would not take the risk of it. If there was proof of her supposed offence, the ordeal would not be proposed to her. If there was no proof, she would reject it, and rather brave the only consequence she could then incur, that of divorce.—Maimonides' notion of the use of this ordeal was, that it secured domestic quiet, by influencing a wife to avoid all occasions of displeasure on her husband's part. "Istud enim permovet omnem mulierem

If the wife, in the courage of her innocence, were to offer herself to the trial, it would naturally make the husband ashamed of his doubts, or at least unwilling to commit himself by proclaiming them in so conspicuous a manner; the rather, as, if he should obtain no confirmation of them, he would necessarily expose himself to severe reproach for having groundlessly resorted to so extreme a measure. And a single instance of the trial having been resorted to, without resulting in any confirmation of the suspicions entertained, — which must be the consequence, unless there were both guilt, and a supernatural visitation of it, — would probably deter, for a long period, from any repetition of the experiment.

But it will still be said, that an express declaration is made, of a supernatural punishment of the sin. Here is the stress of the question. And for myself, I entertain little doubt that the words convey a different sense from what has been ascribed to them. I understand them to refer to the infliction, which the superstition of the time anticipated from the ordeal of jealousy, when taken by a guilty person, and to declare, that, at all events, it is not to be looked for till all the ceremonies previously prescribed shall be gone through; — not that it will take place then, but that it will not take place before.† And this view, I conceive, is strikingly con-

viro junctam, ut exactissimè sibi caveat, ne cor mariti sui ægritudine afficiat, propter metum aquarum mulieris declinantis. Nam etiam innocentes mulieres pleræque, et quæ benè sibi sunt consciæ, omnibus suis facultatibus actionem illam ignominiosam redimerent, quinimò mortem jucundio rem haberent, quàm publicam illam ignominiam, quâ caput mulieris discooperiebatur, capilli detondebantur, vestimenta usque ad pectus dilacerabantur, atque ita ligata in Sanctuario in conspectu omnium virorum et mulierum, totiusque Synedrii magni sistebatur. Ob hujus ergo rei timorem magni et exitiales morbi ordinem domesticum destruentes impediti fuerunt." — "More Nebochim," pars 3, cap. 49, p. 499.

† This is no unusual form of speech. Compare e. g. Matt. xviii. 17, where every one understands, not that we are in duty bound to treat a

firmed by the fact, that there is no direction to stone the criminal, whose conviction, supposing it to have supernaturally taken place, would have exposed her to that last sentence of the Law. If it be supernatural conviction which is here spoken of, it is impossible to explain why the crime, aggravated by the effrontery with which its denial had been persisted in, and made so notorious by the manner of its detection, should be punished merely by disease and shame, instead of that death which the Law denounced against it.

A similar remark is perhaps more manifestly just respecting the provisions for the Nazarite vow in the next chapter. Here is no new institution, but the regulation of an old usage, mainly, as it would seem, for the purpose of rendering it inconvenient, burdensome, costly, and thereby infrequent. It is not mentioned as a new institution, but the contrary. "*When* either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite," &c.* It was an observance to which the Jews, from fashion, fancy, or old association, were addicted. It did not require to be absolutely forbidden. But it had no good claim to be encouraged. A Jew, therefore, might make the vow, if he would; but, if he

person "as a heathen man and a publican," under the circumstances described, but that it will be time enough to do so when those circumstances have occurred; that we are not to do it before.—And after all, in a matter so peculiar, a question of translation might well be raised. Other considerations apart, it would be altogether unsafe to build an important theory upon a passage of such dubious rendering. The verb in the last clause of verse 21, (repeated in verses 22 and 27,) translated in our version "swell," occurs nowhere else, and it is out of the question to say that we are sure of its meaning; and the word rendered "rot," is simply the common verb signifying *fall*, (נָפַל,) and might be understood of the faintness consequent on agitation. I am, however, proposing no new translation, but only urging that we cannot defend that which is received, with sufficient confidence to found upon it any important conclusion. See pp. 17, 18.

* Rather, "shall *signalize* himself" by such a vow, shall wish to attract attention by it. Compare Lev. xxvii. 2, and the remark on it, p. 308.

made it, he must pay for it; so that this use, at least, his will-worship would have, that it would tend to the more liberal support of the ecclesiastical estate. Besides refraining from all inebriating liquor, and from every natural or manufactured product of the vine, and letting his hair grow long, observances which probably belonged to the ancient institution,* a Nazarite, under the present regulation, must refrain from mourning, even for his nearest relatives; if, by accident, he should approach a dead body during the term of his vow, he must present an offering, and begin, all over again, the series of his consecrated days; and when the term specified in his vow had expired, he must repair to the Tabernacle, and offer costly sacrifices of all the different kinds.† I can only see, in the spirit of these arrangements, a purpose to obstruct, in two different ways, a propensity to the ostentations of will-worship. A vow, which no one was under obligation to make, must now be made, if at all, at the expense of considerable time and trouble, at serious pecuniary cost,‡ and under the inconvenience of all the anxiety which would be felt lest the accident of a contracted impurity should require a new beginning of the consecrated term. There is a principle of human nature, — the pride of sanctity, — which would overcome all this difficulty, and be even stimulated by it. And against this, too, an effectual precaution is taken. The impulse of the ostentatious devotee would naturally be, to signalize his self-denial in the view of others, by making his vow for a long term. But here the Law met him on his own ground. It prescribed costly offerings at the sanctuary, which, how-

* Numb. vi. 3 - 5.

† vi. 6 - 21.

‡ The case of Paul, (Acts xxi. 23, 24, 26,) shows, that the poor, if they made this vow, brought themselves under the embarrassment of depending upon charity for its execution.

ever, were not to be presented till the Nazarite term was over, making him liable to the opposite imputation of niggardliness, if his vow should be for a long period, and especially if it should be for life. The shorter the time specified in it, the sooner would he be able to exhibit himself to the priests and people in all the glory he had coveted.*

In the benediction which Aaron was directed to pronounce upon the people, as often as there should be occasion for any such form of address, it is very probable, that there was, in the way of antithesis, some reference to idolatrous forms which had prevailed. But all that at the present day we can see is, that use was to be made of the opportunity, to remind them whose blessing it was for which they must look, the name *Jehovah* being the leading name in each clause; a circumstance which is also expressly adverted to in the last verse.†

The donations of the princes of the several tribes, on twelve successive days, enumerated in the seventh chapter, have been commonly understood as having been made immediately after the dedication of the Tabernacle; but, I think, erroneously. No such inference can be safely made from the first verse of this chapter; for the word "day," is freely used for time in general, and indeed the interpretation, which should here put on it the most literal sense, is contradicted by what we presently after read of the presentation having occupied twelve days. On the other hand, the need for some

* In Lev. xxv. 5, we have seen a reference to the Nazarite institution as already existing. For authorities showing that rites resembling those of Jewish Nazariteship were practised among the Egyptians and other ancient nations, see Spencer, "De Legibus" &c., lib. 3, cap. 6, diss. 1, §§ 1, 3. Compare a fragment of Chæmon the Stoic, in Porphyry, "De Abstinentiâ," lib. 4, § 6.

† Numb. vi. 22-27. Compare Psalm iv. 6; lxvii. 1.

of the articles presented, did not arise till the separate services of the Levites had been assigned.* Some expressions used, denote that that service had already been arranged, and the census already made;† and the offerings of the several princes were made from Judah to Naphtali, in the order in which their respective tribes were, at the beginning of the second month, arranged around the Tabernacle.

The offerings of all the princes were, no doubt by previous concert, the same; consisting of plate and incense for the use of the Tabernacle.‡ Each prince also, in his tribe's behalf, brought an ox, and each two princes a wagon, for the transportation of the sacred edifice.§ Of these, four wagons, each with its yoke of oxen, were assigned to the family of Merari, to whom belonged the conveyance of the more bulky parts of the structure, and two wagons to that of Gershon, who had charge of its hangings; while that of Kohath needed none, "because the service of the sanctuary, belonging to them, was, that they should bear upon their shoulders." || Thus, in all respects, care was taken to interest the tribes in their place of common worship, as their common property. And the accompanying ceremony, including the presentation of victims for the different kind of offerings, ¶ was apparently intended to be a solemn individual recognition by each tribe of that common place of worship as its own; a relation, too, in which all stood on a footing of dignified equality. To this end, through twelve successive days, the princes appeared, followed each, it is likely, by a procession of his tribe, to lay its rich offering upon the common altar; and further to cement the union, each day of the momentous celebration was made a day of festivity for the

* Numb. vii. 7, 8.

§ vii. 2, 3.

† vii. 2, 5.

|| vii. 6-9.

‡ vii. 84-86.

¶ vii. 87, 88.

whole, by the rich Feast Offering which made part of the tribute:

The last verse of the seventh chapter, should, I think, be detached from that connexion, and made part of the narrative at the beginning of the eighth chapter, to which it is merely the introduction. This passage appears to be an account of the first lighting of the lamp in the Holy Place, which was henceforth never to go out.* That apartment being without windows, its gorgeous furniture would not be visible to those authorized to enter it, till the lamp had first been lighted. The event was of sufficient interest to deserve a special commemoration, and the influence which the arrangement of the only light would have on the effect intended to be produced on the minds of beholders, entitled this to be the subject of a special direction. The seven lights were, as it seems, to compose one cluster, all turned inwards towards the centre of the room.

The arrangement for the Tabernacle service being now all completed, and the Levites prepared for their appointed work, they are directed to be set apart for it by proper ceremonies of consecration.† These ceremonies are simple, consisting merely in the ablution of those who were to be dedicated, accompanied by the offering of two young bullocks, the one for a Sin Offering, the other for a holocaust. A little change is now made in the provision respecting their term of service. It had been before decreed, that they should serve at the Tabernacle from the age of thirty to that of fifty years.‡ The number thus furnished had, perhaps, ap-

* It is not unlikely, that, among the donations of the twelve days, oil had been brought by the princes or others, for the use of the lamp. (Compare Lev. xxiv. 2.) But of this we do not read, unless קֶטֶר in the 14th and corresponding verses will bear that sense, which I think it scarcely will. See however Psalm lvi. 15.

† Numb. viii. 5—22.

‡ iv. 3.

peared to Moses, on reflection, too small; or those excluded from it, for want of a little more age, had been ambitious of the honor, and solicited their share in it; or it was thought fit to distinguish the Levitical office from the more dignified one of priests, which is believed to have been entered on at the age of thirty. At all events, the rule now introduced was, that, at twenty-five years of age, the Levites should henceforward enter on the appropriate duties of their tribe, and after the age of fifty be subject to no other demand, than to “minister with their brethren in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, to keep the charge, and do no service.”*

The first relation in the ninth chapter is clearly retrospective, being an introduction to the record of the rule prescribed for such as had been prevented from keeping the passover at the proper time.† It should accordingly be translated in the same manner with several others in the book; ‡ “The Lord *had spoken* unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ‘Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season, in the fourteenth day of this month.’” On this first occasion of keeping the passover, which occurred after the Exodus, it appears, that, in consequence of regulations which had been meanwhile enacted, a new question arose,

* Numb. viii. 24–26. I have given above what seems to me the most probable view, resulting from a comparison of these two texts, which, however, some commentators propose to reconcile by understanding the service referred to in iv. 3, to be the special service of conveying the Tabernacle and its furniture, which, say they, required full strength, and was therefore committed to the most mature and robust portion of those designated for the general service of the Tabernacle in viii. 24. The Alexandrine version has in iv. 3, a reading which avoids the discrepancy in the reckoning of years.

† Compare ix. 1–5, 6–14.

‡ E. g. i. 47.

which now had to be settled. "There were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day; and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day; and those men said unto him, 'Wherefore are we kept back that we may not offer an offering to the Lord, in his appointed season among the children of Israel?'" Moses suspended the question, till he should "hear what the Lord will command," and received the direction, that whoever was unavoidably hindered from keeping the festival at its proper time, on the fourteenth day of the first month, should observe it on the same day of the second, which, probably, on this occasion, immediately followed the days occupied by the twelve princes in making their offering. And in this, as in other respects, it is added, that the same rule should have force for the stranger, (that is, the circumcised stranger, the proselyte,*) "as for him that was born in the land."

In connexion with the preparations for the approaching decampment, we have now a repetition of the statement respecting the signal by which the encampment and the marches were regulated. As the first removal of the Tabernacle had not yet taken place, the passage must be regarded as a remark inserted by Moses, after the course of operations described in it had occurred,—in which case it seems a natural preface to his record, which follows, of the first movement,—or as, possibly, an interpolation by some later hand.†

* Ex. xii. 48.

† The passage has some bearing upon the theory of the miraculous character of the appearance of cloud and flame. At verse 19 it is said, that "when the cloud tarried long upon the Tabernacle, many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not." But, from verse 23, it would appear that this command, which they so observed, was given through Moses' instrumentality; that is, that it

The last act of preparation for the intended movement, is the fabrication of two trumpets of silver, to be used henceforward in giving signals on various important occasions, civil, ecclesiastical, and military.* These trumpets were to be blown by the priests; another favorable distinction of their order, and another office connecting them with the responsible parts of national administration. The blowing of both trumpets was to call together "all the assembly," that is, as I understand, a full representation of the tribes,† to the door of the convention-tent. The blowing of one only was to convene the phylarchs. Four successive blasts, in a particular air, called in our version "an alarm," were to set in motion the several camps. In all coming times, this "alarm" in the perils of war, was to be an appeal to Jehovah's protection; and the sound of these same trumpets was to usher in the days of religious festivity.

was Moses who regulated the appointed signal. "At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed; they kept *the charge of the Lord*, at the *commandment of the Lord, by the hand of Moses*."

* Numb. x. 1-10.—In this passage (10) we have the first mention of what are commonly called the "new moons"; viz. the holiday celebrations of the first day of each lunar month. Probably the practice was ancient. The ritual is described further on, at Numb. xxviii. 11-15. The occasion was festive (Numb. x. 10; 1 Sam. xx. 5, 24), though the prohibition of labor on one new moon, viz. the Feast of Trumpets, (Lev. xxiii. 24, 25,) implies that, on other such days, labor was allowable.

† See p. 165.

LECTURE XV.

NUMBERS X. 11.—XIX. 22.

DECAMPMENT FROM "THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI." — PLACE OF THE LEVITES, AND OF THE EPHRAIMITES, ON THE MARCH. — DISCONTENT OF THE PEOPLE. — COMMISSION OF SEVENTY ELDERS. — MIRACULOUS SUPPLY OF QUAILS. — MORTALITY AT KIBROTH-HATTAVAH. — INSUBORDINATION OF AARON AND MIRIAM, AND PUNISHMENT OF THE LATTER. — SPIES SENT TO EXPLORE CANAAN. — DISCOURAGEMENT OF THE PEOPLE AT THEIR REPORT. — POSTPONEMENT OF THE INVASION FOR FORTY YEARS, DENOUNCED. — BATTLE WITH THE AMALEKITES, AND DEFEAT. — RITUAL OF CERTAIN OFFERINGS. — STONING OF A SABBATH-BREAKER. — REGULATION FOR A UNIFORM DRESS. — REBELLION AND PUNISHMENT OF KORAH, DATHAN, ABIRAM, AND ON. — MIRACULOUS TESTIMONY TO AARON'S AUTHORITY, BY THE BUDDING OF HIS STAFF. — ARRANGEMENT OF THE SACERDOTAL AND LEVITICAL REVENUES. — RITUAL OF THE "WATER OF SEPARATION." — QUESTION RESPECTING THE DATE OF OCCURRENCES RELATED IN THE LAST FIVE CHAPTERS. — RECAPITULATION OF EARLIER EVENTS.

THE people had now been eleven months encamped by Mount Sinai. At the end of one month after leaving Egypt, they had come "unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai."* From Sin they had come to Rephidim, and from Rephidim, "in the third month," † to Sinai. Here the first elementary law had been given, and the directions respecting the Tabernacle, the execution of which occupied the rest of the year. "In the first month, in the second year, on the first day of the month, the Tabernacle was reared up." ‡ During this first month, the Law in the book of Leviticus was delivered; and in the early part of the second,

* Ex. xvi. 1.

† Ex. xvii. 1; xix. 1.

‡ Ex. xl. 17.

the organization was completed. All was now ready for the intended movement. "And it came to pass, on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from the Tabernacle of the testimony, and the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.* And they first took their journey, according to the commandment of the Lord, by the hand of Moses."

In part of the arrangement of the march, we seem to see an alteration from what had been originally proposed, to secure what was obviously a more convenient course of procedure. In the original plan, before the Levitical families had been set apart for separate tasks, it had been directed, that, after two divisions of the tribes had proceeded on the march, then "the Tabernacle of the congregation" should "set forward, with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp." † When the host actually made its first movement, the Levitical families having received meanwhile each its separate charge, we find that after the first division of three tribes had gone forward, "the Tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the Tabernacle;" while, after the second division of three tribes, "the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary, and the other did set up the Tabernacle against they came." ‡

* This mention of Paran, (Numb. x. 12,) as the place where the ark rested, appears to indicate that the tenth chapter, and, if so, then probably the latter part of the ninth, as well as the eleventh and twelfth, were written at once, after the encampment at that place. For there were at least two stopping-places between Sinai and Paran. See xi. 34, 35; xii. 16. Compare xxxiii. 16-18.

† ii. 17.

‡ x. 17, 21.—I cannot dwell on each one, so numerous are they, of the unobtrusive arguments, of the nature of that which this passage supplies, for the authenticity of the writing. But who can believe that a composi-

Another part of the arrangement deserves remark. It is, that, while the tribe of Ephraim was the rear-guard of the whole army while in camp, it was not so on the march, but retained, probably as a post of honor, its position immediately after the Ark of the Covenant.*

The urgency, which Moses used to induce Hobab to remain with him as his guide, has been the subject of remark in another place.† The few words recorded as having been used by Moses when the ark removed and rested, are probably to be understood as constituting respectively the first verses of hymns which were used on these occasions.‡

The fire, which is said at the beginning of the eleventh chapter to have “consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp,” has been differently understood as denoting the Simoom, lightning, or a burning of the dry shrubbery of the desert, which had extended to some tents on the outskirts of the encampment. In preference, however, to either of these interpretations, I would adopt a suggestion which has been made, that “the fire of the Lord” here denotes the divine displeasure, which is often said to “burn,” and to “consume,” and is spoken of as being “kindled,” in the same verse.§ So understood, the first three

tion of a comparatively modern period would have been made to contain the record of an alteration like this?

* Numb. x. 21, 22.

† x. 29–32. See p. 150.

‡ x. 35, 36. What I suggest is, that the meaning is the same as if we should say, The congregation sang “Before Jehovah’s awful throne”; that is, the psalm beginning with that line.—“The ark of the covenant of the Lord went *before them* in the three days’ journey, to search out a resting-place for them” (verse 33); not in the van, which would contradict verse 21, but in their presence; לַפְּנֵיהֶם, *in their company*, in their midst.

§ xi. 1–3. Compare 10, 33. See Drusius, “Commentarius ad Dif. Loc. Num.,” cap. 43. Compare Ps. lxxviii. 21, where this incident is referred to, as the context will show.—On the exposition which I propose, the first half of verse 1, is a compendious statement of what is related in the

verses present but a concise statement of the occurrence, which is narrated in detail through the rest of the chapter. We there read, that, some of the meaner sort of the people* having broken out into mutinous expressions of discontent, on account of their limited supply of food, so different from the luxurious variety, to which they had been accustomed in Egypt, Moses was directed to promise them a miraculous provision, abundant beyond their utmost wishes. Flocks of quails were accordingly seen pouring into the camp, which the people greedily collected and devoured. But hardly had they done so, — “the flesh was yet between their teeth,” — when a pestilence broke out, to which numbers (we are not told how many) fell victims. It is, I suppose, commonly understood, that the divine displeasure, thus expressed, was what had been occasioned by the people’s discontented language. I incline to think, however, that the writer’s intention was rather to represent the mortality as consequent upon the avidity with which they fed upon the unusual food miraculously furnished. Either the game of the desert was at that season unwholesome,† and the design was to admonish them, by severe experience of this, not to murmur henceforward on account of wanting what their divine

first part of the chapter; the second half, of what is related in the latter part. No objection arises from two significant names being given to the same place (Numb. xi. 3, 34). Compare Ex. xvii. 7.

* The “mixed multitude,” spoken of here, and in Ex. xii. 38, have been understood to be other than Israelites. I know not why. Moses’ word רֵפָאִי־רַפָּאִי is of a composition which would be not ill represented by our *ruff-scuff*, or *riff-raff*. I understand him to be speaking of the meaner sort, who had not, like others, flocks and herds, to which they could have recourse for animal food; and he applies to them a disparaging expression, on account of their disorderly conduct. “They lusted, even those children of Israel wept again,” &c. (4.)

† Respecting the unwholesomeness of this food, at certain times, see Bochart, “Hierozoicon,” pars 2, pp. 97 - 100.

protector did not see fit to afford; or else, in their turbulent eagerness, they had devoured the quails without first divesting them of the blood, a course which had been prohibited in the most peremptory manner, and which was now punished either by its natural effect upon the systems of those, who were accustomed to the use of little animal food, or by a direct miraculous visitation of Him whose distinctly and repeatedly expressed will it violated.*

Meanwhile, as another means of winning the people to a better mind, and reviving the spirits of their leader, desponding under such repeated experience of their perversity, seventy eminent individuals of their number are summoned to the Tabernacle to witness a manifestation of the divine presence, similar to what had been made on former occasions, and receive a commission to aid Moses in his charge.† The narration, that two of

* For remarks applicable to Numb. xi. 11–15, see p. 105; compare Ex. xxxii. 7–14, 31, 32. — “Two cubits high upon the face of the earth” (31). Not that they lay in heaps of that height, but that they flew at that distance above the ground. The words admit that sense, and it is given in the Vulgate.

† Numb. xi. 16, 17, 24–30. It has been thought that the number of the elders, viz. seventy, had reference to the aggregate number of the twelve phylarchs, (i. 5–15,) and of the fifty-eight heads of families (xxvi. 5–50). The later Jews have supposed that here was the origin of their national Sanhedrim, or Great Council of Seventy. But there is no reason to suppose, that the institution of any permanent magistracy is here related, nor do we read of the existence of any such, previous to the captivity. Their task in “prophesying,” as Moses’ assistants in quieting the people, (25, 26, 30,) was that of his *spokesmen*, or exhorters, according to a common use of the original word in Scripture, and indeed of the word *prophesy* in the old English. Compare Ex. iv. 16; vii. 1, 2. The promise (17) to “take of the spirit” which was upon Moses, and “put it upon them,” is evidently to impart to them a measure of authority, and endowments for persuasion and command, like his. — With xi. 25, compare Ex. xxxiii. 9, 10. — “They prophesied and did not *cease*.” The word is נִבְּאָה. Probably we should read, with the Samaritan, וַיִּבְּאָהוּ, and render, “and two of the men had not *been congregated* with the rest, but remained in the camp,” &c.; compare 26. — “The Lord came down *in a cloud*”

the persons designated to this duty of "prophesying," that is, exhorting the people to a better conduct, entered upon their office without first repairing to the Tabernacle, and of the freedom from any jealous feeling with which Moses heard of their proceeding, is interesting to a reader of the present day, chiefly on the ground, that it was an incident, which Moses, writing at the time, would naturally record, but which a writer of any later period would scarcely have cared to invent or preserve.

The occasion or pretence of the temporary disaffection of Aaron and Miriam from their brother, which makes the subject of the twelfth chapter, is said to have been his having married an Ethiopian, or rather Cushite, woman. Most expositors have understood this circumstance to imply a second marriage of Moses, not related in the history; both because they have doubted whether Zipporah, who was from Midian,* could properly be called a Cushite, and because it seems to them unreasonable to suppose, that an unsuitable marriage was now made a ground of complaint, when it had been contracted so many years before. But, as to the first point, it appears very probable that the people of Midian might properly be called Cushites; † and the alliance of Moses with a foreigner might naturally enough be seized on as a ground of factious complaint, and his obligation to divorce her be urged, now that he was raised to so peculiar an authority over his countrymen; not to say, that, at this particular juncture, his brother and sister may have been stimulated by jealousy of the apprehended influence of Hobab, the brother or uncle of Moses' wife, who had lately been prevailed upon to

(25), might equally well be translated, *into the cloud*; and so in xii. 5. But both renderings appear equally inconsistent with the supposition of his perpetual, peculiar presence at the cloud over the Tabernacle.

* Ex. ii. 16, 21.

† See Bochart's "Phaleg," lib. 4, cap. 2.

remain near his person. However this might be, the discontent of individuals of so much note and influence, and such near affinity to the leader, needed to be punished in so summary and conspicuous a manner, as to discourage similar attempts in future from the same quarter; and, to this end, an infliction of the fearful and loathsome disease of leprosy is employed to make Miriam feel the folly and hopelessness of such an enterprise, while (her punishment being sufficient to enforce the lesson) Aaron is spared, either because of his more prompt repentance,* or to avoid unnecessarily lessening the reverence, due from the people to the exalted office which he held.†

From "the wilderness of Paran," to which their few days' march had brought the people, on the southern border of the promised land, Moses (at their own instance, as appears from the parallel passage in Deuteronomy ‡) sends out a party of twelve men, one from each tribe, to explore the country, and report their

* Numb. xii. 11.

† "Hath he not also spoken by us?" (2.) Compare Lev. x. 8; xi. 1; xiii. 1, et al. h. m. — "The man Moses was very meek." (3.) This text has been the subject of much discussion. I find no difficulty in it. The more common meaning of the word rendered "meek," is *distressed, miserable*. And so I have no doubt it should be rendered here. Moses does not laud himself, but very naturally speaks of the great trials of his situation. And this view explains the other peculiarity of expression in the same sentence; "the man Moses." מֹשֶׁה, "the man," is a word, conveying a sense of dignity. Compare Ps. xlix. 2; Prov. viii. 4. It is as if he had said; Moses, exalted as was his place, was now the most wretched of men. — In verse 4, (as in Numb. xi. 1-3,) I think we have a concise statement of what is presently related more in detail. Compare 5. — "If there be among you a prophet," or an announcer of my will, (as Aaron and the seventy elders had been,) I reveal myself to him in a way, which, compared with the clearness and fulness of my disclosures to Moses, is but what a dream or a vision is to a reality (6); what a similitude, a portraiture, is to the substance (8); for "and the similitude," should rather be rendered, "nor the similitude of the Lord" alone; not the mere shadowing forth of the Lord's will shall Moses behold.

‡ Deut. i. 22.

observations on its attractiveness, and its capacity of defence against the proposed invasion. They traverse the region in its whole length, from Hebron to Hamath, from its southern to its northern boundary; and returning, after a forty days' search, declare, that it was as fertile as it had been described, but that its inhabitants were so warlike, and so well secured in their strong-holds, that it would be rashness to attempt to dispossess them. Two of the twelve alone, Caleb and Joshua, the representatives of the great tribes of Judah and Ephraim, brought a different report, assuring the people, that, with a proper energy on their own part, and with the blessing of their guiding God, they might presently make a successful inroad, and bring their great enterprise to the desired issue. The more timid counsels, however, prevailed. The pusillanimous multitude shrank from the hazard, deplored their folly in having left Egypt, and were near stoning Caleb and Joshua for endeavouring to excite them to a more worthy conduct.

It was now proved, that they were not yet prepared for an undertaking requiring so much vigor as the contemplated invasion. Until their cowardly, unenterprising character, not unnatural in just emancipated slaves, should be superseded by the spirit of men reared in freedom, it was fit they should be kept in such a degree of retirement and safety, as was allowed by a Nomadic life in a country not permanently occupied. They needed time to consolidate their commonwealth, to familiarize their institutions, and form a national character, before they should enter on such a task as was before them. They are accordingly told, that they must abandon the design of the projected invasion, till forty years shall have expired from the time of their emigration from the land of their bondage, and till another generation shall have succeeded, of a character more equal to

the occasions of the time. Their fickleness, under the sting of this rebuke, now displays itself in the opposite direction. Ashamed of their late fears, and hoping, perhaps, that some display of valor would cause the mandate to be recalled, they persist, against Moses' remonstrances, in attacking a party of the inhabitants of the country; but are defeated with much slaughter, and desist from any further attempt.*

* Numb. xiii. xiv. — The mention of the ripening of grapes (xiii. 20) indicates the time to have been the month of September, or Tizri of the second year. — The messengers, it is to be presumed, did not conduct their search (21) in a body, but dispersed themselves, going singly, or two or three together. A natural inference from their going and coming without observation, is, that their language was essentially that of the Canaanites. Compare p. 5. — The proper names of men in verse 22, I take to be used collectively, as the names of descendants from one stock. Compare Judges i. 3. — The relation in verse 23 has been a subject of cavil. But, on any exposition, what kind of argument can be made out of it, to discredit the record? Supposing the representation to be, what it has been imagined to be, that a single cluster of grapes was too heavy for one man's strength, so far from indicating a forgery, it would rather sustain an inference of the opposite character; for, in such a matter, the apparent exaggeration would be as manifest to a forger, as to a true narrator, and a forger is scrupulously studious of verisimilitude. But the truth is, that the word אֶשְׂתֵּל has by no means the same limitation of sense with our word *cluster*; that (apart from this) what was carried was, "a branch with one cluster," an expression naturally conveying the same meaning, as if one should say, "a branch all covered with grapes"; that one of the great clusters of grapes of that country, (which, according to well authenticated modern accounts, sometimes weigh ten pounds and more,) might be carried in the manner described, not because it was too heavy for one man's strength, but to keep it from being injured by striking against the person; and that, finally, what was carried upon a staff, between two, appears to have been some vessel, containing, besides the grapes, a quantity of pomegranates and figs. — Verse 24 I can hardly hesitate to account a gloss from some recent hand; and I make the same remark upon the latter half of verse 16, which is, unless I greatly err, an explanatory note upon verse 8, comparing it with other places where the same individual is mentioned by Moses. These observations have precisely the form, in which a modern commentator would attach a note. — "A land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" (32); that is, a land either unhealthy, or wasted by continual wars. Compare xiv. 9; Ez. xxxvi. 13. — With Numb. xiv. 10, compare Ex. xvi. 10; and with Numb.

A careful reader of this narrative is naturally led to inquire; Was it not known beforehand to the Divine leader of the Israelites, that they were not as yet fit to occupy their destined position in Canaan, nor would become so, until the national institutions had had time to form a national character, which they could only do through the education of a younger race? Was it not then designed from the beginning, that there should be this interval between the emigration and the invasion? And, if so, with what propriety can the delay be represented, as it is, in the light of a punishment of their want of courage in not being willing to prosecute the enterprise at once to its completion?

I reply, that in the strictest sense of the words, the delay was a punishment of their pusillanimity; inasmuch

xiv. 11-20, compare Ex. xxxii. 7-14, 30-34. See p. 219. Numb. xiv. 12 might be rendered interrogatively, but it is unnecessary.—It may be doubted whether verses 22, 23 were designed to be understood so rigidly as is commonly supposed. See pp. 125, 133. Compare Matt. iii. 5; iv. 23, 24. If it be said, that the express exception of Caleb (24), implies that there was no other exception, I reply, 1. that it might be fit to mention only the exemption of a distinguished person, even though others of less note were exempt also; and, 2. that there certainly was (30, 38) at least one other person exempt, besides Caleb. If the strong expressions in verses 22-24 must not be so understood as to exclude Joshua, neither can it be positively declared, that the subsequent strong expression, (30) which includes Joshua, must needs be so construed as to exclude all others.—“These ten times” (22), indefinitely; as we say, “a dozen times”, “a hundred times”, “sexcenties”.—“Your children shall wander” (33); literally, shall *feed*; shall feed cattle; shall lead a Nomadic life, the life of the Bedouins of the present day.—“Ye shall know my breach of promise” (34). Much ingenuity has been expended upon this clause. I understand it to mean simply; See whether I withdraw from what I have said; You shall learn by your experience, whether I will retract my threat. Compare verse 35.—Upon verses 36-38, which interrupt the connexion, I offer the same observation as upon xiii. 24. I regard the passage as probably a gloss, written after the completion of the forty years, (though possibly indeed from Moses' own hand,) recording the ultimate fulfilment of the threat, in respect particularly to the ten explorers of Canaan. Possibly, however, it was a record (made at the time) of a speedier divine judgment, executed upon them for their agency in the violence related in verse 10.

as, though designed beforehand, it was designed with reference to the existence of that fault. It was this, which made the delay fit, as part of the divine plan for them. Its occasion would have been removed, had they possessed a courage equal to the immediate prosecution of their undertaking; and, accordingly, the only question properly presented by this part of the history is, why the people should be placed in a condition to manifest distinctly this meanness of spirit (as they did at the return of their messengers), and then be told that they were to suffer, in consequence, the inconveniences of an unsettled life of many years, rather than that they should have had their wanderings protracted without any explanation of the cause, or that the cause should have been signified to them without their having first given, in their conduct, any manifestation of its existence. And I apprehend that the course, which we read to have been taken, will appear to any one, on a little reflection, to be the course which might have been expected, and the fittest course to produce the effect designed. Had the Israelites been detained year after year at a distance from Palestine, and the delay been in no wise explained, there would have been no reply for Moses to give to the remonstrances of their discontent. Now, as often as they expressed impatience, he had an answer to seal their lips with; they had shown themselves unequal to the work, which they wished to hasten. Had the reason of the delay been explained to be their want of preparation, still, had there been no notorious fact to appeal to, in proof of that want, its reality would have been denied, and the argument would have lost its efficacy. That the postponement of the invasion of Canaan was part of the original divine plan, — that there was nothing in it contingent upon the people's specific misbehaviour in the wilderness of Paran, — I readily allow.

But, in addition to God's knowing their want of preparation, it was necessary that they should know it too; both to make them acquiesce more readily in the arrangement which it required for the time being, and to present to them a motive, in the interval, for cherishing those institutions, and forming that character, which were eventually to remove the defect.

At the beginning of the fifteenth chapter, the Israelites are addressed with some new regulations, prescribing additions to the ritual of Burnt and Peace Offerings, such as to give a character of greater sumptuousness to those ceremonies, and referring to the ultimate establishment in Canaan as a thing certain, though it was to be so long deferred. When the people should "be come into the land of their habitations", and be better able to command the means, they were to accompany the sacrifice of each animal, whether a kid or lamb, a ram, or a bullock, with a Meat Offering of flour, a Drink Offering of wine, and a quantity of oil, proportioned in each case to the value of the victim which was immolated. And the same rules, in this respect as in others, were to be observed by any transient sojourner in the country, who should desire to testify his respect for the national divinity; a provision obviously intended to prevent departures from the simplicity and uniformity of the ritual, such as might have been brought in through the example of foreigners, who would naturally be disposed to dispense themselves from a punctilious observance of it.*

* Numb. xv. 1-16. A half hin of wine, and the same quantity of oil, were to be presented with each bullock, a third part of that measure with a ram, and a quarter part with a lamb; of flour, the proportions were to be as three, two, and one. The flour and oil were to be made into cakes. The present law is an extension of that previously given (Ex. xxix. 40,) in respect to the daily Burnt Offering. A hin was a little over a gallon. A "tenth-deal" was probably a tenth part of an ephah, which was about a bushel.

We have next a direction respecting a new perquisite to the priests. It had before been commanded, that, at every Pentecost, two loaves should be brought to them by each householder, from the first-fruits of the wheat harvest. That provision is now so extended as to give them a similar claim to a loaf made from the first gatherings of all kinds of grain, its size, as far as we know, being left to the giver's discretion. This law, like the last, and like the similar one of older date, was first to go into effect after the establishment in Canaan. The whole revenue, designed eventually for the priesthood, was not at present wanted, while the number of priests was so small, and the dignity of their order, in a community but partially organized, did not require so liberal a support as would be suitable in later times. When it should be wanted, it would be afforded all the more readily, on account of the law prescribing it being of a date nearly simultaneous with the origin of the institution.*

The regulations which occupy the next following verses, I think have been correctly understood as having reference to those laws respecting sacred offerings, a portion of which had just been recited. Whoever should with presumption and defiance violate those laws, was to incur the high penalty which is called "cutting off from the people." The individual, who should break any one of them unintentionally and ignorantly, was, on coming to a knowledge of the transgression, to manifest his repentance by presenting a Sin Offering of the kind formerly described; and this, whether the offender was of native or foreign birth.† If a like error had

* Numb. xv. 17–21. The later Jews understood this law as binding them to bring first-fruits of five kinds of grain; viz. wheat, barley, oats, rye, and spelt. For the previous law, respecting two wheaten loaves at the Pentecost, see Lev. xxiii. 17.

† Numb. xv. 27–31. Compare Lev. iv. 27–35.

occurred in an act performed in behalf of the nation, its sense of the fault was to be manifested in a manner somewhat altered from what had been before prescribed, and more costly and imposing. Instead of a bullock only for a Sin Offering, which had been first ordained, a Sin Offering of a kid is now substituted, to be accompanied with the holocaust of a bullock, with the addition of its appropriate Meat and Drink Offerings, as these had been lately regulated. It would appear, that as the people became more familiar with the law, there was a fitness in repressing infractions of it by an increase of the penalty incurred.*

Next follows a narrative, apparently having no other connexion with the context than that of time, and inserted in its place as the record of a passing incident. A sabbath-breaker was detected in the act. The proceedings against him were deliberate; "they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him." It was not, that there was any doubt that he must die; that had been explicitly determined by previous directions.† But it was the first instance which had called for an infliction of the threatened penalty, and, as in the case of the blasphemer, the son of Shelomith, Moses had first to seek instruction respecting the manner in which execution should be done. As in that instance, to make the punishment exemplary, he

* Numb. xv. 22-26. Compare Lev. iv. 13-21. I have spoken of this law as having reference to errors in the observance of the ritual, as the nature of the topics in the context suggests. Perhaps, however, it also contemplated an extension of the meaning of "Sins of Ignorance" on the part of the congregation, making them cover the case of the commission of any offence within its borders, when the criminal had escaped detection. Compare verse 24. Public vigilance would be stimulated, by a provision, making the community liable in what was virtually a fine, for failing to ascertain the perpetrator of an illegal act. And such, in fact, as we shall have occasion to see, was the spirit of other regulations.

† See Ex. xxxi. 14; xxxv. 2.

received a command to have it inflicted in the presence of the congregated people, and by their act; that is, without doubt, by the agency of a sufficient portion of them, understood to be proceeding in their name, and by their joint authority.*

The chapter concludes with a brief direction to adopt a certain peculiarity of national costume, which should be, to the wearer, a perpetual memento of his obligations, as a member of the favored community whose badge was upon him. It is a familiar principle of our nature which is here appealed to; the same, through which the soldier is reminded by his gay uniform, and the Quaker by his modest dress, of the duties and sentiments with which the characteristic attire of each is associated in his mind.†

The condition, in which the Israelitish affairs now were, supposing the record in the sixteenth chapter to relate to a time not long subsequent to the abandonment of the design of an immediate invasion of Canaan, was precisely that in which we should expect to read of conspiracies, if, at any time, they were to occur. The arrangement of the political and sacred administration was still recent. Of course, it had not been organized, without creating disappointment and dissatisfaction on the part of some, who had supposed their claim to be as good as that of those who had been preferred to them; and there had not yet been opportunity for

* Numb. xv. 32-36. Compare Lev. xxiv. 12-14. If we are to understand the words "in the wilderness" (32), as a reference to Numb. xii. 16, which is not an unnatural interpretation, the place and time of this incident, and of the promulgation of the laws recorded in the previous part of the chapter, are fixed. Compare Deut. i. 46.

† Numb. xv. 37-41.—Le Clerc, ad loc. suggests, that the selection of the color of the High Priest's robe (Ex. xxxix. 22) for that of the badge, may have been designed for an intimation to the wearer, that he belonged to a "kingdom of priests, an holy nation."

time and the habit of subordination to assuage their discontent, or for the partiality of their retainers and partisans to learn acquiescence in the established order of things. On the other hand, the people were depressed and uneasy, and in a fit state to be tampered with by factious leaders. Mortified as they must have been by the recollection of their late unworthy conduct, and goaded by the thought of having been condemned, in consequence, to renounce the hope of a speedy occupation of their promised home, the time must have been favorable for engaging them in a rebellious movement. They would then have been ready, if ever, to lend an open ear to the assurance, that, under the auspices of other leaders than those who had lately denounced against them the sentence of such a weary delay, they might be able forthwith to prosecute the enterprise, on which their hearts had been so fondly set.*

If the circumstances of the time favored the designs of conspirators, the conspiracy of which we read was formed by precisely the persons, whom we might expect to find taking advantage of any prevailing discontent, to propose extreme measures. The writer, who betrays no solicitude whatever for the credit of his narrative, abstains from any exposition of the circumstances, to which I here refer; but a little consideration brings them evidently to light. There are two parties to the plot; and they are of those, whose jealousy would be most likely to be excited by the recent arrangements; who would most easily persuade themselves, and who could with the best pretence maintain, that there had been a violation of their rights. Korah was a Kohathite, descended from a brother of the progenitor of Aaron, perhaps an older son of the common ancestor;

* See Numb. xvi. 13, 14.

and if any ambitious aspirant was to look with an envious eye upon the possessor of the highest sacerdotal dignity, his position marked him out as a subject for that temptation.* Dathan, Abiram, and On, were descendants from Reuben, the oldest son of Jacob; and so belonged to the tribe, whose pride must have been most wounded (considering how much the rank of primogeniture was, among that people, a point of honor,) by the precedence given to Judah, in the encampments and on the march.

Moreover, the situation of these two parties in relation to one another, when in camp, was such as to afford them all facilities for exciting one another's passions, and maturing the plot. The allotted place of the tents of Reuben, was on the south side of the Court; and between them and the Tabernacle, was the encampment of the Kohathites, the division of the Levitical family, to which Korah belonged.

In respect to any imagined incredibility, in the concocting of such a plot, on the part of persons, who had seen miraculous attestations of the divine favor to those whose authority they were proposing to subvert, I conceive that it would be enough to say, that the difficulty, be it greater or less, consists in the supposition of men's ever acting against their fixed convictions of duty and safety; that the opposition, in conduct, to the persuasions of one's mind, is the unaccountable thing, (as far as any thing is unaccountable,) the method in which such a persuasion has been produced, whether natural or supernatural, not diminishing or increasing the marvel, except as the strength of the persuasion is increased; and that the fact of men's acting against their convictions of what is right and safe is one of too

* Compare Numb. xvi. 9-11.

familiar experience to admit of being denied. I add, however, that with the imperfect views of the Deity which these conspirators must be supposed to have entertained, it is by no means improbable, that they may have partly persuaded themselves as well as others, that Moses and Aaron had acquired their precedence by some indirection, or that the wonders which had been wrought for the common benefit, had no necessary permanent connexion with their authority, and that, if the people should declare themselves in favor of other rulers, their Divine guide might consent to a transfer of their power. Certain it is, that the language of Korah and his associates is as distinctly that of recognition of Jehovah, as of oppugnation to the lawgiver and high-priest.*

The insurrection was of a formidable character. It had engaged a large number of considerable men. It was not to be suffered to succeed; to suppose this, is to suppose that the divine plan for the accomplishment of great objects was to be frustrated, or to be furthered henceforward by departure from a course of operation, which hitherto had been deliberately pursued. It was not to be suffered to be repeated; this would be to permit the infant state to be subject to perpetual hazards, machinations, and broils. Advantage was taken of the occasion to enforce a lasting lesson, repressing the tendency to such baleful manifestations of private ambition and popular discontent, till the early time of weakness and danger should be past. To effect the object thoroughly, a severe supernatural punishment is inflicted. An earthquake "swallowed up all the men that appertained unto Korah, and their houses, and all their goods"; and, the discontent not being yet allayed, but breaking out in complaints on the following day, a

* Numb. xvi. 3; compare 5, 7, 28.

further visitation of divine displeasure, apparently in the form of sudden disease, swept off the assailants by hundreds, till, by Moses' direction, Aaron presented himself in their behalf, in the act of performing a function of his office; and then "the plague was stayed," a second divine testimony to him being thus given by its withdrawal, as the first had been by its infliction.*

* "Take you censers" &c. (Numb. xvi. 6, 7); that is, if you, Korah, aspire to be high-priest in Aaron's place, and your retainers to be priests instead of his sons, present yourselves to-morrow with censers and incense, (that is, prepared to execute the priestly office, compare Ex. xxx. 8,) if your claim should be approved. (Compare 5, 10, 17, 40.) You will then see that it is not I, that forbid you, but God. — "Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?" (14); wilt thou make us pretend not to see what we do see, viz. that thy promises are not kept? — Verse 15 is Moses' appeal to God; *quasi*, thou knowest that they have no ground for discontent in any injustice suffered by them at my hands. — From Korah's presenting himself with a numerous retinue (19), and the manifestation of divine power, with which this movement was immediately followed, (compare Ex. xxxiii. 9; Numb. xii. 5; xiv. 10,) it is natural to infer that he had meditated a forcible establishment of his claim. — With verses 20–22, compare Ex. xxxii. 7–14, and the remarks thereupon, at pp. 218, 219. But, perhaps, by "this congregation" (21), was meant Korah's company, and the command "separate yourselves," was intended for the rest of the people, agreeably to 24–26; in which case, however, it would appear (22) that Moses and Aaron misunderstood the first direction. — From verse 24, it appears that there was a tent, which was a place of rendezvous to the leaders of the revolt, and which is accordingly called "the Tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram," though the dwelling of Korah, as a Levite, was in a place different from that of his Reubenite associates, and though at present they were apart, he being, with his immediate retainers, before the Tabernacle (19), and they at the door of their own tents, which they had refused to leave at Moses' invitation. (12, 27.) Whether by "the elders of Israel" (25), are meant the confederated princes (compare 2), or leaders who adhered to Moses, might be doubted; but it is reasonable to suppose, that both these descriptions of persons followed him, the scene of the contest being changed by his departure from before the Tabernacle. — Dr. Graves ("Lectures on the Pentateuch," Vol. I. p. 115 et seq.) understanding that the families of Dathan and Abiram were destroyed with them in the earthquake, (27, 32,) while that of Korah was spared, (Numb. xxvi. 11; 1 Chron. vi. 22; ix. 19,) very well explains the fact, by remarking, that Dathan and Abiram were at their tents, the dwellings of their families, while Korah was absent from his, which was in the

To the point of the number of victims (which is stated at about fifteen thousand), I do not think that we can quote the record, with confidence that we have it as it proceeded from Moses' hand; for, as we shall have occasion more particularly to observe hereafter, there are no parts of the text, which, as a whole, are liable to so much suspicion, as those which represent figures.

quarter of Levi. But I do not know that the supposed fact existed. There is no more reason to suppose that the families of Dathan and Abiram were confederates with their head, than that such was the case with the household of Korah; nor are we told (in this passage, at least), that the former were destroyed. Nothing is recorded inconsistent with the supposition, that the wives of Dathan and Abiram "and their sons, and their little children" who "*had* come out" with them, "and stood at the door of their tents," whence escape was easy, were among those, who, alarmed by the threat of Moses, "gat up from the Tabernacle on every side." (27.) For "*appertain*," (30,) a word supplied by our translators, might as well be written, *adhere*. By "their houses," (32,) we are rather to understand their *tents*, than their *households*; תֵּיבֹת not uncommonly meaning *a tent*. (See Gen. xxxiii. 17; 2 Kings xxiii. 7.) See, further, Numb. xxvi. 11; Deut. xi. 6, with my remarks thereupon.—"And there came out a fire" &c.; or, "and from the Lord the fire [just spoken of] proceeded," &c. Was this fire a subsequent infliction, or a volcanic phenomenon of the earthquake? Rather, I think, the latter. Compare Numb. xxvi. 10.—The censers, which remained in the dead hands of the victims, Eleazar, Aaron's oldest son, is directed to collect, and having emptied them of the burning incense, to cause them to be beaten into plates, to be nailed upon the altar of burnt offering; that so, through all ages, in the most public place of the nation, they might admonish every worshipper of the wickedness and danger of any such ambition. (36–40.) This charge is trusted to Eleazar, rather than to Aaron, probably that the high-priest might not be defiled by the touch of corpses.—In verse 41, I find a very natural expression of the discontent of the rebellious party, considering their low conceptions of God. He had supernaturally punished their leaders; that, they had seen; but they complained of Moses and Aaron, that, to gratify themselves, they had prevailed to have the infliction made so severe. And to this misapprehension, Moses' interposition in their behalf, (44–48,) to arrest the worst which was threatened, (45,) afforded the most conclusive answer.—"They looked toward the Tabernacle of the congregation" (42); that is, for some interposition in their behalf, as was natural in their alarm; or perhaps they *turned* to it, (יָפְּנוּ) they retreated to the protection of that degree of awe which it continued to inspire.

But, at all events, I submit, that, in our partial acquaintance with the circumstances, we are not prepared to say in what number of instances an extensive and menacing disaffection needed to be punished, so as to exert a powerful and permanent influence on the minds of three millions of people. If the object for which the nation had been set apart, was one worthy of the Divine Being to entertain, it was one which deserved to be protected against defeat, at any sacrifice. If it was threatened by any seditious movement, such a movement needed to be repressed for the present, and its repetition guarded against for the future. If this was to be done, how was it to be done; that is, by what choice among methods suited to operate on the human mind? The use of natural or of supernatural methods, presents the only supposable alternative. Will any one say, that the use of natural means would have been the better, as being the more merciful course;—in other words, that less severity might be expected to result from letting loose the warriors of Judah (exasperated by the plot against their precedency) upon those of Reuben, of not much more than half their number, or by committing the punishment of a portion of the Kohathites to the hands of the families of Merari and Gershon, already as jealous of their pretensions, as they were of those of Aaron and his sons? So far from a greater severity being consequent upon the supernatural character of the visitation, is it not unavoidable to own, that, had this been forborne, the other tribes, on all common principles of action, would have taken the punishment of the rebels into their own hands? And then, all motives of mutual hostility and partisanship having opportunity to make themselves felt, it is impossible to conjecture where the bloodshed would have stopped; except, indeed, through some form of that very super-

natural interposition, which the scheme we are considering aims to avoid.

A supernatural interposition, then, was merciful to the sufferers, as it stayed the less cautious hands of those whose rights had been invaded by the plot. The other form of punishment, moreover, would have been but partially effectual, inasmuch as it would have left any malecontents, whom it did not cut off, in a condition to say, that their claim was defeated, not by God's will, but by man's oppressive power; and it would have sowed the seeds of lasting dissensions, most inimical to the common weal, while, as things were ordered, God, by taking the punishment on himself, taught the more powerful tribes, that it was not necessary for them to interfere to vindicate his law, thus repressing a jealous hostility, which else would have not unnaturally broken out upon small occasions. — And, if it was fit that supernatural power should be applied at all, it was of course fit that it should be applied in the production of effects, of a moment proportioned to the exigency; which exigency was, in the present instance, the making of an impression sufficient to secure the people against similar movements in future, — movements, which, unless guarded against, threatened nothing less than national ruin, and what was much more, the defeat of the inestimable objects for mankind, which the Jewish nation had been organized to promote.*

* Righteous punishment is not vindictive, but has one, or both, of two objects; viz. the reformation of the transgressor, or security for the public, through warning to others who may be tempted to the same offence. In respect to punishment which contemplates the latter object, i. e. exemplary punishment, no principle is more familiar, than that justice and mercy require it to be made heavy in proportion to the interests which are endangered. Abstractly, it would be hard to put a man to death for be-taking himself to the next town. If the man were a soldier, yet if, through his insubordination, nothing were lost to the state but his own

Henceforward we do not read of any organized opposition to the divinely instituted authorities, whether sacred or civil. The miraculous testimony in Aaron's favor, of which we read in the seventeenth chapter, I understand to have been designed to take advantage of the state of feeling which the recent event had created, in order to teach a further lesson. That Aaron was the rightful high-priest, was a point established by the late divine judgment upon those who had oppugned his claim. The time was favorable for teaching the heads of the respective tribes, that he was the superior of them all. To this end, the twelve phylarchs are invited by Moses to bring to the Tabernacle each his sceptre, or staff of office, identifying it by the inscription of his name, that of Aaron being written upon the rod of Levi; and to await the divine decision respecting the precedency of one of their number, to be given in the form of miraculously causing his staff to blossom. On examination of the rods on the following day, that of Aaron, (whether it was of wood or of metal, we are not told,) was found to have germinated like an almond

services, his life would still be too great a sacrifice to exact for that loss. But, inasmuch as what one may do, another may, and by the desertion of a sufficient number of its protectors, a country might be left defenceless, for an invader to ravage it with fire and sword, it is a great saving of life, and consequently a provision of the public clemency, to punish desertion with death.—So to describe some black characters on a white surface, is abstractly an insignificant act, and in a barbarous community might well attract no animadversion; but, in consideration of its consequences, when done under certain circumstances, in a country whose great interests are sustained by mutual confidence, laws, held to be wise and lenient, have called it forgery, and made it capital.—If fifteen thousand lives, in the fifteenth century, had bought the internal peace of England through the next, the price would have been less than was paid, and the purchase better than was realized.—In the case now before us, as in that of Nadab and Abihu, (Lev. x. 1–5,) and of Ananias and Sapphira, (Acts v. 1–11,) the interests at stake were great; and accordingly benevolence dictated that the methods of security should be vigorous.

branch, and to be yielding the fruit of that tree. It was directed to be laid up at the Tabernacle, in permanent memory of the transaction; and the language of the people, when the result of the trial was made known, indicates the impression of salutary awe, which, in connexion with the recent disaster, it produced upon their minds.*

As, in a passage of the preceding book,† we saw the rules respecting the great annual celebrations, which had before been separately exhibited, brought together in one view, with some additions, so, in the chapter which here next follows, we have a collection of provisions previously announced, relating to the revenues of the sacerdotal order; in addition to which, it is now

* We are not informed what means were taken to identify the rods which were produced, as being the same which were deposited, beyond "the writing of every man's name upon his rod." According to the common inference from verse 4, viz. that Moses was to lay them up over night in the Most Holy Place, there would be no satisfactory way of identifying them; and so obviously would there have been opportunity for fraud, that it is hardly to be supposed, on any scheme, that Moses would have proposed it. The rods were to be deposited "at the Tabernacle of the congregation, in the presence of the testimony"; that is, in the sacred precincts. It is to be presumed that they were sealed up in one receptacle, the princes, or others authorized by them, watching by it through the night, to see that no dishonesty was practised. They were not in Moses' charge; for "on the morrow, Moses went to the Tabernacle of witness" (8) to examine them.—The view which I have given in the text, of the special object of this miracle, (according with the fact, that, before the period of the kings, the high-priest appears to have been, in common times, the head of the nation,) I had become satisfied was correct, before I observed the question of Dr. Geddes, ("Critical Remarks," p. 384,) "Is it credible, that . . . a new miracle should be necessary to establish the priesthood of Aaron?" an inquiry, of which this view removes the basis. Nor is it in any degree inconsistent with the language in verses 5, 10, 12, 13. When the people were satisfied, that Aaron was not only rightful high-priest, as they had been taught before, but that he was above all the other permanent authorities of the state, as they were instructed now, and that his rights would be so resolutely vindicated, their consternation at the thought of having so opposed him became extreme.

† Lev. xxiii.

for the first time distinctly declared, that the tithes, which had been declared to be "holy unto the Lord," were appropriated by him to the support of his ministers the Levites, to whom the further direction is given to make a similar contribution for their superiors, to that which the people made for them; that is, to give to the priests a tenth part of their tithes.* In addition to what has been already said upon the subject, it is obvious to remark, that the rich revenues of the Priests and Levites would have an effect to give them respectability in the people's view, and the consequent influence, which it was important to the general well-being that they should possess, besides securing that influence in favor of existing institutions, from which personally they derived so much advantage. Again, the decree that the ministers of the sanctuary should "have no inheritance among the children of Israel," tended manifestly to secure their attention to their proper duties, from which the care of landed property, might they hold it, would be likely to seduce them; while their dispersion in small settlements of their own, throughout the tribes, made them a universal bond of union to the state, and afforded opportunity for the instructions of the Law, which was their charge, to be promptly enforced, wherever occasion might call for them.†

* Numb. xviii. 21-32. See pp. 322, 323.

† This chapter, relating to the support of the priesthood, well connects itself (1) with the two next preceding, in which events are recorded establishing the rank of Aaron and his associates.—"They may be joined" (2); וְיָזְמוּ, quasi, they may be Levited; a paronomasia on the name לֵוִי.—"A stranger shall not come nigh unto you" (4); no other person shall interfere.—"That there be no wrath any more" (5); compare Numb. xvi.—With 8-11, compare p. 255, note §; with 12, 13, compare xv. 1-21; with 14-18, Lev. xxvii. 1-13, 26, 27; and with 21-24, Lev. xxvii. 30-33.—"The best of the oil" &c. (12); literally, the fat; a metaphor in common use, similar, as Geddes well suggests, to our expression, the cream of a thing.—"A covenant of salt" (19); a thing agreed upon,

The nineteenth chapter prescribes a new ritual for the cleansing of impurities, contracted through the presence of dead bodies. On the one hand, it was the policy of the Law to procure their speedy interment; both with a view to the general health and comfort, and also, it is probable, as a discouragement to the superstitious Egyptian practice of embalming.* And this object would be well secured by regulations subjecting a person, who approached a corse, to the serious inconvenience of seclusion from society for some days after, and the observance of a set ceremonial in order to his restoration. Under such a liability, every one would be interested to see that a body was soon buried, whether it was peculiarly his own charge, or might merely expose him to accidental defilement. On the other hand, it is not unlikely, that the regulation previously prescribed,† had proved, upon the short experiment, so burdensome as to have occasioned complaint; and that, its object being served in attracting serious attention to the subject, it now admitted of being relaxed, without injury. Accordingly, provision is made for the purification of the numbers, who, day by day, in such a multitude, must have been defiled by the occurrence of some death near them, without so much as the aid of a priest. The ashes of a heifer, immolated without the camp, with certain carefully specified formalities, are directed to be thrown into water, which water is to be kept, in order to be sprinkled by any "clean person" upon whatever person or thing has been defiled by the presence of a body, of part of a body, or of a grave. This

for perpetuity. See p. 242, note ††. — Verses 27, 30; your tribute to the priests, paid from the tribute of others, shall correspond to the tribute, which others, from their own threshing-floors and wine-presses, pay to you. — "Pollute" (32); make common by withholding from the due sacred use, that of contribution to the priests.

* See Ex. xiii. 19.

† Numb. v. 1-4.

being done on the third, and again on the seventh day after a defilement, it was then considered to be removed. It is reasonable to suppose, that, to meet the numerous occasions, which must have been constantly arising in remote parts, a quantity of water, thus prepared, was sent into the different quarters of the encampment.*

The last five chapters, on which we have remarked, are without a date in the text. The contents of the last four are assigned, by a note in the margin of our English Bibles, to a period half way between the Exodus and the invasion. This, however, is done without authority; nor, though it is true we cannot disprove the hypothesis, is there any probability in its favor. On the contrary, the movement to which the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters relate, is one which it is far most natural to refer to a period when the national institutions were recent; the arrangement prescribed in the eighteenth, for a tribute from the Levites to the priests, had such an important relation to the economy of the ecclesiastical estate, that it seems impossible not to ascribe it to a very early time; † and the inconvenience, resulting from a preceding law, which I have suggested that the law in the nineteenth chapter was designed to remove, was so oppressive, as to create a strong probability, that it was not permitted to remain long in force. On the whole, I cannot hesitate to understand, that the actual

* It may safely be presumed that the precise directions respecting the "red heifer" had reference to some existing practices and opinions; but it is in vain to attempt to explain all the particulars of the ritual. A quantity of learning, collected with a view to their illustration, and successfully, as to some parts, may be seen in Spencer, "De Legibus" &c., lib. 2, cap. 15.

† Verse 22 may be thought to furnish a confirmation of this argument. "Neither must the children of Israel *henceforth* come nigh the Tabernacle of the Congregation." This is language, which it is not natural to suppose was used a score of years after the Levites had entered on their charge.

series of events is pursued by Moses, without a pause, from the place which records his entrance on his mission, to the end of the nineteenth chapter of the book before us.

And I suggest, in conclusion of this part of the history, that the prominent transactions, which it relates, are recorded in the order in which we might have supposed, that, under such an administration, they would be made to succeed each other. First, we have the deliverance of the nation from its bondage, (in other words, the creation of the commonwealth,) along with the institution of its great commemorative rite, the Passover. The people, separated and made one, next receives a compendious law for present use, comprehending, however, the great principles of ulterior legislation. Then elaborate institutions of worship are prescribed, having in view the education of the race for their great function, and laws are given in fuller detail, adapted to the promotion of all their prosperity. They are now an organized community, ready, in every thing except national character, to enter on their high destiny. But this is wanting; and till it shall be formed, they are doomed to remain under circumstances where no call for enterprise will exist, and where their obscurity will be their protection.

LECTURE XVI.

NUMBERS XX. 1.—XXVII. 23.

RETURN OF THE PEOPLE TO THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF CANAAN.—
 THEIR CONDITION DURING THE INTERVAL OF THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS.—
 REASONS OF THE CHASM LEFT BY MOSES IN THE RECORD.—
 SCARCITY, AND MIRACULOUS SUPPLY, OF WATER.—NEGOTIATION
 WITH THE EDMITES FOR A PASSAGE THROUGH THEIR COUNTRY.—
 DEATH OF AARON.—SKIRMISH WITH THE SOUTHERN CANAAN-
 ITES.—CIRCUIT BY THE RED SEA.—PLAGUE OF “FIERY SER-
 PENTS.”—NEGOTIATION WITH THE AMORITES, AND CONQUEST OF
 THE TERRITORIES OF SIHON AND OG.—APPLICATION OF BALAK,
 KING OF MOAB, TO BALAAM, AND HIS PROCEEDINGS THEREUPON.—
 DISORDERS AND PUNISHMENT OF THE PEOPLE AT SHITTIM.—
 CENSUS, AND ARRANGEMENT FOR THE DIVISION OF CANAAN.—RULE
 FOR THE INHERITANCE OF PROPERTY IN LAND.—MOSES’ VISION
 OF CANAAN, AND CONSECRATION OF JOSHUA AS HIS SUCCESSOR.

MORE than thirty-seven years pass without a record, and we find the Israelites again at Kadesh Barnea, near the southern border of Canaan, the same place where their fathers, in the second year after leaving Egypt, had desisted from the project of an immediate invasion. What had been their condition meanwhile? They are probably often conceived of, as having been roving about in a compact mass; without employment, or object, except that of detention from Canaan; and miraculously supplied with all their food through the whole period, on account of the sterility of the tract which they were traversing. Each of these views I conceive to be destitute of proof, and in violation of probability.

The latter view owes its currency among us to nothing more than the manner in which our translators have rendered the word, used to denote the region through

which they wandered. This was by no means a “desert,” or “wilderness,” in our sense of the term; but merely a tract of unclaimed country, and destitute in great part of settled habitations, though not without numerous posts, villages, and cities, of which the names of several, that lay in the track of the Israelites, are actually given.* The country called Arabia, is believed now to sustain a population of ten or twelve millions.† It is in many parts extremely fertile, producing abundance of wheat, millet, rice, and a great variety of vegetables and fruit, much of the latter being spontaneous; and the peninsula of Mount Sinai and the region about “El Ghor,” (the great valley between the Dead Sea and the Elanitic gulf,) in and near which the wanderings of the Israelites appear in great part to have been, contain by no means the least eligible tracts for pasturage and cultivation.

These tracts have actually been traversed, age after age, and continue to be traversed by the Bedouin tribes, whose manner of life may afford us a vivid representation of that of the Israelites, during the interval between their emancipation and their establishment. With their herds and beasts of burden, which carry their little property, these unsettled hordes pass from place to place, as they are tempted by the prospect of water and pasture; while for such wants, as their herds and flocks, with the tillage which they practise when stationary for a sufficient time, do not supply, they provide by the barter of horses and cattle with the inhabitants of the cities, and of the more settled regions, which occasionally they visit. The previous employments of the Israelites prepared them to adopt this manner of life. They had been herdsmen in Goshen; great part of their wealth,

* Numb. xxxiii. 16–36. Compare Ps. lxx. 12.

† See Malte-Brun’s “Universal Geography,” book 30, ad calc.

when they left Egypt, consisted in this kind of property ; and a portion of them, when they reached Canaan, strenuously urged their suit to be permitted to occupy a territory suitable for keeping up their former habits.*

Again ; I suggested, that the Israelites are perhaps commonly conceived of as all dwelling, while upon their wanderings, in a compact camp ; and then the question naturally presents itself, how a population, half as large again as that of the city of London, could live, under such circumstances, through so many years, in any degree of comfort, even if the truth of the common view should be granted, that a daily miraculous provision of food was made for them in the form of manna, which they needed to be at no further pains than to collect.

I will not reply to this by referring to the immense numbers represented by ancient writers to have moved together in military expeditions ; for instance, in the descent of Xerxes upon the Peloponnesus.† I find no reason for supposing, that the Israelites were subjected to any such restraint, as would have been necessary to keep them all collected in one body. I presume the

* Gen. xlv. 31—34 ; Ex. x. 26 ; xii. 38 ; Numb. xxxii. — For the fertility and productions of Arabia, see Malte-Brun, book 30, particularly pp. 195, 196, 200 (Boston Edit.) ; Niebuhr, "Travels through Arabia," &c. § 28, chap. 1 ; § 29, chap. 2, 7, 8. For a particular description of the country about "El Ghor," and near Mount Seir, see Burckhardt, "Travels in Syria, and the Holy Land," p. 410 et seq. The same writer (p. 573 et seq.) speaks of the fertility of the valleys of Mount Sinai. Niebuhr (§ 6, chap. 9, § 24) treats somewhat fully of the condition and manners of the Bedouin tribes of the present day. See also Norden's "Travels in Egypt and Nubia," Vol. I. pp. 11, 61.

† The Greek historians make Xerxes' army, with its attendants, to have amounted to more than five millions. Nor is it to the purpose to say, that this was probably exaggeration. Good writers may exaggerate ; but exaggerations evidently absurd are a kind of statement which the laws of their art do not admit ; and the mention of such a host of Oriental marauders, moving in one body, shows, at least, that to them, who knew, better than we, the habits of the time, the supposition was not incredible. See Herodotus, lib. 7, cap. 51 et seq. ; Diodorus Siculus, lib. 11 ad init. Compare Mitford's "History of Greece," chap. 8, § 1.

fact to have been (what I find nothing in the narrative to discredit), that, while the Tabernacle, wherever it was for the time being, was the centre and rendezvous of the nation, all, beyond a number of warriors sufficient to secure it against any probable assault, were permitted to wander away at will, taking care, of course, to go in sufficient numbers to prevent their return from being cut off. The places of as many, as, at any given time, were in the neighbourhood of the Tabernacle, needed to be determined by a standing rule; else the tribes would have been liable to interfere with each other, and, if collision had not arisen, still the order, which was on all accounts desirable, would not have been preserved. The position of the several tribes, in relation to one another and to the Tabernacle, was accordingly thus fixed; and whatever portion of each tribe was required to remain, or chose to remain, near the central point of the nation, was obliged to occupy that position. But it does not therefore follow, that the tribes crowded upon the Tabernacle, and consequently upon each other, to the universal inconvenience. On the contrary, where their posts are first designated,* we are told, that they are to pitch “far off about the Tabernacle”; just as, in these days, the different divisions of a large army are so disposed, as not to interfere with each other’s supplies. Nor do we read of any thing to impair the evidently strong probability, that, while each tribe had its post, held by a portion of its warriors, a large part of its number was at any given time absent, for the benefit of the best grazing-grounds they might find. Even while in Goshen, it appears that they had wandered thus, extending their migrations as far as the confines of Palestine.† How far they

* Numb. ii. 2.

† 1 Chron. vii. 20—22.—That, besides grazing, those who were in

may have been dispersed in such expeditions, during the forty years, we are now unable to say, nor can we so much as identify many of the places, which are related to have been the *termini* of their several stages. But I apprehend, that we have no authority for supposing them to have been confined to the peninsula bounded by the two bays of the Red Sea to the southeast and southwest, and by Canaan and the Mediterranean to the north, a considerable part of which (the northern portion) is a barren country. It is true, that to penetrate into the eastern and southern districts of Arabia, it may have been necessary for them to pass through a part of the territory of Edom, which lay about Mount Seir, and the *Ghor*, south of the Dead Sea; and that when they afterwards solicited permission for such a passage, it was denied.* But that which was refused to a numerous body, in warlike array, may have been willingly permitted to separate troops of harmless herdsmen; and in fact we find, that, notwithstanding this refusal, the whole host did subsequently pass to the country east of Edom by choosing a less frequented route.†

Another question, which it is natural to ask, is; Why did Moses leave no record of transactions of the intermediate years? The statement of this question, in the first place, needs to be modified. Some record he has left; for instance, the minute list of successive marches in the thirty-third chapter of this book; and the substance of instructions received in the interval (if my view be correct), which are brought together in the book of Deuteronomy. If we insist, that the record

immediate attendance upon the Tabernacle sometimes stopped at one place, during their wanderings, at least long enough to raise a crop, might be argued from Numb. ix. 22.

* Numb. xx. 14—21.

† xxi. 4.

should have been continued, in the same circumstantial manner in which it had been begun, it is because we are satisfied, that events occurred, during the thirty-eight years so lightly passed over, which had an equal or a similar claim to be thus narrated.

These events must have been either 1. incidents of a natural, or, 2. of a supernatural character, or, 3. the reception of new laws.

An outline of one class of occurrences, of the first description, is actually given in the list of marches just now referred to. That any thing else took place, of material importance, demanding a special record to be made at the time, or, if made, to be preserved, is certainly more than we have any right to assume. As far as we may judge of the condition of the people in their solitary wanderings, it was not such as would be likely to furnish the materials of a copious history.

Of new supernatural occurrences,* we have no authority for presuming that there were any. For supernatural operations to produce their intended effect upon the mind, it is necessary that they should not be made common and familiar. That which we frequently see, ceases to impress us. That which often occurs, whatever else be its character, ceases (if I may be pardoned the truism) to be, to us, out of the course of nature. Miracles had been wrought, in the view of the generation, which came out of Egypt, to sanction their acceptance of the national Law. The race which had come into their places, was, for its own satisfaction, to have momentary evidence of the same power in Moses.†

* I say "of *new* supernatural occurrences"; because whoever supposes a perpetual miraculous supply of manna, and guidance of the column of flame, only supposes a *continuance* of what he understands to have been already recorded in comprehensive terms, covering the whole period of the march.

† E. g. Numb. xx. 7—11.

All sound reasoning upon the objects and principles of such operations, would, I think, lead us to suppose, that, when they had done, in the first two years, their special temporary work, there would, in the interval that followed, be a suspension of them.

But it may be further said, It is probable, that additions were made to the system of laws in this interval. That additional laws were, during the time, communicated to the people, is, I think, not strongly probable, if probable at all. Though the system revealed in Sinai and its neighbourhood was not complete (since we know that it admitted of subsequent additions), yet it is likely, that it comprised all provisions which it was best should be promulgated for the time being. What now it most needed, was, to be made familiar, which it would be by regular and uniform practice upon it, and would not be while it continued to be subject to frequent alterations. The national institutions established, and the relations between man and man defined, permanency was now the thing most desirable. Additions and modifications, though in due time to be made, would be most advantageously made, not when all was new, and when change, even for the better, would have kept the people in an unsettled state, but when the experience of a generation had prepared them to understand, what it was that required to be added or rectified. That additions and modifications of this kind, introduced to our knowledge in the book of Deuteronomy, were matter of revelation to Moses in the wilderness, I think extremely likely. That any of them would be communicated by him to the people, immediately on their reception by himself, is what, under the circumstances to which I have referred, we should have no right to expect. That a record was not made by him, of each, at its own time, is certainly

much more than we know. And if, instead of bequeathing this record, if it were made, the form, in which he has seen fit to transmit them to posterity, is that of his comprehensive exposition of them to the people on the eve of their invasion of Canaan, I submit with confidence the question, whether this was not a form quite as natural and fit for him to adopt, as that which the alternative proposes.

Once more; there is a unity in Moses' plan. He writes of the transition of the Jews from the condition of a horde of slaves in Egypt, to that of a powerful nation, about to become free proprietors in Canaan. The subject divides itself into two parts; the emancipation, and the preparation for conquest. Both of these Moses treats at large. The space of years, which he passes over in silence, is, if I may so speak, the interlude between the two acts of the great drama.*

At Kadesh, where, with the arrival of the people on the first month of the fortieth year after leaving Egypt,† the narrative of events in their series is resumed, occasion arises for the performance of a miracle, not only impressive through its own extraordinary character, but doubly so through the recollections which it called up in the minds of those, who in their youth had seen, at Rephidim, a similar divine attestation to their leader's authority, and through the tradition, which had descended to such as were not old enough to have witnessed

* If it should occur to any one, that this chasm in the record has an unfavorable bearing on its authenticity, I will only ask, whether, the circumstances above suggested being considered, it is not much more easy to explain how it should have been left by Moses, than that it should be left by any later writer, who had nothing to do but to fill up the interval with his own imaginations. So satisfied am I of this, that I should not hesitate to adduce the fact as a subordinate proof of the Mosaic origin of the narrative.

† Compare Numb. xx. 28; xxxiii. 38.

that act. Distressed by want of water, the people reiterated their accustomed complaints, upon which Moses was commanded to "take the rod," the view of which would recall the memory of earlier miracles, and "speak to the rock" in the people's presence. "And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice. And the water came out abundantly; and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." On account of these transactions, so closely resembling those at Rephidim, the place received the same commemorative name. It was called, as we should express it, "a second *Meribah*," or place of quarrel.*

Something in the conduct of Moses and Aaron on this occasion was censurable; and they are consequently told, that they must not hope to survive to see the

* Numb. xx. 1-13.—"The *whole* congregation" (1, also 22). Was not this expression intended to distinguish between the host, now collected, for the invasion, at one rendezvous, and the scattered parties, who had hitherto roamed the wilderness?—"Kadesh" (1); called "*Meribah-Kadesh*" (xxvii. 14; Deut. xxxii. 51) to distinguish it from the other *Meribah* (Ex. xvii. 1).—"The desert of Zin," (יִזְרַח) on the southern border of Canaan, is a very different place from that of "*Sin*" (סִינַי, Ex. xvi. 1), the latter being a short distance to the northwest of Sinai.—"Miriam died there and was buried there." I am very suspicious of the authenticity of these words. The fact is related nowhere else; (compare Deut. xxxii. 50; also Numb. xxxiii. 36, with 37-39;) they break the continuity of the narrative; and I find it difficult to realize, that Moses should dispose so summarily of the death of a person so intimately connected with himself, and on all accounts so considerable (compare 23-29). If a tradition to that effect existed, it would easily gain insertion, first, in a marginal gloss, and so, subsequently, in the text. If the words are authentic, I have little hesitation in regarding them as retrospective in their sense; "*Miriam had died*, and been buried there," that is, when, nearly forty years before, the march had been arrested there "many days." (Compare Deut. i. 46.) On this interpretation, Moses, returning after so long an interval, to the spot of his sister's burial, naturally refers in a word to that event, though he does not enlarge upon it, as he would have done, had he written while it was still recent. A reason for my dwelling on this remark will appear, when I come to treat of Deut. xxxiv. 7.—"Take *the* rod" (8); the rod so well known of old; compare Ex. iv. 3; xiv. 16; xvii. 5, 11.

establishment of the people in their promised home. What the fault was, does not distinctly appear. It has been differently understood to consist in their impatience, indicated by Moses' striking the rock, when he had only been bidden to speak to it, or by his striking it "twice," instead of once, as at Rephidim, or in their apparent arrogating to themselves of power to do the marvel, when they said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must *we* fetch you water out of this rock," when they should have been careful to "sanctify" the Lord, as the context expresses it, by ascribing the work to him. I suppose that we are not so much to look for their offence in either of these particulars, as in that general air of impatience and petulance, and want of a calm dignity and placid confidence in God, (befitting their office and their situation,) which betrayed itself in the acts and language referred to, and very probably in other parts of their conduct which are not recorded.*

And I conceive it to be an unsatisfactory way of viewing the subject, to regard them as having, on this occasion, committed a sin, which, after all their services, required, as an ultimate object, a punishment so heavy as that of their exclusion from a personal share in the great result of their anxieties and toils. The probable truth seems to me to have been, that, under the infirmities of very advanced age, they had sustained in some degree the loss of that equanimity of temper, which the momentous approaching crisis required in the nation's leaders. Their time of greatest efficiency, at least for the needs of such an occasion as was coming, had now

* See also Numb. xx. 6. Compare Ps. cvi. 33. "Ye believed me not" (12). Some of the Jewish commentators understand, that Moses, remembering that he had done a like act nearly forty years before, despondingly concluded that there was to be another as long delay; and that this was the offensive want of faith, which broke out, through his irritation, in hasty acts and language.

gone by. The common good demanded, that their high trusts should be transferred to the hands of such, as, along with sufficient experience, had more of the self-possessed and uniform energy of more vigorous years. But still, for this to be done, without any specific act of theirs justifying the measure, would have seemed severe, and left them room for dissatisfaction and complaint. An occasion had now arisen, making it fit and seasonable that that decree should go forth. After betraying their infirmity, under such public circumstances, in the people's view, they could no longer pretend that it had not come upon them, to the degree of lessening their fitness for the high responsibility they might otherwise have desired to retain. Being now self-convicted of that infirmity, their sense of right, and their public spirit, would reconcile them to the relinquishment of trusts, which, of course, they would prefer only to resign with life; nor do we read that they ventured any remonstrance against the sentence. In their exclusion from Canaan, as in that of the whole people a generation earlier, we are to recognise the consequence, not simply of a single act, but of a state of mind, which that act made manifest.

Another view, naturally connecting itself with this, may be briefly suggested. The time had come, when it was best for the people, educated for freedom, energy, and conquest, to be made to know, that henceforward they must rely on themselves, and not on supernatural interpositions of their Divine guide. This they could hardly be brought to feel, as long as the instruments of those interpositions in time past continued with them; and therefore it was fit that Moses, and Aaron should be withdrawn. They, however, might have felt that they were harshly treated, in not being permitted to witness the consummation of their cares; and to any

assertion of theirs, that irreproachable conduct in the trusts which they had sustained gave a just title to such indulgence, the suitable reply was, that, even on that ground, the indulgence had not been earned by them, as their conduct, if meritorious, had not been free from reproach.

Whether it was, that the southern border of Canaan presented peculiar obstacles to an invasion, from the character of its inhabitants, or the face of the country, or that the remembrance of the former unsuccessful attempt would have had a dispiriting effect, or for some other cause unexplained, the course now proposed is, to make the inroad from the east, above the head of the Dead Sea. To this end, Moses sends to solicit an unobstructed passage by the great road, which lay through the northern district of the Edomites, or Idu-mæans, descendants of Jacob's elder brother, Esau. It is refused, and he directs the march southward, along the western boundary of Edom, with the purpose of passing to the east through the less populous region, which bordered upon the Elanitic gulf. On its way, the host arrives at Mount Hor, where Moses with Eleazar is directed to attend, in a retirement of that hilly region, on the last hours of the high-priest, and to transfer the *insignia* of Aaron's high office, to his son.*

* Numb. xx. 14–28. — “Thy brother Israel” (14); compare Gen. xxv. 30. — “Strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son” (26); that is, invest Eleazar with the attributes of his father's office. The words need not to be literally taken. We should not hesitate to say, that a son succeeded to his father's crown, even though, strictly speaking, no crown had ever been on the head of either. — “They went up into Mount Hor and Aaron died there” (27, 28). Tradition indicates his tomb near the ancient, and recently re-discovered, city of Petra, thus agreeing with an opinion at least as old as the time of Josephus. (Ant. lib. 4, cap. 4, § 7.) Burckhardt visited the spot in 1812 (“Travels” &c., p. 430), and it has since been more fully explored by several travellers, our enterprising countryman, Mr. Stevens, among the number. (“Incidents of Travel” &c., Vol. II. pp. 95–98.)

Having devoted thirty days to ceremonies of mourning, and suffered some loss in a skirmish with a party of the southern Canaanites,* the people pursued the course which had been marked out, and, passing by the head of the gulf, gained the unoccupied country to the east of Idumæa. Here they were annoyed by venomous serpents, and Moses, interceding for the cure of those who had been stung, was ordered to erect a brazen image of the reptile, and give notice, that whoever looked upon it, should be cured.† A few more stages towards the north, brought them to the territory of the Amorites, through which, as before through that of Idumæa, they sent to ask free passage, with the promise of giving no disturbance, and touching no property, as they passed to their destination in the country west of the Jordan. Sihon, king of the Amorites, not only denied their request, but “went out against Israel into the wilderness,” and, without provocation, assaulted them

* Numb. xxi. 1-3. — “By the way of *the spies*” (1). There is no authority for this rendering. The Septuagint, and after it the Arabic, understand a proper name to be intended, and translate “by the way of Atharim.” — “And he called the name of the place, Hormah” (3); חֲרִמָּה; a word having reference to the חֲרָם, or *doom* to which they had devoted it (2). With some English commentators, I decidedly incline to regard all of this verse, except the last clause, as the gloss of a later time, indicating the subsequent execution of the doom, here threatened, by Joshua, and the tribes of Judah and Simeon, as recorded in Joshua xii. 7, 14; Judges i. 17. The words “unto Hormah” appear to have been inserted in Numb. xiv. 45, subsequently to the giving of that name under the circumstances here related.

† Numb. xxi. 4-9. Burckhardt (p. 499) and Laborde (“Journey through Arabia Petræa” &c., p. 138, London Edit.) found abundance of serpents in this region. “*Fiery serpents*”; serpents with an inflammatory bite. That they were a supernatural judgment upon the Israelites is not said, either in the text before us, or in the parallel passage in Deuteronomy (viii. 15). “The Lord sent fiery serpents” (6) as he sends every thing; and by a natural tendency of the mind, when trouble was experienced, and there was at the same time a consciousness of being faulty, the calamity was viewed (7) as a punitive providential infliction. The fitness of the arrangement for the cure is to be vindicated upon the principles exhibited at p. 159, which see.

there. Victory declared for the Israelites, and they took possession of Sihon's country by the right of conquest. Proceeding on their way, an attack, equally unprovoked, as appears, was made upon them by Og, king of Bashan, the region adjoining Moab on the north. "He went out against them, he and all his people, to the battle, at Edrei." It was attended by a similar result, and the victors occupied his country also.*

The alarm, occasioned by these conquests, extended

* Numb. xxi. 10-35. — In 14, 15 (compare 13), there can be little doubt (though the passage is obscure, and has not improbably been corrupted), that Moses is quoting some history or poem of the Amorites, to the end of determining the extent of the country, of which, by his victory over them, he had become master. He adduces the lines to show, that this people, in their wars with the Moabites, had pushed their southern boundary as far as the river Arnon (compare 24, 26); and accordingly, as far as this, the Israelites might now maintain a claim against the people of Moab, whom they did not propose to disturb in their own possessions. (Compare Deut. ii. 9.) If this view be correct, and if (which has been doubted) the word יְהוָה (14) is genuine, and rightly pointed, the title, "the book of the wars of *the Lord*," used in quoting a record of idolaters, must be understood as equivalent to "the book of the *great* wars." Such forms, for a superlative, belong to the Hebrew idiom; compare Gen. x. 9; xxx. 8; xxxv. 5; Jonah iii. 3; Luke i. 6; Acts vii. 20. — "What *he* did" (14). Who is here intended we cannot say, because of the abrupt beginning, so common in quotations. The clause, further, is altogether obscure; the verb (יָרָה) being not only not found elsewhere, but being of a formation not agreeable to Hebrew analogy. — In verses 17, 18, we appear to have the few first lines of a hymn, composed and sung on the joyful occasion of finding an easy and abundant supply of water near the nation's future home. — "And Israel sent messengers" &c. (21). They had before entered an unfrequented part of the country claimed by Sihon (13, 20), but had not, till now, approached its settlements. — "Come unto Heshbon" &c. (27-30). Here again, (as in 14, 15,) some language current among the Amorites, in the form of ode or ballad, (not of "proverbs,") is quoted, to the end of showing that Heshbon, having been previously taken from the Moabites by Sihon, passed, with his defeat, into the hands of the Israelites, his conquerors. — "There was none *left* him [Og] alive" (35). Not that all his subjects were put to death; but that none of them remained living about their homes. They were treated like the subjects of Sihon (34); and these were not all slaughtered, but expelled (32).

among the neighbouring tribes; and Balak, king of Moab, proceeded to take measures, prompted by the superstition of the time, for securing himself against the expected inroad. In the region, further east, towards or beyond the Euphrates,* lived a person, named Balaam, to whom the popular belief ascribed the mysterious art of propitiating the powers of Heaven, and bending their will to his purposes. To him Balak sent a commission of some of his chief men, associating with them some of the elders of Midian (with which people it would appear from the sequel, that Moab was in alliance), to bribe him, with the promise of great gifts and honors, to come and lay the invaders under that ban, which it was believed would paralyze all their dreaded strength.† Balaam, having a character for supernatural wisdom to maintain, of course took care to inform himself of facts, by which he could judge what oracles to utter, with a probability that the event would fulfil them. Not to say, that tidings of the force and the impetuosity of the strange people, which had issued from the desert, would be likely to reach him in his not distant home, a report of the subjugation of the Amorites, and of Bashan, could hardly have failed to go abroad, and the very message of Balak was hint enough to the watchful and practised sagacity which his profession demanded. When he had learned from those who bore it, how great

* Balaam is said (Deut. xxiii. 4), to have been "of Mesopotamia." Instead of "the land of the children of *his people*," (עַמּוֹ, Numb. xxii. 5,) which is indefinite, the Samaritan, Syriac, and Vulgate give a reading corresponding to "the land of the children of *Ammon*." (אֲמוֹנִי.) The territories of Ammon and Midian lay to the east of those of the Moabites and Amorites; and it is likely, that between the two former respectively, as well as between them and Mesopotamia, still further east, the boundaries were not strictly defined.

† Besides the direct effect, upon the Israelites, of this imprecation, Sihon naturally relied upon it to revive the courage of his own army.

was the panic which prevailed, he already perceived what the event of any contest was likely to be, and possessed the information needful for keeping up his reputation as a prophet.

He understood his art, however, too well to dismiss the messengers at once with the declaration that he could do nothing for their master. It belonged to the proprieties of his assumed character, to entertain their suit; besides, they had come "with the rewards of divination in their hand," and it was his obvious policy to protract the negotiation, and, by stimulating their anxiety while he kept them in suspense, to extort the highest possible recompense for his good offices. Accordingly, he bids them remain by him over night, until he shall consult Jehovah, the patron Deity of the formidable strangers, with whom he professes himself to be in communication. In the morning he informs them that he had obtained an answer, probably in a dream, but that it was unfavorable; Jehovah would not consent that he should comply with Balak's wish.*

* Numb. xxii. 1-13.—"The plains of *Moab*" (1); the district, to which the Israelites had advanced, and into which Balak, moving among the hills, had followed them, retained its ancient name, as is common, though it had passed into the possession of the Amorites.—The substance of verses 3-6, reported to Balaam by the messengers, was enough to indicate to him, in the first instance, the panic which made the Moabites incapable of a successful defence.—"I will bring you word again, as *Jehovah* shall speak unto me" (8). Upon this statement, of Balaam's speaking of "*Jehovah*," Le Clerc ("*Commentarius*" ad loc.) remarks; "Forte Moses eum, more Hebraico, inducit loquentem, quamvis non hac, sed synonymâ quâpiam voce, usus sit." I agree to the soundness of the principle of interpretation herein implied, which is developed in Le Clerc's "*Ars Critica*" (Vol. I. p. 277 et seq.); but I think that, to apply it here, is to lose sight of the spirit of the passage. If Balaam was an Ammonite, agreeably to a view in the last note but one, he had an hereditary knowledge that the Hebrew divinity was called *Jehovah*, for the Ammonites were descended from Lot (Gen. xix. 36-38). At all events, he lived near to that race. Nor is it at all necessary even to devise a way for his becoming acquainted with a fact, so notorious, that whoever had heard any thing of

The messengers returned with the report of their unsuccessful application, and (as Balaam naturally expected) were succeeded by a more numerous and dignified embassy, to urge with yet more liberal promises his interposition in behalf of the more alarmed king. Continuing the same artifice as heretofore, (though he well knew, that, as circumstances were, the success of the Israelites could hardly be doubted, and that, accordingly, to curse them would be to forfeit for the future all his character as a true soothsayer,) he told the new envoys that no prospect of advantage would induce him, in a matter regarding the Israelites, to go contrary to Jehovah's word, but that, if they would remain near him till the next morning, he would make another attempt to effect their purpose, in the only way within his province. In the morning, accordingly, he informs them, that he had prevailed so far as to obtain leave to go with them to their monarch's encampment, and await further communications on the spot; and he relates to them (if I understand the passage correctly) the incidents of a dream, in which this consent on Jehovah's part had been conveyed. Nothing could be better devised than this measure, to carry on the imposture, and secure the utmost profit from it. By appearing to act so cautiously and submissively, he secured confidence; and, by repairing to the spot, he placed himself in a position (without exciting any suspicion that such was his design) to make his own

the Israelites, must be supposed to have learned it. — Verse 9 contains a question altogether suitable for Balaam, narrating a fictitious interview, to put into the mouth of Jehovah, but admitting no interpretation consistent with the common view. — Verse 11 implies no representation on Balaam's part, that the Israelitish God was ignorant of what his people had done. He merely tells the messengers, that, at the pretended interview, he had apprized Jehovah of the fact of their arrival, and of the message which they brought.

observations on the existing state of things, so as to avoid being at fault, when he should come to utter his final predictions.*

Arrived at Balak's camp, he is received with great

* Numb. xxii. 14-35. — "The word of Jehovah, *my God*" (18). This is an expression, which has cost much pains to the commentators, and much error to their followers. The spirit of the transaction, as above described, being regarded, the expression will appear altogether fit and natural. Jehovah was Balaam's god, *pro hac vice*, as being the god, with whom, as proper guardian of the Israelites, he professed to be treating. Jehovah was "his god," *quasi* his familiar. To get light on the expression, see not the Rabbins, nor their Christian disciples, but Shakspeare, who, always true to the proprieties of a scene and character, makes Prospero say, "*my dainty Ariel*"; "*my brave spirit*"; "*my tricky spirit*"; "*my diligence.*" — "If the men *come*" &c. (20); rather, *since* the men *have come* &c.

I have represented the transaction recorded in verses 21-35 (the last clause of 35 excepted), as Balaam's account of a dream, in which he pretended to have received Jehovah's consent to his repairing to the camp of Balak, with his messengers, its whole machinery being contrived to illustrate his desire to overcome every obstacle, so as to gratify their master. Let the reader compare verse 20 with 21-35, and I think he will see reason to allow, that Balaam, having in the first place told the messengers, who had remained with him, that he had received a communication during the night, and what its substance was (20), then proceeds to tell them in detail (21-35), in what form the communication came, viz. that of a dream, in which, after persisting, in the face of extraordinary discouragements, in the attempt to visit Balak out of his good-will to that prince, he heard himself addressed by Jehovah's angel, who saw how determined he was, with permission to prosecute his journey. The identity of substance between verses 20 and 35, demands particular observation; in 20, as I have remarked, the communication alleged to have been received, being given alone, while it is repeated in 35, as the last of the incidents which made the form and manner of its conveyance. The relation between the two passages is the same which I have represented above as subsisting between Numb. xi. 1-3, and 4-35. Compare also Gen. xxxvii. 21 with 22; John xxi. 1 with 2-23. And thus the inconsistency is done away, (fatal, as it seems to me, to the common hypothesis, to say nothing of other insuperable difficulties attending it,) between the permission first given for the journey (20), and the impediments afterwards supposed to be thrown in its way (22 et seq.)

But I shall be required to point to something in the narrative, showing that what I call a dream was designed to be represented as such. I reply, that all writing supposes some exercise of discernment on the part of the reader, and some capacity of inferring, from significant circumstan-

distinction by the monarch, to whom (reserving himself for future action) he merely repeats the declaration, that he has come to exercise no will of his own, — that he is to receive an oracle, not to dictate one; a declaration rendered necessary by the circumstances, since, by declaring, on the one hand, that the case was desperate, he would have forfeited his prospect of reward, and, on the other, by uttering a favorable prediction which the event should not confirm, he would have lost the reputation from which he derived his gains. On

ces, what is not distinctly announced. Such circumstances I have endeavoured to show that there are in this context. It is an obvious artifice of rhetoric to slide into the relation of a dream, from a narrative of real incidents, in such a manner as to require the reader to infer a transition, from the altered character of the occurrences described. I am speaking of an acknowledged law of composition. Let the following lines from one of Scott's poems illustrate it, though of course, we should expect to find even bolder devices of writing in use among ancients and Orientals, than in our tamer western and modern world.

“The short, dark waves, heaved to the land,
With ceaseless splash kissed cliff or sand.
It was a slumb'rous sound; — he turned
To tales at which his youth had burned,
Of the wild witch's baneful cot,
And mermaid's alabaster grot,
Who bathes her limbs in sunless well,
Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.
Thither in fancy wrapt he flies,
And on his sight the vaults arise.
That hut's dark walls he sees no more,
His foot is on the marble floor,
And o'er his head the dazzling spars
Gleam like a firmament of stars.”

Lord of the Isles, Canto 111.

Who doubts, when he has read thus far with attention, that there has been a transition to a dream? Yet he has not been told it; it is merely his inference from the character of the description. The words “thither in fancy wrapt he flies,” are no intimation of a dream; they describe the previous state of wakeful musing. And though, for the convenience of the rhyme, and of the further narration, the reader is presently after told

————— “with Allan's *dream*
Mingled the captive's warning scream,”

it is the fault of his own dulness, if he is not fully in possession of the meaning, before he has proceeded thus far.

the morrow, choosing a spot among the hills, where he could have the Israelitish camp below, full in view, and be able to observe it with a leisurely survey, he has seven altars erected (a favorite number with the Israelites, and therefore to be supposed acceptable to their guardian god), and causing a holocaust to be offered on each, of animals which were known to make the customary tribute to that deity, separates himself from Balak under the pretence that it was suitable for the monarch to watch his own offering, and goes away himself to a solitary place, as if to a private interview with Jehovah.*

Returning from it, he reports to Balak, (as well he might, after what he had seen with his own eyes of the force of the Israelites, and the pusillanimous fright of the people of the neighbourhood,) that all is in vain; Jehovah will not consent that his people shall be cursed. As Balak's apprehensions and distress increase, however, he naturally becomes more unwilling to abandon the hope of advantage from the magician's interposition, as long as any chance remains; while, on the other hand, it is the plainly eligible course for the latter, having first taken care of his character for truth and consistency, to consent to repeat the attempt which he had pronounced futile, as often as the monarch, in this extremity of his fear, should himself desire; since the more persevering good-will Balaam manifested, the larger compensation he might expect. Accordingly, he goes through the same formalities twice more, shifting his place each time, probably through some hope entertained by Balak, that he might secure a more auspicious spot, and not improbably through some wish of his own to examine the Israelitish encampment from different

* Numb. xxii. 36—xxiii. 3.

points of view. The disappointment of Balak at length vents itself in rage, and he dismisses Balaam abruptly to his home, who, to fix the impression of his supernatural knowledge, breaks out, in parting, into prognostics of the coming triumphs of Israel. These were such as his observations had now satisfied him, that the event would speedily fulfil in part; while in part the predictions, thrown in to fill up the imaginary outline, were so general in their terms, or so indefinite as to the time of their accomplishment, that no refutation of them was to be feared, which would prejudice his character for foreknowledge.*

* Numb. xxiii. 4—xxiv. 25.—“God met Balaam, and he said unto him, ‘I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram’” (4). That is, Balaam said, on returning to Balak, that he had had an interview with Jehovah, and had pleaded with him to be propitious, in consideration of his having presented, in Balak’s behalf, such offerings as Jehovah was accustomed to accept.—“Lo! the people shall dwell alone” &c. (9); it is destined to attain to a singular eminence.—“Let me die the death of *the righteous* (יְשִׁירִים), apparently a paronomasia upon יִשְׂרָאֵל, *Israel*, and let my *last end* be like his” (10); that is, Oh that I may be as fortunate to the end of my days, as that people is destined to be, and my *lot* [or my enterprises] *for the future* be prospered like theirs. אַחֲרַיִת has here a similar sense to what I have ascribed to אַחֲרָן on page 227.—“Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place,” (13, compare 27), “Peor” (28) perhaps being selected as the site of a temple of Baal-Peor. The repetition of trials of this kind, when the first failed, was in the spirit of the ancient idolatries. Augustus, says Suetonius, (cap. 96,) “circa Perusiam sacrificio non litante, cum augeri hostias imperasset.” “Si primis hostiis litatum non erat, aliæ post easdem ductæ hostiæ cædebantur.” Aul. Gel. lib. 4, cap. 6.—“The spirit of God” (xxiv. 2); a divine impulse, as Balaam pretended.—Verse 11 does not imply that Balaam obtained no reward. Balak, in the extremity of his alarm, hints to Balaam, that if he would even now relent, and do the office which had been sought at his hands, all that had yet been done for him was as nothing, compared with what should be.—“There shall come a star out of Jacob” (17). A star is a natural and a scriptural figure, for princely and triumphant power. Compare Is. xiv. 12. In this, and the four next following verses, we have merely Balaam’s declaration, (founded on the observations which he had made on the relative strength and spirit of the parties, but without specifications of circumstances or time,) that the

Such I conceive to be the simple account of the general contents of a passage of Scripture, which has been the subject of much speculation. At the time when Canaan was invaded, the superstitions prevalent among idolaters made it natural for them to have recourse, in any exigency, to those who cultivated arts of sorcery, and were believed to be able to influence the gods. Balaam was such a person; and he proceeded in precisely the manner in which we should expect to find an impostor of his class proceeding, if he had a king for his suitor and an occasion of great publicity for the exercise of his cunning, and was contriving to turn the transaction to as great account as possible, both in respect to present gain, and to permanent credit as a master of his craft. He needed only to know the force and enthusiasm of the Israelites, and the want of spirit and of preparation on the part of those whom

Israelites would prove too powerful for their neighbours.—The text of verses 22–24 is very uncertain; but I understand, to sum up all in a few words, that the pretended seer chose to end his discourse with a climax, saying that the conquests and revolutions he had spoken of were not all that were ever to take place; that there would be others yet, in later times; a declaration which he might make with little risk to his reputation, since he added, that he did not undertake to declare when the events he foretold in such indefinite terms should occur. “Who shall be living,” he asks, “when God shall do this?”—“Until Ashur shall carry thee away captive” (22). “And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Ashur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever” (24). “Ashur,” I take to mean Assyria, from whose neighbourhood he had come; “Chittim,” people beyond the sea, the word having a vagueness of somewhat the same kind as our word *Indies*; and “Eber,” the Hebrews, of whose present triumphs he had been speaking. And what he says has this definiteness, and no more; that the revolutions of empire should not stop with that which was now impending; that after the Israelites had conquered the Kenites and others, land forces should at some time come from the inland direction, that of Assyria, and conquer them; and then sea forces, at some time, would come from the other quarter, and conquer the conquerors. The thing was very likely to occur in some age of the world’s life. But if it did not, the soothsayer lost nothing; he would not be here to be refuted.

they had terrified, to be sure that they must conquer. It was not, however, for him to lose the opportunity of enriching himself, and making himself conspicuous, by prejudging the question from the first, and saying that he could do nothing. His consent to use his mediation, when first applied to by the messengers, indicates a friendly disposition towards Balak, and naturally excites that prince to further solicitation. On the other hand, his declaration, that he can only do as Jehòvah shall dictate, goes to confirm his character with them for candor, disinterestedness, and veracity; they could not be surprised to learn that Balaam, powerful as he was, could achieve nothing of what they desired, except so far as he should be able to conciliate or overrule the deity, who had so powerfully protected his people against the gods of Egypt; and by placing the question on this ground from the first, he provided himself with a defence, when his final announcement of inability to pronounce the curse should be made. His further measures, as they are recorded in this passage, all bear upon the threefold object of keeping the king in his toils till he should have received a large reward; making his consequence widely known; and preparing himself to pronounce at last a decision, which should establish and extend his estimation as a proficient in his pretended art.

Another measure adopted by him, of which we are told further on, is equally consistent with his character, as I have represented it. He had seen that the Israelites, remaining well organized and resolute as they seemed, could not be driven back by the feeble races into whose neighbourhood they had come; and this conclusion he communicates to Balak in the form which has been commented on, saying, that Jehovah, their

divinity, would not consent to have them cursed.* He knew, however, that if they could be seduced into the idolatrous and lascivious practices of Midian, a course of such hostility to their institutions and law would be fatal to all subordination, and involve an abandonment of all private sense of character; and that, in the social dismemberment which would follow, they would be in a condition to be overcome. In advising to this attempt, he offered no contradiction to his previous course. On the contrary, the spirit of the counsel evidently was, Though Jehovah, their God, refuses to permit them to be doomed, as long as they are obedient, yet he cannot prevent them from breaking their fealty to him, and, if you can persuade them to disloyalty, his protection will be forfeited.

The scene of these transactions, was the country of Midian and Moab, and the camp of Balak. Thither also we are accordingly to look for the origin of the narrative, written or oral, which has been transmitted to us, and which, in all probability, was preserved by Moses in the same shape in which it reached him. It probably became known to him, after the attack upon the Midianites, of which we are soon to read. The reason of his publishing and preserving it, is easily assigned. It was to his purpose to use all methods to encourage his inexperienced people to the work which was before them, a work to be only begun in his life-time, and prosecuted after his death; and nothing could serve this purpose more effectually, than an authentic narrative of a transaction like that on which we have been remarking, indicating, as it did, the panic which prevailed in the region, and tending to extend it further, and thus showing, that the Israelites had little to fear, except from their own timidity.

* Compare Numb. xxiii. 21.

The treacherous advice, which, a little further on, we shall find retrospectively alluded to, as having been given by Balaam,* was attended, for the moment, with but too good success. The Israelites, dazzled and bewildered, it is likely, by magnificent and seductive appliances of vice, to which, in their simple wandering life, they had been all unused, were prevailed on by the idolaters of Moab and Midian, to take part in the riotous and lustful orgies of their gods; and, as before by an insubordination which threatened the permanency of the state, so now by practices which outraged the great principle and object of its institution, they created a necessity for a severe and exemplary visitation of the Divine displeasure. To present the principles of interpretation, which I regard as applicable to the narrative in the twenty-fifth chapter, would be only to repeat what I submitted in treating of the insurrection of Korah and his confederates.† I but add the remark, that the reasons, which in the former case dictated a direct supernatural interposition, not existing in the present instance (since there was now no collision between different portions of the people, to exasperate them one against another), the punishment of the offenders was committed to that portion who remained faithful; the rather, it may be thought, as this course would tend to excite them to a greater abhorrence of the sin.‡

* Numb. xxxi. 16.

† pp. 358, 359.

‡ In xxv. 2, 3; there is no intimation that the guilty part of the people abjured their faith in Jehovah, or so much as adopted a belief in Baal-Peor along with it. What they did was, to participate in the licentious acts by which his devotees professed to honor him. "And Israel [some of the Israelites, as the context shows, and as the Samaritan copy expressly reads] *joined himself* unto Baal-Peor"; rather bound themselves with his badge.—"Take all the heads [chiefs] of the people" (4); i. e. apparently, take them to sit in judgment on the guilty; compare 5. "Hang them up"; that is, their bodies, after they are slain, as I am to show hereafter. "Against the sun"; compare Deut. xxi. 23.—"Those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand" (9). The hint

Preparatory to a division of the territory, about to be conquered, into districts proportioned to the population of the several tribes, another census is directed to be taken; and from the fact, that the names of the great families composing the respective tribes are now recorded, it may be gathered, that the arrangement contemplated such a subdivision of the territory of each tribe, that its several branches (distinguished by their descent from different sons of the common progenitor of the tribe) should each compose a separate neighbourhood. The numerical statements exhibited in this chapter, compared with those of the former census, are such as to increase our distrust of the integrity of the text, in cases where figures are concerned. The sum of the whole people is less, by about two thousand, than what was ascertained forty years before; and this does not surprise us, when we consider the life they had led meanwhile, and the great mortality on two occasions.* But the changes represented to have taken place in some of the tribes, are so remarkable as to justify the belief of a vitiation of the record. For example, the tribe of Simeon is represented to have been reduced by nearly two thirds of its number; and that of Manasseh,

thrown out above (p. 357, compare 56), on the uncertainty of numbers, has of course equal application here. "The plague" (compare 5, 8,) is the execution done by the faithful upon the offenders. — "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar," &c. (11–13); Phinehas, by the zeal he hath manifested for my honor and the people's virtue, hath shown himself worthy of that priesthood, which is his and his posterity's by hereditary claim, and which I now confirm to him. The act of Phinehas was of the greater importance, as it exhibited an example of determination, to excite others, (thus checking the sin, and arresting the extension of its punishment, compare 8, 11,) and as the crime, which it avenged, was that of persons of high rank (compare 14, 15), and was done with publicity and defiance, to the overthrow of all subordination (which was the very point Balaam had had in view) and in mockery of the people's repentance. Compare 6.

* Numb. xvi., xxv.

on the other hand, to have increased from thirty-two thousand two hundred, to nearly fifty-three thousand.*

We read, at the beginning of the following chapter, that the daughters of a descendant of Manasseh, named Zelophehad, understanding, that, according to arrangements just adopted, their father's family, for want of male representatives, was to be excluded from a share in the territory of its tribe, made a representation to Moses on the subject,—who accordingly received a direction to the following effect, for the determination of all similar cases; viz. That, if a proprietor died without male children, his daughters were to inherit his land; that, in default of direct heirs in the female line, it was to go to his brothers; if he left no

* Numb. xxvi.—Verse 4 is evidently defective; but the corruption is very ancient, being found in the Septuagint version, and the Samaritan copy, as well as the Hebrew.—“Notwithstanding [but] the children of Korah died not” (11). These words have been thought to intimate, that the children of Dathan and Abiram, who are mentioned in the preceding verse, did die. But I cannot think the argument sound. The words may have been originally a gloss upon the text, by some Levite of this race, (compare 1 Chron. vi. 33–37, and the inscriptions of twelve Psalms, e. g. Ps. xlii.,) who gratified his family pride by noting, that, though Korah fell, his line did not perish. But without resorting to this supposition, it would be not unnatural for Moses (particularly interested as he was in the Kohathite division of Levi, as belonging to its number) to remark, that the death of the head of one of its families did not cause the race to become extinct, without implying any distinction in this particular, between Korah and the other persons mentioned in the context. Further, it may well be questioned, whether, in a list of heads of families prepared for the purpose named above, the names of Dathan and Abiram would have been given, had they left no posterity to inherit land.—The tribes whose numbers are stated to have diminished, are those of Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Ephraim, and Naphtali.—“Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by *lot*” &c. (55); rather, “Surely the land shall be allotted according to the names” &c. “By *lot*”; that is, by *allotment*, by deliberate assignment here, not by any dictation of chance. For such a use of לַחֲלוּץ, see Judg. i. 3; Is. lvii. 6; Ps. xvi. 5; cxxv. 3; Dan. xii. 13.—The language in 64, 65 has the same force as that in xiv. 29, 30, 35; and if the remarks made on that passage (p. 347) have any weight, they are equally applicable here.

brothers, then to his father's brothers; and, failing that relationship, then to his nearest collateral kinsman. In cases, where a parent left daughters and sons, it is to be presumed that the former, being incompetent to inherit land, would be provided for from personal property, which consisted in money, slaves, domestic animals, and garments, these last, in a state of society in which the fashions of dress did not change, appearing to have constituted one of the recognised forms of wealth.*

Forewarned, at this juncture, of his near approach to the close of his days, Moses receives a promise, that first, from a mountainous ridge near at hand, he shall enjoy a view of the region which he is not to be permitted to enter.† In compliance with his request, that, before his departure, a future leader for the people may be designated, he is directed to present Joshua, the partner hitherto of so many of his cares and toils, before the chief priest and the congregation, and address to him, in their presence, a charge respecting the due execution of his trust.‡ This public recognition of Joshua, during Moses' lifetime, doubtless served to prepare the way for his undisputed assumption of the high authority about to pass into his hands.

* Numb. xxvii. 1-11. Compare xxvi. 33.—There is no reason for understanding verse 3 to imply, that if Zelophehad had died as an accomplice of Korah, his descendants must have been disinherited. The fact, that he had not, is but named, to conciliate a favorable hearing.

† xxvii. 12-14.

‡ xxvii. 15-23.

LECTURE XVII.

NUMBERS XXVIII. 1.—XXXVI. 13.

DIRECTORY FOR OFFERINGS ON THE PERIODICAL CELEBRATIONS.—RULES RESPECTING THE OBLIGATION OF VOWS.—OCCASION AND PROSECUTION OF THE WAR WITH THE MIDIANITES.—CONSIDERATION OF THE SEVERITIES EXERCISED THEREIN.—LAWS RESPECTING THE DIVISION OF BOOTY TAKEN IN WAR.—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REUBENITES, THE GADITES, AND HALF OF THE TRIBE OF MANASSEH, IN THE DISTRICT EAST OF THE JORDAN.—LIST OF THE MARCHES FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.—COMMAND TO EXPEL THE CANAANITES.—DEFINITION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF PALESTINE.—APPOINTMENT OF PRINCES TO MAKE A PARTITION OF THE TERRITORY.—DIRECTION FOR LEVITICAL CITIES, AND CITIES OF REFUGE.—INSTITUTION OF GOELISM.—TREATMENT OF JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE.—RULE TO PREVENT THE TRANSFER OF LAND BY HEIRESSSES TO ANOTHER TRIBE.

THE twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Numbers resemble the twenty-third of Leviticus; containing, like that passage, a directory for the observance of the national periodical celebrations, arranged in their chronological order; incorporating some particulars, in respect to the forms of offering, which had heretofore been exhibited in different connexions; and adding some others, these latter for the most part relating to a more costly and imposing ceremonial, such as the improved circumstances of the people would henceforward admit. The passage, taken in connexion with previous directions upon the same subject, presents one of the numerous striking instances of that progressive character of the Law, on which I formerly remarked.*

* See above, pp. 145, 166.

In respect to the perpetual Burnt Offering, at the Tabernacle, of a lamb in the morning, and another in the evening, of every day, with their proper appendages, nothing new is here prescribed;* but notice is repeatedly given, that it is never to be superseded by other ceremonies, — that all others are to be additional to it.† The direction, that on every Sabbath day these offerings shall be tripled, is now for the first time given.‡ The celebrations of the first day of each month, had before been but incidentally mentioned.§ The ritual for them is now ordained, to consist of a Sin Offering of a goat, and a rich Burnt Offering of two young bullocks, one ram, and seven yearling lambs, with their appropriate accompanying offerings of flour, wine, and oil, as these were regulated by a standing law.|| A material addition is made to the ritual of the Passover and of the Pentecost; sacrifices, the same with those appropriate to the New Moons, being ordained to be offered on each day of the week of those great festivals, while before, no more had been commanded, than that there should be a Burnt Offering on every day of the Passover week, and that on one day of that of the Pentecost there should be presented a Burnt Offering of seven lambs, two rams, and one bullock, besides a kid for a Sin Offering, and two yearling lambs for a Peace Offering.¶ The same remark holds good of the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement; except that on these two occasions, there was to be but one bullock, in the sacrifice, instead of two. On the latter of these days, the appropriate ceremonies of the

* Numb. xxviii. 3-8. Compare Ex. xxix. 38-42.

† Numb. xxviii. 15, 23, 24, 31, &c.

‡ xxviii. 9, 10.

§ x. 10. See p. 337, note.

|| xv. 3-11.

¶ xxviii. 16-31. Compare Lev. xxiii. 8, 18, 19.

occasion, as before described, were also to be gone through; and, on the former, those of a New Moon.*

But the most prominent new feature in this compend, is that of the ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles. That festival was designed for a commemoration of what had not been consummated at any earlier period in the history, than that to which the passage now before us relates. The sojourn in booths in the wilderness, had been hitherto matter of anticipation and experience. From this time forward, it was to be remembered as an interesting incident, belonging to the "day of small things" in the national history. We may imagine the enthusiasm, with which, just emerged from the wilderness, the people would receive a command to celebrate, with magnificent holiday observance, a course of travel, which at length had brought them where they saw conquest, and a secure national establishment within their grasp; and, in the place where this record appears, it is altogether natural to trace the hand of one, who wrote at the point of time, when the proper occasion for the arrangement had arisen, and when the arrangement was accordingly made. Before, no more particular direction had been given respecting offerings during the Feast of Tabernacles, than that they should be presented upon each of its days. It is now ordained, that, for seven days successively, there shall be presented a Sin Offering of a goat, and a Burnt Offering of fourteen yearling lambs, two rams, and a number of bullocks, beginning with thirteen, and diminishing by one each day; and that the feast shall close by an offering, on the eighth day, the same as that of the Feast of Trumpets, or first day of the civil year.†

* Numb. xxix. 1-11. Compare Lev. xxiii. 24, 27; xvi.

† Numb. xxix. 12-38. Compare Lev. xxiii. 33-36, 39-43. The

We have seen, from time to time, that it was not the spirit of the Law to encourage free-will offerings.* In the next following chapter, we find a short series of regulations, tending (while they secured the integrity of all who should choose to make vows, whether relating to the dedication of some gift, or to some ascetic observance,)[†] to diminish their frequency, and especially to obviate the inconvenience of their being made by persons so situated, that the cost of their fulfilment would fall upon others. If a person in an independent condition made a vow, (alike a woman, widow or divorced, as a man of full age,) he made it on his own responsibility, and he must keep it. If it was made by one in a relation of dependence, a wife, or an unmarried daughter, who might make it lightly, as not being personally liable for the cost, it was of no binding force, unless the husband or father were acquainted with it, and either expressly, or by silence, testified his consent at the time.[‡] His consent at the time made the vow his own, which he was not afterwards at liberty to retract; § otherwise he would have been tempted to negligence on the subject, and the priests, or any others interested, might be wronged. The married woman who made a vow, and became a widow before the time for its fulfilment, was liable or not upon the same principles; that is, if her husband had assented, her engagement continued good against herself, and, without doubt, being construed as his own engagement, was a lawful incumbrance on the

bullocks offered on the seven successive days, amounted to the number of seventy, a favorite number with the Jews. It has been estimated, (Lowman's "Rational of the Ritual" &c., p. 205,) that if the yearly expense of the national sacrifices were assessed equally upon the twelve tribes, the sum payable annually by each, would, at a liberal computation, amount to less than five hundred dollars.

* pp. 308, 330.

† Numb. xxx. 2, 13.

‡ xxx. 3-9.

§ xxx. 15.

property he had left; if he had dissented, she and his estate were free.* The case of male children, continuing members of their father's family, is not treated. It is probable, that in mere boyhood a person was not capable of making a legal vow, and that after that period he was bound, as he was able, to provide for himself the means of executing whatever vow he made. It can hardly be supposed, (though such, without authority from the text, has been the exposition of some commentators,) that the observance of the vow of an ignorant and thoughtless child would be exacted when he should arrive at full age.

Hitherto such contests as we have seen the Israelites engaged in, appear to have been of a defensive character, according to the strictest acceptance of that phrase. We are now to read of an assault of theirs upon a neighbouring tribe, the Midianites; and questions present themselves respecting the justifiableness of that assault, and of the manner in which it was conducted. We are told, that Moses received a divine command to "avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites," that is, to punish the Midianites for their recent treachery; that, in pursuance of this command, he despatched a party of twelve thousand men, who attacked some of the cities of that people, put to death a portion of its male population, and returned with numerous prisoners (women and children), and a large booty of beeves, asses, and sheep; and that Moses commanded an indiscriminate slaughter of the women of adult age, and the male children, and a retention of the female children as slaves, prescribing also the principles of a division of all the spoil.†

In conducting this argument, I wave any benefit

* Numb. xxx. 10–13.

† xxxi. 1–47.

which may be supposed to be derived from the representation, that the whole, or a part, of these transactions, took place by virtue of a divine command. When it is urged, that the acts were morally wrong, and therefore, being inconsistent with the character of God, were not done by the authority of any delegate of his, the apologist of the Mosaic records reasons in a vicious circle, if he replies, that a divine command determines the character of an act, and that accordingly the acts in question, being commanded by God, were right.

Was it right, then, upon acknowledged principles, for the Israelites, under the existing circumstances, to attack the people of Midian? This, I think, is a question which needs not detain us long.

When I say, “acknowledged principles,” I am of course understood to mean, principles acknowledged by those who regard self-defence as the first law of nature, both for individuals and communities; a law, nowhere abrogated in Scripture. To enter into the controversy here with such as hold a different opinion, would be to write what would be superfluous for the great mass of Christians.

Of the lawful causes of war, none is more unanimously asserted by the writers upon public law, than an attempt, on the part of one community, against the political institutions, and so against the integrity and internal peace of another. A just war, no doubt, must be a defensive war. But a wise and effectual self-defence does not begin when the arm of violence is actually uplifted, and the assailed stands powerless before it. In order, even, to be merciful to the antagonist, it will often be best to anticipate his action, when his injurious purpose has been ascertained. So against that enemy, which, without having itself unsheathed the sword, has attempted to overthrow the government of

a country, and bring on it the ruin of anarchy and civil conflict, all the rights of war, as universally understood, take effect.* That which in our times would be done by a nation, which should send emissaries into another nation to preach rebellion, was done, in the instance before us, by the Midianites against the people of Israel. They endeavoured to withdraw that people from their allegiance, and thus not only to remove the principles of all their union, prosperity, and peace, but to prepare them to become an easy conquest for their own arms.

But though self-protection is the right and the duty of individuals and of nations, vengeance (properly so called) is not the duty nor the right of either. Violent measures are justified, so far as they are necessary for security, (present and future,) and not a step further. What degree and kind of violent procedure existing circumstances may thus render necessary, is a question, without doubt, which men are liable to determine wrong, their judgment being subject to be swayed, in such cases, by their passions. But the principle is none the less clear, on account of one or another erroneous application which may be made of it. In the present instance, the national existence of the Israelites, and ultimately the lives of themselves and their children, (not to speak of the accomplishment of the great peculiar objects which their national separation was designed to promote,) depended on their being secure against such treacherous attempts as had lately been made. Under the circumstances, it had become allowable and requisite for them to do all that was needful, to guard against the repetition of such.

* It would be useless to multiply authorities, which might be had, to an indefinite extent, by turning to the approved writers on international jurisprudence. See (*instar omnium*) Vattel, "Droit des Gens" &c., livre 2, §§ 49-57.

How much, then, was needful to that end? This is the question that remains; and, keeping this statement of it distinctly in view, I suppose that we may come to a solution of the problem of the consistency of Moses' conduct, on this occasion, with the character which ostensibly he bore.

If it is right to wage war at all, it is not only right to wage it in such a manner as will effect its object, but it would be wrong to wage it in any other manner. War is, of its nature, the infliction of suffering in order to an ulterior good. The infliction of any degree of suffering is unjustifiable, except so far as it tends to that result. And if, in the prosecution of a war, the measures adopted are of such lenity, as to be unsuitable to produce the contemplated end of protection for the present, and security for the future, the mitigated evil becomes then uncompensated, causeless, unjustifiable evil. It is not mercy; it is cruelty and crime.

No principle is clearer than this to the eye of reason, nor more familiarly recognised in the proceedings of communities, especially in the usages of war; though, when any application of it, however wise and just, leads to severities which we are not accustomed to think of as belonging to the necessity of the case, our feelings are naturally shocked. It is the business of humanity to keep continually in view a mitigation of the miseries of war, and to induce nations to settle their disputes at less cost to one another. But, as long as forcible defence continues to be necessary against profligate invasion, so long the force exerted ought to be terrible enough to accomplish its eventually merciful end.

The principle not only bears upon the general system of the conduct of wars, but has a righteous application to its details.—A small garrison, for example, with the advantage of its fortifications, might put to death

many times its number of a besieging army, before it could be compelled to a surrender; and frequently it would do so, when it had no hope of eventually holding out, if it had nothing worse to fear, in case of its reduction, than if it had capitulated seasonably, or sustained defeat in a contest on equal terms, in the open field. The law, by which a garrison, acting thus wantonly, is made liable to be put to the sword, does not sacrifice life. In its whole operation and result, it saves life on a large scale; though the recital of each of the rare instances of its occurrence strikes us with horror.—

In the war of the American revolution, an officer of the hostile army, of merit and accomplishments to interest all feelings most strongly in his behalf, allowed himself to be brought into a situation, where, by the usages of war, his life was forfeit. The exigency was a most painful one to him on whose will the issue depended. But he had the care of protecting a great community, and a great cause, and he could not be false to such a trust. Whoever is able to vindicate the conduct of that just and merciful man on the occasion to which I refer, is possessed of the principles of justification for the conduct of Moses, in the instance now under our notice.

A just war, I have remarked, aims at the accomplishment of a good end through measures of dreadful severity. This is equally true in these times, as of old. The difference is only that of violent measures of a more or less distressing character and amount. With the progress of civilization, it has come to be understood in civilized communities, that inflictions, formerly resorted to, should be forborne. Accordingly, without the use of such, questions, still tried by war, are settled between such nations. In their conflicts with barbarous races, who have no such understanding, they are accustomed to adopt harsher

measures; and this, for the simple and the sound reason, that the object could not otherwise be gained, and that, if they were to allow a war to be to their adversaries a less evil than those adversaries were in the habit of expecting it to prove, such a self-frustrating lenity would tempt to a speedy renewal of the contest, with all its mutually inflicted mischiefs.

Severity, in short, is beneficent, when it is suited to guard against the necessity of its own repetition; and how much or how little of it is adequate to this end, is a question to be determined by reference to some existing state of society. It is to be hoped and believed, that the time will come, when descriptions of wars, as they are now conducted, will call up feelings of the same disgust, with which it is natural for us of this age to look at the record of the manner of conducting them among the uncivilized nations on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, fifteen centuries before the Christian era.

I return, then, to the remark, that Moses was intrusted with the protection of vast interests, and that whatever price their protection required, that price it was his duty to pay. If they were to be protected by war, then it was by war conducted agreeably to the habits of the time; otherwise it would have been waged without any prospect of doing its office, and accordingly ought not to have been waged at all. Sufficient suffering to be likely to attain the end ought to be inflicted, or else none whatever. They, who are offended with Moses' conduct on this occasion, would find nothing to condemn, had he conducted his war agreeably to now established usages. To the argument implied in their view, I reply, first, that these usages themselves are but a very partial departure from the course which in Moses is found so offensive; so partial, that, even if he had

adopted them, a future age, more enlightened and more tender of life than ours, would still find reason to renew the complaint; and, secondly, that, if he had adopted them, he would have taken a course so inefficient, that his enemies would hardly have believed him in earnest. His forbearance would have been but an invitation to them to repeat their outrage, and with it the occasion for other wars.*

We ought to be careful not to add to the essential difficulty of this question, be that greater or less, by any unauthorized assumption respecting the amount of bloodshed. Readers of the passage perhaps not unfrequently take up the idea, that the whole people of Midian were now condemned to death and captivity; a supposition, than which none could be more erroneous. On the contrary, that people were, a few generations later, in a condition to subjugate the Israelites.† It is probable, from the number of warriors detailed (one

* I have not thought it necessary to collect authorities respecting the horrors admitted to belong to a state of war by the common consent and practice of nations in a low stage of civilization. Approved writers even lay it down as a principle, that that state involves all the issues of property, liberty, and life, and this for both sexes, and all ages; and that all limitations of rights of conquest are but so many departures from the strictness of the relation of hostility. See Grotius, "Rights of War and Peace," lib. 3, cap. 4, § 5, 6, 9–12; cap. 5, § 1; cap. 7, § 1–3. Nor does even civilization, without religion, do much to promote, in this particular, the objects of humanity. The history of the Roman wars, even under the high cultivation of the empire, is no more consonant with the feelings of a reader of the present day, particularly in respect to the treatment of prisoners, than that of the wars of Canaan. A course taken, by the Greeks, with their Trojan prisoners, similar to what we are now considering, furnishes the plot of the "Troades" of Euripides. For the practices of war in the Old Testament times generally, see e. g. Judges i. 7; viii. 7, 16, 18–21; xx. 43–48; 1 Sam. xi. 2; 2 Kings viii. 12; Amos i. 3–13. Some of these instances relate to the Israelites themselves; but probably no one supposes, that (after the time of Moses, at least) their customs were more sanguinary than those of their neighbours; and, if any one did so suppose, the other instances, in the texts quoted, would refute him.

† Judges vi. – viii.

thousand only from each tribe), that nothing was intended beyond a sudden inroad on a few exposed neighbouring settlements, to the end of deterring the Midianites, by a seasonable exhibition of energy, from repeating their late treacherous attempt, at the same time that by substituting a mutual antipathy, in the place of the recent dangerous friendship, it should accomplish the same end by putting the Israelites for the future out of the way of such a pernicious influence.* From the fact that the returning party represented themselves to have sustained no loss,† it is probable, further, that they did not engage Midianites enough, to make any organized resistance.

Who were, then, "all the males," whom they "slew"? ‡ Certainly not all the males of the nation; for the nation survived in great power. I understand the record to declare, that they slew all the males who fell in their way; and how many these were, is a question which we have no means of determining. The class of captives, who were preserved alive, are said indeed to have amounted to thirty-two thousand; and this statement might seem at first view to afford the basis of a calculation. But I have repeatedly had occasion to observe, that numbers make the most suspicious part of the text, and, in the present instance, I think that there need be little hesitation in saying, that the text has suffered violence; for, supposing each of the two classes of prisoners put to death to have been as numerous as that preserved, an easy calculation will show, that each warrior, on his return from the expedition, must have come burdened with the care of eight persons, and more than sixty-seven animals; a view which

* Compare Numb. xxv. 1-3.

† xxxi. 49.

‡ xxxi. 7.

it seems impossible to suppose was originally presented either by a true historian or a forger.*

Besides the slaying of the Midianitish warriors, more or fewer, the other forms of severity which the passage under examination records, are the putting to death of the male children and the adult females among the prisoners, and the reduction of the female children to captivity. Pained, as much as other readers, by the recital of such horrors, and rejoicing most gratefully, that, in so large a portion of the world, they have now passed away from among the practices of war, I yet cannot but think, that the principles above developed supply a vindication of such (the then existing circumstances considered) to any mind, which admits the general lawfulness of appealing, in emergencies of a state, to the *last resort of kings*. I trust, that there is to be hereafter a state of society, in which it will be no longer needful for the public security to take a murderer's life. But, believing that that state of things has not yet arrived, I hold the public officer, who is the instrument of a convicted murderer's execution, to be doing his duty; to be doing, in other words, God's will, which has respect to existing circumstances. So, looking back upon a remote, unformed age of human history, I find myself compelled to allow, that the necessities of the world's government then involved the use of a much

* A glance at the following table, which exhibits the Hebrew numerical notation by means of letters, will show how easily copyists might fall into errors in respect to figures, whenever anciently this literal notation was employed, or one using the same elements.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Units	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט
Tens	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ
Hundreds	ק	ר	ש	ת	ך	ם	ן	ף	ץ
Thousands	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט

harsher instrumentality than now is requisite ; and, painful as is that observation, I find it impossible not to acquiesce in the equity, for the time being, of what the exigencies of the time enforced.

I have treated this question on its general principles ; and if I have shown, that, in the existing circumstances, it was right for measures to be adopted, from which our feelings revolt, and which in us, in altered circumstances, would be criminal in a high degree, I have shown also, that it is consistent with our views of the benevolent attributes of God, to suppose, that under those circumstances he should command those measures. God's will, respecting the action of his children, will always have reference to the conditions under which they are acting ; so as to make that his pleasure at one time, concerning them, which would not be so at another. If we have not satisfied ourselves, that, at the present time, we ought to slay the malicious manslayer, we must by no means do it. If we have so satisfied ourselves, this is but saying, in other words, that we have become persuaded, that such is God's will. So, if we have seen reason to believe, that it was right for Moses, under the circumstances, to do as he did, we have equally become convinced, that God's will was to have him thus proceed ; and, if such was God's will, then there remains no difficulty in supposing, that he made it known by the revelation of a direct command. It will be seen, therefore, that I do not care to lay any stress upon the fact, — of which, however, I ought not to omit all notice, — that Moses nowhere recites or refers to a divine command for his particular manner of procedure at this time. Preferring to rest upon the principles which I have exhibited, I will not, at present, propose any application of views, which might be suggested by the supposition of an unrestrained discretion, and conse-

quent individual responsibility of Moses, in the present case.

I have represented Moses' course as designed to operate, *in terrorem*, with a view to future security. He does not appear to have had satisfaction in his task. On the contrary, he is related to have been strongly excited when he saw the array of prisoners, and to have uttered a rebuke, which shows, that he would far rather that whatever severity needed, to be exercised, should have been finished in the furious haste of onset, than that it should be left, as it was, for his execution in cold blood.* As it was, however, the prisoners were now upon his hands; and it was unavoidable for him to dispose of them, according as the recent hazards, and the present posture of the state, demanded.

What should be done with them? Should they be sent home unharmed, or should they be welcomed, on an equal footing, to the hospitality of Israel? Then, if the views above presented are sound, the war would better not have been undertaken; not to say that, in the latter case, the now youthful sons of the Midianitish warriors would presently have grown up to be a sword at the bosom of the still feeble state, and possibly to compel the hazards and the hardships of another contest, while, as to the adults of the other sex, it was, on the one hand, their wicked instrumentality, which had created the occasion for the recent war, and, on the other hand, the danger from them, if allowed to be in a condition to try again their seductive arts upon the Israelites, had just been proved to be such as the state could by no means tolerate.† The assertion that it was

* Numb. xxxi. 14—16.

† Moses' renewed solicitude upon this point appears to have been extreme. Compare Numb. xxxi. 15, 16. He seems to have thought, that, if the ruinously depraving intercourse with these idolatrous wantons had

for guilty purposes, that the remaining description of prisoners was preserved alive, is destitute of all authority from the narrative. The distinction made in respect to them was a distinction of mercy, rendered, possible and fit by the circumstance, that their preservation would not be attended with the same perils as the preservation of the others. The exigency demanded victims, but it admitted of a selection. The selection exempted those, from whom danger of internal strife and of moral corruption needed not to be apprehended; since by them the lascivious arts of their elders had not yet been learned, and they might be bred in purer habits, and a faith which would not demoralize. Circumstances thus admitting of their being spared, they were spared;—for servitude, doubtless, because they were captives, and, according to all the notions and usages of the age, such was a captive's doom;—but still for servitude among a people, whose laws were tender of the slave, and with whom, should they enter into domestic relations, more or less honorable, they received a treatment, which, compared with established customs of the time, had a certain delicacy and forbearance, and became invested with privileges of elsewhere unprecedented liberality.*

not been repeated, they had at least been spared by the army with a view to it. And I add, that his question (15) is naturally understood to imply, that the sparing of prisoners (at least when taken under exasperating circumstances) was a departure from the common usages of war.

* Compare Deut. xxi. 10–14.—Suggestions made in previous parts of this volume, respecting the character of education (whether education of an individual or of communities) as being a process, and not an instant result, and therefore having reference to the present condition of its subject, and not always admitting of the application of the best rule in the first instance, have an obvious bearing upon this question, which I do not stop to follow out.—“Moses sent Phinchas, the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the *holy instruments, and the trumpets*” (xxxi. 6). Le Clerc, whom Dathe and others follow, understands here, (correctly as I think,) a *hendiadys*, the trumpets being themselves the holy instru-

The war with the Midianites gave occasion to Moses to establish, before his death, the laws which were thenceforward to regulate the division of spoil obtained in military expeditions. The rule of distribution was, that those who had borne arms should divide one half among themselves, after setting aside one five-hundredth part of their portion for the priests, while the other half should go to the rest of the people, and be chargeable with one fiftieth part for the Levites. This arrangement would operate as a liberal bounty upon enlistments; since, except in the improbable case of an army's numbering a large part of the nation, those who took the field would individually obtain thereby a much greater share of booty, and be liable to a much less deduction for the sacred treasury. It would tend to excite the courage of the soldiers, since, the fewer they were, provided they conquered, the richer would be the spoil of each; while the portion, required to be reserved for the priests and Levites, reminded them of the religious gratitude which they owed to the Providence that had given them success. From the fact, that the officers presented a voluntary offering, at the sanctuary, of their booty consisting of lighter articles, it is

ments intended. Compare x. 9. *Alii, alias.* — “Five kings of Midian” (8); that is, lieutenants, procurators, of some degree. Compare Joshua xiii. 21. From the same verse it appears, that Balaam (compare Numb. xxiv. 25) had either stopped, on his way homeward, at the western Midianish settlements, or else that he had returned to them. — The occasion for the purification enjoined in 19, 20, is stated to be the recent contact of the soldiers with bodies of the slain. Compare xix. and p. 363. The direction to remain meanwhile “without the camp,” is not to be regarded as a revival of the earlier law in v. 1–4. As the persons to be purified, in this instance, had not yet entered the camp, mere convenience dictated that they should not, till they had gone through their purgation together. “Captives” (19) needed to be purified; else their touch would defile. — The spirit of the new direction in 22, 23, apparently is, that whatever had belonged to idolaters, if preserved, required to be made pure, as far as possible, by a peculiar lustration.

to be inferred, that this was admitted to belong to him into whose hands it fell; the law being scrupulous not to create a temptation to fraud, by instituting a demand, for what might so easily be concealed, in behalf of the national treasury.*

In the thirty-second chapter, we read, that the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half of that of Manasseh, finding the lately conquered districts of Bashan and the Amorites on the east of Jordan to be favorable to their occupation as graziers, applied to Moses for his consent to occupy it as their territory; which consent they obtained, having first stipulated, that, after establishing their families, they would accompany the other tribes in the invasion of Canaan, and not abandon them till possession should be taken of that country. I make no further remark upon this passage, except that the stern vehemence with which Moses repels the first proposal of the tribes, and his suspicion of treacherous designs, apparently beyond what was required by the occasion, are perhaps to be taken as indications of that state of his mind at the present period, on which I remarked in connexion with the miracle at Meribah.†

The next passage contains a list of successive stages travelled between the Exodus and the invasion, which Moses, drawing near to his end, took care to leave in a form to be preserved. Most of the names, contained in it, have no meaning for the modern geographer. Several spots, however, indicated by them, and those

* Numb. xxxi. 25–54.—It is difficult not to recognise, in 32–46, an inventory and calculation made at the time. In a later age there would hardly be interest enough in such details, to lead to such a record of them.

† With xxxii. 6–15, compare p. 375. The readiness to be soothed (20–24), as much as the previous irritation, betrays a senile flexibility of mood; and the tender deference, with which, after his outbreak, Moses is addressed by the suitors (16–19, 25–27, 31, 32), is worthy of remark in the same connexion.

of the greatest interest, we are still able to identify, either absolutely, or with a high degree of probability.

Rameses, the place of rendezvous and departure, has been thought, on what seem to me good grounds, to have been the capital of the district of Goshen, and to have been situated on the eastern side of the eastern mouth of the Nile.* Succoth, the first stopping-place, was very probably no established post, but took its name, which means *booths*, from the circumstance of the Israelites erecting there a temporary shelter; in respect to Etham, we have to be content with the description, that it was “in the edge of the wilderness,” close to the extreme limit of the densely inhabited country; † nor of the three places next named, Pihahiroth, Baal-zephon, and Migdol, can we say any more, than that they were passed in the way to that spot, where was effected the miraculous passage of the Red Sea. This, the best modern writers (particularly

* Numb. xxxiii. 3. Compare Ex. i. 11; xii. 37; Gen. xlvii. 11. The question, according to the present state of the controversy, lies between a village near Alexandria, which Niebuhr found to bear the name of *Ramsis*, and a spot, east of the Delta of the Nile, where extensive ruins of some ancient city have been thought to mark the ancient capital of Goshen. If the whole of the first half of verse 3 is genuine, it would seem to require the inference, that Rameses was near the seat of the royal court, which was the fact, provided it was at or near the place last specified, and provided the royal residence was now at Zoan, (Numb. xiii. 22; Ps. lxxviii. 12, 43; Is. xix. 11–13; xxx. 4,) which there are strong reasons for believing. See Stuart’s “Course of Hebrew Study,” Vol. II., Excurs. 1. See also, Gesenius, “Lexicon,” ad Verb. רַעַקְקָם. The Septuagint translators, in Gen. xlvi. 28, have rendered רַעַקְקָם by ‘Ραμασσῆ. — As to the expression, “they departed from Rameses, in the first month, on the fifteenth day” &c. (3), it is very properly understood, *they began to depart*, &c. The Israelites, who were already at that place, knowing what had previously occurred, were prepared to proceed on the march, on the morning after the death of the first-born. Others, whose home was elsewhere, departed from Rameses, as fast as they could assemble there. — “The Egyptians buried” &c. (4); rather, *were burying*, &c., so that they gave the retiring Israelites no disturbance.

† Numb. xxxiii. 6. Compare Ex. xiii. 20.

since Niebuhr's observations) incline to place a little above the city of Suez, at the northern extremity of the gulf of that name, where the breadth of the strait is now about three thousand five hundred feet.*

A march of three days, after the passage of the Red Sea, through "the wilderness of Shur," where they "found no water," brought the Israelites (moving slowly, of course, from their numbers) to Marah, so named from its bitter spring. Burckhardt, on his way from Suez to Mount Sinai, after passing over a tract of sand and stone, came, on the second day, to water, which he describes as being "so bitter, that men cannot drink it; and even camels, if not very thirsty, refuse to taste it." The next stage was to Elim, where were "twelve fountains of water, and three-score and ten palm-trees"; and the same traveller, three hours after leaving what he supposes to have been the ancient Marah, came to a spot abounding in water, and the same kind of vegetation.† The next encampments, as they proceeded southerly along the eastern edge of the Gulf of Suez, were "by the Red Sea," (of which that gulf, it will be remembered, is the northwestern arm,) and "in the wilderness of Sin"; descriptions too indefinite to afford any means of identifying the spots; nor have we any information concerning Dophkah, Alush, and Rephidim, except that a monkish tradition designates the position of this latter place, where "there was no water for the people to drink," fixing it, as the circumstances dictate, a little to the west of Sinai, whither the host next proceeded, and where it was

* Numb. xxxiii. 7, 8. Compare Ex. xiv. 2 et seq. See Rosenmüller ad loc. poster. Le Clerc, "Dissertatio de Maris Idumæi Trajectione," § 2. Stuart's "Course of Hebrew Study," Vol. II., Excurs. 4.

† xxxiii. 9. Compare Ex. xv. 22, 23, 27. See Burckhardt's "Travels" &c., pp. 472-474.

arrested nearly a year, to receive the Law, prepare the Tabernacle, and, in short, form itself into a body politic. The descriptions which travellers give of that region, show the fitness of its selection for such a purpose; its awfully grand scenery being suited to impress the minds of such especially as had been used only to the tame-ness of the flat, alluvial country of Egypt, while the exuberant fertility of its valleys afforded the needed supplies.*

Leaving Sinai, on its march northward towards the southern frontier of Canaan, the host halted at places, to one of which the commemorative name of Kibroth-hattaavah was given, while the others bore the name of Hazeroth, or *hamlets*.† Thence, we are told in a previous part of this book, it “removed and pitched in the wilderness of Paran”;‡ from Paran, (the position of which is fixed by the whole context, and particularly by the mention of Hebron and Kadesh-Barnea,§ as lying on the southern border of Canaan,) they sent spies to explore that region; and subsequently turned back into the open country for their wanderings of many years,|| at the end of which, they reappear at Kadesh.¶ The passage now before us does not mention “the wilderness of Paran,” its object being a more precise specification of the places of encampment; but one or more of the eighteen names, recited in it, between Hazeroth and Kadesh (to which it also declares the host to have returned**), are doubtless to be understood as lying within the territory of Paran, while the

* Numb. xxxiii. 10–15. Compare Ex. xvi. 1; xvii. 1; xix. 1, 2. See Burckhardt’s “Travels” &c., pp. 572–574.

† Numb. xxxiii. 16, 17. Compare xi. 34, 35. ‡ xii. 16.

§ xiii. 22, 26. Compare 17; also 21 with xxxiii. 36, xxxiv. 3, 4.

|| xiv. 25.

¶ xx. 1.

** xxxiii. 18–36. Compare xii. 16; xx. 1.

rest, (with the exception of Ezion-Gaber,* a well-known haven at the northern extremity of the Elanitic gulf,) can now no longer be identified. The march from Kadesh to Mount Hor is related as in the previous passage,† along with a brief notice of the death of Aaron at the latter place,‡ and a hint at the attack sustained in its neighbourhood from the southern Canaanites;§ and thence the list of removals proceeds, (with a minute enumeration, where it had not been already given,||) as far as to the encampment of the host “in

* Numb. xxxiii. 35. — If the genuineness of Deut. x. 6, 7, be allowed, (respecting which see my note *ad loc.*,) the position of Mosera also (Numb. xxxiii. 30) is ascertained as being part, or in the vicinity, of Mount Hor. A question will also arise on a comparison of those verses with xxxiii. 31–33, and of Deut. ii. 8, with Numb. xxxiii. 35. — xxxiii. 36 is alone sufficient to prove, what could be abundantly shown from other sources, that this list (and the same is true of other memoranda of the kind) is not intended to include all the stopping-places; since the distance from Ezion-Gaber to Kadesh was not less than a hundred miles. I submit the conjecture, that, unless there was intended to be a rest of a day or more, (so as to admit of sacrifices being offered,) the Tabernacle was not set up, and then no record of the halt was made.

† xxxiii. 35. Compare xx. 22.

‡ xxxiii. 38, 39. Compare xx. 23–29.

§ xxxiii. 40. Compare xxi. 1.

|| The list in xxxiii. 41–44, only differs from the previous one, (compare xxi. 4, 10, 11,) in inserting two names of stopping-places, Zalmonah and Punon, between Mount Hor and Oboth. “From Oboth they journeyed,” say both accounts, (xxi. 11, xxxiii. 44,) “and pitched at Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab.” “Iim,” in xxxiii. 45, is but an abbreviation of Ije-abarim; but previous to the arrival at “the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo,” (xxxiii. 47,) in other words, “the top of Pisgah,” (xxi. 20, compare xxvii. 12; Deut. xxxii. 49; xxxiv. 1,) four names (besides “the valley of Zared,” and “the other side of Arnon,” which are indefinite) occur in the one list, (Numb. xxi. 16, 18, 19,) which differ from the two names, corresponding to them, in the other. It is likely, that, these removals being recent, when both records were made, the latter record in this instance only filled up two chasms in the former. From xxi. 20, and xxxiii. 47, I gather, that the Israelites took care early to gain the hilly country, whence, in greater security, they could make their first observations and arrangements; and that, these made, they descended into the plain, (xxii. 1, xxxiii. 48,) where Balaam reconnoitred their camp (xxiii. 9, xxiv. 2). — If, as Josephus understood, (Antiq., lib. 5, cap. 1, § 1; Bell. Jud., lib. 4, cap.

the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho," the scene of the transactions of which we have been reading in the eleven next preceding chapters, and of all that follows of the history recorded in the Pentateuch.

In what remains of this chapter, we read of a direction given to Moses, to expel the Canaanites, when possession should be taken of their country, and destroy all the instruments and monuments of their idolatrous worship. Upon this I make, at present, no further remark, than that the divine command, as far as it respects the persons of the Canaanites, enjoins their expulsion, and nothing more. There is nothing said as yet of extermination, whatever may be said elsewhere.*

At this period, to keep the Israelites, when they should have passed into Canaan, within the limits which they might rightfully claim, and arrest that love of extended conquest, which success might engender, Moses receives a distinct statement of the boundaries of the promised land, which is transmitted to us in the next following chapter. Taking its departure, at the east, from the lower extremity of the Dead Sea, the southern

7, § 6,) Abel-Shittim (compare Numb. xxv. 1, xxxiii. 49) was the *Abila* of his time, it lay seven or eight miles east from the Jordan, opposite to Jericho, and Beth-jesimoth (xxxiii. 49; compare Josh. xii. 3, xiii. 20,) was near it.

* I do not go so far as to urge, that the terms of the precept, "Ye shall drive out," &c. distinctly convey an implication of an opposite character; because possibly the Hiphil of *יָרַשׁ*, with the accusative of the person, may be used in the sense of dispossessing of life, though Ex. xv. 9, proves nothing of the kind, nor can it be clearly made out from Numb. xiv. 12, where the "disinheriting" may well be regarded as one thing, and the "smiting with the pestilence," which accompanies it, another.—For views of Moses' plan concerning the conduct of the war in Canaan, see my remarks on Deut. vii. 1–5.—With 54, which is here merely introduced in natural connexion with 53, compare Numb. xxvi. 53–56.—"If ye will not drive out" &c. (55, 56); if ye allow the Canaanites, with their false and depraving faith and practices, to remain among you, the sources of your prosperity will be sapped; you will but bring on yourselves eventually a national ruin, like what has been denounced against them.

line was to run westerly along “the desert of Zin,”* and then, following the course of “the river of Egypt,” to have its “goings out” at “the sea”;† that is, to terminate at the Mediterranean, which was to make the “west border” of the country in its whole extent.‡ The *termini* of the northern line, which was to begin westward on the sea-coast, at an elevation called Mount Hor, and run easterly to the point of its “goings out” at Hazar-Enan, cannot now be identified;§ and the same is true of land-marks mentioned in connexion with the eastern boundary, though this, it is plain, was to be made by the Jordan,|| the Sea of Chinnereth (or Gennesaret), and the Dead Sea.¶ The Reubenites and Gadites, with half of the tribe of Manasseh, are assured again, according to the arrangement lately made, of permission to have their settlements out of the region of Palestine proper;** and, to make the division of Canaan satisfactory, twelve men, a prince from each tribe, are divinely designated to superintend it.††

* Numb. xxxiv. 3, 4. — The “desert of Zin” was, as we have seen before (xiii. 21, 26, xx. 1), the northeastern portion of “the wilderness of Paran” (x. 12, xiii. 3, 26), which name appears to have represented the whole wild country between Palestine to the north, the peninsula of Sinai to the south, “El Ghor” to the east, and the confines of Egypt to the west.

† xxxiv. 5. — The “river of Egypt,” (compare Josh. xv. 4; 2 Chron. vii. 8,) sometimes called the “river of the wilderness,” (Amos vi. 14,) has been thought to be the same with “the brook Besor,” (1 Sam. xxx. 9, 10, 21,) a little stream which empties into the Mediterranean near Gaza. Other maps lay it down about thirty miles further south. (See Carpenter’s “Geography” &c., § 85.); while some commentators understand the Nile.

‡ Numb. xxxiv. 6.

§ xxxiv. 7–9.

|| Probably the Septuagint and other versions are right in translating Ain, (אֵין, xxxiv. 11, which, in one of its meanings is *well, fountain*,) instead of regarding it as a proper name. It then denotes the source of Jordan. But the eastern boundary began further north, as is shown by the words next preceding.

¶ xxxiv. 10–12.

** xxxiv. 13–15. Compare xxxii.

†† xxxiv. 16–29. — The arrangement here, appearing to indicate the

We have seen before, that it was the intention of the Law, that the Levites, devoted to their public functions, and endowed with a competent revenue from a public provision, should possess no landed property for purposes of agriculture, but should dwell together in walled cities, each making a kind of University, within the precincts of the several tribes.* The latter arrangement is now specially prescribed. Moses is directed to ordain, that, when the distribution of territory comes to be made, forty-eight cities, each with a sufficient space of suburbs for necessary grazing-ground, shall be assigned for the habitations of the Levites, the number of those cities to be assessed among the tribes in proportion to the extent of their several districts.†

Of these Levitical cities, six are to have the character of Sanctuaries, or, as they are called, “cities of refuge”

design of a deliberate distribution, may be thought to confirm my observation (p. 392) on Numb. xxvi. 52–56. The list of princes is given in nearly the same order in which the settlements of the tribes were afterwards disposed from south to north (compare Josh. xv–xix); a fact which may be thought to indicate, that the general arrangement had already been determined. But of this, more, hereafter.

* See pp. 306 (note), 322, 362.

† Numb. xxxv. 1–8. There has been much question respecting the apparent discrepance between verses 4, 5. I propose to reconcile it by simply rendering מִבְּרֵחֵי הָעִיר לְעִיר (5), instead of “ye shall measure from without the city,” *ye shall measure outward for the city*; that is, outward from a central point. From this central point, there would then be a measurement of two thousand cubits each way, for a square, (of about two thousand four hundred yards to a side,) including both city and suburbs, while the interior square (with a side of half that length), would leave suburbs of the dimension described in verse 4. I think the words will well bear the sense which I have put upon them, though it must be owned, that the received translation is not objectionable, except as it presents a discrepance, where it is not natural to look for one. Le Clerc (“Commentarius” *ad loc.*) presents a view according with this in the result, but obtained by an interpretation of the word קִיר, which I suppose cannot be sustained; and Lowman (“Civil Government of the Hebrews,” p. 109), comes to the same conclusion by another process, which is liable to the same objection.

from "the avenger of blood"; a provision, which brings to our view, in one important aspect, the relation of the *next of kin*, as it existed among the Hebrews. With them, that relation had a much greater importance than belongs to it among us, and even than that which is attached to it by the Civil Law. If a man fell into poverty, so as to betake himself to servitude, or part with his land, the Law presumed that his next relative would desire to interpose to liberate his person, or disencumber his estate, and invested him with rights for that purpose.* In like manner, if he had suffered a pecuniary wrong, his kinsman succeeded to his claim to restitution.† In the passage before us, we find him exhibited as being placed, by the sentiments of the time, under an obligation of mischievous tendency, which it was the object of the Law to enfeeble, and eventually to destroy.

It is a dictate of nature, for those to be each other's champions, who are allied in blood. In a cultivated state of society, great part of the protection, which they mutually owe, is assumed by the law of the land. In a rude condition, on the contrary, this championship naturally takes the form of retaliation on the part of the survivor of one who has suffered violence. For what security they have, independent of their personal prowess, men depend in great part, on the general understanding, that their death will not be unavenged; and the urgency of the case erects the obligation of the surviving relative to exact life for life, into the strictest point of honor.

All early antiquity presents references to this practice,

* Lev. xxv. 25–28, 47–53. The conditions on which either of these steps was to be taken, are sufficiently explained in the context of these passages, as treated above, on pp. 304–306.

† Numb. v. 8.

as far as it has records to exhibit them ; and it is constantly found among barbarous races at the present day. What is particularly to our purpose, it existed anciently, and exists now, in full force, in the regions near to Palestine.* The Law of Moses, finding it among the Jews, dealt with it with that wisdom, which it is necessary to use with an established point of honor, against which penal inflictions always prove powerless. It could no more be broken down by such provisions, than the practice of duelling at the present day. Not carrying the public sentiment with them, they would fail to be executed, and the exposure of their practical inefficiency would increase the motive to their violation ; while, on the other hand, the severer they were made, the greater would be the apparent hazard of infringing them, and accordingly the greater the distinction so acquired. Under such circumstances, the very executioner of the law would himself become a certain mark for the “avenger of blood.”

* Of the Arabs, says D'Arvieux, (“Travels in Arabia Deserta,” p. 145,) “There is no hatred among them, but on account of blood, and that is irreconcilable. For example, if a man has killed another, the friendship between their families and all their posterity is broken. If they happen to be in some common interest, or there is any match to propose, they very civilly answer, ‘You know there is blood between us ; it can never be done ; *we have our honor to preserve.*’ They never pardon till they are revenged.” “Les Persans,” says Chardin, (“Voyages en Perse” &c., Tome III., p. 417,) “et tous les autres Mahometans, se conforment là-dessus absolument à la loi Judaïque, remettant à la fin du procès, le meurtrier entre les mains des *plus proches parens du défunt.*” Father Lobo testifies to the same practice in Abyssinia (“Voyage to Abyssinia” &c., p. 57). “If a man is unlawfully killed,” says the Koran, (Sura xvii. verse 35,) “we give to his nearest relation the right of revenge.” But the notion is by no means to be called Oriental.

“If I live to be a man,
My father’s death revenged shall be,”

says the child of the Border Chief, in the “Lay of the Last Minstrel” ; and there is no rule more rigidly observed among our North American Indians.

What the Law (its office being education, not miraculous change,) was incapable of effecting or promoting by direct menaces, it aimed to bring about by a course corresponding with the opinions and feelings which produced the occasion for its interference. It did not tell the representative of a slain Jew, that, under pain of its displeasure, he must disgrace himself in the eyes of all his countrymen, by allowing the author of his friend's death to go unharmed. But it declared, that, after pursuing him within the protection of the Levites, in an appointed place, he had done all that honour demanded, and all that religion allowed. He had saved reputation, and now he must abstain from sacrilege. Arrived there, the slayer was entitled to a legal investigation of his act; and, if ascertained to have been guilty, the "avenger" obtained all his right, with the Law's own allowance and aid. If an acquittal of malicious intention followed, still if the asylum were abandoned, before the death of the high-priest, (an uncertain time, but one likely to be long enough to suffer the excited feelings of the avenger to cool, as well as for reflection to come to his aid and that of those who might be urging him on, and even for their thirst for revenge to be in some measure satisfied by what was a virtual imprisonment,) there was nothing then to prevent him from pursuing his intended victim, who, through such negligence, had forfeited the protection extended by the Law.*

* Numb. xxxv. 9-34.—For the original simple outline of this law, see Ex. xxi. 12-14.—The primitive sense of the word translated "avenger" (לֹאֵן, 12,) has been the subject of much discussion. Pointed as we have it, it is the active participle of לָאָן, to *redeem*; and I conceive that it is best so understood. The *Goel* was called so from his right of *redemption*, (Lev. xxv. 25, 48,) though that was but one of his offices.—"Ye shall give three cities" &c. (14); the cities were to be thus scattered over the country, in order that, whenever occasion occurred for their pro-

The institution of *sanctuary*, for persons guilty of a criminal or questionable act, was thus turned to the best account for the ends of public justice. He who, having stained his hands with blood, had sought the protection of a "city of refuge," had by no means placed himself in a situation to defy the Law. He was only safe there until he could be brought to "stand before the congregation in judgment." Should circumstances (the principles for estimating which, are described in some detail,) then be found to indicate that the assault had been malicious, he was brought out to abide the vengeance of him to whom his life became forfeit. Should it prove that the fatal blow had been only accidental, that sentence declared his life inviolable, provided he continued to claim the protection offered, till the high-priest should die; the Law aiming to enforce a salutary caution against all occasions of fatal accident, by subjecting even the unintentional destroyer of life to the serious inconvenience of a long separation from his home.

The last regulation recorded in this book, is consequent upon one, of which we read a few chapters further back.* The effect of the law, that, when there were no sons, daughters might inherit land, would have been, that, if they married into another tribe, the territorial possession of their own would have been transferred to that into which they were adopted. Solicitous about such a result, the heads of the tribe, to which those females belonged, at whose solicitation the previous rule had been arranged, represented the inconvenience, which would follow, to Moses, who was directed to provide against it by ordaining,† that heiresses should not

tection, there might always be one within convenient distance.— With 30, compare Deut. xvii. 6, and see my remarks thereupon.

* Numb. xxvii. 1–11.

† xxxvi. 1–13. "And when the jubilee of the children of Israel

marry out of their own tribe. In reading of such successive provisions, the later originating and grounded in the earlier, one sees strong reason to allow, that they were recorded by one, who witnessed their successive enactment, as the occasions, that led to them, successively arose.

shall be" &c. (4); that is, even when a jubilee shall arrive, still their estate will continue to belong to another tribe; even then it will not revert to the tribe, of whose district it was originally designed to be a part. By the Attic law, a female under the circumstances here defined, had the same rights and obligations. See Passow's and Stephanus' Lexicons, Art. *ἐπίκλησις*. — "These are the commandments which the Lord commanded, in the plains of Moab" &c. (xxxvi. 13); that is, as he had commanded others, thirty-eight years before, by Sinai. Compare Lev. xxvii. 34.

LECTURE XVIII.

DEUTERONOMY I. 1.—XI. 31.

OCCASION AND DESIGN OF THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.—ITS AUTHENTICITY.—ITS CHRONOLOGY.—MOSES RECAPITULATES SOME EVENTS OF THE FIRST TWO YEARS AFTER THE EXODUS,—AND SOME EVENTS OF THE FORTIETH YEAR,—AND EXHORTS THE PEOPLE TO OBEY THEIR LAW,—AND ESPECIALLY TO ABSTAIN FROM IDOLATRY.—HE SELECTS THE THREE EASTERN “CITIES OF REFUGE.”—RECITES THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DELIVERY OF THE LAW AT SINAI.—URGES THE DUTY OF A SOLICITOUS OBSERVANCE OF IT, AND OF INSTRUCTING THE YOUNG IN ITS PRINCIPLES.—INTERDICTS INTERCOURSE WITH THE IDOLATROUS CANAANITES, AND COMMANDS THEIR EXPULSION.—RECOUNTS INSTANCES OF GOD’S FAVOR,—AND OF THE PEOPLE’S UNFAITHFULNESS.—EXHIBITS THE CONSEQUENCES OF FUTURE OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE.—REFERS TO A FUTURE ACT OF NATIONAL SELF-CONSECRATION.

A YEAR before the time came for invading Canaan, Moses had been informed, that he was not to be permitted to remain at the nation’s head, when they should take possession of that country.* Of the reasons for his being apprized of that fact so long beforehand, it is natural to suppose that this was one; That he might have opportunity to make deliberately and fully, before his death, such arrangements for the people as remained unmade, and such communications and representations to them as would be for their advantage after his departure, and would impress their minds all the more profoundly, on account of the circumstances under which they would remember them to have been delivered. I understand him, accordingly, to have partly employed himself, during this interval, in preparing what was to

* Numb. xx. 1, 12.

be to them his last legacy of instruction and counsel; and that the result of these cares of his has been transmitted to us in his book now known by the name of Deuteronomy. It divides itself into three parts, each of which I shall make the subject of a Lecture. Whether the first of these, which is chiefly, and the third, which is in great part, of a hortatory character, were committed to writing before or after their oral delivery, I think we are unable confidently to decide. That the second, which contains a promulgation and revision of various laws, was prepared beforehand, and communicated as a written composition, appears to be a reasonable inference from the nature of its subject matter.

One, who has seen reason to conclude, that the preceding books were the work of Moses, will scarcely hesitate to refer this, with an equal degree of confidence, to the same origin. Without the conclusion, which this book presents, the history begun and prosecuted in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, is left incomplete; and, on the other hand, regarded in any other light than as a sequel to those books, Deuteronomy is nothing else but a disconnected, immethodical (I might almost say, unmeaning) fragment. What pervading difference of style, between the books respectively, is observable, is precisely that which ought to be looked for, upon the supposition of their common origin. The one being professedly a set historical composition, the other professedly a spoken address, we ought (if the received theory be correct) to find (what we actually do find) the former to be characterized by the comparatively dry manner of an annalist, the latter by the more full and earnest style of oral discourse; and whatever degree of copiousness and repetition remains unexplained by this consideration, was naturally incident to the advanced age which the speaker is represented to

have reached. Events, recorded in full in the previous books, are referred to in this, cursorily and briefly, in a way which would be natural for one who had made the previous record, but by no means equally so for any other writer; and the whole matter, form, and tone of the address are such as undoubtedly have a perfect suitableness to the office, the temper, and the present position of Moses, as exhibited in the previous books, a suitableness such as it is very difficult to represent to ourselves as the result of any artifice of imitation.*

* See my notes on pp. 75–77, for proof that Deuteronomy, as well as the preceding parts of the Pentateuch, is referred to, in the later books, under the names of “the Law,” “the book of Moses,” &c. Compare Josh. viii. 30–32, with Deut. xxvii. 1–6; 2 Kings xiv. 6, and 2 Chron. xxv. 4, with Deut. xxiv. 16; Nehemiah xiii. 1, with Deut. xxiii. 3. — That at the Christian era the quinpartite arrangement of the composition ascribed to Moses, already existed, (though in another point of view it was considered as only one, the New Testament habitually calling it “the Law,”) may be seen in the extract from Josephus given above, p. 25, note †. The same two-fold view is presented in the Jewish name חֲמִשָּׁתֵּי הַתּוֹרָה חֲמִשָּׁה חֻמְּוֹת, the *Five Fifths of the Law*. See Buxtorf’s “Lex. Chald. and Rab.” Art. חֻמְּוֹת. So the Rabbins say, that the Law formerly made but *one word, or one verse*, (Eichhorn, “Einleitung in das A. T.” I. 174,) indicating the original undivided sequence of the matter, which is now laid off into the chapters and verses of the five books. But how ancient these forms of expression are, it must be owned, that we do not know.

In a careful examination of the arguments against the common origin of Deuteronomy and the preceding books, as they are urged by De Wette, Bertholdt, and Vater, I have been unable to find any thing which strikes me as weighty. The most plausible is, I think, that which is founded on a few different expressions, used, in the same connexion, in the books respectively. And of these, that which appears to me the most specious, is that which Vater first presents, (“Abhandlung über Moses und die Verfasser des Pentateuchs, § 40,) the use of the name *Horeb*, in Deuteronomy, for the mountain where the Law was promulgated, which, in the earlier books, is called *Sinai*. But *Horeb* also occurs in Exodus (iii. 1; xvii. 6; xxxiii. 6), and *Sinai*, on the other hand, in Deuteronomy (xxxiii. 2); and, if it were not so, the inquiry might be made, whether there is any thing extraordinary in a person’s employing one name of a place in one part of a composition, or at one period of his life (for it is very probable, that nearly forty years elapsed between the writing of Exodus and

The time, occupied by the transactions recorded in Deuteronomy, appears to have been about two months.* Of these, the latter is represented to have been employed in mourning for Moses,† so that it is natural to refer the discourses to different days in the former month (viz. the eleventh month of the fortieth year from the Exodus); the time being thus the same with that spent in the promulgation of the laws in Leviticus.‡

In the first four chapters, in which Moses is represented as addressing the people with a brief reference to some events of the history immediately succeeding the Exodus, and to others of recent occurrence, and then grounding upon them an exhortation to obedience, (“Now, therefore, hearken, O Israel, to the statutes which I teach you,” §) I think we may discern an implied argument, enabling us to account for his selection of incidents, which is a fact to be explained. In this discourse, I understand his purpose to be, to make a representation of the following tenor. “I have never selfishly arrogated authority over you. On the contrary, I have been willing to be influenced by you, and to commit to you a discretion of your own, whenever I might with safety. Witness my proposal to you, from the time of your first organization, to make an election for yourselves of subordinate governors,|| and my readiness to accede to your request, when, having made all preparations for an invasion on the southern border, I

that of Deuteronomy), and another name at another. I ask myself the question, which is the only way to settle it; and I call to mind, that, while I have perhaps always heretofore called my native commonwealth by its common and legal name, I have happened repeatedly, during the last year, to denominate it, in writing, the “Bay State.” Such things are matter of accident, or they proceed merely from the taste of the hour.

* Compare Deut. i. 3, with Josh. i. 1, 11; iv. 19; v. 10.

† Deut. xxxiv. 8.

‡ See p. 235.

§ Deut. iv. 1.

|| i. 9–18.

was solicited by you to send first a party of explorers into the country, to bring you back a report of its condition.* When, however, you have chosen to use this discretion too far, so as to reject my counsels, and be guided by your own, remember how you have brought on yourselves the divine displeasure, and in what grievous disasters you have experienced its effects.† On the other hand, when you have been willing to give up your judgments to mine, all has prospered with you. The recent period of your obedience has been the period of your successes. When you demeaned yourselves becomingly towards the children of Esau, observing throughout a peaceable demeanor towards them, we obtained the passage which we desired to the eastward of their territory.‡ When you followed my directions in crossing a border river into the neighbourhood of Palestine, that passage was successfully effected;§ and your obedience in respect to the late wars with the Amorites and Og, has been attended with a like happy result,|| eventuating, through the unprovoked assault which we have sustained on their part, in the acquisition of a valuable territory, not comprehended within our originally contemplated limits. Let, then, your experience in the past convey to you profitable instruction for the future. As you see that disregard of my warnings has been fruitful of disasters to you, as you see that you have had the best reason to trust me, be induced to trust me still. Trust me, when I shall be taken from you, so as carefully to make the Law, which I leave with you, your guide.¶ Make it your guide in its purity and wholeness, free from any retrenchment or addition of your own; ** that Law, which first and

* Deut. i. 19—24.

† i. 25—46.

‡ ii. 1—8.

§ ii. 13, 18, 19.

|| ii. 26—iii. 17.

¶ iv. 1.

** iv. 2.

chiefly enforces on you its commands to reserve your homage for Jehovah alone,* and to worship him without the use of any ensnaring visible symbol; † that Law, whose obligation he who gave it will assuredly not fail to uphold, by bountifully rewarding the obedient, and grievously punishing the transgressor." ‡

Such I take to be substantially the argument of the discourse recorded in these first four chapters. But I cannot forbear to remark, in a word, upon the address and tone of conciliation, as well as of authority and pathos, with which it is presented. Of the three branches of it, which are illustrated by facts, the illustration of the third, (viz. of the good fortune which had uniformly followed upon obedience,) is much the most copious, the recollections which it calls up being of far the most gratifying character. The second, suggesting only painful and humbling thoughts, is very lightly touched upon; but the selection of topics under it, (the disastrous route experienced by the people in the very outset of their national career, § and the doom of a whole generation to forfeit its share in the improved national fortunes, ||) are of the most solemnly impressive character. Under the first head, again, while enough is said, in the allusion to two important incidents, the topic is not unduly pressed; and the effect, designed to be produced by it, is increased by the perfectly natural and highly effective introduction, from time to time, of expressions of the speaker's disinterested love for his people, and hints, that his place of authority had, in a personal point of view, been any thing rather than a place of ease and privilege. ¶ Nor are opportunities lost, in the progress of the discourse,

* Deut. iv. 3, 4, 19, 28, 39.

† iv. 25-40.

§ i. 44.

¶ i. 11; iii. 23-27; iv. 21, 22.

† iv. 15-18.

|| i. 34, 35.

briefly to enforce some particular obligation, which the immediate topic naturally brings to view.*

Having finished this discourse, we are told that Moses

* E. g. Deut. iii. 18—20, 21, 22.—“Moses spake unto all Israel” (i. 1). See the remark (p. 165) on the words “all the congregation.”—“On *this side* Jordan.” It has been questioned, whether the word יַעֲבֹר ever means *on this side*; its common sense being, *on the other side*. But its derivation from the root יָבַר, *he passed over*, is equally suitable to either meaning; and such passages as Josh. i. 15; v. 1; ix. 1; xii. 7; 1 Sam. xiv. 4, 40; 1 Chron. xxvi. 30, appear to determine the *usus loquendi*, as having this latitude. The interpretation will be perceived to be important, on account of its bearing upon the question, where this inscription was written; since Moses, in writing it, could only have used the word יַעֲבֹר, in the sense of *on this side*.—“The Red Sea.” There is no good authority for this rendering of our translators. רִיָּה, the word in the original, is probably the proper name of a town. See Gesenius’ *Lexicon, ad verb.* It appears very likely to have been the same with the רִיָּה of Numb. xxi. 14. Of “Tophel,” and the rest, we know nothing. “Hazereth,” (*hamlets*), is a name given to various places, as a concordance will show.—“There are eleven days’ journey” &c. (2); these words are not improbably the gloss of some commentator, who, to the statement (3) that it was “in the fortieth year” that Moses and the people were still lingering on the border, has prefixed the remark, that, had they come to the nearest point of Canaan in a direct course and without delay, they might have accomplished the march from Horeb in a few days.—The connexion between 6—8, (with which compare Numb. x,) and 9—18, (compare Ex. xviii., and p. 147,) I take to be as follows; Before we so much as moved from Sinai, and began our march towards the land of our inheritance, even “at that [early] time” (9) inexperienced as you were, *I had addressed you* with a proposal to select your own magistrates, only charging them on my part (16, 17) to discharge their function righteously, without fear or favor, as those who were executing a trust delegated from God. The designation of them (13) was committed to the people, though their institution in their office (15, Ex. xviii. 25) was the act of Moses.—In the exclamation thrown in, in verse 11, suggested by the mention of his having formerly referred to their growing numbers, we have a beautiful stroke of nature.—“I commanded *you* at that time all the things which ye should do” (18). I have not seen, anywhere, what I think is the true explanation of this verse. Geddes, understanding the “chief of the tribes” (15) to be the persons here said to be “commanded” respecting the fulfilment of their office, as the connexion indicates, suggests that the text here is corrupt, and that the original reading was, “I commanded *them*.” But for this there is no authority of manuscripts or versions. Moses had “commanded,” on that former occasion, the “chief of the tribes.” He was now

proceeded to designate the three "cities of refuge" for the country on the east of Jordan, leaving the selection of the other three for the time when the region

addressing the chief of the tribes. (See note above, on Deut. i. 1.) I suggest, that, in a natural form of speech, he now says, "I commanded you," meaning, I commanded those who were formerly in the same official relation which you now sustain; I commanded the then incumbents of your office. But perhaps, after all, the verse means, I went on, subsequently, to give to you the laws I received on Sinai.—With 19–45, compare Numb. xiii., xiv., also p. 146.—Verse 37 suggests the same remark which I made upon 11. It was not till many years after the event which he is now reciting, that Moses was apprized that he was not to enter Palestine. But the mention of the threat denounced against the former generation as a whole (34–36), leads to the painful thought, and the plaintive expression, of his own similar disappointment.—"Ye abode in [or *at*, or *by*] Kadesh many days, according to the days that ye abode" (46). The latter clause is equivalent to saying, *as you remember*. The camp may have remained at and near Kadesh a considerable time. But I think it probable (compare Numb. xiv. 25) that the meaning rather is, ye *stopped* at Kadesh, that is, were arrested there, made no progress beyond that point, into Canaan, for "many days," viz. the years of their wanderings in Arabia (compare Deut. ii. 1).—With ii. 2–15, compare Numb. xx. 14–xxi. 12. The divine direction in 2–7, not to molest the Edomites, is not related in Numbers; nor, on the other hand, is the unsuccessful negotiation recorded in Numb. xx. 14–21, mentioned in the parallel passage before us. But what is more satisfactory, the result of the latter incident is referred to, as a thing well known, where the people are reminded (Deut. ii. 8, compare Numb. xx. 21), that *passing by* the Edomites of Mount Seir proper, they had *turned*, and reached the region east of them by a less frequented way. The Edomites, who were to be "afraid" of them (4), were clearly not the inhabitants of the central part of the country, who, on the contrary, had prepared to maintain their inhospitable refusal by force, (Numb. xx. 20, but the settlers in the southern, and less populous district, near to Ezion-Gaber, through which the passage was finally effected (Numb. xxi. 4; Deut. ii. 8, 29).—"We passed from Ezion-Gaber" (8). There is no reason whatever for supposing this to have been the only visit made to the neighbourhood of Ezion-Gaber, and, accordingly, identical with that mentioned in Numb. xxxiii. 35, 36. Ezion-Gaber was a place to whose vicinity they would be very likely to return repeatedly in the course of their prolonged wanderings. See pp. 366–370; Deut. ii. 1. And accordingly there is no difficulty in the interpretation of those passages, where the mention of it occurs. At one time, before Aaron's death (Numb. xxxiii. 38), the camp removed from Ezion-Gaber to Kadesh (Numb. xxxiii. 36). At a later time it moved back again from Kadesh to Ezion-Gaber. Deut. i. 46; ii. 1, 8. "Elath," now Akaba,

west of that river should be occupied; and probably intending that the choice, which he made, should serve, in respect to the material point of distance, as an ex-

is a well-known port near Ezion-Gaber, giving its name to the Elanitic Gulf. — Of the direction, recorded in verse 9, to abstain from disturbing the Moabites, we read nothing in the book of Numbers. But, on the other hand, all Moses' conduct there recorded, is in conformity with it. Balak, king of the Moabites, is apprehensive of an assault, (Numb. xxii. — xxiv.,) but it is an apprehension which Moses does nothing to justify. The Midianites, whom he did attack, (Numb. xxxi.,) were confederates of the Moabites, it is true, but they were of a different stock (compare Gen. xxv. 2; xi. 27; xix. 37); nor is there the least reason to suppose, that any annoyance was offered to the latter. This entirely unconnected mention of the rule in one place, and of conduct exactly and remarkably conforming to it, in the other, presents an instance of *latent, undesigned coincidence* of that class, which Paley adduces in support of the authenticity of part of the New Testament. — The passage 10–12, is very generally regarded by the commentators as an interpolation. An historico-geographical memorandum of this kind is so unnaturally disposed in the midst of a spoken discourse, that it seems quite unreasonable to suppose the original writer, whether Moses or some other person, to have thus inserted it. It has every appearance of having been a marginal gloss, (founded on Gen. xxxvi. 20–30; xiv. 5, 6,) which eventually obtained a transfer, not uncommon with such comments, into the text. Those, who look upon the passage as authentic, regard Moses as saying in the last clause of verse 12, “as Israel *is to do* unto the land” &c. He will then be understood as reminding the people, that the course which they were to take was the same, which had been successfully pursued by their relatives the Edomites and Moabites, for the acquisition of their respective territories. The words “*said I*” are interpolated by our translators into verse 13, to break an abruptness which now exists in the Hebrew, but which did not exist originally, provided 10–12 are spurious. — The word *giant* (Deut. ii. 11), is an unfortunate translation of גִּיָּמֹת, as carrying us back to the imaginations of the nursery. It appears, however, somewhat like our word *Amazon*, to have belonged, in its primitive sense, to a race of uncommon robustness, and to have taken a secondary, more comprehensive meaning, accordingly. (Compare 20, 21; Gen. xiv. 5; 2 Sam. xxi. 16.) — With 19, compare Gen. xix. 36, 38. — The passage 20–23, is believed to be an interpolation, on the same grounds as 10–12. — Verse 24, presents no contradiction to what has been said (p. 378) of the war with Sihon having been defensive on the part of the Jews. The event, foreknown by God, was communicated by him to Moses (24, 25, 31). But Moses, so far from offering violence, made a friendly and humble proposal to Sihon (26–30); nor was it till that prince proceeded to follow up his refusal by an hostile expedition (32), which there was no resource left but to oppose, that the

ample for the choice which would devolve on his successor.*

From this interruption, and the formality with which the passage that next follows is introduced, it is natu-

Israelites turned their arms against him (33-37, compare Deut. xxix. 7). — From verse 29 it appears, that some of the people of Edom and Moab, through whose confines the Israelites passed, had treated them with more courtesy than had been exercised by their respective governments. Compare xxiii. 3, 4; Numb. xx. 19-21. — “The Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate” (30); a well-known form of speech, not only of the Hebrews, but of other ancients, according to which, whatever takes place, is piously referred to a Divine providence. Compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, with 1 Chron. xxi. 1. So Homer says of Helen, (Odys. Ψ . 222,)

Τὴν δ' ἦτοι πίξαι Διὸς ἄρσεν ἕργον αἰκίης.

See Le Clerc's “Ars Criticâ,” pars 2, sect. 1, cap. 4, § 6, 7. — With 34, compare Numb. xxi. 35, and my note thereupon. A literal rendering of the Hebrew here is as follows; “We devoted *every city* of men, women, and children.” — With Deut. iii. 1-7, compare Numb. xxi. 33-35. — The authenticity of 9-11, and 14, is discredited on the same grounds as ii. 10-12. — שָׁרָף (11), instead of *bedstead*, probably means *bier*, or *sarcophagus*. (Compare 2 Sam. iii. 31; where קִפְּהָ, another word commonly signifying *bed*, clearly has this sense; the Syriac version of Luke vii. 14, uses the word corresponding to שָׁרָף; and the *bed* of Og, if shown anywhere, would probably be shown at his capital city, which was Ashteroth; Deut. i. 4.) The bier or sarcophagus of Og probably became known to the Israelites first in the time of David (2 Sam. xii. 26), and to a time as late as this, it is natural to refer this gloss; though it is true that, at an earlier period, they may have known the antiquities of that city by report. — With 12-20, compare Numb. xxxii. — “We abode (29) in the valley over against Beth Peor” (compare Deut. iv. 46; xxxiv. 6); that is, they stopped at this place to hear Moses' last commands, since he (28) was not to be permitted to accompany them further. — With iv. 3, 4, compare Numb. xxv. — “Which the Lord thy God hath divided” &c. (19); this clause, if understood to mean, that the heavenly bodies were *divided* as objects of worship, is to be explained on the same principles as Deut. ii. 30; but I think the sense rather is, that they are not fit objects of worship, but only creations of Jehovah, the one universal benefactor, who had himself *furnished them for the use* of all nations. — “The iron furnace” (20), i. e. the furnace for smelting iron, intensely heated; a figure illustrating the severity of their servitude. — 21, 22, give occasion for a repetition of the remark made on i. 11. — With 25-32, compare Lev. xxvi., and my observations thereupon.

* Deut. iv. 41-43. Compare Numb. xxxv. 9-15, and Deut. xix. 1-10.

ral to regard the latter as the record of another discourse, delivered on a different day.* On the occasion of which I have just been treating, Moses' course of remark had led him to represent to the people, in conclusion, their obligation to render a zealous obedience to God's Law, and the ingratitude, folly, and danger of deserting his service for that of any idol deity. Resuming this theme, he now proceeds to urge, that the people had voluntarily covenanted to take Jehovah for their sovereign; † that they had themselves heard part of the terms of their allegiance (which he recites) announced by their Divine ruler in an audible voice, and with accompaniments of the most impressive solemnity, ‡ and that they would have heard the rest, but for their own desire, that the further communications intended might be made to him for their use. § Having been received by him under such circumstances, agreeably to their wish, and for their benefit, they were now bound, he says, to keep them with a punctilious observance. || The spirit of them all was, that they should acknowledge the undivided sovereignty of Jehovah, and devote to him their best affections. ¶ These were

* Deut. iv. 44-49, is rather, I think, the introduction to the second discourse, than the conclusion of the first. The division made by 41-43, favors this view of it, and in its structure it resembles the previous introduction in i. 1-5; while, on the other hand, its choice of language, partly different, and partly the same with the other, to describe the place where Moses addressed the people, makes it appear less likely, that the one was intended to open, the other to close, the same narrative. Moses, very naturally, was careful to note in both instances, that the admonitions thus placed on record, were uttered by him to the people, at the last opportunity which he had to address them, and when he was fresh from the only victories which he was permitted to win towards their territorial establishment.—“This law” (44); the word would better be rendered *instruction*, agreeably to its primitive sense; so in i. 5.—For “Sion” (48), the Syriac reads “Sirion”; at all events, the definition attached, distinguishes it from Mount Sion at Jerusalem.

† v. 1-3.

‡ v. 4-22.

§ v. 23-31.

|| v. 32-vi. 2.

¶ vi. 3-5.

lessons, which they ought to keep constantly before the view of their own minds, and teach, with an assiduous diligence, to their children.* Presently, by the very favor of their sovereign, who was about to establish them in the home of their fathers, they were to be exposed to communication with idolaters; but the fear of his righteous displeasure, and the hope of his approbation, should both be motives to hold them to their fealty.† With the idolatrous inhabitants of the country, which was to become their own, they were not only to enter into no alliances, but, for the greater security's sake, they were to admit no intercourse.‡ Their first act was to be an utter destruction of the monuments of that false and depraving worship;§ and the ultimate complete removal of such dangerous neighbours was to be an object perpetually kept in view, though it was only by degrees to be accomplished.|| They were not to distrust their power to effect this; the God, who had always been such a benefactor to them, would give them power.¶ If they continued faithful, they need have no fear of the alienation of a love, which by manifold and unmerited bounties he had so amply proved;** while his displeasure, should they be so elated by prosperity, as to forget their dependence and their obligations, and provoke it, would be testified by the infliction of calamities as heavy as those denounced against the sinful tribes they were invading.††

* Deut. vi. 6-9, 20-25.

† vi. 10-19.

‡ vii. 1-4.

§ vii. 5, 25, 26.

|| vii. 22-24.

¶ vii. 17-21.

** vii. 6-16.

†† viii. 1-20.—“The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers” &c. (v. 3); that is, not with our fathers *alone*; it equally concerns us. See references in page 305, note; compare John iv. 21.—With Deut. v. 5, compare Ex. xix. 16 et seq.—Between the record of the Decalogue, in Ex. xx. 2-17, and that in Deut. v. 6-21, the following diversities occur, besides that remarked on, at length, at pp. 190-193; viz. the word *keep*, in Deut. v. 12, corresponds to *remember*, in Ex. xx. 8, and the last clause

A question of special interest presents itself in this connexion. It relates to the course of procedure, dictated by the Divine will, in respect to the nations of Canaan. The established opinion is, that the Israelites received a Divine command to put all the inhabitants of that country to death, without exception, refusing to accede to any terms of capitulation, such as should give exemption from this sentence. With the exception of one important passage, which, however, as to its relations to the main subject, may not be inconveniently treated here, we have already before us all the materials

of the former verse, "as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee," is wanting in the latter; Deut. v. 14, adds the words "thine ox, nor thine ass," and the clause, "that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou;" in Deut. v. 16, two new clauses are supplied, viz. "and that it may go well with thee," and "as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee;" to the last four commandments in Deuteronomy, the copulative conjunction is prefixed; in the ninth and tenth, the words שָׁוָא (*falsehood*), and תְּתַאֲוֶה (*covet*), occur in the place of their synonyms, שָׁקֵר and תְּחַמְדֶּה, and the tenth transposes the order of the first two clauses, as they are arranged in Exodus, and adds the words "his field." How many of these verbal variations have arisen from erroneous transcription, it is impossible now to ascertain. But that, as far as they subsisted in the original records, that of Deuteronomy is to be taken for the more exact, the declaration in v. 22 seems to leave us no room to doubt. Moses had heard the Decalogue pronounced, when he recorded it in Exodus; when he recorded it in Deuteronomy, it was in his hands, inscribed in permanent letters. — "Ye shall observe to do, *therefore*" &c. (32); Moses reasons with them from their own engagement in 27. — "Ye shall walk in *all* the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may prolong your days" &c. (33). Here (compare vi. 2, 24; viii. 1; xi. 18-21; xxx. 16) we find the same prolonged national life (see p. 173, note), which is spoken of in the fifth commandment in connexion with filial piety, promised as the reward of obedience to the Law in general. — "These are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you" (vi. 1). I seem, to myself, to behold Moses, while he pronounces these words, extending, in the people's view, the volume in which he had recorded the revelations made to him at Sinai, for their benefit; compare v. 30, 31. — "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand" &c. (8, 9). There seems little room to doubt the propriety of giving a figurative interpretation to these words; compare Ex. xiii. 9. — With Deut. vi. 16, compare Ex. xvii. 1-7.

which the Law affords towards a solution of that question.

I ask attention, first, to the fact, that, in the recital of the Divine commands touching this subject, we nowhere read any such direction as is supposed, for a universal massacre of the Canaanites. Those which occur in early passages of these books, I will here set down at length. They are as follows ;

“Mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites ; and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works ; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.” *

“I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come ; and I will make all thine enemies *turn their backs* unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall *drive out* the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee. I will not *drive them out* from before thee in one year, lest the field become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river ; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and thou shalt *drive them out* from before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me.” †

“Observe thou that which I command thee this day. Behold, I *drive out* before thee the Amorite, and the

* Ex. xxiii. 23, 24.

† Ex. xxiii. 27—33.

Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee. But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.”*

“Ye shall *drive out* all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places. And ye shall *dispossess* the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein. But if ye will not *drive out* the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover, it shall come to pass, that *I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them.*” †

Upon these passages, I make two remarks; 1. The command given by God to Moses, was for the *expulsion* of the Canaanites, not for their extirpation by the sword; 2. That it was declared from the first, that their expulsion was to be a gradual process; a declaration which accorded with subsequent facts, as we are to see hereafter, and which is inconsistent with the common supposition of an unsparingly exterminating inroad. ‡

What we learn, then, from Moses' record of the Divine commands to him respecting the treatment of the

* Ex. xxxiv. 11–13.

† Numb. xxxiii. 52–55.

‡ I may add, that the menace, at the close of the last quotation, throws light upon the design. God threatens, if the command was not executed, to visit the Israelites themselves with the inflictions he had denounced against the nations of Canaan. The command was not executed; and what followed? Not universal individual extermination, but national disaster and overthrow, as we read in the book of Judges.—The “destruction” spoken of (Ex. xxiii. 27) is naturally understood, in the connexion, of that national destruction, which was involved in expulsion from the national territory.

Canaanites, (distinct from the treatment of the monuments of their corrupt worship,) is simply this; that those nations were to be dispossessed and expelled, and that this object, though it was only to be gradually accomplished, was to be undertaken and pursued from the time of the first entrance of the Israelites within the Canaanitish border.

The Canaanites were to be expelled from the territory, which the Israelites claimed for their own settlement. This was the consummation, which Moses was bound to keep in view, as long as he remained at the people's head, and to bequeath to the care of his successor. How were they to be expelled? Every one will be ready to say, that if they could be frightened out of the country, at the cost of little bloodshed, by the threat of an unsparing severity, should they oppose an unavailing resistance, such a course would be the course of wisdom and mercy, both for themselves and for the invading force. Could matters be so arranged, that sudden terror should be made to do the work of a protracted contest, the objects of humanity would be essentially served, at the same time that the national object would be effected; and even if, to carry out the plan, and make the menace regarded, the severities threatened should be actually executed to some partial extent, the panic thus diffused, causing security to be sought in flight, might be the saving of life on a large scale.

Such, I have no hesitation in saying, was the course which Moses adopted, in fulfilling his commission, to rid the country claimed by his people, of the presence of the Canaanitish nations. He desired to have a timely terror, which would not touch life, do the work of a bloody force. Arrived on the border of the Canaanites, he proceeded to put that plan in execution. Had he

desired to subject them to an indiscriminate slaughter, there can be no doubt, reasoning on the common principles of action, that he would have kept his purpose to himself till he had them within his power. As yet, this was by no means the case. Of the four borders of their country, his army only occupied a part of one. To the north and south there was still free egress, and the western was a maritime frontier, allowing them to seek safety and freedom over an element, to which, from their commercial habits, they were accustomed. Had his object been wholesale slaughter, nothing could have been more sure to frustrate it, than to make proclamation of it beforehand in the immediate vicinity of the intended victims.

Yet such proclamation Moses makes. At the time that he addressed the host of Israel with the directions, the mention of which introduced these remarks, it lay upon the Canaanitish line. The encampment was probably as open to the resort of the neighbouring inhabitants, as it had been before to the men of Midian. At all events, an army is nowhere an isolated body, nor does that which is done or said in it with publicity, fail to become known in the surrounding country. Several weeks were still to elapse before the movement of invasion; time enough for the inhabitants to collect their property, and leisurely and peaceably to retire. Under these circumstances, is it conceivable, that, if Moses had thirsted for their blood, he would in such a public manner, (for, let it be remembered, his words were spoken to "all Israel," not written to be laid by,) have announced his relentless purpose? Instead of creating or adding to a panic,* which would be so likely to cheat him of his victims, would he not have carefully dissembled till the prey was within his grasp?

* Compare Josh. ii. 9, 11.

These circumstances indicate very satisfactorily, to my mind, that his purpose was the opposite of what has been imagined. He had been bidden, in what we have before read, to expel the Canaanites. He proceeds to fulfil that commission by means of threats, which he trusted, would, to a great extent, remove any opportunity for their own execution, since, as yet, there was ample time for his words to go abroad, before the evils they denounced could be incurred, (no part of Canaan being distant more than a hundred miles from the place of his encampment,) and for those, for whom the warning was intended, to find safety in timely flight, whether by land or sea. Accordingly, we find him, after having repeated the command in substantially the same general form in which we have read that he received it,* going on in a later passage to say, that with the cities of the seven devoted nations his people must not even make a treaty to spare their lives, on condition of reducing them to servitude; † a rule, however, for which he nowhere appeals to any divine authority. ‡

* Deut. vii. 1–5, 16, 22; xii. 1–3.

† xx. 16–18.

‡ “Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, neither shalt thou make marriages with them” &c. (vii. 2, 3). On the common theory, that the destruction intended was universal massacre, an extraordinary anti-climax is here presented.—“Ye shall cut down their *groves*” (5); if this, which is derived from the Septuagint and Vulgate, is the true sense of the word, the reference is to the plantations which were the scene of licentious idolatrous rites. Gesenius, (*Lexicon Art.* אֲשֵׁרָה), understands an image of *Astarte*, the Phenician *Venus*.—With 12–15 compare Lev. xxvi., and my remarks thereupon.—In 16, 22, we find nothing additional to what occurs in passages before quoted.—“The Lord thy God will send the *hornet*” (20). See p. 182, note on Ex. xxiii. 28. Compare Josh. vi.—“This day” (viii. 1); the phrase, it is well known, is used with great latitude; compare ix. 1.—“That he might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread only” &c. (3); that is, that he might satisfy thee, that God, by his own will and power, is able to make provision, when common provisions fail.—“Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years” (4). The received

We might feel confident in saying, that many of the Canaanites, hearing that such a powerful and implacable enemy was on their borders, which it was preparing soon to cross, (an enemy whose force and prowess had been already proved by easy conquests obtained over their most martial neighbours, and whose merciless intentions had been formally proclaimed,) would take to flight in due season, abandoning their lands for the preservation of their lives. Nor could an advocate of the view I have been presenting be reasonably called upon, in the comparative silence of history concerning those remote times, for any further evidence of the fact than its strong probability. But it so happens, or rather (one is authorized to say) it has been so ordered by a good Providence, that some positive proof of the fact has been preserved. The historian Procopius wrote in the sixth century, but he declares himself to have taken his statements concerning the Canaanites "from those who had written the ancient Phenician history"; nor is his testimony liable to any suspicion on the ground of his having desired to furnish aid towards the interpretation of the Mosaic records, since nothing could have been further than this from his purpose. In

interpretation of this verse has a most viciously Jewish taint. The supposition that the garments and shoes of the Jews were miraculously preserved from decay, of course involves also that of their miraculous growth along with the growth of the wearer; and this while the wealth of the people consisted in flocks, which could furnish them abundance of wool and leather, and among the women, who had so wrought in the construction of the Tabernacle (Ex. xxxv. 25), there was no want of operative skill. A sober expositor will hardly hesitate to say, that here, in animated language, according with the whole strain of the context (compare 3, 9), it is declared, that Providence had ordered things so favorably for the Jews, that they had never wanted for proper clothing, obtained either by their own manufacture, or by commerce with others. Indeed, the word *קָלָה*, rendered "waxed old," out of which the whole misconception grows, might be equally well translated *failed*, or *was deficient*; compare *בָּל*, *נָבַל*, *אָבַל*.—With 15, compare Numb. xx. 1–11; xxi. 6.

the second book of his "Vandal War," he writes as follows; "When the Hebrews had left Egypt, and had come to the bounds of Palestine, Moses, a wise man, who had conducted them on the march, died. The government devolved on Jesus, son of Naue, who led the people into Palestine, and, having shown in the war a superhuman valor, took possession of the country. It was then inhabited by populous nations, as the Gergesenes, and the Jebusites, and others, whose names are given in the Hebrew history. This people, when they saw that the foreign leader was invincible, leaving their paternal seats, *departed to the neighbouring country of Egypt*. Finding there no convenient place of settlement, since Egypt was of old a thickly peopled territory, they proceeded to Lybia, which, having built many cities, they occupied as far as to the pillars of Hercules. They also built a castle in Numidia, where now is the city called Tigisis. There, near to a great fountain, are two columns of white stone, bearing this inscription in the Phenician language; '*We are they who fled from before the face of Jesus the robber, the son of Naue.*'" * —This positive, indepen-

* Procopius, "De Bel. Vand.," lib. 2, cap. 10, in "Corpus Byzantinæ Historiæ" (Edit. Venet., 1729), Vol. I., p. 400.—Suidas has the same account. Joshua, he says, "expelled all the kings and mighty men of those nations," οἵτινες ὑπ' αὐτοῖ διακόμενοι, διὰ τῆς περιάλιου Αἰγύπτου τε καὶ Λιβύης κατέφυγον εἰς τὴν τῶν Ἀφρων χώραν. Καὶ προσφυγόντες τοῖς Ἀφροῖς, τὴν ἔρημον αὐτῶν ἔχρησαν χώραν, ἐν πλατῆι λίθιναις ἀναγραψάμενοι τὴν αἰτίαν, δι' ἣν ἀπὸ τῆς Χαναανίων γῆς ἤκισαν τὴν Ἀφρικὴν. Καὶ εἰσὶ μέχρι νῦν αἱ τοιαῦται πλακίαι ἐν τῇ Νομηδίᾳ, περιέχουσαι οὕτως· Ἡμεῖς ἰσμήν Χαναανῖοι, οὗς ἰδίωξεν Ἰησοῦς ὁ ληστής. Lexicon, Art. Χαναάν.—Selden, ("De Jure Naturali et Gentium" &c., lib. 6, cap. 13), gives an extract from the Jerusalem Gemara, which is chiefly valuable for its bearing on the same point. It is to the following effect; "Joshua, before the Israelites invaded Palestine, proposed three things by letter; that they who preferred to flee, should flee; that they who preferred peace, should treat; and that they, who would have war, should take up arms. Accordingly, the Gergesenes, believing in God, *fled, betaking themselves to Africa.*"

dent testimony to a fact, which all the circumstances of the case show to be strongly probable, has a peculiar interest and value.

There is no language at the beginning of the ninth chapter, indicative of a transition from the discourse on which I have been commenting, to another now begun;* for aught that appears, the same discourse is continued. Moses warns the people not to imagine, that any successes they might obtain, were the fruit of their own valor,† or that God gave them these successes in consequence of any desert of theirs; ‡ and now, having prepared the way for greater plainness of speech than would have been suitable at an earlier period of his addresses to them,§ he proceeds to rebuke any tendency to an arrogant spirit, by recalling the painful and humbling memory of some of the worst instances of their intractableness and ingratitude,|| and declaring that these were but specimens of a spirit which had always seemed ready to break forth, on any insufficient occasion, from the very time of the great mercy manifested in their behalf, in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.¶ Yet, notwithstanding all these provocations, he says, he had never ceased, with a disinterested earnestness, to intercede for them; and their Divine benefactor, though greatly incensed, had never ceased to pardon.** Still, God was waiting to be gracious. All he required of them was obedience; but it must be an obedience, not of outward service, but of the heart.†† He appealed to them to render that obedience, by the memory of

* With Deut. ix. 1, compare vi. 3, 4, xii. 28.

† ix. 3.

‡ ix. 4-6.

§ Compare i. 26-46.

|| ix. 8-12, 22, 23. Compare Ex. xxxii. (with my remarks, pp. 215-222); Numb. xi., xiii., xiv.

¶ Deut. ix. 7, 24.

** ix. 13-20, 25-x. 5.

†† x. 12, 13, 16, 20, 21.

his past kindnesses; for, when all nations were alike his, he had selected theirs to be the object of his peculiar care, and had already raised them, from small beginnings, to be a numerous people.* He appealed to them by a sense of his impartial justice, which weighed in the same balance the lowly and the great.† He appealed to them by past manifestations of his great power, as this had been manifested alternately in their protection and their punishment.‡ And finally, he appealed to them by his purposes of heavy retribution,§ or unlimited bounty,|| for the future, according as they should

* Deut. x. 14, 15, 22.

† x. 17, 18.

‡ xi. 1-9.

§ xi. 16, 17.

|| xi. 10-15, 18-25.—With ix. 18, 25, compare Ex. xxxiv. 28.—ix. 20, has no parallel in Exodus.—I do not think that ix. 22, contradicts my suggestion (p. 340, note §) respecting Taberah and Kibroth-hattaavah being different names of the same place. (Compare Numb. xxxiii. 17.) Moses might repeat both significant names, for greater emphasis, though he placed another, of the same class, between them. The ancient versions, unlike ours, translate all the three words.—Deut. ix. 22-24, should be arranged as a parenthesis, so as to preserve the connexion between 21 and 25 et seq.—The force of x. 1-5, is to remind the Israelites with what peculiar reverence the written Decalogue, now in the ark, in the custody of the Levites, ought to be regarded, in consideration of the manner in which it had been provided.—I cannot hesitate to regard x. 6, 7, as an interpolation; and that, too, originating, it may be presumed, in some accident. I lay no stress on the circumstance, that the proper names in 6, apparently the same with those in Numb. xxxiii. 31, are here disposed in a different order; for nothing is more likely, than that the Israelites, in the course of their long wanderings, should, at different times, have visited the same spots, taking them in a different order. But they break the connexion between 5 and 8, which otherwise is as close as possible (compare 10); nor can they even be regarded as a parenthesis, so irrelevant to the subject is the matter which they contain.—Verse 8, in its connexion with 5 and 10, determines the time, when a definite arrangement for the service of the Levites was communicated to Moses, to have been that of his second retirement to Mount Sinai; compare p. 317, note †. They were appointed to “bear the ark” (8) in which (5) the stone tablets were deposited.—Verse 19 is a moral precept for the people, parenthetically introduced, in connexion with the mention (17, 18) of God’s impartial providence; after which (20); the course of the argument

prove docile or incorrigible ; purposes (as I understand) to be providentially accomplished in what we call the natural consequences of obedience or disobedience to a law perfectly devised to insure the national prosperity.

To inforce this last appeal the most strongly possible upon the people's minds, Moses now announces his purpose to cause them to constitute themselves a party to the engagement therein implied, by invoking on themselves, with the most solemn forms, the Divine favor or vengeance, according as their own conduct should be. Referring to their establishment in Canaan as an event unquestionably to take place, though not till after he should have rested from his labors, (a manner of refer-

is resumed. — “I speak not with your children, which have not known, and which have not seen his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt” &c. (xi. 2-7). Whether any, besides Caleb and Joshua, of the men of full age, who came out of Egypt, survived or not, Moses was now addressing numbers, who, though then too young to be enumerated in the census, were old enough to be intelligent observers of the prodigies of the time. — “The earth swallowed them up, and their *households*, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession” (6). I would rather understand as follows ; “swallowed them up, and their *houses* ; yea, their tents, and [more] all their property [that was in their tents]. See pp. 356, 357, note. — “The land of Egypt, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it *with thy foot*” (10) ; the allusion is to a method of irrigation in Egypt, water being drawn for the purpose from the river. Philo, “De Confusione Linguarum,” (Op. Vol. I. p. 410, Edit. Mang.,) describes machinery for this use, worked with the foot, the description corresponding with the modern tread-mill. — “*I will give you* [it is Moses who speaks] the rain of your land in his due season” &c., “and *I will send grass*” &c. (14, 15) ; that is, through the natural operation of the wise laws which I give you, if they be obeyed, the rains will prove seasonably propitious, causing the obedient husbandman's labors to prosper. — “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and he shut up the heaven that there be *no rain*, and that the land yield not her fruit” (16, 17) ; that is, according to the simple Hebrew idiom, — that the rains prove to be no seasonable, no productive rains ; that the bounties of Providence be frustrated by that want of attention, on your part, to my laws, which would make your toils of cultivation prosper.

ence, the most effectual to inspire confidence on the part of those addressed,) he directs, that then their first act shall be this solemn rite of national consecration.* But, before he proceeds to specify the designed formalities,† he presents that statement of parts of the Law as before revealed, with additions and alterations, which is to make the subject of my next Lecture.

* Deut. xi. 26-31.

† xxvii.

LECTURE XIX.

DEUTERONOMY XI. 32.—XXVI. 19.

MOSES RECITES AND ANNOUNCES LAWS, —RELATING TO IDOLATRY, — TO WORSHIP, —TO THE RELIGIOUS REVENUES, —TO DISTINCTIONS OF FOOD, —TO THE FESTIVALS, — TO THE SECOND TITHE AND FIRSTLINGS, —TO THE SABBATICAL YEAR, —TO SLAVERY, —TO A FUTURE MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT, —TO FALSE TEACHERS, WITH A PREDICTION OF THE GREAT TEACHER TO COME, —TO RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP, —TO THE CUSTOMS OF WAR, —TO DOMESTIC RELATIONS, —TO USURY, —TO OFFICES OF JUSTICE, HUMANITY, COURTESY, AND COMPASSION, — TO MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS, — TO CRIMES, PROCESSES, AND PUNISHMENTS. —HE GIVES DIRECTIONS RESPECTING OFFERINGS TO BE MADE AFTER THE ORDERLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY, —AND RENEWS HIS EXHORTATIONS TO OBEDIENCE, AND ASSURANCES OF THE DIVINE FAVOR.

In fifteen chapters of the book of Deuteronomy, beginning with the twelfth, we find Moses represented as publicly repeating, with or without modification, various laws which had been previously established, and for the first time promulgating others, a greater or less portion of which, I have remarked,* are to be taken for the fruit of his meditations and experience, and the subject of revelations to him, during the long wanderings in the wilderness. A general remark, to be made upon the collection of rules here brought together, is, that they are of a character corresponding with the occasion to which the record refers them. They are declared to have been addressed to “all Israel,” — to the people at large; and accordingly rules of that class, with which the people had no immediate concern, — which were intended for a directory to the sacred order

* See p. 372.

in the discharge of their functions, — are not found embraced in the collection.*

In the account which I am to give of these laws, (and in which I shall not treat of their principles, except as far as new provisions require it, having done this already in earlier parts of the discussion,) it will be convenient to bring together those which treat upon the same general subject, though we should find them dispersed in different parts of Moses' discourse. They were rehearsed to the end that they might be remembered and obeyed. It was not necessary to this end, as it would have been in the recital of historical facts, that they should be presented in a determinate order; and it would be fruitless to inquire why Moses has adopted the particular arrangement in which we find them, in preference to any other. Nothing is more probable, than that single rules took their places successively, as they chanced to occur to his mind.

The great subject, however, of True and False Worship, of idolatry and fealty to Jehovah, is placed, as we should expect, in the fore-ground, in a repetition of the rule respecting the destruction of the monuments of that licentious and flagitious form of heathenism, which prevailed in Canaan, as soon as that country should be possessed.† Further on, a caution is given

* Compare Deut. xxiv. 8, where the people are expressly referred, for instruction in the provisions relating to leprosy, to the sacred order, to whom the administration of those rules had been committed in full detail (compare Lev. xiii. xiv.). "As I commanded them, so shall ye observe to do," is all that is said to the people, except that, to make them more ready to submit to the separation which the priests were directed to enforce, they are reminded (Deut. xxiv. 9), that Miriam herself had been subjected to the same exaction, and this, though the host had been detained upon its march for the purpose. (Compare Numb. xii. 15.)—The remark, however, in the text, is not to be taken without exception. See Deut. xviii. 6–8.

† Deut. xi. 32–xii. 3. Compare Ex. xxxiv. 13; Numb. xxxiii. 52; Deut. vii. 5.—It will be observed, that I take Deut. xi. 32 into this division of the book. There it seems to me to belong. As arranged in

against any disposition, after the power of the ancient inhabitants should be broken, to revive their senseless and brutal practices.* Whoever, among the people, shall attempt to seduce others to the sin, is forthwith to be put to death without mercy, however artfully he may sustain his attempt at imposture; † to such a conspirator against the common well-being, the closest ties of blood and friendship are to afford no protection from the swift vengeance of him, on whom he has dared, in the confidence of intimacy, to try his baleful arts; ‡ and the

the received division of chapters, I think it not only makes a very frigid conclusion of the first part, but deprives that part of the emphatic conclusion, which belongs to it, in verse 31. On the other hand, arranged as I propose, verse 32 makes a most appropriate opening of the second section. It is true, that the words "this day" are capable of being used with much latitude; but in the present instance I understand Moses as saying, "Ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you *this day*," as well as what I have commanded at other times; and then he goes on to exhibit them.

* Deut. xii. 29–32. This is a new rule, *e majori securitate*. The occasion for it probably was the prevailing notion, which might beguile the Israelites, that every territory had its patron god, without whose favor its occupants could not thrive. Compare 2 Kings xvii. 26.—Deut. xiv. 1, 2; compare Lev. xix. 27, 28, and my note thereupon.—Deut. xvi. 21, 22; compare Lev. xxvi. 1; 1 Kings xv. 13.

† Deut. xiii. 1–5.—"If there arise among you a prophet" &c. (1, 2). Nothing could be more unfounded than to imagine, that there is an implication here of the actual possibility of a false teacher's performing a miracle, or uttering a prediction with supernatural wisdom. The people are warned against the pretence and appearance of such things,—against appeals for the defence of false doctrine, to tricks pretending to be miracles, or to prognostics of the future, with which (merely because they were sagacious anticipations, or lucky guesses) the event proves to correspond. The words אִיָּהּ and מִוִּפְתָּהּ signify *a sign*; something observable and striking, something remarkable and surprising, whether miraculous or not. The Egyptian wise men gave signs and wonders (pp. 119 et seq.) in the same general sense in which these false teachers might give them.—"The Lord your God proveth you" &c. (3); look upon it as only a trial, which God's providence has permitted to come upon you, and use it so as to manifest and confirm your loyalty.

‡ xiii. 6–11. But the criminal counsellor was not to be slain privately, which would have been a liberty subject to extreme abuse. He was to be

city which has suffered itself to harbour the crime, is to be made the subject of a more memorable judgment; not only are its inhabitants to be put to the sword, their cattle are to share their fate, its movables are to be consumed with fire, and its walls and dwellings are to be razed to the ground, to remain thus for ever, a warning monument of desolation.* Even he who does no more than offer idolatrous worship, though he should design it to be done in secret, is to be led forth, as soon as solemnly convicted, to public execution; † nor is the presence of any of the pretended practitioners of magic, and those other kindred arts, which connected themselves with heathen belief and worship, to be tolerated within the holy realm of Israel. ‡

In respect to Worship, the principal regulations, embraced in this collection, have reference to that altered condition of things, in which the people, soon to be possessed of a permanent habitation, might have a permanent place of resort for the duties of their religious ceremonial. What that place should be, Moses does not determine, § perceiving, probably, that a premature decision of the question might create jealousy among the tribes, and that circumstances might require any

informed against by the person whom he had solicited, and then executed pursuant to a judicial sentence. (Compare 9, 10, with p. 482.) The Septuagint reads, more expressly to this point, ἀναγγελλίς πρὸς αὐτοῦ. — Perhaps (6) the law dispensed a wife or child from informing.

* Deut. xiii. 12–18. The severe provisions in this passage, extending even to the destruction of animals and property, with the strictest prohibition to spare any thing, not only tended to exasperate the sentiment, which they expressed, of abhorrence of the crime which had called for such vengeance, but they secured the further point, that a city should not be exposed to become a prey to the cupidity of its neighbours, under pretence of punishing its sins. — All the provisions in this chapter are new.

† xvii. 2–7.

‡ xviii. 9–14. Compare Ex. xxii. 18; Lev. xix. 26, 31; xx. 6, 27.

§ xii. 5, 11, 14, 21.

first choice which he should make, to be subsequently abandoned. But its selection, he says, will afford opportunity, and impose an obligation, for greater regularity in the services of worship; than had hitherto been observed.* To that place all offerings were to be brought; † and that was to be the scene of a festive and charitable liberality, of a kind which is now first mentioned. ‡ In one respect, however, the rigor of the old rule respecting resort to the place of the national worship was to be relaxed: Some weighty reasons, at least, for the strictness of the demand, that all animals designed for food should be brought to the Tabernacle to be slaughtered, being now superseded by the change of circumstances, and others having become less urgent, through the influence of the habits of forty years, permission is given to the proprietor to slaughter them henceforward at his own home, if the place where the Tabernacle was pitched was so remote from him, that a journey to it for the purpose would be attended with inconvenience. § The prohibition of the use of blood is declared to have application to this case, as well as to others, previously treated. || The rule requiring that victims shall be perfect in their kind is briefly repeated. ¶ The Pagan practice of offering the wages of prostitution as a consecrated gift is condemned as

* Deut. xii. 8, 9.

† xii. 4-7, 10-14, 26-28.

‡ xii. 17-19. For remarks on the subject here introduced, see below, pp. 454-458.

§ xii. 15, 20-22. The law in Lev. xvii. 1-7, is here repealed. See pp. 252-254, 288. — "The unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike" (22); which they could not do if the animals were presented as a sacrifice. Compare Lev. vii. 21.

|| Deut. xii. 16, 23-25. Compare Lev. xvii. 10-14, and p. 289, note *. The idea referred to at the end of that note, entered extensively into ancient forms of speech. — "*Purpuream vomit ille animam,*" says Virgil (*Æneid*. ix. 349).

¶ Deut. xv. 21; xvii. 1. Compare Lev. xxii. 19-25; p. 296.

an abomination in Jehovah's sight;* and the liberty of making vows, or refraining from making them, together with the obligation of fulfilling them when made, is again affirmed in the same tone with that of other passages in which the subject has been treated.†

In respect to Religious Revenues, no more is here done than to refer in the most general way to the established provision for the maintenance of the sacred order; ‡ to make a trifling addition to the priest's perquisites; § and to direct, that if any Levite should be disposed to forsake his home in one of the cities of his tribe, and devote himself to a perpetual service at the Tabernacle, he should be entitled to a like support with those of his brethren, who, from time to time, were rendering there their stated temporary service.||

The rules respecting clean and unclean animals are repeated, as they had been prescribed in the book of Leviticus. ¶

* Deut. xxiii. 18. Compare Lev. xix. 29. Respecting this practice of ancient idolaters, and of the Phenicians among others, see Spencer, "De Legibus" &c., lib. 2, cap. 23, § 1. Haud dubito, quin vocabulum *canis* de *cynædo* [κύναςδος, quasi impudens ut canis] sit accipiendum; confer 17. At vide Bochart, "Hierozoicon," part. 1, lib. 2, cap. 56.

† xxiii. 21-23. Compare Lev. xxvii. 2; Numb. xxx.; pp. 308, 397.

‡ Deut. xviii. 1, 2, 5.

§ xviii. 3, 4. "The two cheeks, and the maw," "and the first of the fleece of thy sheep," are donatives not hitherto mentioned.

|| xviii. 6-8. Moses dictated no arrangements respecting a succession of the Levites in the duty of serving at the Tabernacle; but of course he anticipated that they would presently be made, since, on the one hand, the Tabernacle was to be served, and, on the other, the Levites were to have their homes in forty-eight cities.

¶ xiv. 3-21; compare Lev. xi. 1-23.—There are, however, the three following slight differences between the two records. In Deut. xiv. 4, 5, as if to suggest some instances before the rule is named, a few animals falling within it are specified, of which we find nothing in Leviticus. In xiv. 13, the word גִּלְדֵי הַיַּרְבֵּה, rendered in our version "glede," is added to the list in the parallel passage; a few manuscripts, however, and the Samaritan copy, omit it. The four exceptions in Lev. xi. 22, to the prohibition of "flying creeping things," do not occur in Deuteronomy; nor (with

If I understand correctly the passage in which the three great annual Festivals are briefly mentioned, the worshipper, who shall have repaired to the Tabernacle, in pursuance of earlier directions, to observe the Pass-over,* is now informed, (probably on account of the season of the year, when his presence might be urgently required at home,) that, from the morning after the paschal lamb has been slain, he is dispensed from further attendance; while, at the feast of Pentecost and Tabernacles, he was bound to remain, and let "the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow," share with his own family, from high to low, in a liberal dispensation of his Peace Offerings.†

a single exception, in Deut. xiv. 21, compare Lev. xi. 39, 40) is the related subject, treated in Lev. xi. 24-43, there pursued; the object naturally being, as we should suppose, in a spoken address, rather to present the principal features of such a subject, than to exhaust it. — "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" (21). The use of this precept (compare Ex. xxiii. 19; xxxiv. 26) is not apparent. The best sustained exposition appears to me to be that of Spencer, who represents it ("De Legibus" &c., lib. 2, cap. 8, § 2) as having reference to a heathen custom of propitiating the favor of deities who presided over cultivation, by sprinkling over the fields the milk of a goat, in which the flesh of its young, which they ate, had been boiled; but it must be owned that his authorities to this point (or rather his authority, "vetus Karaita anonymus") are less satisfactory than in many other cases. The view of Michaelis ("Commentary" &c., book 4, chap. 4, part 1, art. 205) is peculiar. He thinks, that here is a prohibition of the use of butter, to the end of endearing the Israelites the more to Palestine; oil (which would furnish the substitute) being a large product of that country. (Compare p. 242 above, note ††.) He says that the Jews have always understood this law as forbidding the use of butter. If it be so, the fact is important; but I have never happened to meet with that statement elsewhere, and cannot reconcile it with the fact, that the Jewish commentators, as well as the Christian, have sought other solutions of the text; e. g. Maimonides, "More Nebochim," pars 3, cap. 48.

* Ex. xxiii. 17; xxxiv. 23; compare p. 199.

† Deut. xvi. 1-17; compare Lev. xxiii; Numb. xxviii., xxix. — I cannot admit the correctness of the inference drawn from verses 5, 6; viz. that the paschal lamb must be eaten nowhere but in the neighbourhood of the Tabernacle. This solemnity was undoubtedly in its whole

Upon the uses of the annual Festivals, as occasions of patriotic festivity, and of private hospitality and beneficence, I made some remarks, at a previous stage of our inquiries.* From part of the discourse before us, we learn, that they were to be made to serve these uses the better, through an institution which has not before been mentioned. Independently of the contributions for the maintenance of the sacred order; of which we have read in the previous books, and which,

original spirit, an institution for domestic observance (Ex. xii. 1–28); nor ought we to admit, without cogent reasons, the idea of such a departure, as is supposed, from the primitive plan, especially when it is considered what numbers must, from various causes, have been prevented from repairing to the Tabernacle, and how severely, on the other hand, the omission was condemned. (Numb. ix. 13.) Sacrifices were required to be presented at the Tabernacle. But the paschal lamb was in no proper sense a sacrifice. No part of it was presented to be consumed upon the altar. A precept, too, in the immediate context, distinctly intimates, that the ceremony in question was to be observed throughout the Israelitish borders; “there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee *in all thy coasts*” (4). Accordingly, I do not hesitate to understand “the passover” spoken of in verse 5, as well as that in verse 2 (the latter expressly declared to be of the flock and *the herd*, which the proper passover could not be), to denote whatever “free-will offering” (10) the worshipper should, at the Passover season, see fit to present. (Compare 2 Chron. xxxv. 6–11.) Regulations of the Passover proper (3, 4) are very naturally introduced in the connexion, but ought to be distinguished by being thrown into a parenthesis. Verse 5 then connects with verse 2; and verses 6 and 7 I propose to divide as follows; viz. “But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there shalt thou sacrifice the passover. [This subject finished, another now begins.] At even, at the going down of the sun, *was* [there is no “at” in the original] the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt, *and* [or *so*] thou shalt [then] roast and eat [the original has no accusative noun or pronoun here, but no Jew could fail from the context to supply the ellipsis with *the paschal lamb*] in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose [where the whole context supposes the person addressed to be, else he could not sacrifice “of the flock and the herd,”]; and [having done this] thou mayest turn in the morning [after], and go unto thy tents [the protracted largesses of the other seasons (10–17) not being required at this].—Again; כִּוְעָרָה (6) may be rendered *festival* as well as *season*; and then we should read “At even &c. is the *festival*, or *celebration*, of thy departure from Egypt.”

* See pp. 200, 201, 246.

In connexion with this subject of a Second Tithe, occurs the mention of Firstling animals as destined to a similar use. We have before read of an assignment of the first-born of animals to make a part of the sacerdotal revenues; and the question, which arises from a comparison of these different regulations, we are unable confidently to answer, from the very cursory manner, in which that now under our notice is presented. The commonly received interpretation, and one having much probability to recommend it is, that, in this case, as in that of Tithes, after the legal contribution had been made for the priests and Levites, a second similar deduction was made, agreeably to ancient usage, from what remained with the proprietor, for festive and charitable uses, and that the name *Firstlings*, in the latter instance, denoted the animals next in age to those belonging to the religious revenue.*

therefore the more effectually, the excellent office of our modern inventions of Cattle Shows and Fairs; for, when farmers from all the districts brought their products to one place, comparison and emulation could not fail to follow. Perhaps it would not be going too far to suppose, that we have here one of the reasons for the strict prohibition (compare Lev. xxvii. 32, 33) of a pecuniary commutation of animals, belonging to the revenue of First Tithes.

* Deut. xii. 6, 7, 17; xiv. 23; xv. 19–23. Compare Ex. xxxiv. 19, 20; Lev. xxvii. 26; Numb. xviii. 15–19.—If this Firstling had any physical defect, it was not to be taken to the Tabernacle, but to be eaten at the proprietor's dwelling (Deut. xv. 21, 22; compare p. 296).—Rosenmüller approves the view, that these Second Firstlings were female animals ("Scholia," on xii. 17). But he must have overlooked xv. 19.—I see no objection to the common interpretation; on the contrary, in our small acquaintance with the subject, I think it may be reasonably taken for the true one. Nevertheless, I have been surprised to find nowhere any consideration of the question, whether here may not be an instance of the repeal of an early provision, and the transfer of the property concerned, to a different use relating to the public good, the priests being still allowed (xviii. 4) to retain the first-fruits of vegetable products. (Compare Ex. xxii. 29, 30; xxiii. 19.) And still another question occurs; viz. May it not have been, that, though the Firstlings, agreeably to what we have before read, were a requisite of the priests, the priest who received, and the proprietor who present-

The institution of the Sabbatical year is here brought to view, in order to attach to it the new provision, that, on that year, the payment of debts should not be enforced; not that their obligation should then be discharged, but that, through a season, during which the Israelitish proprietor, from whom debts were due, was divested, by the Law, of the customary income from his land, it should be suspended, as was reasonable, for such as had not other resources. But as it was not designed that the regulation should extend any further than the just occasion for it, it was declared to have no application to the opulent, nor to foreigners, who, being incapable of holding land in the country, suffered, on the Sabbatical year, no abridgment of their means. It is interesting to remark how provisions, mentioned in different places, thus correspond to, and imply one another, without any express reference to the fact of this mutual fitness.*

The Law delivered on Mount Sinai had recognised

ed them, were in the habit of regaling on them together, or enjoying them jointly by some mutually satisfactory arrangement? At least, no directions are given concerning them, limiting their use, like that of some offerings, to the priests; compare p. 255. But this is less probable.

* Deut. xv. 1-11; compare Ex. xxiii. 10, 11; Lev. xxv. 1-7; p. 301.—Dathe well proposes in verse 2 to read *בְּשָׁנָה*, instead of *בְּשָׁנָה*, so as to render, instead of "shall release it," which gives no translation of the word *יָדוּ*, "shall withhold [or suspend] his hand," shall not seize upon the debtor, for the time being. So in verse 3, though Dathe does not pursue the thought, *בְּשָׁנָה* should be construed as the second person, and *יָדוּ* as the accusative.—"Save when there shall be no poor [or, save when he shall not be a poor man] among you" (4); a plain intimation that the regulation was only for their benefit.—Verse 3 shows a Stop Law only to have been intended, and not a final discharge of contracts; for it would be quite superfluous to say, that the occurrence of the Sabbatical year was not to cancel debts from foreigners. Nor do verses 7, 9 intimate any thing to the contrary; a niggardly person would naturally be disinclined to give a credit, the obligation of which was to be suspended over a year close at hand.

the right of holding Hebrews as Slaves, or rather (as the arrangement was, from the first, in respect to males) as apprentices, for in no case could their involuntary servitude be prolonged beyond the period of seven years. If the Hebrew had been married before he entered upon his service, his wife became free along with him. If he had received a fellow slave in marriage, and if, when the time for his emancipation came, he was too much attached to his family and his master to wish to use his privilege, he might then, in the presence of magistrates (so as to guard against fraud on the master's part), go through a ceremony, by which he devoted himself to permanent servitude. A female slave, on the contrary, was liable to be retained permanently in that relation; but, if her master had received her with a view to espouse her to himself, or to his son, she had a right to the treatment of a wife or a daughter, or else to her freedom; she might not be transferred to any other purchaser. A later rule, recorded in Leviticus, gave the Hebrew servant his freedom in the Jubilee year, even if his seven years of service had not then expired, along with the further privilege of demanding the manumission of his family; and the emancipation of the Jubilee was at the same time extended to females, the Law declaring, that only foreigners shall be subject to be "bond-men and bond-maids for ever."* With the advantage of this preparation, the Law in Deuteronomy proceeds to make still more generous provisions. It ordains, that the right of emancipation, after six years' service, shall be extended to the female slave, and that, when manumitted, none shall be sent away destitute, so as to be exposed to want or temptation. "Thou shalt furnish him liberally," it is said, "out of thy flock,

* Ex. xxi. 1-11; Lev. xxv. 39-46. — In Ex. xxi. 8, instead of "be redeemed," the rendering should be, *go free*.

and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press; of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee shalt thou give unto him." *

In one remarkable passage, Moses, looking forward to the time, when, under the influence of the example of surrounding nations, and other influences always at work in society, the Jews would be led to the establishment of a Monarchical Government, takes care to exhibit for their use, whenever that important crisis should come, some of the principles upon which the change might be made with safety. The person elevated to the throne, must be one enjoying the Divine approbation; he must be of native, and by no means of foreign birth; and in the enjoyment of his high trust, he must understand, that he is not to imitate the hurtful luxury, pomp, and ambi-

* Deut. xv. 12-18.—“The seventh year,” of which this passage treats, is clearly the seventh year of the slave’s own service, (compare 12, 18,) and not the periodically recurring Sabbatical year spoken of just before; the mention of which, however, naturally suggested it, as having a certain similarity.—The boring of the ears (xv. 17, compare Ex. xxi. 6), was anciently a sign of servitude in several nations; see, e. g. Juvenal, Sat. 1, l. 102. It has been suggested, that Moses, by insisting on this form, designed to attach a mean association to the wearing of ear-rings, and so to discourage it,—amulets, connected with heathen superstitions, being carried about the person in this way; and the fact, that he appears to have gone somewhat out of his way (if I may so speak) to repeat the direction, gives a degree of probability to this remark.—If the question be asked, why, in Lev. xxv. 47-55, the right of *the next of kin* to redeem his friend to freedom is spoken of with reference to the Jubilee year, and not equally to the conclusion of seven years of service, I reply, 1. That the Jubilee is there the main subject, and that accordingly it would be irrelevant to mention a kinsman’s rights, incident to any other period, supposing such to exist; 2. That as an Israelite, sold into servitude, must first have alienated his property, he would probably, for a general rule, wish to prolong his servitude, till the Jubilee should come round to restore it, since he would have nothing to live upon meanwhile (compare 41); unless, indeed, his kinsman should be disposed (25) to redeem his estate as well as his person, in which case the price of the former, at least, which would probably be much greater, must be calculated with reference to the distance of the Jubilee. (Compare 15, 16.)

tion of surrounding monarchs; but, having a constant view to the promotion of the national welfare and greatness, by carrying out the principles upon which the nation was founded, he must, on his accession, make a copy of the Law for his frequent use and meditation, in order to be the more familiar with its requisitions, and to be reminded of the fact, that he was but one of the people, raised above them only by the possession of peculiar power for their service.*

* Deut. xvii. 14–20. —“Whom the Lord thy God shall choose” (15). Choose, how? By direct declaration of his, through a prophet, or otherwise, say the commentators. But, without much better proof than I have seen adduced, I cannot admit the idea that such a succession of miraculous divine communications on this subject was in Moses’ thought. בָּחַר בִּי frequently means, *he delighted in*, he approved (compare Is. i. 29; xiv. 1; Zech. i. 17; iii. 2; Prov. i. 29; iii. 31); and, thus understood, the precept will be, to appoint for king a good and devout man, such a man as God may be believed to regard with complacency. But I incline strongly to think, that we have here a direction, that the monarchy shall be elective, and not hereditary; The king, whom ye shall set over you, from time to time, shall not be he who is simply his father’s son, but he whom God [in his providence] shall have designated, shall have presented to your view, as the worthiest. Verse 20 offers no contradiction to this view. Its sense is naturally understood to be, that the king’s good conduct will attach the people to his family, and dispose them to give the succession to one of them. —“One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee” (15); besides reasons for this rule, having equal application to other nations, a foreigner was obviously not to be trusted with such an influence as the throne would give, over a people, whose consecration to Jehovah was of such a peculiar kind. —“He shall not multiply horses, nor cause the people to return to Egypt,” &c. (16). In obtaining supplies of horses, the Israelites would have been led to a hurtful intercourse with Egypt, where they were raised in great numbers (1 Kings x. 28, 29; 2 Chron. xii. 2, 3). On the other hand, cavalry in the mountainous country of Palestine was not wanted for defence, and it might tempt to wars of conquest. Also, for their necessary uses, the ox and the ass, whose maintenance is far more economical, sufficed the Jews; and the absence of the horse enabled their country to support a much larger population. —“Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away” (17); that is, lest he come under the influence of idolatrous women (compare 1 Kings xi. 1). By *multiplying* wives, we are not to understand having more than one; (the high-priest, we are told (2 Chron. xxiv. 3), the

But a far more interesting prospect of the future than this, I conceive to have been opened by Moses in another passage. After urging those admonitions against the pretended arts of enchantment, divination, and the like, which came under our notice in connexion with the subject of idolatry,* he goes on to speak, if I interpret him correctly, of that future revelation (possessed by us in Christianity), destined to consummate the work of a moral renovation of the world, of which only the first step had been taken by his own labors. Having cautioned the people against the impostures of those foreigners, whose pretensions to intercourse with the spiritual world were connected with the falsehoods and follies of heathen belief and practice, I understand him as proceeding to give the assurance, (which the connexion naturally prompted,) that God would take care, that whatever communications of a supernatural character it was best they should have, should, in his own good time, be conveyed to them through one of their own number, as those already received by them had been; and that, in fact, God had made known to him, at the time of the first promulgation of the Law, that such was his purpose. "I will raise them up," he had said, "a prophet from among their brethren *like unto thee*, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." — I am aware to what an extent this language of Moses has been understood as a reference, not to the founder of the future, better dispensation in particular,

authorized expounder of the Law, gave two wives to king Joash;) the king was forbidden to maintain a numerous *Harem*, after the oriental manner, to his own harm, and the wide injury of his subjects through the example. — "Neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" (17); the lust of which would lead to extortion, while their possession might enable him to rear a despotism.

* See p. 451.

tion of surrounding monarchs; but, having a constant view to the promotion of the national welfare and greatness, by carrying out the principles upon which the nation was founded, he must, on his accession, make a copy of the Law for his frequent use and meditation, in order to be the more familiar with its requisitions, and to be reminded of the fact, that he was but one of the people, raised above them only by the possession of peculiar power for their service.*

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but to the line of teachers to be raised up, from time to time, in the Jewish Church. But I find no argument for this departure from the most obvious exposition, except the supposed improbability, that an event so far distant as we know the Messiah's coming to have been, would be referred to in this connexion; an argument to which I cannot ascribe any force, inasmuch as it appears to me altogether natural for Moses to bid the Israelites await God's time for making further disclosures, whatever that time might be, instead of seeking them at forbidden sources. And, on the other hand, persuaded as I am, that Moses was the subject of supernatural illumination, I am more than prepared to believe, that he was informed of the character of his Law, as being (what we know it to have been) a preparatory dispensation; and that he received that information (as he seems to declare) at the time when he received the Law itself. And, when I consider the extreme difficulty of applying to any person, or succession of persons, in the Jewish history, antecedent to the time of Jesus, the description of being *like unto Moses*, whose great distinction was, that he was the founder of a new religious system, supernaturally communicated to his own mind, and sustained by miraculous exhibitions of which he was the instrument; and when I remember how explicitly our Lord says of Moses, in a distinct reference to the evidences of his own claims, "He wrote of me," and observe, in the New Testament records, authoritative references to this passage, to which I can attach no other satisfactory meaning, — I do not hesitate to regard Moses as here predicting the mission of the finisher of his own incomplete work, the advent of **JESUS CHRIST, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.***

* Deut. xviii. 15–22; compare John v. 46. — Whoever was the writer of the last verses of this book (xxxiv. 10–12), I cannot but think, that he

Most nations have their Laws of Naturalization, or of admitting foreigners to the privileges of citizenship. The Israelites had theirs. We have seen that the Jewish religion admitted proselytes, the nation at the same time adopting citizens.* The prerogatives of citizenship were great; to name but one of them, the citizen, and no other, could hold land in perpetuity. Accordingly, we might expect to find that some cautions were necessary in the offer of this privilege, and that checks were placed upon its extension to any, from whom the national institutions would be peculiarly in

looked upon the resemblance of the promised prophet to Moses, in the light in which I have above described it, when, intimating the expectation, which, ever since their first leader's death, the nation had entertained, but which hitherto they had cherished only to be disappointed, he says, that "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." On the other hand, I cannot but regard the first martyr, Stephen, as distinctly implying (Acts vii. 37), and the apostle Peter as declaring, that, after the ages of delay, the prophet, promised by the lawgiver, at length had come. "Moses truly," are Peter's words, "said unto the fathers, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me' 'Unto you first, God, having raised up his son Jesus'" &c. (Acts iii. 22-26). — "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a prophet," said Moses, "unto him ye shall hearken" (15); and, when the prophet came, it was to these words, I conceive, that the remarkable attestation to him, by a miraculous voice, referred, when, on the mountain of transfiguration, the august form of the old lawgiver was revealed in communion with him; "This is my beloved son, hear ye him" (Matt. xvii. 5; Mark ix. 7; Luke ix. 35). — The fact, which Moses communicates in 16-18, viz., that, at the time when the people prayed, that God would not appear to them in such terrific majesty, he had replied, that so it should be, and that whatever he should have to reveal, he would reveal through Moses, and, later, through a prophet like him, is not related in the parallel passage. (Compare Ex. xx. 18-22.) — False pretenders to the character of this prophet, should they present themselves, were to be detected (Deut. xviii. 21, 22) by their failure to give supernatural evidence of a supernatural commission; and they, as well as those who attempted to seduce the people to the worship of other deities, were to be put to death. (Compare xiii. 1-5.) It was under this law, I suppose, that the Jews proposed to proceed with Jesus, as related in John xix. 7. If so, we have here an additional indication, that the nation understood these words, of their Messiah.

* Ex. xii. 48.

danger, or who, from any cause, would be undesirable associates. Such restrictions we, in fact, find to have been prescribed. While, for a general rule, it appears that foreigners might be naturalized, or “enter into the congregation of the Lord,” on submitting themselves to the initiatory rite of Judaism, an Egyptian, or Idumean, could not claim the privilege, unless his father and grandfather before him had been residents in the country; that length of time, it seems, being thought needed to afford sufficient security, that such families had abandoned the religion and habits of the respective countries of their origin, for those of their adoption. Accessions from among the Ammonites and Moabites were more undesirable still. Their races had manifested, both a sullen, and one an insidious hostility, to the race of Israel, which admitted of no satisfaction in welcoming them to its fellowship; and they, by a perpetual edict, were denied the privilege, till the residence of a family could be dated back ten generations. In another way, this law operated to prevent a dangerous intercourse with unfriendly and suspected neighbours. A Jewish woman and her friends would be indisposed to an alliance with one of them, though no positive law forbade, when she must look forward to her posterity being so long disfranchised and degraded.*

* Deut. xxiii. 1-8. — “Non intrabit” &c. (1). En Judaismi indolem, polygamie, ac malis crebris eò pertinentibus, planè inimicam. Ubi enim polygamia nimia, ibi eunuchorum caterva. En indolem honestam, quæ civem Judæum, domini libidinis ministrum vilem fieri noluit. — “A bastard” &c. (2). The word רַבִּיָּדָא occurs in only one other place (Zech. ix. 6), and its meaning is altogether doubtful. The most plausible interpretation which I have seen of it, attributed by Rosenmüller (ad loc.) to a German critic, represents it as the Hiphil participle of a lost verb רַבִּיָּדָא, the sense of which, as ascertained by the corresponding root in Arabic, is, *he corrupted*. The *corrupter*, would be an expression very suitable to be used of the Canaanites (Ex. xxiii. 33, xxxiv. 15, 16); and they accordingly are supposed to be meant (compare 3, 7). — In the words, “the tenth gener-

A not less important feature of the relations of the Jews to foreign nations is found in their Laws of War. Of the manner in which they were to conduct hostilities against the inhabitants of Canaan, I have already treated at length. With these they were to make no treaty, nor hold out to them any hope of security, while remaining within their reach.* To other nations, which, after a war had broken out, entered seasonably into a negotiation for surrender, to be proposed on the part of the Jews, they were bound to give full security for life, exacting only tribute by the right of conquest, and as indemnity for the hostilities which had been provoked; † a great advance, apparently, on the practices of the age. If, refusing to capitulate, a city had to be taken by storm, its defenders might be put to the sword (a principle equally recognised in theory, in modern warfare), and their property seized; but women and children must be spared. ‡ With the Amalekites, war must be

ation" (2, 3), the numeral may indicate an indefinitely long time, and so be in a manner equivalent to "for ever" (3); but I am rather inclined to interpret this last verse thus; "For ever" it shall be a rule, that "to their tenth generation" &c. Compare, however, Nehemiah xiii. 1.

* Deut. xx. 15-18; compare pp. 436-441. — The language in verse 13 is clearly *in terrorem* (compare 11), being to this effect; If the cities which may capitulate in season, do not, their defenders expose themselves to be put to death. By parity of reasoning, the sense of 16, 17, is naturally taken to be the same; If the nations which cannot be admitted to treat, remain to be attacked, they have nothing to hope. — Another reason for not making a treaty with the Canaanites (vii. 2) might have been, that the same perfidy, which, noted in the Carthaginians, their descendants, gave rise to the name of *Punic faith*, was known to be a characteristic of theirs. Compare Numb. xxxiii. 55.

† Deut. xx. 10, 11.

‡ xx. 12-14. I say, "*might* be put to the sword," for there can be no question, on grounds of grammar, about the propriety of rendering the Hebrew future as potential, and the spirit of the passage recommends this version; *quasi*, When you are compelled to take a city by storm, if you put its armed garrison to the sword, make no other victims. Compare xxii. 7.

waged, till the power of that pestilent horde of land pirates should be blotted out of memory.*

Nor are the Jewish War Laws, relating to internal administration, without their interest. When the host was mustered for an expedition, and had been addressed by the priest with an exhortation to courage, founded on a pious confidence in the guardian God of Israel, heralds, before it was marshalled and officered, were to make proclamation, that whatever citizen soldier had lately built a house, or planted a vineyard, or contracted a marriage, was at liberty to retire unquestioned to his home; and finally, that the same privilege was allowed to whosoever was "fearful and faint-hearted."† The wise reason of the last provision, is given; the coward was permitted, and advised to retire, "lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." In an age when military discipline had not achieved the work of giving to men of no character a factitious courage, by making fear of superiors overcome fear of the enemy, a panic, originating in one weak mind, might spread so as to cause universal disorder and shameful rout. He, accordingly, who found in himself so little stomach for such an enterprise, that, rather than encounter its hazards, he preferred to make his reluctance known under such public circumstances, might better be spared than retained; while one who had forborne to avail himself of the permission when it was offered, conscious that he had left himself without excuse, should he prove

* Deut. xxv. 17 – 19. How well this race of rovers deserved the name which I have given them, is easily understood, if what is related of them here (compare Ex. xvii. 8) is a specimen of their practices; nor would any legislator expose himself to complaint by directing the breaking up of a nest of freebooters, of enemies of the human race. To say that absolute individual extermination is here commanded, would be to go much beyond the record.

† Deut. xx. 1 – 9.

craven afterwards, was placed under a new impulse to a manful conduct. Through the reflex influence of the other laws, important contributions were secured to the public welfare. The citizen, who found himself indisposed to serve the state in one way, was led to earn his exemption by serving it in another. It was the policy of the state that houses should be built, vineyards planted, and domestic contracts formed; and whoever was conscious of an insurmountable aversion to the perils of war, would take care seasonably to provide himself with an honorable title to be discharged from them.*—In conducting a war, the people were to be provident, as well as energetic, not destroying wantonly, in its operations, what would else be of value after its close; † and, regarding their camp as a place honored by the virtual presence of Jehovah, they were to observe, in all their arrangements, that order and decorum, which a reverential sense of this would naturally prompt.‡

Some important additions are made, in this collection, to the rules respecting Domestic Relations. To the law in Leviticus forbidding the marriage of a widow with her husband's brother, one exception is now speci-

* It may be added, that the life of a citizen thus circumstanced, would be peculiarly valuable to his family, and to the state; and, further, that, persuading himself that it was peculiarly valuable, he might be more backward to expose it, than would consist with his best usefulness as a soldier. In Deut. xxiv. 5, the dispensation under one of the cases here named, is extended from military to civil service.

† xx. 19, 20. — Trees not bearing fruit might be felled (20); fruit-trees were "man's life" (19; compare Gen. i. 29), and it would take a long time to replace them.

‡ xxiii. 9–14. — *Quicquid sit, quod e sensu communi (ut dicunt) a reverentiâ et verecundiâ abhorret, id a præsentia divinâ abesse debet.* — Clericus (recte, me iudice) meretrices a castris Judaicis 9no (confer 10, 11) arceri vult. — *Munditiæ, pudoris, honestatis (12–14) præceptum datur, quòd omnia his virtutibus contraria animum parum Dei observantem indicare existimantur. Adde quòd cautum est, ne fætor se diffunderet, malum nequaquam sub cælo calido temnendum.*

fied. If a married Jew died without leaving children, his brother (the oldest brother, it is probable, as being next in succession,) was not only allowed, but bound, under penalty of being the subject of a degrading public ceremony, and bearing thenceforward an ignominious name, to espouse the surviving wife; and the eldest son born of this alliance, being legally reckoned as the son of the deceased, succeeded to his estate.* — In the treatment of female captives, a forbearance is enjoined, which, however far it may fall short of the generosity that a higher culture would have taught, was evidently, from the terms of its statement, a material advance on the customs of the time. If he into whose hands one of these captives had been brought by the hard fortune of war, designed to make her his wife, a period for solitary mourning over her altered condition was first allowed, before she was expected to transfer her interests to a conqueror's home. If, having espoused her, he saw fit afterwards to use his liberty of divorce, she was then entitled to her freedom; she could not be retained as his slave, nor sold by him to be another

* Deut. xxv. 5–10; compare p. 290. Which of the reasons proposed in note † on that page, occasioned this alteration in the law, I am unable to show. Both may have had their weight. On the one hand, it is certain, from very numerous indications, throughout the Old Testament books (compare Numb. xxvii. 4), that to have his memory kept alive by offspring, was a special object of a Jew's ambition; and the provision before us may have been the Law's indulgence to that feeling, (a feeling, which it did well to keep alive,) afforded in the best way which the case allowed. On the other hand, the rule prevented such an accumulation of property, as would have resulted from a necessity, that the estate of a childless proprietor deceased should pass to a collateral branch. — “If brethren *dwell together*” &c. (5). By this I understand, that if the surviving next of kin had expatriated himself, there was a transfer of the obligation to another brother. — Concerning the significance of the ceremony referred to in 9, 10, I have seen no plausible conjecture. It was probably ancient. Part of it was used (Ruth iv. 7) where no affront was intended, but only the renunciation of a right.

man's.* — In respect to the privilege of Divorce, a large discretion was allowed to Israelitish husbands, on account, as Jesus said, of “the hardness of their hearts”; † and yet it was plainly the purpose of the Law to introduce some restraints upon the license of that practice, as it had hitherto prevailed. Before the repudiated wife can be dismissed, Moses requires that “a bill of divorcement” shall be written, and given “in her hand.” The act, being thus necessarily attended with formalities, which took time and demanded deliberation, could never be done under any sudden impulse of passion. Still more, as it is probable that a small proportion of the people were capable of being their own scribes for such a purpose, the time necessarily occupied in seeking another's aid would invite the access of relenting thoughts; and the consultation, which would naturally follow, with a Levite employed to draw up the writing, or some other person capable of soothing resentment, and advising for the best, would often arrest the proceeding, which had been hastily resolved upon. — A divorced woman, who married again, could not be reunited to her former husband, after the death of the second, or after he too had divorced her; otherwise, it is likely, the natural return of the affections to their first object, might have endangered the life of the partner of the second marriage, or led to attempts to provoke him too to dissolve the union. ‡ In two cases, the husband forfeited his liberty of divorce; the one, when he had married, as the Law compelled him to do, the woman whom he had seduced from virtue; § the other,

* Deut. xxi. 10 – 14. The regulation has affinity with that in Ex. xxi. 7 – 11, respecting purchased bond-women. By all parity of reasoning, a female, thus dismissed, would be entitled to the benefit of the provision in Deut. xv. 12 – 14.

† Matt. xix. 8.

‡ Deut. xxiv. 1 – 4.

§ xxii. 28, 29.

when he had falsely represented his wife to have been unchaste before their union.* — The Rights of Children were protected by peculiar regulations, having reference to the rivalship and preferences to which polygamy would unavoidably give rise. The oldest son could not be despoiled of his right of primogeniture (that of inheriting a double portion of the family estate), on account of his mother's not being the favorite wife; † and, in the charge of incorrigible profligacy made against a son, both parents must unite to make it valid, ‡ else a weak father might be prevailed on by the mother of one part of his offspring, to do injustice to the rest.

The prohibition of Usury might, in one aspect, be arranged under the next class of rules, which I am to specify. But, in an important point of view, it demands a separate consideration. Commerce, to be carried on to any considerable extent, requires the use of credit. A community, whose citizens have little or no command of borrowed capital, can never engage in the transactions of trade, on any but the most limited scale. But, where the taking of interest for money lent is not allowed, no loans will be made except in the way of charity to the indigent (which none could be esteemed to be, who proposed to borrow money to invest in business); since, if I may have no rent for money, I shall, rather than lend it, prefer to purchase something with it, from which I may obtain a profit. The Law of Moses, accordingly, in prohibiting the taking of interest, struck a blow against any tendency of the people to engage in those pursuits of commerce, which, by leading them to

* Deut. xxii. 19.

† xxi. 15–17. This text makes it certain, that, where there were children by different mothers, there was reckoned in a family only one first-born; compare p. 317, note *.

‡ xxi. 18, 19.

too much intercourse with other nations, would have endangered the purity of their faith. I say, by prohibiting the taking of *interest*; for the Law, by the word which our translators have rendered *usury*, intended not excessive interest, but all interest whatever. The object of depriving the Israelite of the use of borrowed money, except for the supply of his necessities, was attained by successive steps. The first direction, touching the subject, was introduced into the original legislation at Mount Sinai, to the effect, that, from a poor Israelite, interest on money lent might not be exacted.* A little later, apparently to create a greater familiarity with the approved practice, the rule was extended to loans made to strangers dwelling among the Israelites, and to loans of articles of food as well as money.† Hitherto the danger of the people's addicting themselves to commercial pursuits, was remote. But, when they were about to be established in the promised land, the rule for which preparation had been making, was at length announced in its whole breadth,—that a Jew might take no interest from a countryman for the loan of money, or of merchantable commodities of any sort; from which, as I have said, it would follow as a certain consequence, that very little money would be lent for purposes of traffic. With credits given to foreigners, the Law declared itself to have no concern, it being no part of its province to limit their commercial operations.‡

Besides what are properly called *laws*, we find in this discourse the most earnest and considerate inculcation of sentiments and offices of Justice, Humanity, Courtesy, and a Compassion extending to the inferior races. Not only was the Israelite taught to shun all

* Ex. xxii. 25.

† Lev. xxv. 35–38.

‡ Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.

dishonesty in his dealings, — respecting his neighbour's land-mark,* and selling and buying by the same weights and measures, and those such as had been carefully ascertained to be true standards,† — but with emphatic repetition it was enjoined upon him to pity and relieve the poor, the widow, the fatherless, the stranger, and the bond-man.‡ Nor did his rule stop short in the urgent enforcement of principles of benevolent action, which, from their essential vagueness, might trust too much to the discretion of a sordid interpreter. The Israelite, after extending the hospitality and bounty of his Offering Feasts, and his Second Tithes and Firstlings, and affording the legal advantages of the Sabbatical year,§ was not only charged to lend freely to a needy brother, — disregarding the thought that the “year of release” might be near at hand, (during which he could not expect to collect his debt,||) and that he

* Deut. xix. 14. — This precept had not before been given. The occasion for it arose, now that the Jews were about to become landholders.

† xxv. 13–16; compare Lev. xix. 35–37. — “That thy days may be lengthened” &c. (15); the life of a nation being naturally prolonged by the prevalence in it of principles of integrity. Compare p. 173, note; also verses 17, 18, for an example of the use of the pronoun. Michaelis (“Commentary” &c. book 4, chap. 5, § 10,) has a striking suggestion, that the parts and furniture of the Tabernacle (e. g. Ex. xxv. 10, 23; xxx. 2), including the pedestals of columns, which weighed each a talent (Ex. xxxviii. 27; compare 25, 26; xxx. 13; xxv. 31, 39), having their dimensions exactly described, and committed to the care of the Levites, (Numb. i. 50; iv. 32,) furnished the permanent legal standards of value. The standard measures of capacity may have been the pot of manna deposited by Moses, (Ex. xvi. 33, 36,) which was of gold, (Heb. ix. 4,) and the golden bowls upon the table of shew-bread (Ex. xxv. 29). An expression in 1 Chron. xxiii. 29, is remarkable. A portion of the Levites, in Solomon's time, were over “all *measure and size*.”

‡ Compare Deut. x. 18, 19; Ex. xxii. 21–24; where I understand the threat in 24, to be to the effect, that a neglect of these rules, so well fitted to unite a people in love, would end in civil dissensions, making them an easy prey to their enemies. No one, perhaps, would be prepared to say, that *God's killing them with the sword* for their sin, should be taken literally.

§ See pp. 301–305.

|| Deut. xv. 7–11.

might himself reap no advantage from the loan, beyond the great advantage of doing a charitable act,* — but he was instructed not to go over his field, his vineyard, or his olive yard, a second time, to collect what the first gathering might have spared, but to leave this for the free gleaning of any indigent neighbour; † and a delicate and considerate feeling for misfortune was taught him, when he was forbidden to take as security for a debt, the mill-stone, which was necessary to the debtor's sustenance and that of his dependents, or to distress him by retaining over night the pledged garment needful for his comfortable rest, or to afflict his family by going into his house to demand an article promised in pawn, when it might as well be brought out and delivered, without the exposure of their penury to a stranger's view. ‡ A hired servant, whether Israelite or foreigner, was to be paid his wages, before the sun of the day on which they were earned, went down; "for he is poor," says the Law, in words to which there is nothing of reason or eloquence to add, "he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it." § A foreign slave, escaped, might not be given up; he had found security for freedom when he crossed the Israelitish border. || A previous law had ordained, that the stray or overloaded beast, even of an enemy, should be relieved and restored. ¶ The present, going further, ordained,** that any property found, its owner being unknown, should be

* Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. † xxiv. 19–22; compare Lev. xix. 9, 10.

‡ Deut. xxiv. 6, 10–13.—The precept not to retain over night the garment which the debtor needed to sleep in, had been given before in Ex. xxii. 26, 27. Was it to be transferred back and forward then, every day that the debt remained unpaid? I think the sense rather is; When, having lent, you find that your debtor is so miserably poor, that he has nothing but his cloak to leave with you in pawn, give it back to him, and release the debt. Compare Deut. xxiv. 17.

§ xxiv. 14, 15; compare Lev. xix. 13.

¶ Ex. xxiii. 4, 5.

|| Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

** Deut. xxii. 1–4.

kept and cared for, till inquiry for it should be made. The very ox, who trod out the corn, (the ancient mode of threshing,) was not to be so muzzled as to be prevented from feeding on a part, to beguile and cheer his labor;* and even the mother bird, whose nest was discovered by a passer-by, was to be unmolested when he despoiled her of her young.†

A few directions occur in this discourse, not conveniently referable to any general head. A careful consideration for the security of life is inculcated, where houses are required to be furnished with parapets around the roof, which is used by the Orientals as a place of exercise, refreshment, and repose.‡ The wearing by one sex of the proper garments of the other is prohibited, as opening a door to immoralities, and probably also on account of its being a practice belonging to the licentious forms of idolatrous worship.§ For a

* Deut. xxv. 4.

† xxii. 6, 7. Besides its influence on the general culture of a compassionate spirit, it is likely that this rule was designed to serve economical uses. — “That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days” (7). From this text we obtain further light, respecting the promise made in several other places besides the fifth commandment. Different rules made part of one Law, designed and fitted to promote the citizen’s virtue, and, through this and in other ways, the nation’s prosperity. Obedience to it, and the spirit which would be manifested in every minute act of obedience, would tend to prolong the nation’s life; for as the author of the Proverbs well lays down the principle (xxviii. 2), “by a man of understanding and knowledge the state [firm footing of a nation] shall be prolonged.” It would be bold criticism, which should infer from the text before us, that Divine Providence would reward with longevity an exercise of moderation in robbing a bird’s nest. On any other principle, again, how are we to interpret the words “for ever,” added to the clause, as it occurs in Deut. iv. 40? We speak of the *perpetuity* of a nation, but hardly of that of an individual human life. — The general subject of the paragraph in the text, has been before us at pp. 292, 293.

‡ xxii. 8; compare Josh. ii. 6; 2 Sam. xi. 2.

§ Deut. xxii. 5. In Cyprus (Spencer, “De Legibus,” &c. lib. 2, cap. 17, § 1) there was a statue of Venus, to which men sacrificed in women’s attire, and women in men’s.

reason apparently similar to this last, rules announced before, forbidding the sowing of different kinds of seed together, and the wearing of a garment of peculiar fabric, are here repeated;* and another resembling them, is added, against ploughing with a yoke of animals of different species.† To give a reasonable indulgence to way-farers on the one hand, and on the other, to prevent its being presumed upon too far, they are permitted to satisfy their hunger in a vineyard, but to carry no fruit away, and to gather with the hand in a field of standing corn, but not to put in a sickle.‡ The exact limitation of the right in the latter case, is not obvious to us; the words, in this connexion, had probably an idiomatic, or conventional sense, which we have no means to recover. The manner of affixing to the dress the national badge, prescribed in a previous passage, is now indicated with more particularity.§

Finally, we have now before us the subject of the Administration of Law, with all the materials, which the original documents afford, for arriving at correct views concerning it.

The original code had contained precepts touching the respect due to public office, and the integrity and caution to be exercised in the execution of that trust; the magistrate being even forbidden to receive a present, lest, discerning and well-intentioned as he might be, it should insensibly bias his judgment.|| In the discourse in Deuteronomy, Moses, directing the institution of a magistracy in the several cities, so that there shall not need to be a delay of justice for any citizen, goes on to

* Deut. xxii. 9, 11; compare Lev. xix. 19; p. 292. —“Lest the fruit of thy seed be *defiled*” (9); rather, *consecrated*, i. e. confiscated as the punishment of the offence.

† Deut. xxii. 10.

‡ xxiii. 24, 25.

§ xxii. 12; compare Numb. xv. 38.

|| Ex. xxii. 28; xxiii. 6–8.

repeat these charges concerning judicial uprightness, and to provide, that, whenever a question belonging to the interpretation of the Law should prove too intricate for the solution of the civic magistrates, it should be carried up to "the place which the Lord shall choose," (the seat of the national worship,) and referred "to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge that shall be in those days," and that the decision, thus obtained, should be conclusive. A uniform administration of law throughout the country being a point of the most material consequence, oppugnation to the decrees of the central tribunal was made a capital crime.*

As first in the case of murder, next in all capital cases, and afterwards in all criminal cases whatsoever, the testimony of one witness against a person arraigned, is declared to be insufficient for his conviction, the presumption is, that in civil controversies, the evidence of one witness was legally credible.† Witnesses were

* Deut. xvi. 18–20; xvii. 8–13. The latter provision is, in short, that difficult cases shall be carried up, by appeal, from the municipal courts, to the highest Law Tribunal, near the Sanctuary. The Levitical priesthood, "the priests the Levites," would be likely to be found prepared with a settled opinion on the subject; if not, after a proper consultation, such a decision would be made and announced, the presiding officer at the deliberation, and the organ of the decree, being "*the judge* that shall be in those days" (xvii. 9). Moses says nothing of any such office as that of a *Chief Justice*; but it would seem that he expected such an office to be in some way instituted. It would naturally devolve on the High Priest; but he forbears to speak of the two trusts as being essentially coincident, thus leaving opportunity for a different disposition to be made, whenever, for instance, the High Priest (who was such by hereditary right) was incompetent by reason of youth, or some other cause, to the administration of law in its highest department. That there can be no reference here to the Judges, so called in the book of that name, I think we shall be satisfied when we come to examine it.

† xvii. 6; (compare Numb. xxxv. 30;) Deut. xix. 15. The provision "at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses" &c., strikes a reader as indefinite. Yet we should not hesitate to say, in such a case, *two witnesses, or more; two witnesses at least*; which are only different expressions for the same thing. Not improbably, however, it

examined upon oath.* They are solemnly charged to be true to their responsibility, not allowing themselves to be seduced from their uprightness by sympathy with the popular will, or desire to propitiate the popular favor, nor yielding to the natural temptation to wrong the rich through feeling for the poor;† and the witness, proved on a legal investigation to have been perjured, is doomed himself to undergo the same sentence, even though it should extend to loss of life, which his perfidy would have brought upon another.‡

The following offences had been declared in the previous books to be punishable with death; viz. idolatrous practices (not idolatrous belief, — into this the Law made no inquisition); § blasphemy; || sabbath-breaking; ¶ usurping the sacerdotal functions; ** murder; †† adultery with a married woman (both parties being included in the punishment); ‡‡ unchastity in a priest's daughter; §§ unnatural lust; ||| incest, in some cases; ¶¶

was meant to declare, that where there was an informer, he should not be a witness in the contemplation of the rule; there must be two besides.

* Lev. v. 1.

† Ex. xxiii. 1–3. — “Put not thy hand,” &c. (1); i. e. do not plot with a bad man to help his cause by perjury. Compare Lev. xix. 15.

‡ Deut. xix. 16–21. — Cases of perjury, it seems (17), were reserved for the cognizance of the highest tribunal, on account of their essential intricacy, as well as probably for the greater solemnity and impression.

§ Ex. xxii. 18, 20; Lev. xx. 2, 27.

|| Lev. xxiv. 16.

¶ Ex. xxxi. 14, 15; xxxv. 2.

** Numb. iv. 20.

†† Ex. xxi. 12–14; Lev. xxiv. 17, 21. — The killing of a slave, the Law yielded so far to the habits and feelings of the time, as not necessarily to avenge by death (Ex. xxi. 20); but the language of the rule is guarded, and does not exclude a presumption that cases of an aggravated character were treated like other murders. If the slave survived the assault “a day or two,” the Law admitted the presumption, that the master, who thus lost his property, could not have intended his blows to be fatal, and accordingly absolved him (Ex. xxi. 21). — The putting to death of a burglar detected in the act, was justifiable homicide (Ex. xxii. 2).

‡‡ Lev. xx. 10.

§§ Lev. xxi. 9.

||| Ex. xxii. 19; Lev. xviii. 22, 23; xx. 13, 15, 16.

¶¶ Lev. xx. 11, 12, 14.

man-stealing;* violence and insult offered to parents;† and neglect to secure a vicious animal if it should take a citizen's life.‡ To this list, some additions are made in the compend in Deuteronomy; viz. false pretension to the character of a divine messenger;§ unchastity before marriage, when charged by a husband;|| stubborn and irreclaimable profligacy, when complained of by parents;¶ and opposition to the decree of the highest judicial authority,** that being a definite form of

* Ex. xxi. 16.

† Ex. xxi. 15, 17; Lev. xx. 9.

‡ Ex. xxi. 28-31. — In this case, unlike the killing of one man by another (Numb. xxxv. 31), a pecuniary composition might be made, and the life of the animal's owner be ransomed. The reason is clear. A man's life never would be safe, if the assassin might secure impunity by a compromise with his *next of kin*, who, perhaps, as his heir, might be the very person whom his death would most oblige. In the case of an unconscious animal being the agent, of course there was no such danger to be guarded against, and the owner was punished sufficiently for his neglect, in being compelled to purchase his life on the best terms he could make. If the animal had not been known to be vicious before, he only suffered the loss incident to its being stoned, (so that it might do no further injury,) and to his not being permitted to use its meat. (Ex. xxi. 28.) Again; the killing of a slave by such an animal did not involve its owner's death. He was amerced (32) in the value of the animal, which was stoned, and in the specific sum of thirty silver shekels, from which, by the way, we learn what was the estimate of the average value of a slave.

§ Deut. xiii. 1-5; xviii. 20.

|| Deut. xxii. 20, 21. — The place of execution, in this instance, was peculiar; "the door of her father's house." Probably the design was to make her fate peculiarly afflicting to him, as a punishment for his want of parental fidelity.

¶ Deut. xxi. 18-21. This law, instead of conferring new parental prerogatives, was probably, in respect to its requisitions of public legal information (19, 20) and of the mother's being associated with the father in taking such an extreme measure, (an arrangement, the importance of which has been before adverted to, p. 472,) a limitation of rights before existing. In a primitive state of society, the *pater-familias* is all but despotic. According to some authorities, the Roman father had power of life and death over his child, as late as the time of Adrian. The known existence of the rule under our notice would sustain parental authority (so material an object before other authority was consolidated), while parental feelings would scarcely admit of its being ever executed.

** xvii. 12.

rebellion, or treason. In a few cases, a law of this class, before given, is repeated, in order either to define it more exactly,* or give it a greater comprehension,† or make further provision for carrying it into effect.‡

* Deut. xxiv. 7; compare Ex. xxi. 16.

† Deut. xxii. 23–27; compare Lev. xix. 20–22.—The rule here referred to in Leviticus, taking no notice of the case of a free woman betrothed, had ordained, that a female slave, under that engagement, guilty of unchastity, should be scourged, and her paramour be held to present a Trespass Offering. The passage in Deuteronomy makes the offence punishable with the death of both parties, and preserves no distinction between bond woman and free, designing probably that it should no longer, in this particular, be sustained.—One cannot say, on the authority of 25–27, that rape was a capital offence among the Jews. On the contrary, as such, as far as the statute-book is concerned, it was a *casus omissus*, being regulated probably by consuetudinary or *common* law. (Compare p. 161.) The verses in question treat the crime precisely on the footing of the adultery spoken of immediately before (23, 24); save only the exemption of one of the parties from the punishment, as not participating in the guilt.—The next two verses repeat and extend the law in Ex. xxii. 16, 17, respecting the liabilities of a seducer. It had there been ordained, that he must offer the reparation of marriage, and make the customary marriage-present to the father, whether he consented to the union or not. The sum, to be thus bestowed, is now specified, and the right of divorce in such a case is declared to have been forfeited. I would prefer to make a new clause in the middle of verse 29, and render thus; “Should she become his wife [which the father might disallow], because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away” &c.—For the mere repetition in verse 30 of the law in Lev. xviii. 8; xx. 11, no special reason is apparent.

‡ Deut. xvii. 2–5, compare Ex. xxii. 20; xix. 1–13, compare Numb. xxxv. 9–29.—“Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land” &c. (Deut. xix. 2); that is, on the west side of Jordan; compare iv. 41.—The directions in verse 3, “Thou shalt prepare thee a way” &c. (that is, there shall be such roads to the cities of refuge, and they shall be so distributed through the country, as to render them easily accessible, to whosoever shall need their protection) with the further command, “If the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast, and give thee all the land which he hath promised to thy fathers, (compare Gen. xv. 18.) then shalt thou add *three cities more* for thee, besides these three,” (8, 9) constitute all the additions here, to the rule in Numbers. It will not escape observation, that the distinctions made in both passages, (Numb. xxxv. 16–23, Deut. xix. 4, 5, 11,) are simply between criminal and justifiable homicides. The division of the former class into man-

Only the criminal could be made to suffer for his crime, the Law refusing to sanction the ancient savage practice of implicating his innocent posterity in his fate.* The place, where execution was done, as well as trials conducted, was the "gatès" of cities, as being at once sufficiently public, and sufficiently apart from the scene of the citizens' occupations.† When the "blood avenger" was the executioner, the sword, it is to be presumed, would be his instrument;‡ but in most, or all other cases, a criminal was put to death by stoning. The witnesses were required to make the first assault; a provision, which, of course, made it necessary, that there should have been first a legal process, and which gave this further protection to the accused, that nothing short of the most inveterate malignity would induce the giving of false testimony, when the witness knew, that, if conviction ensued, he must himself take the lead in the murder which would follow on his perjury.§ We read of burning and hanging;|| but these were only *post-mortem* insults to the body, (to the end of making the example more effective,) similar to the modern practices of piercing a malefactor's grave with a stake, or exposing his head in some conspicuous place, or leaving his limbs to decay on a gibbet.

Extirpation, or *cutting off from the people*, I take to be simply the converse of *entering into the congregation*

slaughter and murder, made by our modern law, we do not find here recognised.

* Deut. xxiv. 16.

† xvii. 5; xxi. 19; xxii. 15.

‡ Numb. xxxv. 19; Deut. xix. 6.

§ xiii. 9; xvii. 5, 7.

|| Deut. xxi. 22, 23; Lev. xx. 14; xxi. 9. To sustain what is remarked above of these accompaniments of capital execution, see Josh. vii. 25; x. 26. In the former of these cases the criminals are stoned, and then burned, as if to pronounce them unfit to be allowed to pollute the earth with their carcases; in the latter, "Joshua smote them and slew them, and [then] hanged them on twelve trees." The precept to bury the body without delay, belongs to the class of rules treated on p. 363.

of the Lord;* the former signifying privation of all rights of citizenship, as the latter denoted investiture with them. Since only a Jew could hold an estate in the country, this extirpation involved a confiscation of landed property; a circumstance, which alone, not to speak of other civil disabilities, gave to the punishment a most serious character. This view will explain the fact, that, in a few instances, death and extirpation are mentioned together as combined in the punishment of the same crime;† a fact, which has led most commentators to understand an identity between them. In such cases, if my view be correct, the death of an offender was accompanied with the confiscation of his landed estate, a combination of penalties analogous to that in the European law of high treason. And it deserves particular remark, in this connexion, that the offences against which the penalty of excision from the people is denounced, are either merely ritual transgressions, which is the case with far the greater number, or such, at least, as, when committed by a Jew, had peculiar aggravation in reference to his position and character as such.‡ Plainly, as it seems to me, the idea at the basis of this menace is, that he who will not submit to the characteristic obligations resting on him as one of the community of God's chosen people, shall have no share in their characteristic privileges.

Corporeal punishment was prescribed by the Law in

* Deut. xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 8.

† E. g. Ex. xxxi. 14.

‡ The texts are Ex. xii. 15, 19; xxx. 33, 38; xxxi. 14; Lev. vii. 20, 21, 25, 27; xvii. 4, 9, 10, 14; xviii. 29; xix. 8; xx. 3, 6, 17, 18; xxii. 3; xxiii. 29; Numb. ix. 13; xv. 30, 31; xix. 13, 20.—Ezra x. 8, as far as authority may be allowed to an interpretation of such comparatively recent date, strongly corroborates the view which I have given.—The "stranger" who might be "cut off," spoken of in Ex. xii. 19, is clearly the circumcised stranger (48) who was as truly a citizen, as one "born in the land."

two forms. When a malicious personal injury had been done to a freeman, it was visited upon the offender by the infliction of the same harm, not in the way of private retaliation, but by judicial sentence. This rule had been prescribed in the early legislation, in a reference to the simplest case, that of personal assault;* in the discourse in Deuteronomy, it is carried out into the equally reasonable application to instances in which the injury had been caused by giving false testimony.† Probably we are here to recognise a practice descended from earlier times, it being in accordance with a very simple theory of justice; but it is obvious, that nothing could have been more effectual to secure the essence of a republic, — to maintain equality, and a sense of equality, among the citizens, — than the knowledge, that, in the eye of the Law, the richest and greatest man's life or limb was of the same worth with that of the meanest.

Corporeal punishment was administered in cases besides those, in which the crime, having consisted in the infliction of bodily harm, admitted of being so retaliated. The calumnious husband, in particular, was to be beaten, in addition to the payment of a heavy fine to the head of the family which he had attempted to disgrace.‡ In instances, where the discretion of the judge dictated this kind of chastisement,§ it was ad-

* Ex. xxi. 23–25; Lev. xxiv. 19, 20.

† Deut. xix. 16–21.—It is likely that this demand would be often compromised, the injured person being induced not to give information; and then, virtually, the wrong-doer would escape by paying a fine according to his means.

‡ xxii. 13–19.

§ xxv. 1–3.—I have followed in the text the common view of the last clause of verse 3, though some commentators would render, “lest thy brother be too much injured.” That stripes were not an ignominious punishment, might be argued from xxii. 19; since it would be no satisfaction to an injured woman, to be joined, beyond the possibility of divorce, to

ministered in his own presence, that there might be no opportunity for either too great severity or forbearance, according to the caprice or the interest of underlings; and the scourging was never allowed to be excessive (forty stripes being the limitation of the number), "lest," it is said, "thy brother should seem vile to thee." What the mere endurance of such chastisement, in any degree, would now be, in relation to self-respect and the point of honor, it appears that its severity was in that less artificial age.

Punishments, virtually of the nature of Fines, were, under the Jewish institutions, of various sorts. We have seen that offerings, particularly the Sin and Trespass Offerings, are properly regarded in this point of view.* Sometimes a fine, being paid to the person injured, was simply an indemnity for a wrong done. Thus a man, wounded in a fray, could recover of the assailant the expenses of his cure, and an equivalent for the loss of his time; a bodily injury, done to a woman or a slave, must be compensated to the husband, or master; and the loss of an animal must be paid for by him, into whose open pit it had fallen, or whose own animal had destroyed it, except, that, in the latter case, if the offending beast had never been known to be dangerous before, it was to be slaughtered, and, with the other, divided between the two owners.† Sometimes the compensation was made in kind, either simply, as when culpable carelessness was chargeable, but not-

a dishonored husband. Apart from this sense of disgrace (a somewhat arbitrary thing), which, leading to the abandonment of sense of character, has properly caused the exclusion of this punishment from some modern codes, it has its obvious advantages.—A peculiar maiming is prescribed in Deut. xxv. 11, 12, as appropriate to the offence committed.

* See pp. 247–251.

† Ex. xxi. 19, 22, 33–36.—A great bodily harm to a slave was punished by the forfeiture (26, 27) of all future right to his services.

ing worse, or when a borrowed animal was lost; or with additions, when there had been theft or fraud, varying from two to five fold, with reference to the facility of concealment, or the degree of villany implied, the thief being liable, in the last resort, to make remuneration by being sold into servitude.* An omission to present an offering due was to be compensated, in like manner, to the priest.† In the same general aspect of a pecuniary mulct, (only falling in this instance upon a community,) a ceremony presents itself to us, required in this discourse in Deuteronomy to be gone through by the magistrates of a city, in the neighbourhood of which a murder had taken place, and the perpetrator not been detected. The preliminary measurement in order to ascertain what city was responsible, the procession which its "elders" were obliged to arrange, to move to some valley, watered by a perennial stream, which often would not be near, and the procuring of the required presence of the Levites to take their part in the solemnity, must, besides the use of giving great publicity to the crime, and setting on foot an extensive inquisition respecting it, have been attended with an expense and inconvenience, which would influence magistrates and citizens to a salutary vigilance for the detection of individual offenders.‡

The Law of Moses knew nothing of imprisoning as a

* Ex. xxii. 1-15. The distinction in the provisions (1, 4), making it more highly penal to sell or slaughter a stolen animal, than to preserve it alive, may naturally be understood to have reference to the greater difficulty of detection in the former case. But the Law (Lev. vi. 1-5) encouraged confession, by requiring the self-convicted thief to add only twenty per cent. in making restitution.

† Lev. v. 14-16.

‡ Deut. xxi. 1-9. To use a phrase of repeated occurrence in the earlier books (e. g. Numb. xviii. 1) communities were thus made to "bear the iniquity"; that is, they were held accountable. The spirit of the rule is so far substantially the same with that of Alfred's institution of tithings, hundreds, and counties.

punishment, nor did it resort to confinement for any other purpose than that of detention.* But, on the other hand, the debtor was a prisoner to his creditor, being held by him to personal service, if he had no other means to discharge the claim.† And this fact it is necessary to keep in view, in order to illustrate the reasonableness of the laws respecting usury, and respecting restitution as a punishment for theft. In connexion with them, it made part of a mutually sustained and energetic system; without it, the laws of the former class would have been oppressive, and those of the latter ineffectual. An Israelite could the better venture to lend without interest, since his security was complete; he had a claim upon the debtor's landed property (which there could not fail to be), upon his movables, and, in the last resort, upon his person, as a laborer. And a detected thief had nothing to console him in the mildness of the penalty of restitution; since, in the first place, it was accompanied, as we have seen, by a heavy fine, and resolved itself, if not so discharged, into liability to be made a slave to the injured party, till the debt, so enhanced, was cancelled. The two prompters to theft, cupidity and idleness, were effectually met on their own ground.

In the passage, which, at the beginning of the twenty-sixth chapter, follows the collection of laws we have been remarking on, Moses recommends to the Israelite a fit expression of the devout and grateful sentiments, with which, reviewing his nation's history, he ought to be filled, when, settled at length in his promised country, and having raised a harvest from its long-desired soil, he should repair to the Sanctuary with his first offering of those First-Fruits, which thenceforward the Law made it his duty to present, with each returning

* Lev. xxiv. 12.

† Ex. xxii. 3; Lev. xxvi. 39, 47.

season.* A direction of the same purport I understand to be next given in relation to the time, when, having surmounted in two years the embarrassments of a first settlement, he should present himself on the third with his offering of Tithes.† And the people, in conclusion, are briefly assured, that if true to the obligations and engagements, which they had been so honored in being permitted to assume, they would not fail to experience what designs of unequalled favor their Divine Benefactor had conceived for them, when he who was addressing them should have passed away.‡

* Deut. xxvi. 1-11.

† xxvi. 12-15.

‡ xxvi. 16-19.

LECTURE XX.

DEUTERONOMY XXVII. 1.—XXXIV. 12.

MOSES COMMANDS THE ERECTION OF AN ALTAR ON THE WEST SIDE OF JORDAN, — THE INSCRIPTION THEREUPON OF IMPRECATIONS TO BE UTTERED BY THE LEVITES, AND ASSENTED TO BY THE PEOPLE, — AND A PROCLAMATION, BY ALL THE TRIBES, OF FUTURE PROSPERITY OR RUIN, ACCORDING AS HIS LAW SHOULD BE OBSERVED OR VIOLATED. — HE REVERTS TO PAST TOKENS OF THE DIVINE GOODNESS, AND AGAIN EXHIBITS THE NECESSARY CONSEQUENCES OF FUTURE OBEDIENCE AND DEFECTION. — HE GIVES A PUBLIC CHARGE TO JOSHUA, — DELIVERS THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO THE LEVITES, WITH THE COMMAND TO READ IT PUBLICLY EVERY SEVENTH YEAR, — AND ACCOMPANIES JOSHUA TO RECEIVE A DIVINE COMMUNICATION AT THE TABERNACLE. — THE BOOK CLOSSES WITH THE RECORDS OF HIS DIRECTION CONCERNING THE PLACE OF DEPOSIT OF THE LAW, — OF AN ODE, REPRESENTED TO BE UTTERED BY HIM IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CONGREGATION, — OF HIS LAST BENEDICTION OF THE TRIBES, — AND OF HIS DEATH AND BURIAL. — REMARKS ON THE ABSENCE FROM THE LAW OF ANY SANCTION DERIVED FROM A FUTURE LIFE.

AT the end of the eleventh chapter of this book, before entering on the recital of those laws which we have last been considering, Moses had hinted at a solemn ceremony, by which he designed that the people, on first occupying their destined country, should consecrate themselves anew to the service of him, who, at length, had fulfilled his word, in their secure establishment in the home of their fathers. Proceeding now to prescribe that ceremony, he directs, that, first, certain imprecations, which he specifies, upon the perpetrator of particular crimes, having been engraved upon the stones of an altar, to be erected on a mountain in the centre of the country, shall be pronounced aloud by the

Levites, and responded to, in like manner, by the *Amen* of the assembled congregation; and that then the prospects of the nation through the coming ages, as depending, for weal or woe, upon submission or disobedience to Jehovah and his Law, shall be proclaimed by the responsive voices of all the tribes, six being posted, to announce the curses, on the rugged and dreary side of Ebal, and six, to bless, on the verdant opposite slope of Gerizim.

Such, at least, is my understanding of the narration, concerning some particulars of which, different opinions have been entertained. "Thou shalt set thee up great stones," it is said, "and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over."* What is meant by "this law," has been made a question. Some, misled by the sound of the words, have understood the whole Pentateuch to be intended; a theory not more opposed by the consideration of the extent of that collection of documents, requiring so much time and labor for the inscription supposed, than by that of the uselessness of such a costly arrangement for preserving and making known to the people, what, in a much more convenient shape, was to be intrusted to the Levites for both purposes.† Others have understood by "the law," in this instance, the book of Deuteronomy. But that book has no suitability to be placed anywhere as an independent composition; being incomplete, supposing the existence of the preceding books, and only satisfactory when viewed as a supplement to them.‡ Others, perceiving the force of such considerations, have supposed the Decalogue

* Deut. xxvii. 2, 3.

† xxxi. 9 - 13, 24 - 26.

‡ See p. 425. So incomplete is it, that, from first to last, the Sabbath is not mentioned in it, except in the Decalogue (v. 14), nor does any reference to circumcision occur, except that the word is twice used (x. 16; xxx. 6) in a figurative sense.

to be intended, to which, however, no reference is made, either in the direction of Moses, or in the account of its fulfilment by his successor.* Lastly, under the guidance of the context, and in a very proper application of the word rendered “law,” (a word signifying *instruction, injunction*, of any kind, which the imprecations may rightly be considered, — not to say that the writing and utterance of them were, strictly speaking, a law of Moses,) some have regarded the curses recorded in the latter part of the twenty-seventh chapter, and the blessings at the beginning of the next, as together composing the *law* in question.† But this, I think, is still assigning a too great comprehensiveness to the present use of that word. The benedictions, here proposed to be included, correspond to the other curses, by which they are followed, at greater length, in the same chapter, and (if I mistake not) were destined with them to the second use which I have specified above; viz. that of being rehearsed by the twelve tribes, after the first ceremony (that of the reading aloud, by the Levites, of the twelve imprecations engraved on the altar stones) had been concluded. Those first twelve imprecations, brought together in one list, and suited (as one sees at a glance that they are) to such a use, by their concise and pointed statement, so different from the diffuse form of most of what follows, I take to be the *law* which Moses directed to be inscribed on the altar.‡ And such, I think we shall see reason to

* Josh. viii. 30 – 35.

† This view dates as far back as Josephus. See his “Antiq. Jud.,” lib. 4, cap. 8, § 44.

‡ Deut. xxvii. 1–8.—“And Moses, with *the elders of Israel*, commanded the people” &c. (1); he had been hitherto addressing the elders (compare p. 165); he now dismisses them with a direction to acquaint the people, in their several divisions, with the intended solemnity. — “Thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster”

believe, was the view that Joshua entertained of the command, according to the account of his proceeding to execute it, preserved in the book called by his name.

The question concerning the selection of the twelve

(2). The commentators have largely debated the question, what could be the use of this *plaster* for a monumental inscription, designed, as they assume, to be lasting. One will have it, that the letters were raised in black stone, in *relief*, and that the plaster between was intended to make them more conspicuous; another, that it was used to cover over the inscription, to the end that, when the lime decayed, the inscription should be revealed to a future age. I submit, that all this perplexity grows out of a misconception of the spirit of the arrangement. Had Moses directed, or permitted, an expensive altar to be built, and carved with an inscription suited to last, a great idea of sanctity at least would have attached to it. There would have been danger, that he would be considered as fixing the place of worship for the nation. This he by no means intended to do (compare Deut. xii. 5, 11, 21, &c.); it was a point upon which he always held himself in reserve. Besides, at such a critical period, he would by no means have been willing that the people should pause in their career of conquest, to finish an elaborate work of art. Accordingly, with reference to an occasion which was to arise for an altar and an inscription, he directs, as before on a similar occasion (compare xxvii. 5, 6; Ex. xx. 24, 25; xxiv. 4, 5), that the former shall be constructed in the rudest manner, and the latter cut in a substance which would easily receive an inscription, and which would fall to pieces, as soon as it had served its use.—Verse 2, with the words, “and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law” (3), are a brief statement of what is directed, more fully, in the passage extending thence to verse 8.—In 3, 4, the punctuation in our version is bad. From “*when*” (beginning a period with that word) we should read as follows; “When thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in, (3) *then* (4) it shall be, when ye be gone over Jordan” &c.—“In Mount Ebal” (4); the Samaritan Pentateuch here reads *Mount Gerizim*. Which is the true lection, has been a question much discussed. Kennicott preferred the Samaritan, urging, for instance, that Gerizim was the mountain, from which blessings were pronounced; that the fact of the Samaritans having built their temple afterwards on Gerizim, when they might have built on Ebal as well, proves their conviction that the former was the site of Moses’ altar; and that Jotham (Judges ix.), who uttered his remonstrances to the Shechemites from Gerizim, is to be presumed to have chosen the place where the altar was standing or had stood. All which has been retorted as follows; that the proper place for the altar was that, whence imprecations were to be uttered; that the Samaritans would have been more likely to choose Gerizim for their temple, as being a *blessed* spot, than Ebal, as being the

offences specified to be the subjects of so many imprecations, in preference to all others, would seem to me at once more important and more perplexing, did I believe the received opinion to be correct, that the inscription of them was intended to compose a permanent monument. I apprehend, on the contrary, that, being made upon a frail material, it was designed only to serve a temporary use, which use was served rather by the solemnity of the ceremonial, in which wickedness in various forms was condemned, than by any exact selection of such forms, on the principle of taking those, which were most criminal, or otherwise most dangerous. It is not said, that the altar was to be built of twelve stones, — the number of the tribes; — but as, on a former occasion of a similar solemnity, that number had been expressly prescribed,* it is natural to suppose that the same would be now adopted. If twelve stones were to form the altar, it follows, that each was to be provided with an inscription, having reference to some

site of an altar erected for a solemn form of cursing, as well as that the picturesque beauty of Gerizim might decide their choice; and that Jotham was not in circumstances to choose his position, and, if he had chosen it for the reason supposed, would have lost all the advantage thus obtained, if he omitted, as he does, to advert to the fact. — “Thou shalt build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; and thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law” (5–8). I could not undertake to demonstrate that the stones inscribed were not, as many suppose, one thing, and the altar another; but the natural and probable interpretation appears to me to be decidedly that which represents them as the same. (Compare Josh. viii. 30–32.) — In xxvii. 9–13, I find the beginning of the direction for that further ceremonial to which the next chapter relates. Why the twelve tribes should have been distributed as they are (12, 13), to take the respective parts in it, I suppose that we have now no means to explain. Some of the commentators remark, that the tribes selected to bless, are all descendants of Leah and Rachel, the free wives of Jacob, while the other party is composed of the posterity of his bond-women, along with that of Reuben, who had fallen into disgrace with his father, and that of Zebulun, the youngest son of Leah.

* Ex. xxiv. 4, 5.

crime of serious magnitude. Why, in this collection, precisely those which we find should have been included, to the exclusion of some others, is a question, which, it is true, we cannot answer; but, also, it is a question which the circumstances do not call upon us to entertain. The ceremony was not intended to embody a denunciation of crimes, which law, in the common course of its administration, would be able to punish, but to go further, and, by force of a religious dread, to create an aversion to acts, which, being done in secret, only that God, whose vengeance was imprecated upon them, might be able to detect. Accordingly, each of the curses recorded may be observed to relate to some evil-doer of that class. They concern not the bold idolatrous worshipper, but “the man that maketh any graven or molten image, and putteth it in a secret place”; not the undutiful child, guilty of outrage or insult, but him “that setteth light by his father or his mother.” They concern him who stealthily “removeth his neighbour’s landmark”; who deceives the blind, that are helpless either to escape or expose his treachery; the secret hired assassin; the ruffian, who watches for a clandestine opportunity to assault the weak; the perfidious judge, whom none but his own conscience can convict. They concern throughout the perpetrator of some deed of darkness. The spirit of the whole transaction is a national adjuration, to this effect; Be the land, where Jehovah has now planted his people, unstained henceforward, not only by any crime which its law may punish, but by any which the all-seeing eye of its God may discern.*

In the twenty-eighth chapter, we have what I understand to be Moses’ directory for the second part of the

* Deut. xxvii. 14—26.

ceremonial, intended by him to be gone through by the tribes, on their first occupation of the country. The Levites, reading from the stones of the altar, having first uttered a course of maledictions against the perpetrators of a particular class of sins, to each of which, the people, as one body, was with one acclamation to respond, — the tribes, ranged in two equal divisions on the declivities of two opposite mountains, where the vast array of each was visible to the other, were themselves, with their foot on the recovered soil of their fathers, and in the open face of Heaven, to pronounce alternate benedictions and curses on themselves and their posterity, according as their divinely given law should be observed or transgressed. It may strike the reader, that in giving these directions, Moses intended in the first place to study brevity and point, saying no more than what would be suitable, from its length, to be repeated on the proposed occasion; and accordingly the benedictions in this list * are reducible, by a natural division, to the same number with the curses, just spoken of, designed to be uttered by the Levites, and are, at the beginning, equally concise. But as he proceeds, his heart seems to warm with the subject; he cannot restrain his thronging thoughts and overpowering emotions within such limits; and, when he comes to that part of his arrangement where he is to direct the denunciation of those calamities, which he knew that national apostasy would entail, his whole mind appears to be possessed and overwhelmed by the awful prospect, and he rather pours out his own strongly excited feelings, than adheres to the plan with which his discourse had begun.† So that the latter part of these directions, at least, it would seem we should rather understand as a statement of the topics, which the

* Deut. xxviii. 2–14.

† xxviii. 15–68.

proposed solemnity was to bring to view, than of the form in which they were to be presented, — a form, which, for that use, would need to be more condensed.*

In the two next following chapters, Moses is represented, apparently in a different discourse, as addressing the people again in his own person, in a similar strain, first briefly recalling to their remembrance a few instances of God's goodness, by way of showing his willingness to be always gracious,† and then proceed-

* Yet it may have been, that they were intended to be read aloud in their whole length, by some individual, each sentence being appropriated by the tribes appointed for the service, by means of a response at its close. (Compare Josh. viii. 34, 35.) — I have never, heretofore, proposed to illustrate a passage by supposing a transposition of parts of the text. But, in the present instance, I cannot suppress the conjecture, that, as originally written, xxvii. 14 immediately followed xxvii. 8, the passages to which they respectively belong being most closely connected in sense; and that the passage, which now divides them, (9–13) followed verse 26, being the introduction to the second part of the proposed ceremony described above. If this were the case, the abruptness of the transition from the twenty-seventh to the twenty-eighth chapter, would be much less than it now is; and I may add, that the accident, whatever it were, which caused such a dislocation, may also well have occasioned the loss of some connecting words, which seem still to be wanting. Thus much is certain; that benedictions and maledictions were respectively to be "put" (Deut. xi. 29; literally *given*, — *uttered*, I would render) on Gerizim and Ebal; that (xxvii. 12, 13) they were to be uttered on these mountains, by the twelve tribes, six standing on the verge of each; that of the six tribes standing *on Gerizim to bless*, Levi (xxvii. 12) was one; yet that Levi (xxvii. 14) was to pronounce certain *curses from Ebal*; — the obvious way of understanding all which, (since there are two sets of maledictions,) is, that the Levites, in their sacerdotal capacity, were upon Ebal to announce one (xxvii. 14–26), and afterwards to pass over to Gerizim, to assume their office, as one of the tribes, in blessing, leaving the proclamation of the other curses (xxviii. 15–68) to the company of tribes left for the purpose upon Ebal. — The conjecture at the beginning of this note, I present merely as such. My view of the sense of the two chapters does not demand it. It may well have been, that Moses, having first given the outline of his plan in both its parts (xxvii. 1–8, 9–13) should then revert to the first, to present them successively more in detail (14–26; xxviii. 1–68). — At the middle of xxviii. 2, I would close one sentence, and begin another ("If thou shalt hearken" &c.); with xxviii. 1, compare 15.

† xxix. 1–16. — Some commentators would make verse 1 the close of

ing to urge upon them, as often elsewhere, the momentous alternative which was submitted to their choice.* The remark, which has before been made upon such passages, needs only to be here repeated in relation to this, and to that which we have just been considering; viz. that the promises and denunciations, uttered in the bold figurative language of strong emotion, are by no means such as to justify the conclusion, that they were to be fulfilled by any miraculous agency of God, or in any other way than in that regular course of his common providence, which, following causes with their proper effects, would reward a nation with all sorts of prosperity, when it faithfully observed a law divinely and perfectly contrived to advance that prosperity, and punish it, when it neglected or abandoned that rule, by the infliction of those evils which such a departure from the true course of its interest would itself entail. That is to say, the terms of such promises and denunciations by no means sustain the opinion, — whether sustained or not by other facts or considerations, — that a miraculous administration of the Jewish affairs continued through the ages subsequent to that miraculous administration, under which Moses gave the Law, and

the preceding passage; but “the covenant” there spoken of (exhibited, as I think, in the words of Moses which follow) was to be made in “the land of Moab”; and compare 9, 12, 14. — With 5 compare p. 441, note †. — “Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine” (6); that is, regularly and abundantly; for they had had both in the wilderness (Ex. xxix. 40; Lev. vii. 12, 13). — The argument in verses 8 and 9 is as follows; “We took their land” (that of Sihon and Og) by Jehovah’s favor; obey him still, “that ye may prosper in *all* that ye do,” in the similar enterprise which is now before you.

* Deut. xxix. 17—xxx. 20. — I understand xxix. 29, as follows; The obedience, which, under such sanctions, I demand from you, relates to the revelation which you have received through me. With whatever things God reserves in his own knowledge, it is true that you have no concern; but those which he hath disclosed expressly for your observance, you have no excuse for not observing.

established the commonwealth. Nor would the critic, who should propose to expound the words of Moses, in these connexions, on the basis of their literal import, find it possible to carry out such an interpretation; so numerous are the instances of the use of language, to which, literally taken, nothing can be found to correspond, in the more recent fortunes of the Jewish race.*

Moses now proceeds to make the last arrangements for devolving his trust, so far as that trust was still to be continued, on his already designated successor. He tells the people, that, being by age disabled for such usefulness as the times required, and having reached the furthest point to which he was to be permitted to advance, he has no more to do than to commit them to the divine guidance, and to that of their new leader, with the assurance, that, if true to themselves, they would be divinely strengthened for the conquest, which was to give them the land of the patriarchs for their secure home, and for the scene, if they would have it so, of their future glorious history.† To their leader he repeated a solemn charge in their presence, exhorting him to that courage which became his station;‡ and committed the Law, which he had written, to the custody of the “priests” and “elders,” with the command to perpetuate a universal knowledge of its contents among the people, by causing it to be publicly read in their hearing, on the recurrence of every sabbatical year, when they should be convened at the Feast of Tabernacles;—a season, which, by its exciting associations, would secure to the truths of their religion, the requisi-

* E. g. Deut. xxviii. 22, 23, 24, 27, 35, 61; xxix. 23.

† xxxi. 1–6. — “I am an hundred and twenty years old” (2); compare p. 507, note. — “Joshua, he shall go before thee, as the Lord hath said” (3); compare Numb. xxvii. 18.

‡ Deut. xxxi. 7, 8.

tions of their law, and the wonders of their history, a strong impression on their minds.*

Once more; it was fit that before the venerable minister of God's high purposes laid down his charge, there

* Deut. xxxi. 9–13; compare xvii. 18. — The reader will remark, that I do not, by a *petitio principii*, represent the book of Deuteronomy as declaring Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch, because it relates him to have written “this Law” (xxx. 9; compare 24, 26). In these writings, as in our common use, the word *law* means either a single provision (as Gen. xvii. 26), or a collection of provisions relating to some one subject or more (Lev. xi. 46), or a complete code (Psalm i. 2); and which meaning is in a given case intended, is to be ascertained from the context. Being persuaded, for reasons set forth at large in this volume, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, I conclude that collection to be “the law” here intended; inasmuch as all reasons, which led him to compose it, would influence him equally to take special care for its preservation and publication, and all reasons, which would impel him to make provision for the safe keeping and publication of a part, (whatever part that might be, to which xxxi. 9 should be understood to refer,) would call still more strongly for the same provision in respect to the whole volume. It is true, that some of the early regulations were afterwards modified or repealed. But the record of them did not therefore become obsolete and useless. Considered simply as belonging to the history of the legislation, they had their great and permanent value and importance. But, besides, they were interwoven into a history of the divine dealings with the nation, which was as essential to be known, as any regulations. As to the original compendious law in Exodus (xx. – xxiii.), it is remarkable, (what, however, I have nowhere seen remarked,) that no one of its provisions was afterwards repealed, though in a very few instances (e. g. Ex. xxi. 4, 7,) they subsequently received a greater extension. If any part of the Law could advantageously be spared from the periodical public reading, every one would say that it was the book of Leviticus, as pertaining especially to that ritual which was the charge of the priesthood; yet how fit was it, that, by being compelled to exhibit this portion of the code, at such intervals, that the same generation would hear it repeatedly, they should be called upon to give satisfaction to the people, that they had not interpolated it, and that they executed their functions agreeably to its provisions. The view, proposed by some commentators, that the book of Deuteronomy was “the Law” intended in xxxi. 9–13, appears to me to have been taken up without proper consideration of the structure and contents of that book, which, taken by itself, presents nothing like a system. I cannot attach any importance to the objection, that the Law, in its larger acceptation, was of too great bulk to be conveniently read in eight days. Certainly, it cannot be pretended that there was any deficiency of

should be given in the people's view (most of whom had not witnessed his first acts of power) an attestation to the authority, under which the work, now about to be finished, had proceeded, similar to what had been from time to time employed, when his commission was first received.* Attended by Joshua, he repaired, by the Divine summons, to the Tabernacle; and there, while a supernatural manifestation betokened the Divine presence to the people's view, and gave the visible sanction of the Divine authority to the provision made for their future government, Joshua received his charge respecting the execution of the high trust he was undertaking,† and to both was dictated a warning to be communicated to the people, respecting the inevitable consequences of future disobedience, which, as coming directly from their Divine benefactor, and under such solemn circumstances, was suited to have all the effect on their minds, which could be exerted by remonstrance in any form.‡ Departing from the Tabernacle, Moses resumed the "book of the Law" to make in it the further important record of the admonition which he had now received,§ and returning it to the Levites to be deposited in the most sacred place of the nation, "by the side of the ark of the covenant,"|| he convened

time; of course, there would be a succession of readers; and there is no reason to presume that the audience of any one hour would be precisely that of the next.

* Ex. xxxiii. 9; Numb. xi. 25; xii. 5.

† Deut. xxxi. 14, 15, 23. — "He gave Joshua, the son of Nun, a charge" (23). This is not a repetition of verse 7; but clearly, I think, *God* gave this charge; for the verse proceeds, "Thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which *I* swear unto them, and *I* will be with thee;" compare 14. The transposition which this interpretation supposes of the facts recorded in verses 22, 23, is by no means violent. Moses merely notes (22), that he fulfilled the direction which concerned himself (16, 19), before he proceeds to mention that which had been addressed (23) to Joshua.

‡ xxxi. 16–21.

§ xxxi. 22.

|| xxxi. 24–27.

the congregation once more to deliver to them the message with which he and Joshua had been intrusted; * after which, adding a few earnest and persuasive words, † he withdrew to the retirement of the appointed mountain, to enjoy one distant view of the land where his people were now ripe for establishing their divinely instituted commonwealth, and then to rest in death from his long labors. ‡

* Deut. xxxi. 28, 29; xxxii. 44, 45.

† xxxii. 46, 47.

‡ xxxii. 48–52.—It will be perceived, from the representation in the paragraph above, that I apply the words “this song” (xxxi. 19, 21, 22, xxxii. 44), not, as is commonly done, to xxxii. 1–43, but to xxxi. 16–18. That the word rendered “song” may with propriety be used of such a passage as that last named (compare Is. v. 1), I suppose no one would dispute; and the whole context, in my view, dictates the conclusion, that it is so used. Upon this interpretation, God addresses to Moses a brief and solemn admonition for the people respecting their future course,—an admonition obviously suitable in every point of view, in length, in substance, in tone, and in form, for its intended office, commanding him to “teach it” to them, and “put it in their mouths”; which he presently proceeds to do (Deut. xxxi. 22, 28; xxxii. 44, 45), having first taken care (xxxi. 22; compare 24) to make it part of the written record. By the received exposition, the directions and statement concerning “this song,” in xxxi. 19–22, are severed from the close connexion in which they stand with 16–18, and made to refer to another passage, which, of course, God is then represented as having in the first place himself delivered, and then commanded the children of Israel to learn; though its length appears to make it altogether unsuitable for the latter use, and (what is more to the purpose) its contents are not such as to correspond with the view of its being a message from the Deity. As to the latter point, it is not only that single expressions are clearly the language of a devout worshipper of Jehovah, and are incapable of being referred to Jehovah himself (e. g. xxxii. 3, 31), and that in parts (20–27, 37–42) the composition itself introduces the Lord as speaking, (a positive indication of the different source of the composition, which contains those episodes,) but its whole tone, verbose, discursive, gorgeous, and expressive of human feelings, is so widely adverse to any easy conception of that Divine message (given under well defined circumstances) which the common exposition represents it to be, that I do not perceive how a careful reader can recognise any verisimilitude in that view.

This brings us to the question, Where does the record of Moses end? That it ends somewhere before the end of the book of Deuteronomy (as that book exists in our hands), I suppose no one who entertains the question, would now deny; though there have been critics, who, in their zeal for

The writer, who has continued the record after the final entry in it by Moses' hand, has preserved for us some of his later words, probably as he understood them to have been remembered and reported by those

the integrity of the Pentateuch, have maintained that Moses wrote prophetically, in the thirty-fourth chapter, of his death and burial. If his record closed before the end of the present book, how much before? It is a question which cannot be positively answered. I have little hesitation in ascribing the thirty-third chapter, as well as the thirty-fourth, to a later hand, not only because its contents appear to be represented as Moses' last words (which he who utters them can hardly be supposed himself to record), but for other reasons to be mentioned presently. These chapters being left out of the question, I am doubtful at which of two points to place the limit of Moses' writing. I find every reason for carrying it as far forward as the entry of the important transaction at the Tabernacle, which no person but himself and Joshua could record, from personal knowledge; that is, to the end of xxxi. 23. That in the act of delivering the volume to the Levites, he should himself make the record of the important fact of this delivery, and its reason (24–27), and that, before he resigned the book, he should add, in a few words, a statement of the command, which at the same time he was giving them, to convoke the people for his last public act, viz. the annunciation to them of the Divine message, which, in their view, he had just been receiving for that purpose (28, 29), appears to me in a high degree probable. I suppose then, either that his record terminated at that point, or else that he proceeded so much further, as to add, in xxxii. 44–52, an account of his performance of this duty, of the brief address with which he followed it, and of the summons, now to be obeyed, which called him away to the vision of Canaan, and to his death. Without pretending to decide any thing, still, in the fulness with which this last topic is set forth, in the tone of exultation for the people's prospects, and of compunction and melancholy for his own, in the allusion to the brother departed before him, and the expression of satisfaction, that, if Canaan is not to be reached by him, it is yet to be seen, I find that which inclines me to refer this record, also, to Moses' own hand.

In either case, I understand the passage xxxii. 1–43, with its inscription (xxxi. 30), to be a later addition. Still, it may have been a composition of Moses;—no considerations I have presented imply any thing to the contrary, nor is any important argument to that effect brought to view by an examination of its language;—it may have been, I say, an independent composition, not intended for the place where it stands, and having nothing to do with xxxi. 19, 21, 22. If it were so, we are aided to conjecture how it came to be interpolated where we find it. Some possessor of it, recognising it as Moses' work, imagining (perhaps) that, being so, it must originally have belonged to his larger work, the Pentateuch, and

who attended upon his retirement into the mountain, and his last hours.* Out of the view of the host, he was laid in a grave prepared in a hollow of the hilly region where he died. Had the spot been known, it

fancying that the sense of xxxi. 22, 23, xxxii. 44, &c., was left incomplete, (for want of perceiving their true connexion with xxxi. 16–18,) naturally fixed on this place to incorporate it with that collection. And this, it is reasonable to suppose, was done at a period, considerably subsequent to the death of Moses, such as to give time for the true meaning of xxxi. 16–22, to be lost sight of.

* Deut. xxxiii. 1–29. The date of the addition of this passage to the book, we have no means of ascertaining. Its obvious incompleteness, and want of proportion, the fulness with which it represents some tribes to have been discoursed upon, (8–11, 13–17,) while others, as Dan (22) and Reuben (6), are despatched with the briefest notice, and one, Simeon, is entirely passed by, — while it indicates, on the one hand, that we have not the full account of what Moses said on the occasion in question, — seems to me to show, on the other, to a considerable degree of probability, that the composition consists of what a tradition (not transmitted without corruptions) had actually preserved of his last discourses (1); since, if the passage were merely a work of imagination in some after time, it would have been easy and natural to give it the finish and coherence which it wants. And that what thus remains, was preserved not as a whole, but in parts, put together at a later time, might be not unreasonably inferred from the fact, that each of the blessings (unless that of Reuben be an exception, of which presently) has its own introduction, not in words of Moses, but in the narrative form; e. g. “Of Levi he said” (8); “And of Benjamin he said” (12) &c. The fragmentary character of the passage, together with our ignorance of its history, and of the force of the allusions, of which it seems to be full, causes it, in parts, to bid defiance to exposition; nor have the large labors of the commentators upon it, done much more than largely illustrate the fact of its obscurity. — “And he said” (2); this, with what follows in verses 2, 3, I take to be the introduction to the blessing of Reuben (6), making it thus correspond with the rest, in the particular just above mentioned. — “The Lord came from Sinai, and *rose up* from Seir unto them; he *shined forth* from Mount Paran” (2); that is, I suppose, he revealed himself at Sinai to the people, and made his revelations more and more clearly to them as they advanced on their way; the words which I have italicized have a peculiar force, being appropriately used of the rising and course of the sun. — “He came with ten thousands of saints”; this translation is disputed, but I believe it to be the correct one, (compare 3; Ex. xix. 6; Numb. xvi. 3,) and that it means, He graciously accompanied his numerous people. — “From his right hand [his divine energy] went a fiery [potent] law for them;” this, again, I adopt for the true rendering, not-

would have become first the goal of pious pilgrimages, and then, perhaps, — by the apotheosis of one so venerated, — a scene of idolatrous worship. It required the self-renouncing spirit which all his life had displayed,

withstanding the question which has been raised upon the word יָה . — “He loved the people; all his [its] saints are in thy hand” &c. (3); this abrupt change of persons is not uncommon in the more animated Hebrew poetry, as we shall see hereafter; the sense I understand to be, Loving them all alike, thou hast graciously adopted them to be thy care, and to sit “at thy feet,” and “receive of thy words,” which accordingly they may all do. — “Moses” &c. (4, 5); these two verses, which ought to be thrown into a parenthesis, I regard as having been originally a marginal remark, intended to illustrate verses 2 and 3. The “law,” (תֹּרָה), — says this annotator (4), — spoken of in verse 2, is the law (הַתּוֹרָה) which is now [at the time when he was writing] the valued “inheritance of the congregation of Jacob,” the same law which “Moses commanded us,” he, who “was king in Jeshurun when the heads of the people, and the tribes of Israel, were gathered together” (5), he who was invested with the highest authority over the *whole collective nation* [this last clause being intended to explain the important word *saints* in verses 2 and 3]. — “Let Reuben live, and not die; and let *not* his men be few” (6). Here is the place where, after the very vague benediction of Reuben, we look for some notice of Simeon, but find none; nor do the attempts to explain the fact by a comparison of the notices of that tribe in Numb. i. 23; xxvi. 14; 1 Chron. iv. 27, amount to any thing, except to give a degree of plausibility to conjectural emendations (should one incline to make them) of the latter clause, which, by altering one word (וַיְחִי to וַיִּהְיֶה), and inserting another (שְׁמֵעוֹן), would make it read, “and let Simeon [too] live, [though] his men are few.” Two or three manuscripts of the Septuagint, — whether on any better ground than conjecture, we know not, — insert here the word $\Sigma\mu\epsilon\omega\nu$. Our translators, in the interpolation of *not*, (italized by them, agreeably to their method of indicating that a word introduced has nothing corresponding in the Hebrew,) have adopted a singular expedient to reconcile their preconceived opinion of what the sense ought to be, with their view (probably a correct one, compare Is. x. 19) of the sense of the word קִהְּפָר . — “This is the blessing of Judah” &c. (7); the few general words, which here follow, imploring success in war, and prosperous returns from it, for this tribe, have a degree of resemblance to the first of those represented to have been addressed by Jacob to its progenitor in Gen. xlix. 8–12. From this point it may be remarked, that with the exceptions of Reuben and Gad, (which cannot be brought into the consideration, as all their territory lay east of the Jordan,) Moses mentions the tribes substantially in the order, from south to north, in which they were afterwards established in Canaan; which fact, could we

to forbid that the place of his last rest should be visited by the coming generations, who would have such cause to revere and bless his name. But, true to his office to the last, he would permit no honors to his memory,

know that the order of his discourse was preserved in our record, would indicate, that the districts for the occupation of the several tribes, were already determined. (Compare p. 417, note †.) We should understand him, while he surveyed the country from an eminence, or when he had just been surveying it, to utter his benediction on one tribe after another, as his eye successively rested on the regions which they were severally to inhabit.—“Of Levi he said, ‘Let *thy* Urim and thy Thummim’” &c. (8–11). By all means, I conceive we should regard these, as well as the preceding verses, as being addressed to God; Let the highest insignia of thy instituted priesthood remain with thy holy tribe, “whom thou didst prove” &c. God proved [tried] that tribe with the rest at Massah, (compare Ex. xvii. 7,) where, perhaps, they were found less discontented than others, though that fact is not related; and he strove with them, when he rebuked their head (compare Numb. xx. 12, 13) “at the waters of Meribah.” “Who said unto his father and to his mother, ‘I have not seen him’” &c. (9); that is (allowing for the poetical clothing of the thought), who evinced their zeal to Jehovah, by faithfully acquitting themselves of that stern duty, which required them to forget the ties of blood. Compare Ex. xxxii. 27, 28.—From a supposed reference, in verse 12, to the erection of the temple at Jerusalem, on the border of the territory of Benjamin, an argument has been sought, to show that the passage was written later than the time of Solomon. But I think it quite unsafe to assume so much as the fact of any such reference being intended in the verse. It is very naturally understood as simply a general invocation of the Divine protection for Benjamin. “He [Benjamin] shall dwell between his [the Lord’s] shoulders”; *quasi*, in his bosom; the expression is of the same class with that in Matt. xxiii. 37.—“And of Joseph he said” &c. (13–17). Here, in 13–16, is a distinct imitation of the blessing pronounced by Jacob upon the same tribe; compare Gen. xlix. 25, 26. Three of those verses, and part of the fourth, refer to the fertility and the mineral wealth of the region which the descendants of Joseph were to occupy; compare a remark above, on verse 7. “The deep that coucheth beneath” (13); that is, the subterranean springs, by which, as well as by “the dew” from above, vegetation would be refreshed. “The precious things put forth by the moon” (14); perhaps some vivifying virtue was ascribed to the lunar influences, or the reference is merely to plants, the rapid growth of one or a few months, as distinguished from annual products mentioned in the preceding clause. “For the good will of him that dwelt in the bush”; compare Ex. iii. 2. “His glory” &c. (17); this powerful tribe being divided into two branches, those of Ephraim and

on the part of those who owed him so much, to prove a snare to their virtue; the secret of his burial-place died with those who consigned him to it; and “no man,” says the historian, in the simply plaintive ex-

Manasseh, its strength is compared to that of the two horns of a firstling [a choice] bullock, or of a *buffalo*, not a *unicorn*, as the word, after some ancient versions, is unfortunately rendered by our translators. — “And of Zebulun he said” &c. (18, 19); in the first of these verses, and the latter half of the second, we may find allusions to the anticipated habits of the Zebulunites, as mariners and fishermen, (that tribe being about to be established between the Mediterranean Sea and that of Gennesareth; compare Gen. xlix. 13,) and to agricultural, or perhaps manufacturing, pursuits of the children of Issachar. We may imagine applications of the language in the first half of verse 19 (as, for instance, that they refer to an expected designation of the lofty Mount Tabor, on the confines of Issachar and Zebulun, to be the seat of the national worship); but I suppose we have no means to determine its sense. — “And of Gad he said” &c. (20). Respecting what is said of Gad, I am fain to repeat the last remark. I obtain no satisfaction from the attempts which have been made to illustrate it. It probably contains allusions to facts, well known at the time when it was written, but which the history has not preserved; though I would not deny that verse 20 may refer to the settlement of that tribe in part of the territory, first occupied, east of Jordan, and to the obligation which still lay upon it to come with “the heads of the people” to prosecute the war in Canaan; compare Numb. xxxii. 31, 32. — “And of Dan he said” &c. (22); all that can be safely suggested concerning this, is the conjecture, that the hilly country lately conquered from Og, being known to harbour lions, (Cant. iv. 8,) the tribe of Dan, for its vigor and activity, is compared to the “lion’s whelp, *which* leaps in Bashan.” — “Of Naphtali he said ‘Possess thou *the west and the south*’” (23); more literally, (and necessarily here, if we are to reconcile the statement with the fact,) “*the sea and the south.*” The tribe of Naphtali actually occupied not the southwestern, but a northeastern, district of the Holy Land (Josh. xix. 32–39). But they *possessed the sea* of Gennesareth, along whose western shore their territory lay; and they might be said to *possess the south* in relation to the tribe of Dan (last before mentioned) one of whose settlements lay to the north of them (Judges xviii. 27, 28). Le Clerc (ad loc.) ingeniously conjectures, that, for יָם וְרִוּם, the sea *and the south*, we should read יָם קְרוֹם, the sea, or lake, *Merom* (compare Josh. xi. 5), which, actually, the tribe of Naphtali did possess. — “And of Asher he said” &c. (24, 25); this description of wealth and prosperity is in the former of the two verses modelled on the parallel passage in Gen. xlix. 20; “Thy bars [or bolts, not thy *shoes*] shall be iron and brass” (25), is language denoting a condition of security; and “As is

pression of a natural feeling, “no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.” — The book concludes with a brief notice of the funeral obsequies, prolonged through thirty days “in the plains of Moab,” and of the accession of Joshua to the place of civil and military head of the people; the office which Moses sustained, as a supernaturally endowed and divinely instructed teacher, having continued vacant since his death.*

thy day, so may thy strength be,” is a wish that the power or wealth of the tribe may continually increase with advancing time. — “There is none like unto the God of *Jeshurun*” (26, compare 5; xxxii. 15; Is. xlv. 2); this name, clearly, used for Israel, appears to be an abridgment of the form which the latter word would take with the termination appropriate to a diminutive sense; יְשׁוּרִי for יִשְׂרָאֵלִי.

* Deut. xxxiv. 1–12. — In 1–3, again, we have a specification of parts of the country, agreeably to the order in which the tribes named, actually had their settlements; but here the survey proceeds from north to south. — “The land of Gilead, unto Dan” (1). The Danites did not establish themselves in this neighbourhood till the time of the Judges (Judges xviii. 29); a fact, which bears upon the question of the period when this passage was written. — “So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died” (5), — by what kind of *euthanasia*, we know not, — “and he buried him” (6); rather, *one* buried him, or he was buried; it is the common form of the Hebrew impersonal. — “Over against Beth-Peor”; compare iii. 29; iv. 46. — “But no man knoweth of his sepulchre *unto this day*”; indicating that a considerable time had elapsed between his burial and this record; compare 10. — “And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old, when he died” (7; compare Ex. vii. 7). So Aaron is said (Numb. xxxiii. 39) to have been “an hundred and twenty and three years old, when he died in Mount Hor.” To Miriam too, if her age was about the same with that of her brothers, the narrative would ascribe a like extreme longevity, if it clearly represented her as dying in the same year with them, that is, the fortieth after the Exodus; but I have endeavoured to show above, (p. 374, note,) that this by no means appears to have been the case. If, then, we could rely on the integrity of the text in these passages, (which, after what has been remarked respecting other instances where numbers are concerned, one hardly feels safe in doing,) we should have the statement, that two individuals, those who had been promoted to the highest trusts in the Jewish nation, had their lives prolonged to the term of about a hundred and twenty years. If it were so, we can do no more than conjecture the reason. It may have been, because it was well for the Israelites to enjoy, down to the last period of their wanderings, the guidance of those who had led them forth from bondage, and to whose

In examining the record of the revelation made through Moses, we have not found that he anywhere represents himself as charged with the disclosure of the great doctrine of a future life, or refers to its retributions as providing a sanction for his laws. Further; without moving the question, at this stage of our inquiries, how far there are traces in the Old Testament, of a belief in that doctrine, I shall take no risk of contradiction, when I say, that nowhere, throughout the series of books, is it referred to as having made a subject of divine revelation.* Undoubtedly, the fact is remarkable; and a very few words respecting the light in which it is to be viewed, may not be considered to be here out of place.

It may be presumed, that the Israelites, when they

authority they were accustomed; and the circumstance could not have failed to attract a strong veneration to Aaron and Moses, among a people who revered age as did the Jews. Certainly, there is nothing incredible in the statement, apart from the supposition of miracle. The age alleged is very uncommon, but not unprecedented; and events, singly within the course of nature, do undoubtedly sometimes occur in such wonderful combinations, that if not sustained by the strongest evidence, the statement of them would be received with great distrust. A remote posterity, for example, will not improbably be inclined to treat as a fable, contrived for effect, the fact, so notorious to us, that of the individuals, who prepared the document which gave independence to this country, the only two who afterwards filled the highest office of the government they had erected, both died on the exact day when a half century from that act of theirs was completed. — At all events, there is no room for any inference from the age of Aaron and Moses, respecting the common length of human life at that period. On the contrary, the whole spirit of the arrangement for the Israelites to wander forty years in the wilderness, in order for a new generation to take the place of those already included in the census, points to sixty years as the received term of life; and the scale in Lev. xxvii. 3–7, specifying no higher age than sixty years, affords ground for a similar conclusion.

* The thesis of Bishop Warburton, on this point, is of this comprehensiveness; that “the Israelites, from the time of Moses to the time of their captivity, had not the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment.” “Divine Legation” &c., book 5, § 5. — How the later Jews proved it, may be seen in Pearson’s “Exposition of the Creed,” Art. 11.

came out of Egypt, entertained the views respecting a future state, which prevailed in that country. If it was so, I think we have substantial reason to conclude, that a divine revelation of the truth of an existence beyond the grave, would, in the actual state of their minds, have done them no good; but, on the contrary, would have been so likely to be perverted by them, and mingled with the grossest errors, that it was for their advantage to have that revelation withheld, till such time as, having become established in a true theology, educated in the doctrine of one God, and trained to some just conceptions of his attributes and agency, they would be prepared to receive the other doctrine with some just estimation of its worth, and preserve it in some degree of purity.

Respecting the belief of the ancient Egyptians in the state of the human soul after death, it would not be reasonable to expect to obtain full satisfaction from such sources of information as remain to us. The supposition, however, that any reasonable views of its condition were entertained by a people, whose theology was so monstrous, would be in violation of all probability; and, in fact, the best authorities instruct us, that, whatever might be the *esoteric* doctrine on the subject (which probably amounted to no more than the resumption of the spirit into its divine source, and accordingly its loss of individual existence, and of the capacity of punishment and reward), the popular doctrine indissolubly connected the continued life of the soul with a *metempsychosis*, with a circuit of transfers from the body of one animal to that of another.*

* Τοῦ σώματος δι καταφθίνοντος, ἐς ἄλλο ζῶον αἰεὶ γινόμενον ἐσθύνεται· ἐπιὰν δὲ περιέλθῃ πάντα τὰ χερσαῖα καὶ τὰ θαλάσσια καὶ τὰ πτερινὰ, αὐτὶς ἐς ἀνθρώπου σῶμα γινόμενον ἐσθύνει· τὴν περιήλυσιν δὲ αὐτῇ γίνεσθαι ἐν τρισχιλίοις ἔτεσι, κ. σ. λ. Herodotus, β', 123. See Brucker's "Historia Critica Philosophiæ," lib. 2, cap. 7, § 18; "Universal History," book 3, chap. 3, § 2.

Of what avail would it have been to confirm the doctrine of an immortality to a people who identified it with the belief, that the undying essence, the human spirit, was but one of the forms of bestial nature? Of what avail to communicate it to them in any shape, when the existing habits of their minds would have forcibly brought it back to this base and pernicious semblance? As far as we may reverently entertain such a question, does it not seem reasonable to say, that it was more fit for God, and more consistent with what we know, in other respects, of his method of educating this people, to reserve this great doctrine from their consideration as part of his disclosures to them, till other generations should arise, which, educated far beyond the reach of the brutalizing follies of Egypt, and made capable of some better conceptions of the spiritual world, and of man's place in it, by what their Law taught them of the undivided sovereignty and excellent perfections of its head, should not put out again in deep darkness the light meant to enlighten the world?

But, was it intended, — I shall be asked, — that this great doctrine, without which, religion, as a practical thing, can scarcely be said to exist, should be still withheld for fifteen centuries? Did God intend that the preparation for its disclosure should occupy so long a time? Not unconscious of the caution with which such ground requires to be trodden, I reply; that I know nothing of *intentions* of God in such matters, irrespective of the condition and the acts of men. Christianity revealed a future life, in “the fulness of time,” — when it was most suitable that it should be revealed. Had the suitable time come earlier, the revelation would have been earlier made. I find no reason to doubt that God gave Judaism to a portion of men under similar

conditions to those under which he gave Christianity ; and that one of those conditions was, that the better or the worse should be their use of the gift, the sooner or the later, and to the greater or the less extent, should be their enjoyment of the benefits it promised. Christianity was *in abeyance* during the dark ages, not by God's irrespective decree, but by man's self-destructive perversity. Judaism did not speedily educate the people, and through them prepare the world, for a revelation of more truth. It did not presently fulfil its office, because they whom it should have trained were wanting to their duty. And accordingly, the incomplete work of Moses, — the proper foundation for higher truth, — remained incomplete through many ages. The Prophet, *like unto himself*, whom he predicted, delayed to come, because they whom he was to teach delayed to prepare themselves for his instructions. We have repeated and emphatic declarations of God through Moses, that, in one important respect, his dealings with the Jewish nation should take a character from their deserts. If they should prove obedient, their state would be prosperous ; if rebellious, it would be visited with all sorts of calamity. On the same familiar principle of the application of divine dealings to human conduct, I find no reason withholding me from the belief, that, if the Jews had better used their first privileges, they would sooner have been blessed with more ; — that, if the discipline of Moses had raised them, as, rightly applied, it was capable of doing, on the scale of a religious civilization, life and immortality might have been brought to light ages earlier in the Gospel.

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