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THE
HISTORY OF THE JEWS,
FROM THE
DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM
TO THE
PRESENT TIME.

BY HANNAH ADAMS,
OF BOSTON, AMERICA.

“ And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other;—and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest.”

Deut. xxviii. 64, 65.

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THE following “History of the Jews,” by Mrs. Hannah Adams of America, is now printed in England, with that Lady’s kind permission, at the expense and for the benefit of the “London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews;” and the hope is warmly cherished, that when British Christians shall have been made more fully acquainted, through the medium of this publication, with the calamities which have befallen the Jews since their last dispersion, such sympathy will be excited, as to stimulate them to co-operate zealously with the above Society, in its benevolent endeavours to impart the knowledge of the crucified Jesus, the true Messiah, to that long oppressed nation, whose past sufferings, present degradation, and future glory, are equally foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New. It is proper to remark, that a few alterations were deemed expedient, in the present edition.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE history of the Jews since their dispersion has been but little investigated even by the literary part of the world, and is almost entirely unknown to the general mass of mankind. The design of this work, including the introduction, is to give a brief sketch of their situation, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, to the nineteenth century. The compiler is sensible, that the subject is not calculated to engage the attention of those readers whose object is merely amusement. [Instead of a narration of new and entertaining events, they will find a tedious succession of oppressions and persecutions, and probably turn with disgust from the gloomy picture of human guilt and wretchedness.]

To the speculative and inquisitive part of mankind, the subject must, however, appear more interesting. The history of the Jews is remarkable above that of all other nations, for the number and cruelty of the persecutions they have endured. They are venerable for the antiquity of their origin. They are discriminated from the rest of mankind by their wonderful destination, peculiar habits, and

religious rites. Since the destruction of Jerusalem, and their universal dispersion, we contemplate the singular phenomenon of a nation subsisting for ages without its civil and religious polity, and thus surviving its political existence.

But the Jews appear in a far more interesting and important light when considered as a standing monument of the truth of the Christian religion; as the ancient church of God to whom were committed the sacred oracles; as a people selected from all nations to make known and preserve the knowledge of the true God. To them the Gospel was first preached, and from them the first Christian church in Jerusalem was collected. To them we are indebted for the scriptures of the New, as well as of the Old Testament. To them were given the spirit of prophecy, and power of working miracles. From them were derived an illustrious train of prophets and apostles. To use the language of an inspired writer, "To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, the service of God, and the promises; and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came."

The history of the Jews by Mr. Basnage, a learned French refugee, who was pastor of the Walloon church at the Hague, and died in 1723, is the principal authority made use of in the first

part of this history; the references are made to the translation of Mr. Taylor, published in 1708, which received the approbation of the author. The compiler is greatly indebted to the writings of M. Gregoire, formerly bishop of Blois, senator, member of the National Institute, &c. &c. His excellent "Essay on the Reformation of the Jews" has afforded much important information respecting this extraordinary people. His late valuable work, entitled "Histoire des Sectes Religieuses," published at Paris, 1810, besides interesting and entertaining accounts of the various denominations of Christians, contains several curious articles respecting the Jews. The works of David Levi have furnished materials for what is said of the religious tenets and ceremonies of his brethren. Occasional assistance has been given by modern travellers, whom curiosity has induced to investigate the present condition of this singular people. The learned Dr. Buchanan, in his valuable works, particularly his "Researches in Asia," has furnished authentic documents respecting the state of the eastern Jews. Some recent intelligence concerning those in Europe has been collected from a late work of Mr. Adam, entitled, "The Religious World Displayed, published 1809. The respectable author observes in his preface, that "he was indebted for particulars respecting them to Joshua Van Oven, a learned, distinguished, and

worthy member of the society of German Jews." Various other authors will be found referred to in the history ; but the above mentioned have furnished the principal materials for the work.

To the intelligent and well informed the difficulty of collecting the history of a people so little known, particularly in this country, during the last and present century, wholly from desultory and unconnected materials, will appear obvious. The compiler can only say, that however deficient and ill arranged her history may be, she has spared no exertions in her power to collect authentic documents, and has used them to the best of her ability. But while she relies on the candour and indulgence of the public, she cannot forbear to express the warmest gratitude to those respectable gentlemen whose generous patronage has enabled her to devote her time to literary pursuits.

INTRODUCTION.

SECTION I.

Of the state of the Jews under the Persian monarchy; and the change which took place after the Babylonish captivity.

B. C. 536.] THE Jews* having remained in captivity seventy years, according to the prediction of the prophet Jeremiah,† were restored to their native country by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. For this purpose he issued a decree, in the first year of his reign, by which they were permitted to return to Palestine, and rebuild their city and temple. This opportunity was joyfully embraced by the most zealous of the tribes of Judah, Benja-

* So denominated from the name Judah, as this tribe obtained the pre-eminence, and was more numerous than that of Benjamin. All the descendants of Jacob were anciently called Israel, or children of Israel, till the time that ten of the tribes revolted from the house of David: (See 1st. of Kings.) These ten tribes were afterwards called the *house of Israel*, and the other two tribes, of Judah and Benjamin, the *house of Judah*. From time to time many of the house of Israel joined that of Judah for the enjoyment of religious privileges: (1 Chron. ix. 3.) became incorporated with them, and were with them carried captive to Babylon. Many of these embraced the opportunity of returning to Judea after the captivity; for the decrees of the Persian kings extended to all the house of Israel. The people of Judah and Israel, after their return, were blended together under the name of *Jews*.—*Prideaux's Connection*, vol. i. p. 190—270.

† Chap. xxv. 11. “And these nations shall serve the king of “Babylon seventy years.”

min, and Levi. A large part of the Jewish captives, who chose to remain in Babylon, made liberal contributions towards assisting their brethren.*

B. C. 534.] Soon after the return of the Jews, they began with alacrity and zeal to rebuild their altar, and laid the foundation of their temple. While they were engaged in this important undertaking, the Samaritans † expressed an earnest desire to assist in the completion of the building. But as they blended the worship of their false deities with that of the God of Israel, the Jews rejected their request, alleging that, as the decree of the Persian monarch extended only to the house of Israel, they could not admit them to participate in the work. This refusal gave rise to that implacable enmity which subsisted between the Samaritans and Jews; ‡ and induced the former to exert

* Ezra i. 6.

† The Samaritans were originally heathen colonies from different countries. After the king of Assyria had taken Samaria, the capital of the ten tribes, he removed the greatest part of the Israelites into Babylon and Assyria. And in order to re-people the desolate country, he brought colonies from Babylon, Cutha, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and established them in the cities of Samaria instead of those whom he had carried into captivity. These people being immediately after their settlement much infested with lions, attributed this calamity to their neglect of the tutelary deity of this country, and petitioned the king to send one of the captive Jewish priests to instruct them how to worship the God of Israel. A priest was accordingly sent back, who took up his residence at Bethel, and established the worship of the true God. Yet while Jehovah was feared because of his supposed influence in that land, the gods of the Babylonians and other countries had divine honours paid to them. This mixture of idolatry with the Mosaic worship continued till the building of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizzim.—*Fleury's Ancient Israelites*, p. 352.

‡ John iv. 9.

themselves to obstruct the building of the temple. In consequence of their malicious attempts, the erection of the sacred edifice was suspended; till Darius issued an edict which not only ratified the grants of Cyrus, but denounced a severe penalty against all who obstructed the work. When this important decree was communicated to the Jews, they rapidly proceeded in the building, which was finished in the sixth year of Darius, and the dedication performed in the month Adar with all imaginable splendour and solemnity.*

B. C. 349.] The history of the Old Testament closes with an account of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, and the building of their city and temple under Ezra the priest, and Nehemiah the governor. The assiduous labours of these pious and eminent men to reform the abuses of the Jewish state and church, to enforce the observance of the Mosaic law, and restore divine worship to its original purity, are recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

It appears from the sacred records, that the Jews, after their return from captivity, were in a feeble state under the first Persian monarchs. They were exposed to the envy and malice of those strangers who resided in the vicinity, in particular to the insults and calumnies of the Samaritans. It is also evident from the cruel edict which Haman obtained against them, from which they were saved by the powerful intercession of queen Esther, that they were in danger of being destroyed upon the least intimation of the king's pleasure. By degrees, how-

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* Ezra vi. 16, 17.

ever, their affairs were established, and though they were subjected to an easy tribute, they lived under their own laws, in the form of a commonwealth, governed by the high-priest, and the council of seventy-two elders; and exercised among themselves the power of life and death.* Jerusalem being at length rebuilt, fortified, and repeopled, began to resume some appearance of its former splendour, and the temple was honoured by the offerings of strangers.†

After the death of Nehemiah, the government of Judea appears to have been joined to the prefecture of Syria, from which the high priests received their authority.‡ This circumstance induced many persons to aspire to that high office merely through ambition and avarice, who were destitute of zeal

* The grand council of the nation called the Sanhedrim, which assembled in an apartment of the temple at Jerusalem, possessed the power of life and death. The Jews styled it a hedge to the laws, because the members of the council had authority to interpret it at certain times and on certain occasions, as they thought proper. Its authority extended over all the synagogues in Judea and remote countries, and no appeal could be made from its sentence. Whether this consistory of seventy elders was a perpetual, or only a temporary institution, is a subject of dispute. The Jews, and after them Grotius, Selden, Lightfoot, and several other learned Christians, maintain that it was first instituted by Moses; that the seventy-two elders appointed to assist him were its first members; and that the Sanhedrim, so famous in the latter ages of Jewish polity, subsisted after his time until the destruction of the temple. But Basnage and others have attempted to prove that the court of the Sanhedrim was first established in the time of the Maccabees.—*Basnage*, p. 400. *Jennings' Jewish Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 39.

† Fleury's Ancient Israelites.

‡ The candidates purchased this office from the Syrian governor, and retained it by means of money; hence they oppressed the people with taxes to enable them to fulfil their pecuniary engagements.

for religion, or love for their country. For whole centuries, the office of high priest, being the chief object of men's ambition, the violent contests for the sacerdotal dignity, and the arbitrary conduct of those who obtained it, involved the Jewish nation in various calamities.

B. C. 373.] A remarkable instance of the truth of this assertion occurred in the 34th year of Artaxerxes Mnemon; at which period Joiada was succeeded in the high priesthood by his son Johanan. Some time after his investiture he received a visit from his brother Joshua, who asserted that Bagoses, the governor of Syria, had promised to transfer the sacred dignity to him. A dispute immediately ensued, and Joshua was slain in the interior court of the temple. Bagoses receiving intelligence of this event, severely upbraided the Jews with defiling the habitation of their God, and imposed a heavy fine upon the pontiff, which was not taken off till the death of Artaxerxes changed the face of affairs. The Jews were, however, by no means free from trouble in the reign of his successor; for Ochus having subdued the greatest part of Phœnicia, carried his victorious arms into Judea; reduced Jericho, and sent a great number of the inhabitants into captivity. Ten years after this event Johanan died, and was succeeded by his son Jaddua.*

After the Babylonish captivity the Jews retained a constant aversion to idolatry, which they justly supposed was the principal cause of their expulsion from their native land.

* Prideaux's Connection, vol. ii. p. 658.

It has been assigned as a reason for this change, that previous to the captivity they had no synagogues* for public instruction, nor places for religious worship, except the temple and the cities of the Levites. In consequence of which the divine laws were neglected, and forgotten, and they were easily allured into the superstitious practices of their idolatrous neighbours. But after their return, they had synagogues erected among them in every city, which were opened, not for ceremonial worship, as sacrificing, for this was confined to the temple; but for praying, preaching, reading the law, † divine worship and social duties. The people repaired to the synagogue morning and evening for prayer, and on sabbaths and festivals the law was read and expounded to them. The custom of reading the scriptures and preaching in the synagogues is supposed to have been introduced by Ezra. ‡

* Dr. Prideaux and other learned writers have maintained that there were not any synagogues before the captivity, as there is no mention of them in the Old Testament, but after that period their number was very great. They were places of prayer and religious assemblies for the worship of God. The times of the synagogue service were three days every week besides fasts and festivals. The Jews also attended prayers three times every day, in the morning, afternoon, and at night. At the east end in every synagogue is an ark or chest, in commemoration of the ark of the covenant which was in the temple; and in this ark they lock up the Pentateuch, written upon vellum with a particular ink.—See *Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. p. 534, 535, and *Picart's Religious Ceremonies of the Jews*.

† The mode of worship adopted in the Jewish synagogues subsequent to the captivity, differed but little from the present worship of Christian assemblies; for it consisted of three parts, reading the scriptures, prayer, and preaching.—*Graves's Lectures on the Pentateuch*. Published 1807.

‡ We have a short but beautiful description of Ezra's first preach-

The reformation, begun by Ezra and others, at length degenerated into formality, and superstition; and when the Jews first deviated from the purity of their morals, and the simplicity of their religious worship, their zeal for the rites and ceremonies of their law increased. It is supposed the lamentable change became more general after miracles and prophecies ceased,* which had in some measure prevented them from taking the shadow for the substance of religion.†

It is evident, that soon after the termination of the prophetic age,‡ the Jews began to corrupt the law of Moses, by introducing certain precepts and institutions which they professed to have received by oral tradition from the most ancient time. This traditional law, which chiefly respected religious ceremonies, fastings, and other practices distinct from the moral duties of life, at length obtained with the greater part of the Jewish nation a degree of authority equal to that of the Mosaic law; whilst the minor part, rejecting these innovations, adhered strictly to the institutions of their sacred oracles. These two general classes, which do not appear to have been distinguished by any peculiar appellation, gradually adopted other tenets and customs, and at length formed several distinct sects, of which the principal were the Sadducees, the Caraites, the

ing in *Nehemiah* viii. The Jews had liturgies for their prayers, in which are all the prescribed forms of their synagogue worship.—*Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. p. 537.

* From the time of Malachi, the Jews had not been favoured with any prophet. He flourished about the year 397 before Christ.

† Picart's *Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Jews*.

‡ Enfield's *Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 171.

Pharisees, and the Essenes.* . These denominations were formed at different periods after the spirit of prophecy ceased from Israel, and were in a flourishing state at the time of our Saviour's appearance upon earth:

SECTION II.

Sketch of the History of the Jews under Alexander and his Successors to the Revolt of Mattathias.

B. C. 330.] A GREAT event, foretold in the prophetic pages † at length arrived, when the mighty empire of Persia was subdued by Alexander the Great, 208 years after the overthrow of the Babylonian empire by Cyrus. The Jews gave a striking proof of their fidelity to Darius Codomanus, the last Persian monarch, by refusing to assist Alexander in the siege of Tyre. The Macedonian hero, exasperated at this refusal, after the conquest of that city led his victorious army against Jerusalem. ‡

At this alarming crisis, Jaddua, the high priest, offered sacrifices and supplications to the God of Israel, and being, as it is said, directed by a vision in the night, went forth the following day to meet the conqueror, dressed in his pontifical robes, attended by the priests in sacerdotal vestments, and the people in white garments. Alexander, struck with profound awe at the sight of this solemn procession, bowed himself down before the high priest,

* See an account of these sects in Section V.

† Dan. ii. 39.

‡ Josephus's Jewish Antiquities.



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quests; the Samaritans endeavoured to accomplish a civil and ecclesiastical union with the Jews. For this purpose Sanballat, governor of Samaria, gave his daughter in marriage to Manasses, the brother of Jaddua the high priest, fully expecting that the succession in the priesthood would devolve upon Manasses, and that by this means a coalition might be effected. Sanballat upon finding that the Jews, particularly the members of the Sanhedrim, highly resented this profane alliance, took his son-in-law under his protection, and having obtained permission from Alexander to build a temple on mount Gerizzim, appointed Manasses its high priest. A powerful body of priests and Israelites, who had been involved in similar connections, joined the Samaritans.* The erection of the temple highly exasperated the Jews; the violent animosity between the parties increased, and gave rise to frequent hostilities.†

B. C. 324.] After the death of Alexander, the Macedonian empire was divided among four of his generals; and Judea being situated between Egypt and Syria, became subject to all the revolutions and wars in which his successors were engaged against each other. It was at first governed by Laomedon, the Mitylenian, one of Alexander's captains, and after he was defeated by Ptolemy Soter, king of

in Greek also, after the Septuagint Version had been prepared, by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt.—*Basnage*, p. 527.

* It is supposed, that when Manasses fled to the Samaritans, he first brought the law of Moses among them; and after they received it they renounced idolatry, and worshipped the true God.—*Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. p. 598.

† *Josephus*, p. 284. . *Enfield's Philosophy*

Egypt, the Jews refused to violate their engagements to him. Enraged at their resistance, Ptolemy marched to Jerusalem, and being apprized of the religious veneration of the Jews for the Sabbath, fraudulently surprised and took the city on that day, and carried a hundred thousand of the inhabitants captive into Egypt. However, in consideration of the loyalty they had on various occasions evinced to former conquerors, he advanced the most distinguished persons among them to places of trust in the military department; and eventually confirmed all the privileges which Alexander had formerly bestowed upon their nation. Ptolemy settled some of the captives in Lybia and Cyrene; from those who were established in the latter of these countries descended the Cyrenian Jews, mentioned by the writers of the New Testament.*

Soon after the recovery of Judea by Ptolemy, Simon, the Jewish high priest, died in the ninth year of his pontificate. The character given of him in Ecclesiasticus† evinces his distinguished merit; and the piety and integrity which uniformly marked his conduct, induced his cotemporaries to honour him with the surname of *Just*. He exhibited an ardent love of his country by repairing and fortifying the city and temple; and is said to have rendered the most essential service to religion by completing the canon of the Old Testament. This celebrated pontiff was the last member of the grand synagogue.‡

* Prideaux's *Connection*, vol. ii. p. 150. *Encyclopedia*, vol. ix.

† *Ecclesiasticus*, chap. i.

‡ The grand synagogue consisted of 120 elders who, in a regular

On the decease of Ptolemy Soter, his successor Philadelphus confirmed and enlarged the privileges of the Jews. He established many of that nation in his dominions, ransomed those who had been carried captive into Egypt, and caused a copy of their sacred books to be translated into the Greek language,* and deposited in his famous library at Alexandria. By means of the translation, which was styled the Septuagint version,† the Jewish religion was made known among the Gentiles, so that the temple was enriched with magnificent presents from the neighbouring monarchs.

The Jews also obtained distinguished favours from Seleucus Nicator, king of Macedon and Syria, who admitted them into all the cities which he had built in Lesser Asia, and allowed them the same privileges with his Grecian and Macedonian subjects.‡

The Jewish affairs continued to wear a favour-

succession after the expiration of the Babylonish captivity, laboured assiduously in restoring the Jewish church and state; and exerted themselves to diffuse an accurate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures among their brethren.—*Sacred Mirror*.

* This translation is frequently quoted by the sacred writers of the New Testament.—*Butler's Horæ Biblicæ*.

† A late author observes that, with respect to the history of the Septuagint, there scarcely is a subject of literature upon which more has been written, or of which less with any degree of certainty is known. The popular account of its being made in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, at the suggestion of Aristeas, and under the direction of Demetrius Phalerus, by seventy or seventy-two Jews shut up in cells, appears to be generally exploded. The prevailing opinion is, that it was made at Alexandria at different times, and by different interpreters, but that all of them were Jews.—*Butler's Horæ Biblicæ*, p. 18, and also *Prideaux's Connection*, vol. iii. p. 29—52.

‡ *Beury's Ancient Israelites*, p. 235.

able aspect, till in the reign of Ptolemy Philopator they were greatly oppressed by the incursion of the Samaritans. At the same time Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, made a vigorous effort to conquer Judea. He was however defeated by the Egyptian monarch, who soon after visited Jerusalem, and offered sacrifices to the God of Israel for his recent victory. Stimulated by an extreme curiosity to view the interior part of the temple, in spite of the remonstrances of the priests and the lamentations of the people, he forced his way through the two outer courts; but it is related, that on his attempting to penetrate into the most holy place he was struck with inexpressible terror, and was obliged to be carried out by his attendants. Instead however of being humbled by this judgment, he was exasperated against the Jews; and on his return to Egypt raised a persecution against those in that kingdom, deprived them of their privileges, ordered them to be enrolled among the lowest order of Egyptians, and sentenced many to slavery and death. He was afterwards however induced to revoke his sanguinary decrees.*

B. C. 212.] After the death of Ptolemy Philopator, Antiochus the Great invaded Cælosyria and

* It is said, that the king had resolved to destroy the whole nation, beginning with those who resided in Egypt, whom he ordered to be brought in chains to Alexandria to be killed by his elephants. As this was to be done publicly, a vast concourse of people were collected together to behold the horrid exhibition, when to their great surprise, the elephants having been made drunk with wine and frankincense, turned all their rage upon the spectators, and destroyed great numbers of them, while the Jews remained in perfect safety. The king relented, and restored this persecuted people to their former privileges.—*Prideaux's Connection*, vol. iii. p. 118.

Palestine, and soon made an entire conquest of these provinces. The Jews renounced their allegiance to Egypt, placed themselves under his protection, and offered him their assistance. The Syrian monarch, highly gratified by the fidelity and zeal they exhibited in his service, restored to Jerusalem its ancient privileges; gave a large sum out of his own treasury for repairing the temple, and maintaining public worship; granted an exemption from all taxes for three years to all the dispersed Jews who should return to their capital, and liberated all who had been sold for slaves in any part of his dominions.*

B. C. 176.] Upon the decease of Antiochus, his son and successor Seleucus continued to the Jews the enjoyment of their civil and religious privileges, and the expenses of their sacrifices were defrayed out of the royal treasury. Their prosperity was, however, disturbed by an unhappy altercation between Onias the high priest, and Simon the governor of the temple. The latter, actuated by a principle of revenge, gave such an exaggerated account of the treasures in the temple, that Seleucus determined to appropriate part of them to his own use, and commanded Heliodorus, his treasurer, to convey them to Antioch. Upon his arrival at Jerusalem, Onias endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, assuring him that these treasures were appropriated to the use of the widows and orphans in the Jewish community. Heliodorus, however, still persisted to execute his commission.

† Prideaux's Connection, vol. ii. p. 128.

But while the priests and people united in ardent supplication to the God of Israel to preserve the sanctuary, he was suddenly struck, according to the book of Maccabees, with inexpressible terror by an awful vision, and soon after quitted the city, which he acknowledged was under the protection of a divine and irresistible power. Simon, enraged at the defeat of his malicious designs, accused Onias of having invited the king's treasurer to Jerusalem. But the high priest justified his conduct to his royal master, and at length procured the banishment of the treacherous governor.*

B. C. 173.] Soon after Antiochus Epiphanes assumed the Syrian diadem, Jason, brother to Onias, went to Antioch and purchased the high priesthood for three hundred and sixty talents † He also obtained an order that the present pontiff, who was a man of exemplary piety and justice, should be sent to that metropolis, and there confined for life. This impious priest subverted the religion of his ancestors, by procuring a grant for erecting a *Gymnasium*, or place of exercise, at Jerusalem, similar to those which were built in the Grecian cities; and encouraged the people by rewards, precepts, and example, to adopt the superstition of their idolatrous conquerors. From this time, therefore, a general apostacy took place, and the service of the temple was neglected. ‡

After Jason had enjoyed his ill-acquired dignity for a few years, he was supplanted by his brother

* Josephus, p. 303. 2 Maccabees iii. Prideaux's Connection.

† About ninety thousand pounds sterling.

‡ Josephus, p. 304. 2 Maccabees.

Menelaus, whose impiety, if possible, exceeded that of his predecessor. After he had obtained the high priesthood by offering the additional price of three hundred talents, he ordered the sacred vessels to be sold to pay the stipulated sum, and bribe the courtiers in his favour. He also caused Onias, who had reproved him for his impious sacrilege, to be put to death. He was indefatigable in his exertions to destroy the Jewish religion; engaged that himself and his party should wholly conform to the Greeks; drove Jason from Jerusalem, and by his tyranny and extortion caused an insurrection in that city.*

[B. C. 166.] In the mean time Antiochus was prosecuting the war in Egypt, and on a false report of his death, Jason marched to Jerusalem at the head of a thousand men, and severely chastised the adherents of Menelaus. But the approach of the Syrian monarch compelled him to elude his vengeance by flight; and at length he died in exile universally hated and despised. Antiochus, exasperated at the supposed revolt, and the rejoicings upon the report of his death, abandoned Jerusalem for three days to the fury of the Syrian army. Forty thousand persons were slain, and nearly an equal number sold for slaves. The impious monarch, conducted by the traitor Menelaus, forced his way into the temple, and even penetrated into the most holy place; tore off the golden ornaments, carried away the sacred treasures and utensils; and in order to offer the greatest insult to the Jewish

* Josephus, p. 303. Prideaux's Connection, vol. ii. p. 175, 176.



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gods, and worship those of the king, under the severest penalties. To enforce obedience to his orders, he placed overseers in every province, and being apprized that the Jews were the only persons who would presume to disobey his commands, strict injunctions were given to have them treated with the utmost severity. Atheneas, an aged and cruel man, well versed in all the rites of Grecian idolatry, being sent into Judea, dedicated the temple of Jehovah to Jupiter Olympus,* and set up his statue on the altar of burnt-offering. All who refused to offer their adorations before the idol, were either massacred, or compelled to endure the most exquisite tortures. At the same time, altars, groves, and statues were established not only in Judea, but in all the parts of the Syrian empire; and all who professed the religion of Moses, were obliged to worship them under the same penalties. The king also promulgated an edict, making it instant death to offer sacrifices to the God of Israel, to observe the sabbath, practise circumcision, or any of the Mosaic institutions. In short, an energetic attempt was made to destroy every copy of the law, which the king commanded to be delivered up under penalty of death, while he strenuously endeavoured to exterminate every faithful worshipper of God. †

At this distressing period, multitudes quitted their

* At this time the Samaritans presented a petition to the king, in which they declared themselves not to be Jews, and requested that their temple on Mount Gerizzim might be dedicated to the Grecian Jupiter, and called after his name.—*Rollin's Ancient History*.

† Prideaux, vol. ii. p. 184, 187.

habitations, and retreated to caves among the rocks, where they subsisted on herbs and roots. A large number apostatized; yet the ministers of cruelty were frequently baffled by the intrepid firmness of their victims. The king, exasperated at their boldness in defying his edicts and punishments, resolved to visit Jerusalem in order to enforce the execution of his sanguinary decrees. When the tyrant arrived, he had recourse to the stake and the rack; and commanded and superintended the most horrid executions.* The unshaken constancy of the sufferers filled him with rage and astonishment; while their triumphant deaths strengthened the faith and courage of their brethren.

Though the persecution under Antiochus was the greatest the Jews had ever suffered, they had hitherto endured the horrid cruelties of the tyrant without resistance. But at length men eminently distinguished for valour armed themselves in defence of their religion and laws; and while they fought under the banner of the God of Israel, they were enabled to effect the destruction of their idolatrous enemies, the deliverance of their nation, and the restoration of the true worship.

* The venerable Eleazar and the seven brethren, with their pious mother, were at this time put to a most cruel death.—2 *Maccabees* vi. vii.

SECTION III.

Sketch of the history of the Jews under the Asmonean family.

MATTATHIAS, an eminent priest of the Asmonean family,* lamented with deep anguish and regret the wretched situation of his country, and had for some time retired to Modin, his native place, in order to avoid the persecution which raged in Jerusalem. Apelles, one of the officers of Antiochus, was sent to that city to establish the heathen worship. After assembling the people, he endeavoured to persuade that venerable priest to set an example of compliance with the king's edict, by insinuating compliments, magnificent promises, and by stating the number who had apostatized. Mattathias boldly replied in the hearing of the multitude, "that though all the Jews, and all the nations on earth, should conform to the king's decree, he and his sons would continue faithful to the law of their God, and that no consideration should ever induce them to abandon the religion of their ancestors." Immediately after, he killed one of his countrymen who offered sacrifices on the altar of Modin. Upon being joined by his sons, and some others, he executed the same summary vengeance on the king's officer and his attendants;† and hastily passing

* He was the great grandson of Asmoneus, from whom the family derived their name.—*Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. p. 187.

† Mattathias's conduct was conformable to the law of Moses in such cases. See Deuteronomy xiii.

about the city, exhorted all who were zealous for the law of God to follow him.

Animated by the example of Mattathias and his pious family, large numbers of Jews being determined to make vigorous exertions for the recovery of their civil and religious privileges, followed their venerable leader into the desarts of Judea.* They were soon pursued by the royal army; and being attacked on the sabbath, many perished without offering to make the least resistance. Their leaders were hence induced to pass a decree for defending themselves for the future on that holy day, which being ratified by the priests and elders, was privately communicated to Palestine and the adjacent villages.†

B. C. 167.] The party of Mattathias being strongly reinforced, furiously attacked the Syrians and apostate Jews, destroying many, and compelling others to seek refuge in foreign countries. After having struck their enemies with terror, the conquerors marched from city to city, overturning the heathen altars, demolishing the graven images, opening the Jewish synagogues, and enforcing the practice of circumcision. They also assiduously employed themselves in searching for and transcribing the sacred books, and causing the reading of the scriptures to be resumed. Their heroic exertions were crowned with such remarkable success, that in the short space of one year, a happy reformation had begun to extend over a large part of Judea, when death arrested Mattathias in his glorious progress. In his

* Whiston's *Josephus*, vol. iii. p. 46.

† *Ibid.*

last moments he exhorted his sons, in the most fervent and affectionate manner, to emulate their pious ancestors, and hazard their lives in defence of the religion and laws of their country.*

[B. C. 166.] Judas, surnamed Maccabeus, † his eldest son and successor, is said to have been the greatest uninspired hero of whom the Jews can boast. ‡ With his small army, which at first only consisted of six thousand men, he soon made himself master of some of the strongest fortresses in Judea; became terrible to the Syrians and Samaritans; compelled the apostate Jews to retire in confusion, while the pious emigrants returned and enlisted under his banners. The Syrian monarch, and the governors of the provinces, exerted themselves to the utmost to crush this dangerous revolt in its infancy. For this purpose they repeatedly sent formidable armies against Judas, commanded by officers of consummate valour. The Maccabean hero, animated by religious confidence in God, was not alarmed by the vast superiority of numbers on

* 1 Maccabees ii. Josephus, p. 309.

† The motto on the standard of Judas was taken from Exodus xv. "Who is like unto thee among the Gods, O Jehovah!" which being written by an abbreviation formed the initial letters of the words put together, which made the artificial word Maccabees. Such at least is the national tradition concerning the origin of a name applied in its strict sense to persons enlisted under Judas and his brethren; but also more extensively to those who, before Judas raised his standard, had magnanimously braved death in the same religious cause. Particularly to those Jews recently tortured at Jerusalem by the merciless Antiochus Epiphanes, as well as those martyred 50 years before at Alexandria by the cruel Ptolemy Philopater.—*Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. p. 193. *Gillie's History*, vol. iii. p. 123.

‡ Encyclopedia.

the side of his enemies : but continued successfully to defend the laws and religion of his countrymen : and in one year defeated the Syrians in five battles. In the last of these engagements, the army which was raised by Lysias the Syrian governor, amounted to sixty-five thousand men. Judas gained a complete victory, obliged the troops who had escaped the sword to elude his vengeance by an ignominious flight, and their commander to abandon the enterprize, and return to Syria.*

B. C. 165.] Encouraged by this brilliant success, the victorious Maccabees marched to Jerusalem, destroyed the Syrian idols, repaired and purified the temple, replaced the sacred vessels; and divine worship, which had been interrupted for three years and an half, was resumed with the greatest splendour and solemnity. The temple, which was decked with a profusion of ornaments, was consecrated anew to the service of God, and an annual feast appointed to perpetuate the remembrance of this joyful event. But notwithstanding the triumphant success of Judas and his army, they were not able to expel the Syrians from their fortress on mount Acra, which was opposite to the temple; in order therefore to prevent the interruption of divine worship, they protected the sacred edifice by building high walls and lofty towers, which were supported by a powerful and vigilant garrison.†

The surrounding nations, exasperated at the re-establishment of the Jews, united against them, and

* For a particular account of the battles between the Syrians and Jews, see 1 Maccabees iii. iv.

† 1 Maccabees iv.

attacked them on all sides, being resolved to destroy every worshipper of Jehovah. But Judas and his valiant brothers repeatedly attacked and vanquished their forces with prodigious slaughter; reduced several of their principal places; and obtained the most complete success.*

In the mean time Antiochus, being on his return from an unsuccessful expedition against Persia, received the alarming news, that all the Jews had revolted, defeated his generals, expelled their armies from Judea, and restored the primitive worship. This intelligence filled him with such frantic rage, that he declared he would utterly extirpate every individual of the Jewish nation. These words were scarcely uttered, says the author of the book of Maccabees, when he was struck with a torturing and incurable disease, and was compelled to acknowledge, that his sufferings were justly inflicted by the God of Israel, whose people he had persecuted with unrelenting cruelty.

After having languished for some time in a miserable condition he expired, and his death freed the Jews from the most inveterate enemy they had ever known. Antiochus Eupater, his son and successor, continued to prosecute the war against the Jewish nation. †

Some time after the death of the tyrant, Judas laid close siege to the tower of Acra, which Appolonius had built to overlook the temple. The young king advanced to the relief of the garrison at the head of an hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand

* Rollin's Ancient History, vol. viii. †

† 2 Maccabees ix. Josephus, vol. iii. p. 69.



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[B. C. 162.] Onias, the son of Onias III. who was murdered in Antioch, being disappointed in not obtaining the high priesthood after the death of his uncle Menelaus, withdrew into Egypt. Indignant at the promotion of the unworthy Alcimus, he petitioned Ptolemy Philometer and Cleopatra his queen to permit him to build a temple for the Jews in that country, alleging that the prophet Isaiah had foretold that “there should be an *altar to the Lord in Egypt.*”* The king and queen granted his request, assigned a portion of land, and an adequate revenue for the purpose. The place chosen for erecting the temple was Heliopolis, or the city of the sun. It was built after the model of the temple at Jerusalem; but not on so large and magnificent a scale. Onias was made high priest; inferior priests and Levites were also appointed; and divine worship conducted as in the capital of Judea.†

Demetrius, son of Seleucus Philopater, and lawful heir to the crown, having put Antiochus Eupator to death, Alcimus, the apostate high priest, who upon being rejected by the Jews had become their implacable enemy, petitioned the new king to support his title. Demetrius at his instigation sent large armies under the command of Bacchides the governor of Mesopotamia, and Nicanor, governor of Judea. But the designs of both were frustrated by the valour and prudence of the Maccabees; and Nicanor, who had blasphemed the God of Israel, and threatened to destroy the temple, was slain in the engagement, and his army defeated with prodigious slaughter.‡

* Isaiah xix. 18, 19.

† Josephus, vol. iii. p. 59.

‡ Ibid.

Soon after this victory, Judas sent an embassy to Rome, and obtained an alliance with that powerful state! But previously to the return of the ambassador, Demetrius despatched Bacchides into Judea with the flower of his troops, consisting of twenty-two thousand men, to revenge the death of Nicanor, and establish Alcimus in the priesthood. At the approach of this formidable army, the soldiers of Judas, which amounted to only three thousand men, were intimidated to such a degree, that all left him except eight hundred. With this small force, which he exhorted in the most pathetic manner to die valiantly rather than desert, he broke the strongest wing of the idolatrous army; and chased the fleeing troops to Mount Azotus. But at length being surrounded on all sides, and overpowered by numbers, this heroic defender of his country fell, covered with honourable wounds, on heaps of his expiring enemies. His death was deeply lamented, and his heroic exploits deservedly celebrated.*

[B: C. 160.] The death of Judas filled his countrymen with the utmost consternation, while their enemies, inspired with fresh courage, reduced Jerusalem, put many of the adherents of the Maccabees to death, and reinstated Alcimus in the priesthood, which sacred office he perverted to the vilest purposes. Josephus observes, “that the calamities the Jews suffered at this time were equal to any they had experienced, since their return from Babylon.” But at length the impious high priest having presumed to break down one of the walls of the sanctuary, was suddenly cut off in the full career of his

* 1 Maccabees ix.

wickedness, and expired in agonies.* The party of Judas made the most strenuous exertions against their enemies, and unanimously chose Jonathan to succeed his brother as their prince and general. Under his direction the war was conducted with such energy and success, that the Syrians, disturbed by their own intestine divisions, solemnly engaged to refrain from further hostilities, and a treaty of peace was concluded.†

Immediately after the Syrian forces left Judea, Jonathan commenced a regular government, similar to that of the ancient Israelitish judges; he repaired the walls of Jerusalem, fortified the city, and made several important reformations in the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of his country. The increase of his reputation and success, induced the competitors for the Syrian monarchy to court his friendship; and as Demetrius had formerly persecuted the Jews, he joined the party of his rival Alexander Bela. With the unanimous consent of the people, he accepted the high priesthood from him; [B. C. 144.] that place having been vacant seven years from the death of Alcimus. Jonathan also formed an alliance with the Romans and Lacedemonians, and rendered himself formidable by his military achievements. But after he had governed the Jewish nation with equal pru-

* By the order of prophets Haggai and Zechariah, a low wall or inclosure was built round the sanctuary to separate the holy from the unholy; and the rule was, that within this no uncircumcised person was to enter. Alcimus, in order to give the Gentiles equal liberty with the Jews, to pass into the inner courts of the temple, ordered this wall of partition to be pulled down.—*Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. p. 264.

† *Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. p. 264.

dence and skill for about seventeen years, he and his children were treacherously put to death by Tryphon, a Syrian usurper, in the city of Ptolemais.* One thousand persons who attended him as guards were likewise assassinated.*

B. C. 143.] After the death of Jonathan, the leaders of the Jewish nation assembled at Jerusalem, and chose Simon, the only surviving son of Mattathias, for their general and high priest; and settled both the civil and sacerdotal power on his posterity. He imitated the valour and prudence which marked the conduct of his brother; repaired the fortresses of Judea; reduced and demolished the tower of Acra; renewed the treaty with the Romans; and sent an embassy to Demetrius, lawful heir of Syria, offering to acknowledge his sovereignty, and assist him in depriving the usurper Tryphon of the regal dignity. These proposals were cheerfully accepted by Demetrius; and a letter was returned, which constituted Simon sovereign prince and high priest of the Jewish nation; ordered all public acts to be made in his name, and released his territories from all foreign dominion. After the independent reign of Simon had commenced, he bravely defended his country; took Gaza and Joppa; restored peace to Jerusalem; beautified the sanctuary, and enforced obedience to the divine law. At length, however, [B. C. 135.] a period was put to his life and usefulness at the castle of his son-in-law, by whom he and two of his sons were treacherously murdered after he had governed the Jews eight years. †

* Whiston's Josephus, vol. v. p. 19. 1 Maccab. x—xiv. †

† 1 Maccabees xvi.

Immediately after Simon's death, Antiochus Sides, the then reigning king of Syria, marched to Palestine with a powerful army, and compelled the Jews to deliver their arms, demolish the fortifications of Jerusalem, and pay him an annual tribute. Not long after, this monarch was slain in an expedition against the Parthians; and the intestine commotions which distracted the kingdom after his death afforded Hyrcanus, the son and successor of Simon, an opportunity to enlarge his dominions, and deliver his country from the yoke of foreign power. His exertions were crowned with such complete success, that neither he nor his descendants were ever after subjected to the kings of Syria.*

He was also successful in his wars with the Idumeans, whom he compelled to renounce their idolatrous rites, or abandon their country; in consequence of which they lost their political existence, and became incorporated with the Jewish nation. The conqueror next turned his arms against the Samaritans; demolished their capital city, and the temple which was erected on Mount Gerizzim.†; Hyrcanus renewed the alliance which his predecessors made with the Romans, who were now rapidly advancing to the meridian of their power. And having subdued his enemies, and amassed prodigious treasure by his conquests, enjoyed his authority without disturbance, made Judea flourish under his wise administration, and raised his nation to a greater degree of splendour than it had ever enjoyed since the Babylonish captivity. His last days

* Whiston's Josephus, vol. v. p. 14. Frid. Conn. vol. ii. p. 325.

† Rollin's Ancient History.

were however embittered by a contest with the Pharisees,* who, at this time had acquired great power and popularity; and had incensed the king by calling in question his title to the high priesthood. Hyrcanus, however, after having enjoyed the royal authority twenty-nine years, died in peace, greatly beloved and lamented by the generality of the Jewish nation.†

Aristobulus, his eldest son, succeeded him both in the regal and sacerdotal dignities. He was the first after the Babylonian captivity who assumed a diadem, and the title of king. The commencement of his reign was marked with several acts of despotic cruelty. He even put his own mother to death, because she aspired to the government; and imprisoned his brothers, one of whom he also caused to be slain upon an unjust suspicion. During his government the Itureans, who inhabited the north easterly parts of Galilee, were attacked and van-

* Learned men differ respecting the origin of the Pharisees. Some suppose that they arose about an hundred and fifty years before the appearance of our Saviour. Josephus, who was himself of this sect, speaks of it as flourishing in the time of Jonathan the high priest. The dissensions between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, a little before the Christian era, increased the number and power of the Pharisees. Hillel, having acquired a profound knowledge of the most difficult points of the Jewish law, became master of the chief school in Jerusalem, and laid the foundation of the Talmud. Shammai, one of his disciples, deserted his school, and formed a college, in which he taught doctrines contrary to his master. He rejected the oral law, and followed the moral only in its literal sense. These different schools long disturbed the Jewish church by violent commotions. However, the party of Hillel was at last victorious.—*Enfield's Philosophy*. See also Section V. for a further account of this denomination.

† Josephus, vol. v. p. 19.

quished. After a short reign the tyrant expired, filled with the utmost horror and remorse of conscience.*

B. C. 105.] Alexander Janneus, brother of Aristobulus, being liberated from prison, ascended the throne. This martial prince defeated the Philistines, and compelled them to receive circumcision.† He also achieved other brilliant conquests in Arabia, Gilead, and Moabitis. During his reign, however, the Jews were in a very miserable condition, being not only involved in foreign wars, but distracted by intestine commotions. The powerful party of the Pharisees, who detested him for enforcing his father's decrees against their constitutions, exerted themselves to the utmost to vilify his government, and exasperate the people against him. Their malicious attempts gave rise to a civil war which lasted six years, involved both parties in innumerable calamities, and occasioned the death of more than fifty thousand persons. At length Alexander having in vain endeavoured to effect a reconciliation, gained the victory in a decisive battle, and punished his enemies with the utmost severity. The king died in the 27th year of his reign, after he had bequeathed the government to his wife Alexandria, whom he appointed guardian to the young princes.

When the queen ascended the throne, in compliance with the advice which she received from her

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 19.

† The practice of obliging the nations, who were conquered by the Jews, to quit their country, or embrace the Mosaic religion, was invariably followed by the Asmonean princes.—*Rollin's Ancient History*, vol. ix. p. 221.



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tobulus, and kept him closely besieged in Jerusalem.*

[B. C. 65.] In this situation of affairs, Aristobulus implored the protection of the Romans, and his petition being accompanied with large presents, effectually answered his purpose, and induced the republic to write to Arétas, commanding him to raise the siege, and leave the country. The Arabian prince obeyed the injunction, and Aristobulus escaped from his confinement, and gratified his vindictive rage by the destruction of his enemies.†

Some time after this event, the two brothers sent ambassadors to Pompey, at that time commander in chief of all the Roman forces in the east, and chose him the arbitrator of their mutual differences.

The Roman general heard each party with apparent impartiality, and dismissed them with a promise, that he would embrace an early opportunity of deciding the controversy. Aristobulus, offended at the delay, and suspecting Pompey favoured his brother, made formidable preparations for war. Exasperated at this, and other parts of his conduct, the Roman commander caused him to be imprisoned, and marched with his whole army against Jerusalem.‡

Though the gates of the city were readily opened by Hyrcanus's party, yet the faction of Aristobulus took shelter in the temple, and resolved to defend themselves to the last extremity. Pompey therefore closely besieged them; and the superstitious rigour, with which the Jews observed the sabbath, facilitated

* Josephus, vol. i. p. 28. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. vol. v. p. 30.

the conquest of their metropolis. For though, since the commencement of the Maccabean war, they had agreed to defend themselves on that holy day, when actually attacked, they still thought it unlawful to prevent the works of the enemy. The Romans therefore were unmolested, while they employed themselves in preparations for an attack on the sabbath, and made themselves masters of the city after a siege of three months. A terrible slaughter ensued, in which more than twelve thousand persons were killed, and many perished by suicide. During these horrid transactions, the priests, who were offering sacrifices, continued their devotions with great composure, and suffered themselves to be murdered before the altar without any resistance. Their constancy excited the astonishment and admiration of the conqueror.*

Jerusalem was reduced on that very day, which the Jews observe as a solemn fast for the taking of the city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar. After Pompey had completed the conquest of Jerusalem, his curiosity induced him to examine every part of the temple. Accompanied with some of his superior officers, he even penetrated into the holy of holies. But he left the treasures of the sacred edifice untouched, and ordered the priests to make a solemn purification, and offer sacrifices according to the Mosaic institutions.†

* Rollin's *Ancient History*, vol. iv. p. 293.

† Josephus, vol. v. p. 31—33.

SECTION IV.

Sketch of the history of the Jews, from the conquest of Pompey to the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. C. 63.] JÓSEPHUS and Tacitus date the loss of the liberty of the Jews, and the translation of the sovereign authority to the Romans, from the reduction of Jerusalem by Pompey. For though Hyrcanus was restored to the pontifical dignity with the title of prince, he was deprived of the ensigns of royalty, and condemned to pay a disgraceful tribute. His dominions were also reduced to narrower limits; for Pompey restored to Cœlo Syria all the towns taken by the Jews, gave liberty to Samaria and other maritime towns, and strictly prohibited him from attempting any new conquests. To prevent future revolts, the Roman general commanded the walls of Jerusalem to be demolished; and, after regulating the government of Judea according to his pleasure, returned to Rome, Aristobulus and his sons Alexander and Antigonus being sent prisoners to that city to adorn his future triumph.*

B. C. 57.] From this period, for many years, civil dissensions and desolating wars raged in Judea. Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, found means to escape from Rome, and appeared in that country at the head of a formidable army. Hyrcanus had left the management of affairs to Antipater, who, having used every artifice to ingratiate himself with the Romans, was enabled, by their assistance, to suppress

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 34.

the rebellion. Some time after, Aristobulus obtained his liberty, and joined the discontented party in Palestine. But his attempts were frustrated; and he was again committed to prison. A few years after, Julius Cæsar set him at liberty, in order to gain his assistance against Pompey; and both he and his son Alexander were put to death by the partizans of that famous general.*

B. C. 52.] About this time Crassus, the Roman governor of Syria, invaded the Parthians; and on his march against that nation stopped at Jerusalem, and stimulated by his insatiable avarice, seized the sacred treasures in the temple. The wealth he acquired by this sacrilegious pillage is said to have been upwards of two millions sterling. But the vengeance of heaven overtook him; for he was soon after defeated and slain by the Parthians.†

B. C. 48.] Meantime the power and influence of Antipater rapidly increased. Julius Cæsar, who after the death of Pompey usurped the supreme authority at Rome, rewarded the services he had rendered him in the Egyptian war, by making him lieutenant of Judea, and honouring him with the title of a Roman citizen. He also confirmed Hyrcanus in the priesthood, gave liberty to fortify the city, and repair the walls of Jerusalem, which Pompey had demolished, and bestowed such signal favours upon the Jews, that during his life, they could scarcely be said to feel the Roman yoke.

At this time Antipater procured the government of Jerusalem for his eldest son Phasaël, and that of Galilee for his second son Herod.‡

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 37—40. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. p. 43.

During the domestic calamities, which engaged the attention of the Romans upon the assassination of Julius Cæsar, Hyrcanus was deprived of his authority by his nephew Antigonus, who, after making vigorous efforts, in which he was assisted by the Parthians, recovered the kingdom. Hyrcanus and Phasael were thrown into a dungeon; but Herod escaped destruction by a precipitate flight. He first took refuge in Egypt, from whence he repaired to Rome for assistance, and by the powerful patronage of Mark Anthony, who was then in the zenith of his power, was inaugurated king of Judea. Soon after he entered Palestine with a numerous army, and subdued Galilee. He was however repulsed at Jerusalem with great slaughter; but being reinforced by Sosias, governor of Syria, he made himself master of the city, after an obstinate siege of six months. The immediate consequence was a cruel pillage and massacre, which was followed by the death of Antigonus the son of Aristobulus. Thus ended the reign of the Asmonean family, after a duration of an hundred and twenty nine years from the beginning of the government of Judas Maccabeus.*

Upon the entire reduction of the holy city, Herod, a stranger and Idumean, ascended the throne of Judea.

Herod, who proved one of the greatest tyrants ever recorded in history, commenced his reign with a cruel persecution of the adherents of Antigonus: the most affluent among them he caused to be put to death, and confiscated their estates in order to re-

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 43.

plenish his empty coffers. The tyrant, decoyed Hyrcanus from Parthia, where he had fled for shelter; and, contrary to the most solemn engagements, caused him to be assassinated. Aristobulus, the grandson of Hyrcanus, who was appointed high priest, was drowned in a bath by his contrivance. Mariamne, his queen, who descended from the illustrious Asmonean family, and was distinguished for her beauty, virtue, and accomplishments, fell the next victim to his resentment and jealousy. Three of his sons, in the course of his tyrannical reign, were condemned to suffer death. He sacrificed his friends as well as foes to his ungovernable fury, oppressed the people in the most cruel and arbitrary manner, and exhausted the treasures of the nation by his boundless extravagance.*

After Herod had destroyed the greatest part of his supposed enemies, he began to exhibit a marked contempt for the Jewish religion and laws. From the beginning of his reign to the final destruction of the temple, the high priests had no hereditary right; but were set up and removed at his pleasure, and that of his successors. He also destroyed the authority of the grand sanhedrim,† and burnt the Jewish records, that he might be thought originally an Israelite. He built temples in the Grecian taste, erected statues for idolatrous worship, consecrated a superb theatre and amphitheatre, to celebrate games in honour of Augustus, adopted in his ordinary habits

* Josephus.

† Herod had been obliged to appear before the grand sanhedrim, in order to answer for his conduct, previously to his obtaining the regal dignity; and from a principle of revenge he attacked the assembly, which by degrees lost its power.

Roman manners and usages, and in his public capacity was absolutely devoted and subservient to the Romans.

Under the administration, and through the influence of this tyrant, the Roman luxury was introduced into Palestine, accompanied with all the vices of that licentious people. In a word, Judea, governed by Herod, groaned under all the corruption, which might be expected from the authority and example of a prince, who though a Jew in outward profession, was, in point of morals and practice, a contemner of all laws human and divine.*

[B. C. 23.] After Herod had amassed a prodigious treasure by his cruel extortions and confiscations, he proposed to regain the favour of the Jewish nation by repairing the temple; and for eight or nine years employed upon it eighteen thousand workmen, who at last completed the stupendous design. The magnificent structure, which he erected, is said, in some respects, to have even exceeded the first temple, which was built by Solomon.† Rising in all its grandeur from the summit of a mountain, it commanded an extensive prospect; its appearance, says Josephus, exhibited every thing, that could strike the mind and astonish the sight. It was on every side covered with solid plates of gold, and, when the sun arose upon it,

* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 31. *Horæ Biblicæ*.

† It was built of hard white stones of prodigious magnitude. Hence, the disciples expressed their admiration of its grandeur, and of the large and magnificent stones, of which it was erected, Mark xiii. 1.—See *Harwood's Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 158.



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every country, except Judea, the predominant, and almost universal religion. The Roman empire under Augustus had attained the zenith of its power: while the pagan nations, who composed this vast monarchy, exhibited the most glaring picture of human depravity; and the Jewish state, and true religion, were almost at the lowest ebb. Just before our Saviour was born, the temple of Janus was shut, to intimate that the nations of the earth were at peace. This remarkable peace, after so many ages of tumult and war, was a fit prelude to the introduction of the glorious prince of peace into the world.*

The malicious attempt of Herod to involve the Saviour of the world in the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem is recorded by the sacred history.† The tyrant died the following year in exquisite tortures. During his illness he sent for the heads of the most eminent families in Judea, confined them, and left orders, that, as soon as he had breathed his last they should all be put to the sword, to oblige the nation to go in mourning at his death. He expired soon after, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign; the sentence was not executed; and the nation rejoiced at their deliverance.‡

After the death of Herod, the Roman emperor divided the kingdom of Judea between his sons. The brothers, for some years, governed Palestine without any open rebellion or disturbance. But Archelaus, who obtained half the kingdom, under the title of exarch, proved so corrupt and wicked a prince, that both Jews and Samaritans sent ambas-

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 16. † Matthew xi.

‡ Josephus, vol. v. p. 154.

sadors to accuse him to Augustus. The emperor deposed and banished him for his tyrannical conduct; and reduced Judea to the form of a Roman province; to be ruled by procurators, who were to be appointed and recalled at the pleasure of the reigning monarch. The power of life and death was taken from the Jews; their taxes were regularly gathered by the publicans; and justice was from that time administered in the name, and by the laws of Rome.*

SECTION V.

Of the different denominations among the Jews at the time of Christ's appearance upon earth.

THOUGH the Jewish nation, at the time of our Saviour's appearance, retained the worship of the true God, they had grossly perverted their religion, by exalting the traditions of their ancestors above the clear and positive injunctions of their law; and while they presumed to infringe the strongest moral obligations, they were scrupulously exact in performing the most minute and trifling ceremonies, which were enjoined by their rabbies. The ultimate object of many, was to obtain popular applause; hence they publicly displayed all the parade of ostentatious charity, and were privately guilty of the

* The precise year, when this event took place, it may be difficult to ascertain; but the judicial forms which were observed on the trial and condemnation of our Saviour, and the acclamation of the Jews, "We have no king but Cæsar," irrefragably shew that it had arrived. *Horæ Biblicæ*, p. 42. This event illustrates the celebrated prophecy of Jacob, Genesis xlix. 10. The generality of interpreters, Jewish as well as Christian, have by Shiloh understood the Messiah.

greatest extortion and cruelty. Yet, elated with spiritual pride, they considered themselves as the only favourites of heaven, and excluded all other nations from the hopes of eternal life.*

. During Christ's ministry on earth the temple was used as a place of merchandize, and the most sacred offices, even the high priesthood, were sold. The chief priests, who purchased their places by bribes, maintained their ill acquired authority by the most abominable crimes. The inferior priests, and those who possessed any degree of authority, had become dissolute and abandoned in the highest degree: while the multitude, excited by their corrupt example, ran headlong into every kind of iniquity, and, by their seditions, robberies, and extortions, armed against themselves both the justice of God and vengeance of man.

The Jewish nation, at the time of our Saviour's appearance, were divided into a great variety of sects. The principal points in dispute among them respected the law of Moses, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, future rewards and punishments, and the nature of virtue. All admitted the divine authority of the Mosaic law. All agreed in thinking, that their religious tenets and observances were the only objects worthy of their attention. †

The rabbies, or the teachers of each sect, defended their tenets with the greatest zeal and pertinacity. The Jews and Samaritans were, in particular, violently opposed to each other. The latter, at first,

* Harwood's Introduction, vol. i. p. 108, 109. Mosheim.

† Prideaux's Connection, vol. i. p. 353. Horæ Bibliæ.

were heathens, who worshipped the God of Israel, in conjunction with other deities, till Menasses, who was made their high priest, with other fugitive Jews, coming to them from Jerusalem, brought with them the book of the law, and taught them to worship the true God only, according to the Mosaic institution. From this period they are considered a sect of the Jewish religion. They looked upon the temple of Gerizzim, as the only place where God was pleased to be worshipped, and the centre of true religion. They received no scriptures except the books of Moses, Joshua, and Judges, which two latter, however, they did not allow to be of divine authority like the Pentateuch.*

The Pharisees were the most distinguished, flourishing, and popular sect among the Jews. They assumed this name on account of their separating themselves for superior strictness in ritual observances. Their separation consisted chiefly in certain distinctions respecting religious ceremonies, and does not appear to have interrupted the uniformity of religious worship, in which the Jews of every sect always seem to have been united.†

It appears, from the frequent mention which is made by the evangelists of the scribes and pharisees in conjunction, that the greatest number of Jewish teachers, or doctors of the law, were at that time of the pharisaical sect. The ecclesiastical scribes were the learned of the Jewish nation, who expounded the law, and taught it to the people.‡

The Pharisees were principally distinguished by

* Basnage, p. 115. † Jennings' Jewish Antiquities, vol. i. p. 437.

‡ Jennings' Jewish Antiquities, p. 392.

their zeal for the traditions of the elders, which they not only maintained to be of equal authority with the written law, but in many cases explained the latter by the former, entirely contrary to its true intent and meaning ; and thus made the *commandments of God of no effect by their traditions*. They pretended that those traditions, which they called the oral law, were delivered by God to Moses, on Mount Sinai, and preserved through successive generations. They were charged with maintaining, that by observing both the written and oral law, man may not only obtain justification before God, but perform meritorious works of supererogation ; that fasting, alms, ablutions, and confessions, are sufficient atonement for sin ; that thoughts and desires are not sinful, unless they produce evil actions. They acknowledged the immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, and the resurrection of the body.* According to Josephus, they maintained the doctrine of predestination ; but supposed, that the divine decrees did not interfere with the freedom of the human will.†

* Dr. Prideaux supposes that the Pharisees maintained only a Pythagorean resurrection, that is, the transmigration of the soul into another body. David Levi, on the other hand, asserts, that the Pharisees knew and taught the true resurrection of the body and soul together. For proof of this, he quotes Ezekiel xxxvii, and other passages in the Old Testament. Whence he asserts, that “ the doctrine of the resurrection, and consequently that of a future state of rewards and punishments, was well known and established in the Jewish nation, (and that in the most clear, explicit, and unequivocal manner) for almost a thousand years before Christ.”—*David Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews*, pp. 255—261.

† They maintained, that “ before a man is born, it is predestinated, whether he shall be wise or foolish, weak or strong, rich or

This denomination, by their apparent sanctity of manners, had rendered themselves extremely popular. It appears both from the scripture, and the testimony of Josephus, that the common people were entirely at their disposal, and gave their suffrage to every religious prescription and judicial sentence, that had obtained their sanction. The great, who feared their artifice, were frequently obliged to court their favour. Hence they obtained the highest offices both in the state and priesthood; and assumed the chief direction both of public and private affairs.*

The peculiar manners of this sect are strongly marked in the writings of the evangelists; particularly their exactness in performing the rites and ceremonies of the law, both written and traditionary; the rigour of their discipline in washings, fastings, and ablutions; their scrupulous care to avoid every kind of ritual impurity: their long and frequent prayers, made not only in the synagogues and temples, but in the public streets; their phylacteries on the borders of their garments, on which were written sentences of the law; their assiduity in making proselytes; their ostentatious charities; and, under all this specious mark of zeal and purity, their abominable and atrocious vices. According to our Saviour's representation of them, they were a race of the most demure hypocrites that ever disgraced human nature, resembling whited sepulchres, which

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poor. But whether he is to be wicked or righteous, vicious or virtuous, is entirely in his own free will."—*David Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews*, p. 267.

* Josephus.

outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of putrefaction.*

The above account is confirmed by the testimony of the Jewish writers themselves. The Talmudic books mention several distinct classes of Pharisees, under characters, which show them to have been deeply immersed in superstition. Among these were the truncated Pharisee, who, that he might appear in profound meditation, as if destitute of feet, scarcely lifted them from the ground; the mortar Pharisee, who, that his contemplations might not be disturbed, wore a deep cap in shape of a mortar, which would only permit him to look upon the ground at his feet; and the striking Pharisee, who, shutting his eyes, as he walked, to avoid the sight of women, often struck his head against the wall. They practised many painful austerities and mortifications, frequently observed severe fasts, covered their features with gloom and solemnity, and used every artifice to captivate the admiration of the populace. †

The sect of the Sadducees was inconsiderable in number; but some of those who professed its tenets, were of illustrious families, and others distinguished for their opulence. We find that Caiaphas, an high priest, was of this denomination, and Josephus mentions several other Sadducees, who were exalted to the supreme power in church and state. The chief heads of the doctrine of this sect are as follow.

All laws and traditions not comprehended in the written law, are to be rejected as merely human

* Harwood's Introduction.

† Godwin's Jewish Antiq. p. 45. Enfield's Philos. vol. ii. p. 181.



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from politics and public affairs, but, as much as the nature of man and constitution of society will admit, from the common concerns and intercourse of private life. Some suppose they took their rise, from the dispersion of their nation; after the Babylonish captivity; others, that they began when the persecútion of Antiochùs compelled the Jews to retire to the woods and mountains. They maintained, that rewards and punishments extended to the soul alone, and regarded the body as a mass of malignant matter, and the prison of the immortal spirit. The greatest part of this sect considered the laws of Moses as an allegorical system of spiritual and mysterious truth, and renounced all regard to the outward letter in its explanation. The leading traits in the character of this sect were, that they were sober, abstemious, peaceable, lovers of retirement, and had a perfect community of goods. They paid the highest regard to the moral precepts of the law; but neglected the ceremonial, excepting what regarded personal cleanliness, the observation of the sabbath, and making an annual present to the temple at Jerusalem. They commonly lived in a state of celibacy, and adopted the children of others, to educate them in their own principles and customs. Though they were, in general, averse to swearing, or to requiring an oath, they bound all, whom they initiated, by the most sacred vows, to observe the duties of piety, justice, fidelity, and modesty: to conceal the secrets of the fraternity; to preserve the books of their institutions; and with great care to commemorate the names of the angels.*

* Enfield, vol. ii. p. 186. Jennings' Lectures, vol. i. p. 170.

Philo mentions two classes of Essenes; one of which followed a practical institution; the other professed a theoretical system. The latter, who were called Therapeutæ, placed their whole felicity in the contemplation of the divine nature. Detaching themselves entirely from secular affairs, they transferred their property to their relations and friends, and retired to solitary places, where they devoted themselves to an holy life. The principal society of this kind was formed near Alexandria; where they lived not far from each other, in separate cottages, each of which had its own sacred apartments, to which the inhabitants retired for the purposes of devotion.*

Besides these eminent Jewish sects, there were several of inferior note, at the time of Christ's appearance; the Herodians, mentioned by the sacred writers, and the Gaulonites, by Josephus.

The Herodians derived their name from Herod the Great, and were distinguished by their coinciding with the plan of that monarch to subject himself and his dominions to the Romans; and also by complying with many of the heathen usages. Their distinguished tenet appeared to be, that it is lawful, when constrained by superiors, to comply with idolatry, and with false religion. Herod seems to have formed this sect, in order to justify himself in his practice of studying every artifice to ingratiate himself with the emperor, and to secure the favour of the principal personages in the court of Rome. We find the Sadducees readily embraced the tenets of this party; for the same persons, who, in one of

* Enfield, vol. ii. p. 186.

the gospels, are called Herodians, are in another styled Sadducees. The Herodians were not so much a religious, as a political sect, attached to Herod during his life, and to his sons after his decease.*

The Gaulonites were Galileans, who derived this name from one Judas Theudas, a native of Gaulon, in Upper Galilee; who, in the tenth year of Jesus Christ, excited his countrymen, the Galileans, and many other Jews, to take arms, and venture upon all extremities, rather than pay tribute to the Romans. The principles he instilled into his party were, not only that they were a free nation, and ought not to be in subjection to any other; but, that they were the elect of God, that he alone was their governor, and that therefore they ought not to submit to any ordinance of man. Though Theudas was unsuccessful, and his party, in their very first attempt; entirely routed and dispersed; yet so deeply had he infused his own enthusiasm into their hearts, that they never rested, till they involved the city and temple in their own destruction.†

Many of the Jews were attached to the oriental philosophy concerning the origin of the world. From this source the doctrine of the Cabala is supposed to be derived. That considerable numbers of the Jews had imbibed this system, appears evident, both from the books of the New Testament, and from the ancient history of the christian church. It is also certain, that many of the Gnostic sects were founded by Jews.‡

* Josephus. Prideaux's Connection. † Josephus.

‡ Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 38.

At the time when our Lord Jesus Christ appeared upon earth, the great body of the Jewish nation were waiting with great anxiety for their promised Messiah. Yet they formed erroneous ideas of his character. They expected not a spiritual, but a temporal sovereign. They supposed he would manifest himself as a mighty conqueror, free them from subjection to the Romans, aggrandize their nation, render Jerusalem the metropolis of the world; and, after subduing all their enemies, commence a glorious reign of prosperity and peace. Hence they were disgusted with the humble appearance of the divine Redeemer; while the Pharisees and great men were exasperated at the boldness and severity of his rebukes. For though he united in himself the accomplishment of every ancient prophecy, he was ignominiously rejected and put to death by the Jewish nation. The tremendous calamities which befell them after perpetrating this horrid crime; the fulfilment of our Saviour's predictions, respecting the destruction of their city and temple, and their consequent dispersion and sufferings, will be related in the following pages.

HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

CHAPTER I.

Tyranny of the Roman government in Judea.—Herod Agrippa made king.—The emperor Caligula attempts to have his statue placed in the temple of Jerusalem.—Resistance of the Jews.—Death of Herod Agrippa.—Arbitrary conduct of the Roman governors.—Many Jews depart for foreign countries.—Number of Jews in Jerusalem at the Passover.—The prodigies which preceded the war.—Of the contest respecting the city of Cesarea.—Jews and Syrians take up arms.—Vast numbers destroyed on both sides.—The Jews take several important fortresses.—Cestius Gallus marches against them; and besieges Jerusalem.—The Christians retire to Pella.—Jews make great preparations for war.—Vespasian is sent against them with a powerful army.—He reduces the cities of Galilee.—Of the parties among the Jews.—Of the civil war in Jerusalem; and the cruelty of the Zealots.—Vespasian is proclaimed emperor, and sends his son Titus to terminate the war by the reduction of Jerusalem.

THE ministry of our blessed Saviour, while he remained on earth, was principally confined to the Jews; and notwithstanding the obstinate incredulity of the majority of the nation, who, impatient under the tyrannical government of the Romans, eagerly expected a temporal deliverer, a large number acknowledged him as the true Messiah. The apostles also, in obedience to the command of their divine Master, began to preach the Gospel to this distinguished people. Under their ministry

many were converted, and the first Christian church was founded at Jerusalem. But the unbelieving Jews, who had rejected and crucified the *Prince of Life*, exhibited the same enmity against his apostles and followers, and, in the infancy of the Christian Church, they were its most cruel persecutors.* The most signal marks of divine vengeance, however, soon pursued this infatuated people; and the predictions of the Divine Redeemer, respecting the tremendous destruction of Jerusalem, began to be accomplished.

The governors of Judea, appointed by the Romans, constantly insulted the feelings of the Jews, by exhibiting a marked contempt for their religion and law. Pontius Pilate, during his administration, took every occasion of introducing his standards, with images, pictures, consecrated shields, &c. into their city; and at length attempted to drain the treasury of the temple, under pretence of bringing an aqueduct to Jerusalem. Seven years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, complaint being made of the tyranny and rapine of Pilate, he was superseded, and, in extreme poverty and misery, perished by suicide at Vienne in France.†

Soon after, Herod Agrippa, grandson to Herod the Great, was promoted to the regal dignity; and, during his reign, the Jews were involved in new difficulties. The Roman emperor, Caligula, intoxi-

* The early ecclesiastical historians, as well as the New Testament writers, attest the enmity of the Jews against the Christians, and, that they were more particularly exasperated against those believers, who were of their own nation.

† Josephus, vol. v.



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Felix, who had advanced from obscurity and servitude to rank and power; with the true spirit of a slave, exercised the tyranny of an eastern prince.† His oppression, rapine, and cruelty, excited a spirit of revolt; while the false prophets (who were so numerous under his government, that some of them were apprehended and killed every day) were continually blowing the flames of sedition. The people were massacred by the troops of Felix for following these deceivers, who, according to our Saviour's prediction, drew multitudes into the desert, to shew them signs and wonders. In particular, a certain Egyptian Jew, entered Judea with a numerous banditti, and, having collected about thirty thousand men, led them to Mount Olivet, and promised to deliver them from the Romans. Felix, with his legions, met him at the foot of the mountain, slew many of his followers, and took others prisoners. The impostor, with a remnant of his adherents, made their escape.‡

Judea, during the government of Felix, was infested with robbers, and clandestine assassins, named Sicarii, who, with poiniards concealed under their garments, used to mingle in the crowd, and stab their supposed enemies.§ By the just judgment of heaven, the Jews, who had crucified their Messiah, and desired a robber and murderer to be granted to them, had their country overrun with robbers and

* Josephus's Wars of the Jews, vol. v. p. 184.

† Tacitus.

‡ This is supposed to have happened in the year of Christ 55.

§ Josephus, vol. v. p. 184, 185.

murderers ; and the frequency of the horrid assassinations among them, excited universal consternation.

Porcius Festus, who succeeded Felix upon his removal from the government, supported a better character than his predecessor. At the commencement of his administration, the assassins were spreading terror throughout Jerusalem. He punished these wretches with exemplary severity, and exerted himself to the utmost to suppress the civil discords, which, in consequence of the extravagant claims, and frequent depositions of the Jewish pontiffs, raged among the priests, and filled the country, the city, and sometimes the temple, with blood.*

Festus died in his government, and the Roman emperor Nero sent Albinus in his room. Insatiable avarice being his ruling passion, he burdened the nation with extraordinary tributes ; and became the encourager of all kinds of villany, by yielding to bribery and corruption.†

Gessius Florius, who succeeded Albinus, far surpassed him in wickedness ; and gloried in his greater violence. He even robbed the sacred treasury, pillaged whole provinces, oppressed the Jews by all kinds of rapine and extortion, encouraged the robbery and plunder of the banditti, for a share of their booty ; fomented the public divisions ; and even used his utmost exertions to excite an open rebellion, in hopes, that the public confusion might prevent complaint against his iniquitous conduct. In a word, he was one of the vilest wretches, that ever disgraced

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 186. Mavor's Univ. Hist. vol. ii. p. 347. &

† Josephus, vol. v. p. 186.

human nature; and a distinguished instrument of divine vengeance upon the subjects of his capricious tyranny.*

In consequence of the distracted state of Judea, many of its inhabitants sought an asylum in foreign countries; while those who remained, applied to Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, who was at Jerusalem, at the passover, earnestly beseeching him to deliver them from the tyranny of their cruel governor. Cestius, instead of making a strict inquiry into the conduct of Florus, dismissed the Jews, with a general promise, that he should behave better for the future. In the meantime directions were given to compute the number of Jews then at Jerusalem, by that of the lambs offered at the festival, which were found to amount to 2,556,000.†

A. D. 65.] While the arbitrary conduct of the governor, and the irritated state of the Jewish people, threatened them with the horrors of war; famines, earthquakes, and terrific sights in the heavens, appeared to fulfil the awful predictions of our Saviour. Josephus, among many other fearful prodigies, relates, that before the rebellion, when a great multitude were assembled in Jerusalem, at the Passover, at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar, and the temple, that it seemed to be bright day; that a few days after the festival, before sun-set, chariots and troops of soldiers in armour were seen passing through the clouds, and surrounding cities; and that the priests, going into the inner temple, felt the place move

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 187.

† Ibid.

and tremble, and heard a voice, more than human, crying, "Let us depart hence."*

This account is confirmed by Tacitus, the Roman historian, who says, "Portents and prodigies announced the ruin of Jerusalem; swords were seen glittering in the air; embattled armies appeared; and the temple was illuminated by a stream of light, that issued from the heavens, the portal flew open, and a voice more than human announced the immediate departure of the gods; there was heard at the same time a terrific sound, as if superior beings were actually rushing forth."†

A contest had long subsisted between the Jews and Syrians concerning Cesarea, which was situated in the confines of Syria and Judea. The Jews maintained, that the city belonged to them, because it was built by Herod their king; while the Syrians pretended, that it had always been considered as a Grecian city, since even that monarch had erected in it temples and statues. During the administration of Felix, the contest rose to such a height, that both parties armed against each other. That governor allayed the ferment for a time, by sending some of the chiefs of both nations to Rome to plead their

* Josephus, vol. v. See Archbishop Newcome's Observations on the character of our Lord, for an admirable detail of these events.

† Murphy's Tacitus. Dr. Jortin remarks, that "if Christ had not expressly foretold, that there *should be fearful sights, and great signs from heaven*, many, who give little heed to portents, and know that historians have been too credulous in this point, would have suspected that Josephus had exaggerated, and that Tacitus was misinformed: but, as the testimonies of Josephus and Tacitus confirm the predictions of Christ, so the predictions of Christ confirm the wonders related by these historians."—*Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.*

cause before the emperor. The affair hung in suspense till this period, when Nero decided it against the Jews. This event was the immediate cause of the fatal war with the Romans, which proved the most desperate of any recorded in history; and terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem.*

[A. D. 66.] The decree of the emperor was no sooner published, than the Jews, in all parts of the country, took up arms; Agrippa,† who happened to be at Jerusalem at the commencement of the war, attempted to appease the fury of the multitude by an elaborate speech, in which he painted, in glowing colours, the vast extent and grandeur of the Roman empire; the mighty nations who had been subdued by its all-conquering arms; the folly and infatuation of the Jews in opposing the masters of the world; and concluded by a pathetic exhortation to his country-men, to lay down the weapons of their rebellion. But his entreaties and remonstrances were alike disregarded; and he was compelled to provide for his personal safety by quitting the city.‡

The flames of intestine war now raged with irresistible fury in every part of the unhappy province, and its progress was marked by acts of cruelty and

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 188.

† He was the son of Agrippa, great grand son to Herod, and king of Chalcis. He resided chiefly at Jerusalem, and obtained the administration of the temple, and a right to appoint or depose the high priests. When the high priest Ananus, had condemned St. James to death, some Jews who disapproved of this cruelty, complained to Agrippa, and this prince deprived him of the high priesthood. He, with his sister Bernice, heard St. Paul's defence before Festus, the Roman governor, and he owned himself almost convinced by it. See Acts xxv. 26. *Basnage's History of the Jews*, p. 23.

‡ Josephus, vol. v. p. 215.

desperation. Twenty thousand Jews were massacred at Cesarea, fifty-two thousand at Alexandria, two thousand at Ptolemais, and three thousand five hundred were cut off at Jerusalem by the troops of Florus in one day. The Jews, to the utmost of their power, exercised similar cruelties on the Syrians and Romans, and slaughtered immense numbers of people.*

The rebellious Jews being joined in Jerusalem by numerous assassins, with their assistance beat the Romans out of the fortresses of Antonia and Massada, possessed themselves of the towers of Phasaël and Mariamne, and reduced the palaces of Agrippa, Bernice, and the high priest to ashes. They even carried their fury to such a height, as to massacre those Romans, who had capitulated on condition of having their lives preserved. Their treachery was, however, soon revenged on the Jews in Sythopolis, who had offered to assist in reducing their factious brethren. For their sincerity being suspected, above thirteen thousand of their number were inhumanly massacred. The rebels, in the mean time, crossed the Jordan, and took the fortresses of Machærus and Cyprus; the latter of which, after putting all the Romans to the sword, was razed to the ground.†

Upon the general revolt of the Jews, Cestius Gallus, president of Syria, marched at the head of a powerful army into Judea and Galilee, burning all the towns and villages in his way, and slaughtering the inhabitants. He was met at Gibeon, a city about six miles from Jerusalem, by large numbers of Jews, who attacked him with such fury, that his whole

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 215.

† Ibid.

army was in danger. Agrippa, who joined him with a body of troops, endeavoured once more to appease his rebellious countrymen by sending two of his officers to them with proposals of peace. But after they had killed one of his officers and wounded the other, Cestius advanced with his whole army, repulsed the rebels, and made himself master of the lower parts of Jerusalem.* Josephus says, “If Cestius had continued the siege a little longer, he would have taken the city; but God being angry with the wicked, would not suffer the war to be terminated at that time.” But Cestius suddenly and unexpectedly raised the siege at the instigation of some of his officers, who, it is said, were bribed by Florus. Emboldened by this impolitic step, the insurgents pursued Cestius to his camp at Gibeon, from whence he escaped by night, with the loss of upwards of five thousand of his army.†

It is recorded by an ancient historian,‡ that the Christians abandoned Jerusalem at this awful period. Having called to mind the warning of their divine Master, that, when they should see Jerusalem encompassed about with armies, and the abomination of desolation (the Roman army with their idolatrous images §) standing in the holy place, they should

* About A. D. 67.

† Josephus.

‡ Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, Book iii. chap. 5.

§ “The Roman armies are styled, *the abomination of desolation*, because they not only spread desolation before them, but were held in the utmost abhorrence by the Jews, on account of the images of their gods and emperors, which they carried in their standards, by which they swore, and to which they sacrificed. The usual ornaments of these standards gave such offence to the Jews, that, in peaceable times, the Romans entered Jerusalem without them: and Vitellius, at the request of some eminent Jews, humanely avoided



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rank, and the celebrated writer of the antiquities and wars of the Jews, was appointed governor of the two Galilees.

Nero, the Roman emperor, who had received intelligence of the defeat of Cestius, and was alarmed at the energetic measures which were taken by the Jews, commanded Vespasian, an officer of distinguished prudence and bravery, to march with all possible expedition into Judea. Accordingly, that commander employed himself in raising forces; and his son Titus was despatched to fetch two of the Roman legions from Alexandria. But the Jews, previous to the arrival of the army in their country, had twice attempted to take the city of Ascalon, and were each time repulsed, with the loss of ten thousand of their number in the first, and eight thousand in the second engagement.

Early in the following spring, the imperial army, which amounted to sixty thousand men, completely armed, and fully disciplined, entered Galilee. Soon after their arrival, Gadara was taken on the first assault; all the adults were put to the sword, and fire set to the adjacent towns and villages. The conquerors next closely besieged Jotaphata. Josephus, being apprized of their design, supplied the city with ample stores, and defended it with heroic valour for forty-seven days. The Romans, however, finally surprised and took the place, and all the inhabitants were either slain, or made prisoners. The captives amounted to one thousand two hundred; and forty thousand lost their lives on this occasion.*

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 285.

Josephus was among the prisoners. He had escaped the general massacre, by flying from the midst of his enemies, and with forty of his bravest men, concealed himself in a deep cavern. His retreat was discovered to Vespasian, and that famous general sent to offer him life, upon honourable conditions. Upon his preparing to accept the terms, his companions upbraided him in the severest manner, and even offered to murder him. At this critical moment, he appeased their fury, by advising them, if they were determined upon death, to draw lots, who should kill his companion, in order to avoid the crime of suicide. This dreadful proposal was accepted; and Providence so ordered it, that the two last survivors were Josephus, and a person whom he easily persuaded to live. The Jewish commander, upon his arrival in the Roman camp, assured Vespasian, that he should soon be chosen emperor; and, in consequence of this prediction, the conqueror treated him with great respect and generosity.*

While the Roman forces were besieging Jotaphata, the inhabitants of Japha, a neighbouring city, rebelled. The general sent a powerful army against them, and they were reduced, after an obstinate siege. All the men, amounting to 15,000, were massacred; and the women and children made prisoners. About a week after, the Samaritans, who had assembled in a riotous manner on Mount Gerizzim, were almost all put to the sword, or perished. Joppa, which had been formerly laid waste by Cestius, being now re-peopled and fortified

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 293.

by some seditious Jews, who infested the country, fell the next victim to the Roman vengeance. When the imperial army invaded that city, large numbers of the wretched inhabitants betook themselves to their ships. But they were driven back by a violent tempest, which dashed the vessels against the rocks. In this extreme distress many perished by suicide; others were swallowed up by the waves, or crushed by the broken ships; and such as were enabled to reach the shore were killed by the merciless Romans. The sea was for a long space discoloured with blood; four thousand two hundred dead bodies strewed the coast, and not a messenger remained to report this great calamity at Jerusalem.*

After Vespasian had refreshed his troops, he marched to Tiberias; the city yielded; and the inhabitants were spared at the moving intercession of king Agrippa. Tarichæ, on the sea of Galilee, was next attacked; and, after an obstinate resistance, reduced by the victorious Romans. Multitudes of Jews were destroyed, and upwards of thirty thousand sold for slaves. Vespasian proceeded to invest Gamala, a city placed on a rocky isthmus. The assailants were driven back with prodigious slaughter. Their last attack, however, was successful, the flight of their darts being favoured by a violent storm, which obstructed those of the enemy. After the city was taken, the exasperated victors slew four thousand of the inhabitants; and a large number fell victims to their own impatience and ungovernable fury. The Romans also obtained a decisive

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 294. Newcome's Observations on our Lord, p. 228.

victory over the Jews, who had retired to a strong hold on Mount Itabys.*

Titus, who was sent to besiege Gischala, earnestly exhorted the inhabitants to save themselves from destruction, by a timely surrender. The citizens were inclined to accede to his advice ; but a seditious Jew, named John, the son of Levi, head of his faction, vehemently opposed it ; and, having the mob at his command, overawed the whole city. On the sabbath he entreated Titus to forbear hostilities till the following day, engaging, on that condition, to accede to his proposal. But, after his request was granted, he with a number of his followers, withdrew to Jerusalem. The citizens then surrendered, and, having apprized Titus of John's flight, earnestly besought him not to punish the innocent with the guilty. The conqueror, after yielding to their entreaties, pursued and killed six thousand of the followers of John, and brought back three thousand women and children prisoners. The traitor himself eluded their pursuit, and exasperated the inhabitants of Jerusalem against the Romans.†

After the conquest of Galilee was completed, by the reduction of Gischala, Titus joined his father, at Cesarea, where his troops were permitted to enjoy an interval of repose ; during the remainder of this, and in the following year, the revolutions in the Roman empire prevented Vespasian from pursuing the war with vigour. He the more readily deferred commencing the siege of Jerusalem, from being

* Josephus.

† Hence Josephus says, " God saved John for the destruction of Jerusalem," p. 294.

apprized, that the Jews were wasting their strength by internal divisions, and facilitating the conquest of their devoted city.*

The Jewish nation at this time were divided into two very opposite parties. The more rational part, who clearly saw that the war, if continued, would end in the total ruin of their country, strongly urged the necessity of immediate submission to the Romans. Another party, called Zealots, from their boasted zeal for the law of God, and the religious customs of their ancestors, vehemently opposed all pacific measures. This faction, which was far the most numerous and powerful, consisted of men of the vilest and most abandoned characters ever recorded in history. They were the remains of the sect of the Gaulonites, which was headed by Judas Theudas, and like him affirmed, that it would be offering the greatest dishonour to God to submit to any earthly potentate, much less to Romans and heathens. Under the mask of religion, these wretches committed the most horrid and unnatural crimes.†

John, who had fled from Gischala, put himself at the head of these incendiaries; and, being joined in that city by a band of robbers and assassins, seized upon the temple for a fortress, and that holy place was made a theatre of civil war. The opposite party, under the conduct of Ananus, a wise and venerable man, among the chief priests, armed in their own defence; and, after an obstinate contest, forced the Zealots into the inner cincture of the temple, where they were closely invested. John,

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 355.

† Ibid, p. 334.

who had pretended to agree with those, who desired peace, was sent to the Zealots with terms of accommodation ; but he betrayed his trust, and earnestly exhorted them to persevere with unshaken firmness. He intimated to them the necessity of foreign assistance ; and persuaded them to enter into a treaty with the Idumeans. But Ananus shut the gates of Jerusalem, and precluded the new allies from entering the city.*

On the night the Idumeans were excluded, there was a tremendous storm, accompanied with thunder, lightning, and a violent earthquake. The Zealots took advantage of the prevailing terror and confusion, sawed the bolts and hinges of the temple gates without being heard, forced the guards, sallied into the city, and introduced twenty thousand of their allies. After being thus strengthened and assisted, they perpetrated the most horrid cruelties. Twelve thousand persons of noble birth, and in the prime of life, upon their refusal to join them, were inhumanly murdered. Ananus and Joshua, the chief priests, were next put to death, and their dead bodies left without burial. After massacreing many persons of distinction, they turned their sanguinary cruelty upon the citizens and lower classes, and the capital was filled with blood and carnage. At this dreadful period, none dared publicly to lament the loss of his nearest friends or relations ; or even afford them the last melancholy rites of interment. This cruel despotism compelled many to forsake Jerusalem, and take refuge with the Romans, though the attempt was extremely hazardous, as the avenues of

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 378.

the city were strictly guarded; and all, who were detected in attempting to escape, were immediately put to death. The Idumeans, who were of John's party, at length complained of the vast numbers, who were massacred; repented of having joined the tyrant, and returned to their native country.*

The Zealots, after they had massacred or driven away all, who were capable of opposing them, turned their murderous weapons against each other. A new faction was formed against John by Simon, a man of an abandoned character, and daring spirit, who had his head quarters in the fortress of Masada. To increase his party, he published a proclamation, in which he promised liberty to the slaves, and suitable encouragement to all freemen, who would enlist under his banners. After he had, by this stratagem, collected many followers, he invaded Idumea, perpetrated all kinds of cruelty, corrupted the general of that country, and having gained possession of their military forces, advanced towards Jerusalem, and encamped before the city. This army destroyed the Jews without the walls, and were more dreaded than the Romans; while the Zealots within excited still greater terror than either.*

The inhabitants of Jerusalem, in order to oppose the tyranny of John, who, they apprehended, would burn the city, formed the fatal resolution of admitting Simon and his troops. Accordingly, they entered the metropolis, and increased the calamities of the miserable people, who were exposed alternately to the rage of both factions. † Another party

* Josephus, vol. v. p. 347.

† Ibid.



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called down the divine wrath, by crucifying the Lord of glory, and blasphemously exclaiming, "His blood be upon us and our children." This dreadful imprecation was fulfilled; and the vengeance of heaven, of which they had been mercifully forewarned by the prophets, and by Christ himself, was discharged upon them by that very nation, whom they had instigated to condemn the Messiah. '

CHAPTER II.

Strength of Jerusalem.—The Jews are assembled from all parts to keep the passover.—The city is invested by Titus.—They make great preparations for an attack.—They gain the first and second wall.—A famine raged in Jerusalem.—Inhuman practices of the Zealots.—Jerusalem is surrounded by a wall.—Terrible situation of the city.—The temple is plundered, and daily sacrifice ceaseth.—The temple set on fire.—Horrid massacre of the Jews.—All Jerusalem conquered by the Romans.—The temple and city demolished.—The remaining castles in Judea are taken.

JERUSALEM was built on two mountains, and surrounded by three walls on every side, except where it was enclosed with deep vallies, which were deemed inaccessible. Each wall was fortified by high towers. The celebrated temple, and the strong castle of Antonia, were on the east side of the city, and directly opposite to the Mount of Olives. But notwithstanding the prodigious strength of this famed metropolis, the infatuated Jews brought on their own destruction by their intestine contests. At a time, when a formidable army was rapidly advancing, and the Jews were assembling from all parts, to keep the passover,* the contending factions were continually inventing new methods of mutual destruction, and in their ungoverned fury they wasted

* “The day on which Titus encompassed Jerusalem was,” says a late author, “the feast of the passover; and it is deserving of particular attention, that this was the anniversary of that memorable period, in which the Jews crucified their Messiah.” See a pamphlet entitled, “The destruction of Jerusalem an absolute and irresistible proof of the divine authority of Christianity.” London; published 1805.

and destroyed such vast quantities of provisions as might have preserved the city many years.*

A. D. 70.] Such was the miserable situation of Jerusalem, when Titus began his march towards it with a formidable army; and, having laid waste the country in his progress, and slaughtered the inhabitants, arrived before its walls. The sight of the Romans produced a temporary reconciliation among the contending factions, and they unanimously resolved to oppose the common enemy. Their first sally was accordingly made with such fury and resolution, that, though Titus displayed uncommon valour on this occasion, the besiegers were obliged to abandon their camps, and flee to the mountains. No sooner had the Jews a short interval of quiet† from their foreign enemies, than their civil disorders were renewed. John, by an impious stratagem, found means to cut off or force Eleazar's men to submit to him; and the factions were again reduced to two, who opposed each other with implacable animosity.‡

The Romans, in the mean time, exerted all their energy in making preparations for a powerful attack upon Jerusalem. Trees were cut down, houses levelled, rocks cleft asunder, and vallies filled up; towers were raised, and battering rams erected, with other engines of destruction, against the devoted city.

* Josephus.

† Bishop Newcome remarks, that at this period the Christians had an opportunity of escaping from Jerusalem, according to our Lord's solemn exhortation. For some time before this flight was precluded, as it bore the appearance of a revolt to the Romans.—*Newcome's Observations*, p. 242.

‡ Josephus, vol. vi. p. 127.

After the offers of peace, which Titus had repeatedly sent by Josephus, were rejected with indignation, the Romans began to play their engines with all their might. The strenuous attacks of the enemy again united the contending parties within the walls, who had also engines, which they plied with uncommon fury. They had taken them lately from Cestius, but were so ignorant of their use they did little execution, while the Roman legions made terrible havock. The rebels were soon compelled to retire from the ponderous stones, which they threw incessantly from the towers they had erected, and the battering rams were at full liberty to play against the walls. A breach was soon made in it, at which the Romans entered, and encamped in the city, while the Jews retreated behind the second enclosure.*

The victors immediately advanced to the second wall, and plied their engines and battering rams so furiously, that one of the towers they had erected began to shake, and the Jews, who occupied it, perceiving their impending ruin, set it on fire, and precipitated themselves into the flames. The fall of this structure gave the Romans an entrance into the second enclosure. They were, however, repulsed by the besieged; but at length regained the place entirely, and prepared for attacking the third and inner wall.†

The vast number of people, which were enclosed in Jerusalem, occasioned a famine, which raged in a terrible manner; and, as their calamities increased,

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 38.

† Ibid, p. 49—50. Mayor's Universal History.

the fury of the Zealots, if possible, rose to a greater height. They forced open the houses of their fellow citizens in search of provisions ; if they found any, they inflicted the most exquisite tortures upon them, under pretence that they had food concealed. The nearest relations, in the extremity of hunger, snatched the food from each other.

Josephus, who was an eye witness of the unparalleled sufferings the Jews experienced during the siege of their metropolis, remarks, that “all the calamities that ever befel any nation since the beginning of the world, were inferior to the miseries of his countrymen at this awful period.”* Thus we see the exact fulfilment of the emphatic words of our Saviour respecting the great tribulation in Jerusalem.†

Titus, who was apprized of their wretched condition, relaxed the siege four days ; and, being still desirous of saving the city, caused provisions to be distributed to his army in sight of the Jews, who flocked upon the walls to behold it. Josephus was next sent to his countrymen to attempt to persuade them not to plunge themselves in inevitable ruin by persisting in defence of a place, which could hold out but little longer, and which the Romans looked upon as already their own. He exhorted them in the most pathetic terms, to save themselves, their temple, and their country ; and painted in strong colours the fatal effects, which would result from their obstinacy. But the people, after many bitter invectives, began to dart their arrows at him ; yet he continued to address them with greater vehe-

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 63.

† Matthew xxiv. 21.

mence, and many were induced by his eloquence, to run the utmost risk in order to escape to the Romans; while others became more desperate, and resolved to hold out to the last extremity.*

The Jews, who were forcibly seized by the Romans without the walls, and who made the utmost resistance for fear of punishment, were scourged and crucified near the city. Famine made them so daring in these excursions, that five hundred, and sometimes more, suffered this dreadful death every day; and, on account of the number, Josephus observes, that “space was wanted for the crosses, and crosses for the captives.” And yet, contrary to Titus’s intention, the seditious Jews were not disposed to a surrender by these horrid spectacles. In order to check desertion, they represented the sufferers as suppliants; and not as men taken by resistance. Yet even some, who deemed capital punishment inevitable, escaped to the Romans, considering death, by the hands of their enemies, a desirable refuge, when compared with the complicated distress which they endured. And though Titus mutilated many, and sent them to assure the people, that voluntary deserters were well treated by him; and earnestly to recommend a surrender of the city, the Jews reviled Titus from the walls, defied his menaces, and continued to defend the city by every method, which stratagem, courage, and despair could suggest. †

In order to accelerate the destined ruin of Jerusalem, Titus, discouraged and exasperated by the re-

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 50.

† Ibid, p. 51—65. Newcome’s Observations; &c. p. 245.

peated destruction of his engines and towers, undertook the arduous task of enclosing the city with a strong wall, in order to prevent the inhabitants from receiving any succour from the adjacent country, or eluding his vengeance by flight. Such was the persevering spirit of the soldiers, that in three days they enclosed the city by a wall nearly five miles in circuit. Thus was the prophecy of our Saviour accomplished :* “ *The days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.*” Upon this, the famine raged with augmented violence, and destroyed whole families ; while Jerusalem exhibited a horrid spectacle of emaciated invalids and putrescent bodies.† The dead were too numerous to be interred ; and many expired in the performance of this office. The public calamity was too great for lamentation, and the silence of unutterable woe overspread the city. The Zealots, at this awful period, endeavoured to encourage the obstinacy of the people,

* Luke xix. 43.

† The vast number of people shut up by the war, occasioned pestilential diseases, and afterwards famine of course advanced more rapidly. Dr. Lardner observes, that “it might have been expected, that the bad food, which the Jews were forced to make use of, the strictness of the siege, and the noisome smell of so many dead bodies lying in heaps in the city itself, and in the vallies and ditches without the walls, should have produced a plague. But nothing of this kind appears in the history ; which must have been owing to the special interposition of divine providence. Josephus, in some of the places, where he speaks of the putrefaction of the dead bodies, may use expressions equivalent to pestilential ; but he never shews, that there was an infection ; if there had been, it would have equally affected the Romans and the Jews, and the siege of the city must have been broken up, and the Romans would have gone off as fast as they could.”—*Watson's Tracts*, vol. v. p. 170. **END.**



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which occasioned Titus to remark, that they began to destroy with their own hands, that magnificent edifice, which he had preserved. When Josephus was sent for the last time to John, who commanded in the temple, to upbraid him for obstinately exposing that sacred building, and the miserable remains of God's people to inevitable destruction, he answered with the bitterest invectives, adding, that "he was defending the Lord's vineyard, which he was sure could not be taken by any human force;" yet this monster had not scrupled to plunder the temple of a large quantity of its golden utensils, and the magnificent gifts of kings, which he converted to his own use. He also seized the sacred oil, which was to maintain the lamps; and even used to intoxicate himself and his party with the wine, which was intended for sacrifice.*

On the 17th of July, the daily sacrifice ceased for the first time since its restoration by the brave Judas Maccabeus, there being no proper person left to make the offering. Titus upbraided the Zealots for neglecting their worship; and challenged them to leave the temple, and fight on more proper ground, in order to preserve that sacred edifice from the fury of his troops. But, as they persisted in their inflexible obstinacy, Titus, after several bloody engagements, took possession of the outward court of the Gentiles, and forced the besieged into that of the priests. The Roman commander had determined in council not to burn the temple, considering the existence of so proud a structure an honour to himself. He, therefore, attempted to

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 79. Mavor's Universal Hist. vol. ii. p. 313.

batter down one of the galleries of the precinct; but as the strength of the wall eluded the force of all his engines, his troops next endeavoured to scale it, but were repulsed with considerable loss. When Titus found, that his desire of saving the sacred building, was likely to cost many lives, he set fire to the gates of the outer temple, which, being plaited with silver, burnt all night, and the flame rapidly communicated to the adjacent galleries and porticoes. Titus, who was still desirous of preserving the temple, caused the flames to be extinguished; and appeased the clamours of his troops, who vehemently insisted on the necessity of razing it to the ground. The following day was, therefore, fixed upon for a general assault upon that magnificent structure.*

The utmost exertions of Titus to save the temple were, however, ineffectual. Our Saviour had foretold its total destruction, and his awful prediction was about to be accomplished.† And now, says Josephus, “the fatal day approached in the revolution of ages, the 10th of August, emphatically called, *the day of vengeance*, in which the first temple had been destroyed by the king of Babylon.” While Titus was reposing himself in his pavilion; a Roman soldier, without receiving any command, seized some of the blazing materials, and, with the assistance of another soldier, who raised him from the ground, threw them through a window into one of the apartments, that surrounded the sanctuary. The whole north side, up to the third story, was immediately enveloped in flames. The Jews, who now began to suppose Heaven had for-

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 93, 94.

† Matthew xxiv. 2.

saken them, rushed in with violent lamentations, and spared no effort, not even life itself, to preserve the sacred edifice on which they had rested their security.

Titus, being awakened by the outcry, hastened to the spot, and commanded his soldiers to exert themselves to the utmost to extinguish the fire. He called, urged, and threatened his men. But so great was the clamour and tumult, that his entreaties and menaces were alike disregarded. The exasperated Romans, who resorted thither from the camp, were engaged either in increasing the conflagration, or killing the Jews; the dead were heaped about the altar, and a stream of blood flowed at its steps.*

Still, as the flames had not reached the inner part of the temple, Titus, with some of his chief officers, entered the sanctuary and most holy place, which excited his astonishment and admiration. After having in vain repeated his attempts to prevent its destruction, he saved the golden candlestick, the table of shew bread, the altar of perfumes, which were all of pure gold; and the volume of the law, wrapped up in a rich golden tissue. Upon his leaving the sacred place, some other soldiers set fire to it, after tearing off the golden plaiting from the gates and timber work.†

A horrid massacre soon followed, in which prodigious multitudes perished; while others rushed in a kind of phrensy into the midst of the flames, and precipitated themselves from the battlements of their falling temple. Six thousand persons, who, deluded by a false prophet, with hopes of a mira-

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 117.

† Ibid. p. 115.

culous deliverance, had fled to a gallery yet standing without the temple, perished at once by the relentless barbarity of the soldiers, who set it on fire, and suffered none to escape. The conquerors carried their fury to such an height, as to massacre all they met, without distinction of age, sex, or quality. They also burnt all the treasure houses, containing vast quantities of money, plate, and the richest furniture. In a word, they continued to mark their progress with fire and sword, till they had destroyed all, except two of the temple gates, and that part of the court which was destined for the women.*

In the meantime, many of the Zealots, by making the most vigorous exertions, effected their escape from the temple, and retired into the city. But the avenues were so strictly guarded, that it was impossible for them to escape. They therefore fortified themselves, as well as they were able, on the south side of it; from whence John and Simon sent to desire a conference with Titus. They were answered, that though they had caused all this ruin and effusion of blood, yet their lives should be spared if they would surrender themselves. They replied, that “they had engaged by the most solemn oaths, not to deliver up their persons to him on any conditions; and requested permission to retire to the mountains with their wives and children.” The Roman general, enraged at this insolence, ordered proclamation to be made, that not one of them should be spared, since they persisted in rejecting his last offers of pardon.†

The daughter of Zion, or the lower city, was

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 116, 117. † Josephus, vol. vi. p. 127.

next abandoned to the fury of the Roman soldiers, who plundered, burnt, and massacred with insatiable rage. The Zealots next betook themselves to the royal palace in the upper and stronger part of Jerusalem, styled also the city of David, on Mount Zion. As many of the Jews had deposited their possessions in the palace for security, they attacked it, killed eight thousand four hundred of their countrymen, and plundered their property.*

The Roman army spent nearly twenty days in making great preparations for attacking the upper city, especially the royal palace; during which time, many came and made their submission to Titus. The warlike engines then played so furiously upon the Zealots, that they were seized with a sudden panic, quitted the towers, which were deemed impregnable, and ran like mad men towards Shiloah, intending to have attacked the wall of circumvallation, and escaped out of the city. But being vigorously repulsed, they endeavoured to conceal themselves in subterraneous passages; and, as many as were discovered, were put to death.

The conquest of Jerusalem being now completed, the Romans placed their ensigns upon the walls with triumphant joy. They next walked the streets, with swords in their hands, and killed all they met. Amidst the darkness of that awful night, fire was set to the remaining divisions of the city, and Jerusalem, wrapt in flames, and bleeding on every side, sunk in utter ruin and destruction. During the siege, which lasted nearly five months, upwards of eleven hundred thousand Jews perished. John and

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 127.

Simon, the two grand rebels, with seven hundred of the most beautiful and vigorous of the Jewish youth, were reserved to attend the victor's triumphal chariot. After which, Simon was put to death; and John, who had stooped to beg his life, condemned to perpetual imprisonment.*

The number, who were taken captive during the fatal contest with the Romans, amounted to ninety seven thousand; many of whom were sent into Syria, and other provinces, to be exposed on the public theatres, to fight like gladiators, or to be devoured by wild beasts. The number of those destroyed during the war, which lasted seven years, is computed to have been one million four hundred and sixty two thousand.†

When the sword had returned to its scabbard for want of objects whereon to exercise its fury, and the troops were satisfied with plunder, Titus commanded the whole city and temple to be demolished. Upon viewing the strength of the works, he exclaimed, "We have fought with the assistance of God; it was God who drove the Jews out of these fortifications; for what can the hands of men, or the force of machines effect against these towers." In order to give posterity an idea of the strength of the city, and the astonishing valour of its conquerors, he preserved the highest towers, Phasælus, Hippicus, and Mariamne, and a part of the wall which surrounded Jerusalem to the west. All the other circuit of the city was so levelled, as not to leave those, who approached it, any proof that it ever had been inhabited.‡ It is recorded in the Talmud,

* Josephus, vol. vi. p. 139.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 142, 143.

and by Maimonides, that Terentius Rufus ploughed up the foundations of the temple; thus were our Saviour's prophecies fulfilled: "*Thine enemies shall lay thee even with the ground; and there shall not be left one stone upon another.*"*

On the reduction of Jerusalem, Titus returned in triumph to Rome, where the senate decreed him a triumph with Vespasian, his father; and all things, that were esteemed the most valuable and beautiful, were exhibited to grace this great occasion. Among the rich spoils, those, which were saved from the temple of Jerusalem, were the most remarkable; and the volume of the law was the most venerable of all the trophies of the conqueror.

Three strong castles still remained untaken in the almost desolated land of Judea. Lucilius Bassus was sent by Vespasian, as lieutenant general; and soon reduced Herodium and Machærus. But the castle of Masada, being very strong both by nature and art; and defended by Eleazar, a man of undaunted courage, baffled the attacks of the Romans. At length, however, they caused it to be surrounded by an high wall, set fire to the gates, and prepared to storm it the following day. When the Jews found no way of saving themselves, or their fortress, from the hands of the enemy, Eleazar instigated the garrison to burn the valuable stores of the castle, destroy first their women and children, and then themselves. Ten men who were chosen by lot executed this horrid purpose. The last survivor among these executioners, set fire to the place, and destroyed himself. [A. D. 73.] When the Romans

* Luke xix. 44. Newcome's Observations, p. 258.



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and the ruin of their temple, form a part of the gospel system, by means of which, a knowledge of the true God was no longer to be confined to one nation only, or his worship attached to one particular place. In short, that these disasters, the greatest that can be conceived, are the vengeance, which God took for the greatest crime which ever was perpetrated upon the face of the earth, the cruel and ignominious death of his Son.”*

It has pleased Providence, that this important part of history should be transmitted to us by Josephus, one of the Jewish nation, who was an eyewitness, and had himself a great share in the principal events. He has, unintentionally, given us a striking demonstration of the truth of the christian religion, by exhibiting, in the most lively manner, how the prophecies of our blessed Lord, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, were literally fulfilled in their fullest extent.

was given at a time, when Judea was at peace, under the sway of a nation, which never, till the destruction of Jerusalem, treated their enemies with utter excision, and unsparing desolation.—*Watson's Tracts.*

* Crevior's Roman History.

CHAPTER III.

Wretched state of the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem.—Titus commands their lands to be sold, and confiscates the tribute which was paid annually to the temple.—His successor, Domitian, treats them with still greater severity.—Sedition at Alexandria.—The temple built by Onias is shut up.—The Jews seek an asylum in various countries.—Institution of the patriarchs in the west.—State of literature among the Jews.—Of the Cabbalistic philosophy.—Account of the celebrated cabbalistic book.—Of the rabbi Akibha.

THE condition of the Jews was extremely miserable after the destruction of their capital. The multitude of the dead, the prisoners who were sold, and the fugitives who had fled into various parts of the world, had left the country almost depopulated. The once flourishing plains of Palestine were covered with dead bodies; and of the celebrated cities, which existed formerly on their coasts, such as Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin, nothing was left but shapeless ruins. Some women and old men were permitted to remain in Jerusalem; but all, who were able to bear arms, were removed. A strong attachment to their native residence probably induced a number to return, and dwell among the ruins of their devoted city.*

After the war was terminated, the emperor ordered all the lands in Judea to be sold, strictly prohibited building any cities therein, and commanded the Jews, on condition of preserving their religion, to pay to Jupiter Capitolinus the capitation tax, which devotion had destined annually for the service of the temple. Although the sum assessed on the head of

* Basnage, p. 508.

each individual was inconsiderable, the use for which it was assigned, and the severity with which it was exacted, was considered as an intolerable grievance.*

Domitian, brother to Titus, who succeeded in the Roman empire, increased the calamities of this wretched people. They were involved in the persecution, which the Christians endured during his tyrannical reign; and many of them were condemned to suffer death.* This emperor intended to extirpate all the lineage of David, but when the grandsons of St. Jude the apostle, kinsmen of our Lord, were brought before him, their poverty induced him to retract his sanguinary purpose.

A. D. 72.] Notwithstanding their late calamities, some of the seditious Jews, who had retired to Alexandria in Egypt, began to excite fresh insurrections. But their countrymen who resided in the city, apprehending the consequences that might ensue, prudently interfered, and delivered them up to the Romans, who put six hundred of them to death. They maintained their inflexible obstinacy to the last; and even their children would suffer the most exquisite tortures, rather than acknowledge Cæsar for their lord. The emperor, being apprized of their rebellious disposition, ordered the temple,

* Though, after the conquest of Pompey, Judea was made tributary to the Romans, they were permitted to collect the taxes by their own receivers, and were exempted from tribute during the sabbatical year. The annual tribute to the temple, they supposed to be an offering to God, as his subjects. But after the destruction of Jerusalem, the emperor usurped the place of God, and appropriated the tribute to himself. This was the more afflicting and disgraceful, because it obliged them to purchase the liberty of exercising their religion.—*Basnage*, p. 509.

† *Basnage*, p. 509.



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of Nerva, who succeeded Domitian. This emperor favoured the Jews; recalled those who had been banished on account of their religion; relieved them from the heavy taxes which had been imposed upon them by his predecessor; and forbade their being molested in future on account of their religion. They are supposed to be of the Levitical race, since the least attempt in the tribe of Judah to recover any of their former power, would have excited the jealousy of the Romans.* But the priests and Levites were permitted to assume the power of teaching the people, to set up schools, to appoint preceptors over them, and at length install one above the rest, with the title of patriarch; because neither their tribe, which was excluded the regal authority, nor their office, which was confined to religious concerns, could give umbrage to the Romans. The celebrated city of Tiberias, situated on the banks of a lake which bears its name, and was rebuilt by Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, was chosen for the patriarchal seat. The dignity of their chiefs was hereditary. †

The authority which the patriarchs acquired over the people committed to their charge, owed its rise and gradual increase to their great reputation for

him as a second Moses, who was little inferior to their lawgiver: and asserted, that the patriarchal dignity continued in his family till the fifth century.—*Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 141.

* The house of David was now almost extinct; and the few who remained reduced to poverty, and obliged to labour for their daily subsistence. If there was any shadow of authority among this people, after the destruction of their city and temple, it fell into the hands of the priests of the race of Levi and Aaron. Their understanding and science raised them above the vulgar; and as the people became more numerous, their authority increased.

† Basnage, p. 146.

learning and piety. They decided cases of conscience, and religious controversies; presided over synagogues; were empowered to appoint subordinate ministers and missionaries to execute their orders; and to receive an annual contribution from their dispersed brethren, in order to support their dignity. They obtained, by degrees, a great authority over the western Jews, who were pleased to depend upon them in order to maintain some shadow of union. The power, which these chiefs obtained, has, however, been much exaggerated by the Jews, to enable them to repel a powerful argument urged by the Christians, viz. that the sceptre, or regal authority, was departed from them.*

The learned Dr. Lightfoot has imagined, that the Jewish sanhedrim was not immediately destroyed, but only removed to Jafna, and thence to Tiberias, where it subsisted till the death of Judah, the saint. Other learned men, particularly Mr. Basnage, suppose this tribunal did not exist after the destruction of Jerusalem, for the following reasons.† If Titus had made any such concession, Josephus would have mentioned it for the honour of his nation. Domitian, who hated and oppressed the Jews, would never have allowed them such a signal privilege; besides, it has been the prevailing idea of the Jews, as well as of the Christians, that this tribunal had not power to sit in any other place but in Jerusalem. Our

* Basnage, p. 146.

† After the Sanhedrim was abolished, the Jews substituted in its room some particular tribunals for the decision of religious disputes. These tribunals, which were afterwards called houses of judgment, were a very imperfect image of the sanhedrim.—*Picart's Religious Ceremonies*, p. 195.

Saviour, it appears, alluded to this, when he said, (Luke xviii. 33) *that it could not be, that a prophet should perish or be condemned to death out of Jerusalem*, since the sanhedrim alone had the power of passing that sentence on him.*

The Jews, though a considerable part of their religion was involved in the destruction of their country, still adhered with inflexible obstinacy to those customs and religious rites, which remained in their power to practise. After their national polity was dissolved, they appear to have been confirmed in their attachment to the oral traditions and unauthorized decisions of the rabbies. As they agreed in thinking, that their religious rites and observances were the only objects worthy their attention, it followed, that their literary controversies, instead of embracing, like those of the philosophical sects of the Pagans, the wide field of general literature, were directed and confined to their religious and ritual institutions, and were exhausted in questions or discussions immediately referrible to these subjects.†

After the devastation and ruin of their country, a small number of learned men only were left among them to transmit their ancient doctrines and institutions to posterity. Of these, part escaped into Egypt, and part withdrew into Babylon; in both which countries the refugees were humanely received. Those, who remained in Palestine, collected the scattered fragments of Jewish learning from the general wreck into the academy of Jafna (frequently called by the Greek writers, Jamnia) where they

* Basnage. Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 186.

† Butler's Horæ Biblicæ, p. 40.



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Jews ; the one public, the other secret. The public doctrine was that, which was openly taught the people from the law of Moses, and the traditions of the fathers. It comprehended the popular articles of faith, and rules of manners.*

The secret doctrine of the Jews was that, which treated of the mysteries of the divine nature and other sublime subjects, and was called cabbala, from a Hebrew word, which signifies to receive, because it was received by tradition. After the manner of the Pythagorean and Egyptian mysteries, it was taught only to certain persons, who were bound, under the most solemn anathema, not to divulge it.

The cabbala is divided into three sorts. By the first, the Jews extract from the words of scripture recondite meanings, which are sometimes ingenious, but always fanciful. The second is a kind of magic, in employing the words and letters of the scriptures in certain combinations, which they suppose have power to make the good and evil spirits of the invisible world familiar with them. The third, which is properly the cabbala, is an art, by which they profess to raise mysterious expositions of scripture, upon the letters of the sentences to which they apply them.†

The Jews assert, that the mysteries of the cabbala contain the profoundest truths of religion, which, to be fully comprehended by finite beings, are revealed through the medium of allegory and similitude, in the same manner as angels can only render themselves visible upon earth ‡ by assuming a subtle body

* Enfield.

† Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*. Basnage, p. 202.

‡ Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*, vol. iv. p. 588.

of refined matter. According to their account, while Adam was in paradise, the angel Rasael brought him a book from heaven, which contained the doctrines of heavenly wisdom. And when Adam received this book, angels came down to him to learn its contents ; but he refused to admit them to the knowledge of sacred things, entrusted to him alone. They assert, that, after the fall, this book was taken back into heaven ; after many prayers and tears, God restored it to Adam, and it passed from Adam to Seth. The Jewish fables proceed to relate, that the book being lost, and the mysteries it contained almost forgotten in the degenerate age before the flood, they were restored by special revelation to Abraham, who committed them to writing in the book Jezirah ; that the revelation was renewed to Moses,* who received a traditional and mystical, as well as a written and preceptive law, from God ; that, being again lost amidst the calamities of the Babylonish captivity, it was once more revealed to Esdras ; that it was preserved in Egypt, and has been transmitted to posterity, through the hands of Simeon-ben-Setach, Elkanah, Akibha, Simeon-ben-Jochai, and others.

Dr. Enfield,† from whom the above account is

* According to the Jewish accounts, all the patriarchs of the ancient world had their separate angels to instruct them in these mysterious arcana ; and Moses himself was initiated in them by the illustrious spirit Metatron.—*Basnage*, p. 185.

† The chief heads of the cabbalistic doctrine, are thus delineated by the abovementioned author.

“ From nothing, nothing can be produced ; since the distance between existence and non-entity is infinite. Matter is too imperfect in its nature, and approaches too near to non-entity to be self-existent. The Being from whom all things proceed is a spirit, uu-

chiefly selected, supposes, that the mystical or cabalistic philosophy of the Jews, arose in the time

created, eternal, intelligent, percipient, having within itself the principles of life and motion, existing by the necessity of its nature, and filling the immensity of space. This spirit is *En soph*, the infinite Deity. This Eternal Fountain of existence sends forth from himself natures of various orders, which, nevertheless, are still united to their source. The world is a permanent emanation from the Deity, in which his attributes and properties are unfolded, and variously modified. The nearer any emanation is to the First Fountain, the more perfect and divine is its nature; and the reverse.

“ Before the creation of the world, all space was filled with the *Or Haen Soph*, or infinite intellectual light. But, when the volition for the production of nature was formed in the divine mind, the eternal light, hitherto equally diffused through the infinite expanse, withdrew itself to an equal distance in every direction, from a certain point, and thus left about this centre, a spherical portion of empty space, as a field for the operation of emanation, by which all things were to be produced. In the space from which the divine light was thus withdrawn, there was still, however, some portions or traces left of the divine essence, which were to become the receptacle of rays, sent forth from the Eternal Fountain, or the basis of future worlds. From a certain part of the concavity of infinite light, which surrounded the opaque sphere, the energy of emanation was first exerted, and rays were sent forth in right lines, into the dark abyss. The beam of light, thus produced, formed a channel, through which streams were to flow for the production of worlds. This beam was united to the concave of light, and was directed towards the centre of the opaque sphere. From this luminous channel, streams of light flowed, at different distances from the centre, in a circular path, and formed distinct circles of light, separated from the concave of light, or from each other, by portions of dark or empty space. Of these circles of light, ten were produced, which may be called *Sephiræ*, or *Splendours*.

The rectilinear beam of light, which is the first emanation from the eternal fountain, and is itself the source of all other emanations, may be distinguished by the name of *Adam Kadman*, the first man, the first production of divine energy, or, the *Son of God*. The *Sephiræ* are fountains of emanations, subordinate to *Adam Kadman*, which send forth rays of divine light or communicate essence and life to inferior beings. The ten *Sephiræ* are known, according to the order of emanation, by the names, Intelligence, or the Crown, Knowledge,



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Oriental, Pythagorean, and Platonic dogmas with Hebrew wisdom. The cabbala having, according to this author, obtained early credit among the Jews, as part of their sacred tradition, was trans-

third world. The fourth, or material world, is the region of evil spirits, called *Klippoth*, the dregs of emanation. These are the authors of the evil, which is found in the material world; but they are continually aspiring towards the *sephiræ*, and will, in the great revolution of nature, return into the inexhaustible fountain of deity. Spirits of all orders have a material vehicle, less pure and subtile in proportion to their distance from *En Soph*; and this vehicle is of the nature of the world next below that to which they belong. *Metatron* is the prince of *Jezirah*, or the angelic world, in which there are ten distinct orders; *Sandalphon* of *Asiah*, or the material world; these, together with the hosts over which they preside, animate aerial vehicles, capable of impression from corporeal objects, and in different ways requiring renovation.

“The human soul, proceeding by emanation from the Deity, is an incorporeal substance of the same nature with the divine intellect. Being united to the body, one complex nature is produced, endued with reason, and capable of action. The human soul consists of four parts: *Nephesh*, or the principle of vitality; *Ruach*, or the principle of motion; *Neschamah*, or the power of intelligence; and *Jechidah*, a divine principle, by means of which it contemplates superior natures, and even ascends to the *Ensophic* world. All souls were produced at once, and pre-existed in Adam. Every human soul has two guardian angels, produced by emanation at the time of the production of souls.

“The mind of man is united to the divine mind, as the radius of a circle to its centre. The souls of good men ascend above the mansion of the angels, and are delighted with the vision of the first light, which illuminates all the worlds.

“The universe continues to exist by the divine energy of emanation. Whilst this energy is exerted, different forms and orders of beings remain; when it is withheld, all the streams of existence return into their fountain. The *Ensoph*, or Deity, contains all things within himself; and there is always the same quantity of existence, either in a created or uncreated state. When it is in an uncreated state, God is all; when worlds are created, the Deity is unfolded, or evolved, by various degrees of emanation, which constitute the several forms and orders of created nature.”—*Enfield's Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 217—221.

mitted under this notion by the Jews in Egypt to their brethren in Palestine.

Simeon ben-Jochai, a celebrated rabbi, was the first who committed these mysteries to paper ; and, as the Jews affirm, by divine assistance, he composed the *Zohar*, or brightness.* He is said to have lived some years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Titus condemned him to death ; but he and his son escaped the persecution, by secreting themselves in a cave, where he had leisure to compose the abovementioned book. He perfected the work with the assistance of the prophet Elias, whom God sent from heaven, from time to time, to explain to Simeon such mysteries as were above his comprehension †

The *Sepher Jetzirah*, or book of the creation, is the next in cabbalistic fame to the *Zohar* : and is quoted by the Jews, as of divine authority. Some ascribe this work to the patriarch Abraham ; others suppose it was written by the rabbi Akibha, who lived in the second century.

He was president of the academies of Lydda and Jafna ; and a disciple and successor of the rabbi Gamaliel. Until he was forty years of age, he was a shepherd in the service of a rich citizen of Jerusalem ; but his master's daughter having promised to marry him, if he became a learned man, he assiduously applied himself to study. So successful was his application, that he became one of the most famous teachers in the schools of Jewish learning.

* David Levi calls the *Zohar* a cabbalistical commentary on the Pentateuch.

† Basnage, p. 185.

He was considered by his nation, as the oracle of the times; and one of the greatest preservers of the traditional law.* The Jews in Palestine did not scruple to say, that God revealed to him, what he concealed from Moses; and, if their accounts are to be credited, he had twenty four thousand disciples. This rabbi is mentioned with veneration through the whole Talmud; not only on account of his great attainments in the cabbalistical learning, but for his extraordinary abilities and wisdom in solving important questions in the law.† Towards the close of his life, he followed the standard of the impostor Barchocheba, who appeared under the character of the Messiah, to deliver his countrymen from the power of the emperor Adrian. An account of this revolt, and the new and dreadful calamities, which the Jews suffered in consequence of the insurrection, will be related in the following chapter.

* De Rossi's Hebrew Biography.

† David Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews.



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ful army against them, and the rebels were reduced after several desperate battles, which were attended with great slaughter.*

A. D. 116] The following year, the Jews in Mesopotamia, alarmed at the fate of their brethren in Egypt, appeared in arms, and with such force, that the inhabitants of the whole country were filled with consternation. This induced Trajan to send Lucius Quietus, the greatest general in the empire, against them, who slew great numbers of the insurgents, and subjected the rest to the Roman power. To prevent their again assembling and rebelling, the emperor appointed him governor in Palestine, to watch their motions and keep them in awe.†

Soon after, the Jews, who were numerous in the island of Cyprus, made a more dreadful insurrection, and massacred two hundred and forty thousand of the inhabitants. Trajan sent Adrian, a famous general, against them, with a powerful army. After an obstinate conflict, the rebels were reduced, and the emperor published an edict, banishing them from the island, and forbidding them to return, under the severest penalties.‡

A. D. 130.] Notwithstanding the miseries, which the Jews suffered by their revolt, their rebellious spirit was still unsubdued. Adrian, the successor of Trajan, had prohibited them from circumcising their children; and sent a colony to rebuild Jerusalem, near the place where the ancient city stood. He designed to adorn it after the Roman style, and call it *Œlia Capitolina*, from the name of his family.

* Basnage, p. 511.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 512.

This exasperated the minds of the Jews, and stimulated them to commence an open rebellion.*

A. D. 132.] Coziba, one of the banditti, who infested Judea, and committed all kinds of violence against the Romans, was the leader of the insurgents. To facilitate the success of his bold enterprize, he assumed the name of Barchocheba, which signifies the son of a star; and pretended he was the person prophesied of by Balaam in the words, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." This barbarian, so well calculated by his courage and enterprising spirit to be the Messiah, according to the perverted conceptions of the Jews, was acknowledged in that character by his infatuated countrymen.† He engaged to deliver his nation from the power of the emperor Adrian, and restore its ancient liberty and glory. The famous rabbi Akibha, being chosen by him for his precursor, espoused his cause, afforded him the protection of his name, and not only publicly anointed him as the Messiah, and king of the Jews, but placed a diadem on his head, caused money to be coined in his name, and followed him to the field, at the head of twenty thousand of his disciples, and acted in the capacity of master of his horse. By calling on all the descendants of Abraham to assist the hope of Israel, an army of two hundred thousand men was soon raised, who repaired to

* Basnage, p. 512.

† Several impostors had appeared before him; some, under the title of the Messiah; others under that of his precursors; most of whom were the disciples of Judas the Gaulonite. But Barchocheba was the first who obtained great celebrity.

Bither, a city near Jerusalem, chosen by the famous impostor for the capital of his new kingdom.* 9

Adrian at first neglected to take measures against the revolt, supposing the Jews had been too effectually humbled by his predecessor to be able so soon to raise a formidable insurrection. But being apprized, that numbers had flocked to the standard of Barchocheba, he sent Tinius Rufus, governor of the province, with a powerful military force against them. The rebels, however, gained great advantages over the imperial army, and destroyed vast numbers of Romans and converted Jews. Their rapid success and sanguinary devastations, filled Rome with astonishment and consternation. At length, Julius Severus, one of the greatest generals of his age, was despatched to crush this dangerous revolt. This able commander, not thinking it prudent to oppose at once so formidable an army, attacked and defeated the insurgents in parties; and, at length, cut off the supplies of the enemy, and besieged them in Bither.†

The rebels defended themselves with obstinate resolution; and, even put Tryphon, a famous rabbi, to death, because he proposed their surrendering to the Romans. However, they were not able long to withstand the repeated and vigorous attacks, which were made upon the city. In one of these assaults, the pretended Messiah was killed, and Bither obliged to surrender. The Jewish history, bloody as it is in almost every page, records no fact, excepting the destruction of Jerusalem, more horrid, than the undistinguished and promiscuous slaughter which

* Basnage, p. 515.

† Ibid. p. 518.



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Bethlehem ; and, as he hated the Christians as well as the Jews, he erected a statue of Venus in the place where Christ was crucified ; and in that where he arose from the dead, one of Jupiter. In the grotto of Bethlehem, where our Saviour was born ; he established the worship of Adonis.*

The emperor, by a severe edict, prohibited the Jews, upon pain of death, from entering Jerusalem, † and fixed a vigilant garrison of the Roman cohorts to enforce the execution of his orders. He even forbade them to view their once beloved city at a distance. “ Before this period,” says a late author ; “ they were seen covered with rags, traversing, midst sighs and lamentations, the Mount of Olives, and the remains of their temple. They were reduced to the necessity of being economists in their misery to purchase this favour from the avarice of the soldiery. At this price they obtained, as a singular indulgence, permission to go thither and weep on the anniversary of the sacking of their city ; and the Jews were obliged to pay for the right of shedding tears, in those places where they purchased and shed the blood of Jesus Christ !” ‡

In the calamities of the Jews, we contemplate the fulfilment of the prophecies, which foretold them

* Basnage, p. 519.

† Though Adrian interdicted the Jews from entering Jerusalem, they were not banished from Judea ; the patriarchs still resided in that country, and the famous school of Tiberias still existed. The condition of those, who remained in Palestine, was, however, extremely wretched. According to Juvenal, some of the Jews in Rome and Egypt, after the revolt, were obliged to turn fortune-tellers for their subsistence.—*Basnage*, p. 519.

‡ Gregoire, in his *Essay on the Reformation of the Jews*, quotes as an authority for this fact, St. Jerome in *Sophonian*. chap. x.

long before they took place. Moses had predicted, that they should be carried into Egypt, and sold at a very low price. “*And the Lord,*” said he, “*shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, and ye shall be sold unto your enemies, and no man shall buy you.*” * When Jerusalem was taken by Titus, the captives, with their wives and children, were sold at the lowest price ; and we learn from St. Jerome, “*that after their last overthrow by Adrian, many thousands of them were sold ; and those, who could not find purchasers, were transported into Egypt, and perished by shipwreck or famine, or were massacred by the inhabitants.*” †

* Deut. xxviii. 68.

† See Newton on the Prophecies, p. 70.

CHAPTER V.

State of the Jews in the East.—Of the princes of the captivity.—Judah the saint compiles the Misna.—History of that work.—Jews rebel under Marcus Antoninus.—Marcus Aurelius renews Adrian's edict against them.—They are treated with kindness by Septimius Severus.—Of their state under Heliogabalus.—They are favoured by Alexander Severus, and the subsequent Roman Emperors.

WHILE the Western Jews were exposed to the terrible calamities, which have been related in the preceding chapter, a milder destiny attended their brethren in the east. Trajan, indeed, had carried his arms against them as far as Mesopotamia; but Adrian, after his accession to the throne, consented, that the Euphrates should be the boundary of the Roman empire. Those, therefore, who resided beyond that river, were not concerned in that prince's war against their nation. Many, however, who panted after liberty in the most remote provinces of the empire, passed into Judea to assist their brethren. Yet they answered no other purpose, but to augment the number of the slain,* and increase the triumph of the conquerors.†

A. D. 122.] The history of the eastern is more obscure than that of the western Jews, the former having but an imperfect knowledge of the events which took place among their brethren in those remote countries. Previous to the destruction of

* The number of the slain, according to Basnage, amounted to above six hundred thousand, which number could not have been found in Judea, after the sufferings of that country under Trajan.

† Basnage, p. 162.



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race of David, abandoned that province, and retired to Babylon, where they conclude the sceptre mentioned by Jacob is to be found. But men of learning among the Christians have proved, that they have greatly exaggerated the grandeur and authority of these princes, who were subjected to the Persian monarchs. And, if we consider the low condition of the Jews, and the oppressions, which they endured from the Parthians, Romans, and other nations, it will appear evident, that the princes of the captivity could possess only a small share of authority.*

In order to raise the glory of their nation, the Jews bestow the highest encomiums on the learned men, who flourished among them during the second century. In particular, they extol the famous rabbi Judah, † the third Jewish patriarch, who obtained the appellation of Saint. He was born in the city of Sephora, and having acquired great celebrity for his piety and profound learning, presided over the academy of Tiberias with uncontrolled authority, and decided the most abstruse controversies. His memory was so highly revered among the Jews, that they compare him with the Messiah; they relate many extraordinary accounts of this rabbi; among the rest, they assert, that he made the emperor, Marcus Antoninus, a proselyte to Judaism, and, that it was by his order, that Judah compiled the Misna. ‡

* Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 180.

† Judah was born on the same day that Akibha died, and the Jews imagine this event was predicted by Solomon, when he says, *The sun riseth, and the sun goeth down.* Akibha dying was the sun that set, and Judah the Saint the rising sun.—*Basnage*, p. 156.

‡ Enfield's Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 198.

This celebrated book is a code of the Jewish canon and civil law. It was held in such profound veneration by the Jews, that they called it the second law, (which the name Misna signifies in Hebrew) importing, that it has the same authority with their Pentateuch or first law. Judah was induced to undertake this work from a just apprehension, that his nation, in their various dispersions and migrations through so many provinces, and during the interruption of their public schools, would neglect to practise the rites of their religion ; and the traditions of their fathers would be obliterated from their memory.*

“ The history of the Misna,” says Enfield,† “ is briefly this : The sect of the Pharisees, after the destruction of Jerusalem, prevailing over the rest, the study of traditions became the chief object of attention in all the Jewish schools. The number of these traditions had, in a long course of time, so greatly increased, that the doctors, whose principal employment it was to illustrate them by new explanations, and to confirm their authority, found it necessary to assist their recollections by committing them under distinct heads to writing. At the same time, their disciples took minutes of the explanations of their preceptors, many of which were preserved, and grew up into voluminous commentaries. The confusion, which arose from these causes, was now become so troublesome, that, notwithstanding what Hillel‡ had before done in arranging the traditions,

* Basnage. Maurice’s Indian Antiquities.

† Enfield’s Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 198.

‡ The name of Hillel is held in the highest esteem among the

Judah found it necessary to attempt a new digest of the oral law, and of the commentaries of the most famous doctors. This arduous undertaking is said to have employed him forty years. It was completed, according to the unanimous testimony of the Jews, about the close of the second century. This Misna, or first Talmud, comprehends all the laws, institutions, and modes of life, which, beside the Hebrew scriptures, the Jews supposed themselves bound to observe.” *

This work was soon respected by the Jews as a sacred book. It consists of a variety of traditions, and explanations of several passages of scripture; and serves as a supplement to their written law. According to their account, these traditions were delivered to Moses, during his abode on mount Sinai, and he afterwards communicated them to Aaron, Eleazar, and his servant Joshua. They transmitted them to the elders, who delivered them to the prophets; and they passed from Jeremiah to Baruch, and from him to Ezra, who delivered them to the grand synagogue, the last of whom was Simon the Just. Thus these traditions were handed down from generation to generation, in regular succession, till they were transmitted to Judah the Saint, who committed them to writing, and thus formed the voluminous compilation styled Misna; † this work

Jews, for his exertions to perpetuate the knowledge of the traditional law. He arranged its precepts under six general classes, and thus laid the foundation for that digest of Jewish law, called the Talmud.—*Enfield's Philosophy*.

* Enfield.

† See a particular account of all the receivers of oral tradition, in David Levi's *Ceremonies of the Jews*, p. 276-286.



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all foreign government. But the Pharisees had, since the destruction of Jerusalem, formed the bulk of the nation. The Hemero-Baptists were a branch of this denomination, only distinguished by their more frequent washings. The Masbotheans, were a branch of the Sadducees, for they denied the immortality of the soul, and attributed all events to chance. The Hellenists were the Jews, who spoke Greek, and read the Septuagint in the synagogues. Though there was at first some jealousy between them and their brethren, who performed public worship in the Hebrew language, they were allowed to use the Greek translation in their religious assemblies. But, after they found, that the Christians, in disputing against Judaism, derived advantage from the Septuagint version, their prejudice against it was heightened, and those who vindicated it were regarded by the other party, as sectarians and schismatics.*

The edict of Adrian, which prohibited the Jews from circumcising their children, being still in force, their impatience under this restriction stimulated them, notwithstanding their late calamities, again to have recourse to arms. The emperor Antoninus, however, soon suppressed the revolt; and afterwards restored to them the privilege for which they contended, and treated them with great moderation and kindness. He, however, forbade their attempting to make proselytes to their religion.

In the commencement of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the eastern Jews, who were subjects of the king of Parthia, joined that monarch in a war

* Basnage, p. 528.

against the Romans. The emperor, incensed at this conduct, after he had reduced the rebels, renewed Adrian's severe edict against them. But those laws were not executed in the remote provinces.*

A. D. 197.] The emperor Septimius Severus, in the commencement of his reign, declared war against the Samaritans and Jews. They had settlements in Galilee; but the prohibition, which excluded them from entering the precincts of Jerusalem, was still in force. This unhappy people, though so often humbled and subdued, attempted once more to repel their enemies, and invaded Samaria and Judea. After the emperor had reduced them to obedience, he relaxed his severity against them. In order to reward their fidelity to him, when Pescennius Niger was competitor for the throne, he allowed them the privileges of Roman citizens, and rendered them eligible to offices of trust and honour.†

A. D. 200.] The chiefs and doctors of the eastern Jews obtained celebrity in the commencement of the third century, and established academies in various parts. After the Persian monarchy was restored, and the Parthian overthrown, the rabbies were for some time treated with great respect. At this prosperous period, Samuel Jarchi, who was famed for his literary acquirements, particularly for his skill in astronomy, came from Judea, was constituted chief of an academy at Nahardea; and among other dignities obtained that of prince of the captivity.‡

The tranquillity, which the Jews enjoyed in the

* Basnage, p. 523.

† Ibid. p. 531.

‡ Ibid.

east proved, however, only a prelude to a violent persecution, which Sapor, king of Persia, commenced against them. According to the Jewish historians, he was instigated by his subjects, who, being jealous of the influence of their nation, endeavoured to effect their destruction.

The scene was reversed, and their affairs assumed a favourable aspect under Zenobia, queen of Palmyra. During the reign of this celebrated princess, they flourished in every part of her dominions; erected superb synagogues, and were exalted to the highest dignities. But, after this heroine was subdued by Aurelian, they retired from her dominions to Persia.*

[A. D. 218.] Heliogabalus, who at this time ascended the throne, had been circumcised, and abstained from swine's flesh. He, however, erected a superb temple in honour of the sun, the idol he worshipped. He ordered the palladium, the vestal fire, the mother of the gods, and whatever the Romans held in the highest veneration, to be conveyed to this temple. Being well acquainted with the tenets of the Samaritans and Jews, he intended to blend their religious rites with the adoration of his deity. The unexpected death of this emperor, who was assassinated by his soldiers, delivered the Jews, who never would have consented to adopt his religion, from the fiery trial which awaited them.†

Alexander Severus, who succeeded Heliogabalus, highly favoured the Jews, corresponded with them, and was instructed in their religion. This emperor had a domestic chapel; where he placed the statues

* Basnage, p. 533.

† Ibid.



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Alexander Severus and his successors in particular treated the Jews with great clemency. But, as it will appear in the following parts of this history, when the Christian princes were at the head of the Roman empire, they did not show so much indulgence to a nation, whom they considered as the inveterate enemies of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

State of the Jews under Constantine and his successors.—The emperor Julian highly favoured this people, and proposed to assist them in rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem.—Of the vast preparations which were made for this purpose, and the miracle which caused his design to be abandoned.

IN the fourth century, one of the most important revolutions took place, that ever was known in the annals of mankind. The splendid edifice of pagan superstition was subverted, and Christianity established under Constantine the Great and his successors. During the reign of this monarch, the city of Jerusalem, which Adrian called Elia, resumed its ancient name. The emperor enlarged and beautified it with many superb buildings and churches; and his pious munificence extended to every spot which had been consecrated by the footsteps of the apostles and prophets, and of the Son of God.*

This important change in the religion of the Roman empire did not prove advantageous to the Jews. Constantine, in the commencement of his reign, enacted some severe laws, which abridged their privileges. Their increasing numbers and prosperity having rendered them insolent, they insulted and abused those who deserted the synagogue and embraced Christianity. The emperor charged them with stoning and burning those who renounced their religion; and condemned them and all their accomplices to suffer the same punishment. He also forbade them to make proselytes under the

* Gibbon, vol. iv.

severest penalties ; and gave liberty to all the slaves, who accused their masters of having circumcised them, or who professed the Christian religion. He further ordered, that they should be obliged to serve at all public offices, like the other subjects of the empire, from which, however, he exempted the patriarchs, priests, and others, who officiated at the synagogues, schools, &c.*

The council of Elvira in Spain, which is commonly placed in the reign of Constantine, prohibited the Christians, who had been in habits of social intercourse with the Jews, from eating with them in future. Though the penalty fell only on the Christians, who were made liable to excommunication, it subjected the unhappy Israelites to insults and contempt. By another decree this council prohibited the possessors of land from permitting Jews to bless the fruits of the earth, † because their benedictions would render those of the Christians useless. The council threatened to expel from the church those, who refused to obey these orders. ‡

During the reign of Constantine, the Jews were numerous in Persia, and having experienced great kindness and liberality from many of the sovereigns in that kingdom; had acquired great influence at court. Emboldened by their prosperity, and stimulated by a desire of revenging the insults and indignities they suffered in the Roman empire, they, in

* 'Basnage,' p. 354.

† The Jews in this country appear to have been tenants to the Christians. They had public prayers in their synagogues for divine blessings on their grounds.—*Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. p. 294.

‡ Basnage, p. 544.



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The death of Constantius delivered the Jews from the evils they endured. Their affairs assumed a more favourable aspect, when Julian, styled the apostate, was elevated to the imperial dignity. As it was his determined purpose to subvert the Christian, and restore the Pagan worship, his aversion to the Christians induced him to treat the Jews with distinguished kindness and liberality. He allowed them the free exercise of their religion; and exempted them from the heavy taxes which were imposed upon them by his predecessors. Emboldened by such powerful protection, they assembled in several cities in Syria and Judea; demolished the churches, and committed other outrages. Their example was followed by their brethren in Egypt, who destroyed the finest churches in Alexandria.*

Julian established the Pagan religion by law; disqualified the Christians from bearing offices in the state; fined and banished their clergy; forbade them to teach the sciences in the public schools; imposed a tax on all who refused to sacrifice to idols; and in short used every method that human ingenuity could invent, to destroy the Christian religion. But finding his attempts baffled by the inflexible firmness of the Christians, he formed the famous design of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem. Its final destruction had been foretold by Christ and the prophets; and it was, as he imagined, reserved for him to falsify their predictions; and he meant to have converted the success of his undertaking into a specious argument against the faith of prophecy and truth of revelation.†

* Barnage, p. 546.

† Ibid.

In pursuance of his general design of opposing revelation to itself by setting one sect against another, the emperor addressed a public epistle to the nation or community of the Jews, dispersed throughout the provinces. In this letter he honours the patriarch with the title of brother. He compassionates their misfortunes, praises their constancy, declares himself their gracious protector, and concludes with a promise, that, if he should return victorious from the Persian war, he would rebuild Jerusalem, and pay his grateful vows to the deity in that holy place.*

The prospect of an immediate and important advantage would not suffer the impatient monarch to await the remote and uncertain event of a Persian war. He resolved to erect a stately temple on the commanding summit of Moriah; to establish an order of priests, whose interested zeal would detect the arts, and resist the ambition of their Christian rivals; and to invite a numerous colony of Jews, whose stern fanaticism would be always prepared to second, and even anticipate, the hostile measures of the Pagan government.†

For this purpose, the emperor assigned immense sums out of the public revenue; and committed the superintendency of the plan to Alypus, his intimate friend, whose aversion to Christianity was congenial to his own. This minister, having obtained the strenuous support, of the governor of Palestine, provided immense quantities of materials, and large numbers of workmen. To use the words of a

* Warburton's Julian.

† Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 105. Warburton's Julian.

celebrated author, “At the call of their great deliverer, the Jews from all the provinces of the empire assembled on the holy mountain of their fathers; and their insolent triumph alarmed and exasperated the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem. The desire of rebuilding the temple has in every age been the ruling passion of the children of Israel. In this propitious moment, the men forgot their avarice, and the women their delicacy; spades and pick-axes of silver were provided by the vanity of the rich, and the rubbish transported in mantles of silk and purple. Every purse was opened in liberal contributions; every hand claimed a share in the pious labour, and the commands of a great monarch were executed by the enthusiasm of a whole people.” *

A. D. 363.] On this occasion, however, the power of Julian, who had all the resources of the empire at his command, and the enthusiasm of the Jews, were unsuccessful; it is attested by several respectable writers, that while the workmen were digging up the foundations of the temple, terrible earthquakes and balls of fire broke forth, which obliged them to desist, and caused a total suppression of the work. †

The most unexceptionable testimony to this extraordinary fact is that of Ammianus Marcellinus, a celebrated Pagan historian, who was a friend and admirer of Julian. This writer, in his history of his own times, has thus recorded the obstacles which interposed to interrupt the restoration of the temple of Jerusalem: “Whilst Alypus, assisted by the governor of the province, urged with vigour and

* Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 106.

† Basnage, p. 546.



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to serve the common cause against Judaism and Paganism.*

Others, particularly Mr. Basnage and Dr. Lardner, have expressed their doubts respecting the truth of this miracle.† The latter of these writers judiciously observes, “Julian’s intention (or desire at least) to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple, was never accomplished, but was frustrated and defeated. Whether it was owing to miraculous interposition, or to his expensive preparations for the Persian war, and other circumstances of his affairs, and to his defeat and death in that war, the overruling providence of God ought to be acknowledged in the event; and the argument for the truth of the Christian religion, taken from the fulfilment of our Saviour’s prediction in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the overthrow of the Jewish people by Vespasian and Titus, and their continued dispersion, remains in all its force.”‡

* Jortin’s Remarks, vol. ii. p. 327.

† The reader is referred to Basnage’s History of the Jews, and to vol. viii. of Lardner’s Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, for the reasons on which they ground their disbelief of this miracle.

‡ Lardner’s Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, vol. viii. p. 393.

CHAPTER VII.

State of the Jews under Valentinian and Valens.—During the reign of Theodosius they insult the Christians at the feast of Purim.—Edicts of Theodosius II.—A false Messiah appears in Candia.—Tumult in Alexandria.—Violent behaviour of Cyril, bishop of that city.—Jews in the west favoured by Honorius.—Reputed conversion of those in Minorea.—Suppression of the Jewish patriarchs.—State of the Jews after the irruption of the barbarous nations into the Roman empire.

A. D. 387.] THE reign of Jovian, who succeeded Julian, was too short to affect any material alteration in the condition of the Jews. Valentinian, who, under the reign of an apostate, had signalized his zeal for the honour of Christianity, granted a general toleration to his subjects. The Pagans, the Jews, and all the various sects which acknowledged the divine authority of Christ, were protected by the laws from arbitrary power and popular insult. He prohibited the Jewish synagogues from being profaned, plundered, and demolished. Under his reign, and that of Valens, the Jewish patriarchs were restored to the enjoyment of all their privileges. However, Valens deprived this people of one great advantage, by revoking the decree which had exempted them from public offices.*

The Jews enjoyed a peaceable interval during the reigns of Gratian, Theodosius, and Arcadius. Theodosius Ist granted them particular jurisdiction; and besides their civil and public judge, they had the power of electing officers and magistrates of their own persuasion. They possessed also authority to

* Basnage, p. 547.

execute the decrees, which were passed respecting the religion and discipline of their brethren. The tranquillity which they enjoyed under Theodosius was, however, disturbed by some bigotted Christians, who caused one of their synagogues to be burnt; but upon complaint being made to the emperor, he ordered it to be rebuilt. St. Ambrose, it is said, justified the outrage, and was highly offended with the emperor for protecting an unbelieving nation.*

During the reign of Theodosius II. the liberal treatment which the Jews had long experienced, emboldened them to offer an insult to the established religion. Being assembled to celebrate the feast of Purim, instead of hanging a figure of Haman on a high gibbet, as had been their common custom, they presumed to fix it on a cross, and with their usual execrations burnt the cross and the figure. The emperor being apprized of their insolent behaviour, prohibited their erecting and burning such gibbets, under the penalty of being deprived of all their privileges. The Jews generally obeyed; but those of Macedon and Dacia continued their insults of this kind; which the Christian magistrates retaliated by burning their houses and synagogues, and putting their leaders to death. †

[A. D. 408.] In order to suppress these disorders, the emperor issued an edict, forbidding the Christians to burn the synagogues, and the Jews to offer insults to the established religion. About three years after, those of Inmestar, a city in Chalcis, being inflamed

* Basnage, p. 547. Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.

† Basnage, p. 550.



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the Jews. The emperor was obliged, in 425, to publish an explanation of his former edicts, in order to suppress the cruelty and injustice, which the revocation of his late decree caused the bigotted people to inflict upon this unhappy nation.

A. D. 432.] The Jews were numerous in the island of Candia, and had acquired wealth. About this time an impostor appeared, who pretended to be a second Moses, sent to deliver his people. He promised to divide the sea, and afford them a safe passage through it to their own land. During one year he passed through every town and village in the island, and persuaded his countrymen to meet him on the day, and at the place appointed. They collected as much of their effects as they were able to carry, and having assembled with their wives and children, he led them to the top of a rock, and commanded them to cast themselves into the sea. The men, with unshaken faith, instantly obeyed, and the women and children followed with equal ardour. Many were drowned; others were saved by Christian fishermen. They became sensible of their infatuation, and endeavoured to seize the impostor; but he had the address to elude the search, which led them to suspect that he was the devil. Ashamed of their blind credulity, many were induced to embrace the profession of Christianity.*

A. D. 415.] The city of Alexandria was computed to contain about one hundred thousand Jews, who had early distinguished themselves by their dexterity in trade, and like the other Egyptians were mutinous and seditious. At this time they

* Basnage, p. 551.

appear to have been greatly relaxed in the strictness of their religious habits; and a number of them, instead of attending the synagogues on the sabbath, chose to be present at the public diversions, which were exhibited on that day. On these occasions frequent dissensions took place between them and the Christians, which seldom terminated without bloodshed. Cyril, the bishop of the city, was ardent in the prosecution of heresy, and entertained, in particular, an extreme aversion against the Jews, whom he threatened with ecclesiastical execution. But confiding in the protection of Orestes, the governor of Alexandria, who was their friend and patron, they despised the menaces of the bishop.

An altercation having taken place with the Christians, the Jews resolved to attack them in the middle of the night. For this purpose they despatched several persons through the streets of the city, who exclaimed, that the principal church was in flames. Alarmed at this outcry, the Christians came hastily out unarmed; and the Jews, who distinguished them by some peculiar marks, immediately attacked them, and many were slain in this tumult.* Exasperated at this outrage, Cyril, without waiting for a legal sentence, led a seditious multitude to the attack of the synagogues, which they levelled with the ground. They then entered the houses, and, without making any distinction between the guilty and the innocent, plundered them of all their goods, which were appropriated to the use of the church. They next compelled the rem-

* Basnage, p. 551.

nant of the unbelieving nation to abandon the city almost naked, and Alexandria was impoverished by the loss of an industrious and wealthy colony.*

Orestes was enraged at this infringement upon his authority. The people also declared against the proceedings of the bishop, and endeavoured to persuade him to submit to the governor. But he resolutely refused, and, taking the gospel in his hand, endeavoured to intimidate him to a reconciliation. Upon finding Orestes inflexible, he commanded a regiment of monks,† amounting to fifteen hundred, to descend from the mountains, and attack him in his chariot. Accordingly, having first reviled, they assaulted and dangerously wounded him. His life, however, was preserved by the people, who repaired to his assistance, rescued him out of the hands of the monks, and compelled them to provide for their safety by flight. After the tumult was appeased, Orestes caused Ammonius, the principal offender, to be put to death, and sent an account of the whole transaction to his court. Cyril, also wrote to the emperor to justify his conduct; and in his next sermon declared Ammonius a martyr in the cause of Christianity.‡

The indiscreet zeal of Cyril produced a new commotion, in which many persons lost their lives; and an atrocious murder gave additional horrors to this sedition. Hypatia, daughter of Theon, a cele-

* Basnage, p. 532.

† Cyril kept a standing army of dragoons, namely, the Egyptian monks and Alexandrian ecclesiastics, who were always ready to fight his battles.—*Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* vol. viii. p. 106.

‡ Basnage, p. 556. *Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iii. p. 106.



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peaceable enjoyment of all their rights and privileges. Agreeably to this decree, he expressly prohibited the destruction of synagogues, and the appropriation of them to any other purposes. He also gave orders, that they should not be compelled to violate the sabbath on account of their public services, alleging that the rest of the week was sufficient for secular purposes. He disapproved of the unjust calumnies which were raised against this people; and commanded the governors of provinces to do them justice, by resisting all the encroachments which had been, and should in future be made upon their privileges. He also allowed them to retain Christians in their service, provided they left them at entire liberty to fulfil the duties of their religion.* On the other hand, to prevent the Jews from abusing their liberty, the emperor prohibited their building new synagogues, and making proselytes; and deprived them of some offices † which they formerly enjoyed in the empire.

A. D. 428.] The celebrated but disputed conversion of the Jews in Minorca, is said to have taken place in the fifth century. There were two considerable towns in this island; and the Hebrews were interdicted from that, in which the Christian bishop resided. It is even related, that those who presumed to enter it were generally punished with sudden and miraculous death. The other was chiefly inhabited by the Jews who, under Honorius,

* Basnage, p. 557.

† The Jews were admitted into the Roman troops for four centuries; they continued on the same footing till the emperor Honorius thought proper to declare them incapable of military service.—*Gregoire's Essay on the Reformation of the Jews.*

enjoyed very considerable and lucrative offices. Theodosius, president of the synagogue, and doctor of the law, was the principal person in the island. Severus, the bishop, was persuaded by Orosius, who had lately returned from Jerusalem, loaded with miraculous relics, to attempt their conversion. They began with private, and proceeded to public conference in the synagogue. The Christians, being apprized that the Jewish women intended to assault them, provided for their defence. A tumult ensued, in which the synagogue was destroyed. It is said, however, that the bishop exhibited such a number of miracles, that their principal men were induced to relent, and in the course of eight days the greatest part of the Jews were converted to the Christian faith, and their synagogue to a church. But some, who continued obstinate and intractable, concealed themselves in caverns, till hunger compelled them to quit their retreats; others, leaving their property behind them, sought an asylum in foreign countries. These facts clearly demonstrate that compulsory means had been used to effect a conversion.*

A. D. 429.] The Jews sustained a severe affliction in the fifth century, by the office of patriarch, which had kept up a centre of unity among them, being abolished by the imperial law. Those chiefs were supported by taxes levied upon the Jewish people, which, at length, became so exorbitant, that they applied to the civil power for relief. Instead, however, of obtaining redress, they had the mortification of seeing the tribute converted to the emperor's use; and, as there was no income to support the dignity,

* Basnage, p. 558. Modern Universal History, vol. xiii.

it became extinct. After this period the western Jews were solely under the direction of the chiefs of the synagogues, whom they called Primates.*

The fifth century was remarkable for the eruption of the barbarous nations upon the western empire. Yet the Jews only participated in the calamities which usually attend great revolutions. Under the Vandals they were allowed the free exercise of their religion, and on the payment of tribute were permitted the freedom of commerce. One of the effects of the invasion was the destruction of trade, which those barbarians, who delighted in war, held in little estimation. Commerce was therefore transferred to a people, who were generally treated with ignominy and contempt, and precluded from enjoying titular dignities, and civil and military offices.†

After the Goths obtained possession of Italy, the Jews continued to be protected by those barbarous kings. Theodoret, in particular, deserves high commendation for the liberality of his conduct. During his reign, the Jews had formed establishments at Naples, Rome, Milan, and Genoa, for the benefit of trade, and under the sanction of the laws. Yet their persons were insulted; their effects pillaged by the populace of Ravenna and Rome, upon the most frivolous, or extravagant pretensions. Theodoret endeavoured to rectify these abuses; he defended them against the Christian zealots, and forbade any

* Theodosius and Valentinian deprived the patriarchs of their office, and applied the taxes which were levied for their support to the imperial treasury. Honorius also published, at the end of the fourth century, a law upon the same subject.—*Basnage*, p. 556.

† *Basnage*, p. 560. *Anderson on Commerce*.



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CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Jewish academies in the east.—Rabbi Asce begins to compile the Talmud of Babylon.—An account of the Masora.—Persecution of the Jews in Persia during the fifth and sixth centuries.—Of the Sebureans and Gaons.—State of the Jews under the Persian monarchs.—Their attempt upon Tyre.—Of their state in the west.—Justinian's edicts against them.—Appearance of a false Messiah.—Revolt in Cesarea.—The Jews assist the Goths against Justinian.—They raise an insurrection in Antioch.—Conversion of those in the island of Cyprus.

THE Jewish academies in the east were towards the close of the fifth century in a flourishing condition, under the direction of rabbi Asce, who was eminently distinguished for his talents and learning. He was born at Sora in Babylon, and at the early age of fourteen was chosen president of the celebrated academy in that city, which office he enjoyed sixty years. He died in 427.

After having taught with the highest reputation forty years, he began a collection of the sayings, debates, and decisions of the rabbies, from the time of Judah the Saint to the period in which he lived. He arranged thirty-five books; but his death prevented his completing the work. However, it was at length finished by his disciples, and styled the Talmud of Babylon.* This collection, like the

* It is so called from its being the production of the Babylonian schools, as the Talmud of Jerusalem derives its name from its being compiled for the Jews in Palestine. This consists of the Misna of Judah the Saint, and the Gemara of Jochanan. The Talmud of Babylon consists of the same Misna, with the Gemara of rabbi Asce. On the subject of these Gemaras, a distinguished Jew has remarked, that "being nothing more than a collection of sentiments, parables,

Talmud of Jerusalem, comprises the Misna, which is the text, and is common to both ; and the Gemara or commentary, which is called the completion. The Jews entertain the highest veneration for this work ;* a learned writer of their nation styles it, “ a complete system of all their learning, and a comprehensive rule of all the practical parts of their laws and religion.” †

Rabbi Asce left a son called Huna, and two celebrated disciples, who were to have finished the Babylonian Talmud. But the work was retarded by a violent persecution which raged in Persia against the Jewish nation, and which is said to have continued seventy-three years. The synagogues were shut, the observation of the sabbath prohibited, and the schools and chapels given to the Magi. Huna, who was then the Jewish chief, and his two disciples were imprisoned, and suffered death with astonishing constancy. But the youthful part of the community, being more attached to the pleasures of life, were easily induced to apostatize from their religion ; and their example was followed by a general defection in Israel. ‡

and legal determinations of the several great men of their schools at different times, the two Gemaras may be considered as one, and the Babylonish only a continuation of the Jerusalem. It is true, however, says he, the former is that intended to be designated by the generic expression of Talmud ; but only because, as being later and more complete than that of Jerusalem, it comprises the last.”—*Adams' Religious World displayed*, vol. i. p. 33.

* It has even been said, that though they affirm the Scripture, the Misna, and Gemara, to be equally of divine authority, they compare the Scripture to water, the Misna to wine, and the Gemara to the choicest wine.—*Basnage*, p. 168.

† *Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews*, p. 310.

‡ *Basnage*, p. 562.

The compilation of the Talmud was, however, resumed by the learned men of the nation, and it is generally supposed, that it was completed in the sixth century. This work was received with high applause by the Jews, who agreed that no addition or diminution should be made to it for the future. But a new order of doctors arose, called Sebureans or Sceptics, who professed to doubt of every thing, and opposed the infallibility which their brethren attributed to the Talmud.*

After the Jews had lost their existence as a nation, they were solicitous to preserve the purity and integrity of their sacred books. For this purpose a number of learned rabbies compiled a work, styled the Masora, in which they first fixed the true reading of the Hebrew text by vowels and accents; and, secondly, numbered not only the chapters and sections, but even the verses, words, and letters of the Old Testament. A late learned writer has styled this work "the most stupendous monument in the whole history of literature, of minute and persevering labour."† The Jews call the Masora "the hedge, or fence of the law," because the enumeration of the verses, &c. is a mean of preserving it from being altered or corrupted.

They assert that when God gave the law to Moses on mount Sinai, he taught him the true reading, which was handed down by oral tradition from age to age, till it was committed to writing. Elias Levita, a celebrated rabbi, who bestowed twenty years' labour on explaining the Masora, makes the first compilers of it the Jewish doctors of the famous

* Basnage, p. 562.

† Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*, p. 57.



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negotiations for peace with the emperor Justinian, which were then in great forwardness. For this purpose they promised Chosroes, that, if he would consent to continue the war, they would furnish him with fifty thousand men, by whose assistance he might be enabled to conquer Jerusalem, one of the richest cities in the world. The king, duped by their flattering promises, broke off his treaty with the emperor, and prepared to carry the project into execution. He was, however, soon informed, that the persons who were employed in the treacherous design had been seized by order of government; and after making a full discovery of their plan and abettors, had been put to death. But this intelligence did not deter Chosroes from prosecuting the war, which was conducted with great energy, and many successful inroads were made into Syria and Palestine. The Jews, however, participated in the common calamities, and were treated with equal severity with the other inhabitants of the conquered countries. Their academies were shut; their love of learning became extinguished; the prince of the captivity was obliged to remove into Judea, and the eastern Jews were destitute of chiefs to preside over them.*

A. D. 589.] When Hormisdas the Third ascended the throne, he restored their former privileges, which they continued to enjoy during the reign of this prince. The academy of Pundebita was opened under the direction of the celebrated rabbi Chanan Mehischa. A new order of doctors appeared, who were called Gaons, (sublime, or excellent,) and de-

* Basnage, p. 565.

stroyed the Sebureans, or Sceptics. . These doctors were constituted chiefs of the academies, were consulted upon all difficult questions, and their decisions were regarded as oracles by their brethren, who considered them the ablest interpreters of the law.*

After Chosroes II. had murdered his father Hormisdas in order to obtain the throne, his son Varanes rebelled against him, and had the address to engage the Jews in his interest. They, however, paid dear for their presumption ; and Varanes being reduced to subjection, they were regarded as a faithless and implacable people, that excited the subjects against their princes, and fomented sedition. Those of Antioch were the first victims of Chosroes' resentment ; many of whom perished by the sword ; others were put to death by the most cruel torments ; and those, who survived, subjected to the most abject slavery.†

A. D. 613.] Chosroes, however, was afterwards reconciled to the Jews, who appear to have rendered him many signal and important services. They acted in concert with this monarch during his invasion of Palestine, and even furnished him with an army of twenty thousand men. When, after the reduction of Galilee, the Persian monarch made himself master of Jerusalem,‡ they, with furious bigotry, pillaged and destroyed the Christian churches ; and the king having delivered the Christian prisoners into their hands, they satiated their implacable hatred against

* Basnage, p. 565. Modern Universal Hist. vol. xiii. p. 208.

† Basnage, p. 566. Mavor's Universal Hist. vol. xiii. p. 18.

‡ Jerusalem was recovered from the Persians by the Greek emperor Heraclius, and soon after taken by the Arabians. See the following chapter.

them, by putting ninety thousand of this unhappy people to a cruel death.*

While Chosroes was besieging Constantinople, and all the forces of Syria and Judea were employed in defence of that city, the Jews conspired with their brethren in Palestine to make an attempt to conquer Tyre, and destroy its inhabitants. But the Tyrians having obtained timely intelligence of their design were prepared for the attack, and repulsed them with great bravery. After this disappointment, they dispersed themselves through the country, and assaulted and burned many of the Christian churches. They were, at length, vanquished by the Tyrians, who sallied out of the city, and made a terrible slaughter.†

Whilst the eastern Jews, in the sixth century, sustained a series of persecutions in Persia, their brethren in the west were cruelly oppressed, and gradually stripped of their immunities and privileges. The emperor Justinian, who assumed the prerogative of deciding on all religious controversies, issued an edict which prohibited their celebrating the passover according to their own calculation, and obliged them to observe it at the same time with the Christian church. Soon after he forbade the magistrates to admit them to give evidence against the Christians; and deprived them of the privilege of making wills, and bequeathing legacies. These decrees were followed by another, still more oppressive, which interdicted them from educating their children in their own faith. Justinian also, at the request of the council of Carthage, deprived those of

* Basnage, p. 566.

† Basnage. Modern Univer. Hist.



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The Jews joined the Goths* in Italy against Justinian and his general Belisarius. While this celebrated officer was engaged in the siege of Naples, they defended the city with the most obstinate resolution. When the citizens were about to capitulate, they encouraged and persuaded them to hold out to the last extremity. In consequence of their exertions the siege was protracted, which occasioned the destruction of many of the Roman soldiers. When the city was taken, though Belisarius endeavoured to inspire his troops with sentiments of clemency and pity, the Jews, without any distinction of age, sex, or rank, were cruelly put to death. Intimidated by this dreadful severity, they remained peaceable during the two subsequent reigns.

A. D. 602.] At length, under the reign of Phocas, the Jews at Antioch, where they had become populous and affluent, raised an insurrection against the Christians, who defended themselves with great resolution; but not being sufficiently powerful to repel their enemies, they became the victims of their cruelty. Many were burnt in their houses; and bishop Anastasius, and several others, after having endured the greatest indignities, were put to death. The rebellion, however, after an arduous conflict, was suppressed by a powerful body of forces, which Phocas sent against them; and the barbarous conduct of the insurgents severely punished. †

* The fidelity of the Jews to the Gothic kings cannot justly be alleged against them, since they were then their subjects.—*Basnage*, p. 579.

† *Basnage*, p. 578.

A. D. 606.] The Jews, at this period, notwithstanding the edict of Adrian, had become numerous in Cyprus. About four years after the insurrection at Antioch, bishop Leontius, fearing that the island would suffer similar calamities, resolved to use every possible method to effect their conversion. His endeavours proved so successful, if we may depend upon his apology to be genuine, that the greater part of them renounced Judaism, and were baptized.* Many of their brethren, in other parts, were about this time induced to profess the Christian religion. A learned ecclesiastical historian, however, remarks, that “it must be acknowledged, that of these conversions the greater part were owing to the liberality of Christian princes, rather than to the force of argument, or love of truth.”†

* Basnage, p. 579. † Mosheim's Ecclesiastical Hist. vol. ii. p. 98.

CHAPTER IX.

Appearance of Mahomet.—His behaviour to the Jews.—They take arms against him, are reduced, and compelled to become tributary.—Rapid conquests of the caliph Omar; he besieges and takes Jerusalem.—The Jews rejoice at his success in Persia.—They are favoured by the first caliphs.—Those in Italy are protected by pope Gregory the Great.—They are severely treated by the emperor Heraclius, who instigates other monarchs to persecute them.

A. D. 609.] MAHOMET, the famous Arabian impostor, appeared in the early part of the seventh century, and established a new religion, which, by force of arms, made a rapid progress in the world. Many of the Jews, after the destruction of their country, had fled to Arabia; and the industrious exiles, who aspired to liberty and power, obtained possession of several towns and fortresses, and had armies, and princes to command them. Their number and respectability induced Mahomet at first to treat them with great attention. He ordered his followers when they prayed, to turn towards the temple of Jerusalem; and adopted many of their opinions and customs, in order to engage them in his interest.*

The Jews, dazzled by the splendour of his victories, began to regard him as the expected Messiah, and some persons of distinction among them embraced his religion. However, they were, soon after, much offended at his eating camel's flesh, which is forbidden by the Mosaic law. But the fear of appearing inconstant, or the hope of deriving advantage from the impostor, induced them to aid him

* Basnage, p. 566. Gibbon, vol. vi.



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sieged the Jews in Hegiasa, and having obliged them to surrender at discretion, drove them into exile. Their wealth was confiscated, and distributed among his followers. After several engagements, in which the impostor was victorious, Cajah attacked him near Kaibar; and though this place was the seat of the Jewish power in Arabia, this miserable people were defeated with great slaughter. Their leader, who with difficulty escaped, being resolved to try the event of another engagement, was again completely routed; and suffered death with that constancy which characterizes his nation. After the termination of the unequal conflict, the Jews were compelled to submit to the power of the conqueror, and become tributary. Some time after the death of the impostor, they were transplanted to Syria, he having left it as his dying injunction, that one and the true religion should alone be professed in his native land of Arabia.*

In the caliphs, who succeeded Mahomet, were united both the temporal and the spiritual power; and their valour, being animated by the violent spirit of fanaticism, was altogether irresistible. Omar, the second caliph, was one of the most rapid conquerors, who ever spread desolation over the face of the earth. During the ten years of his reign, he subdued Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Egypt. With the Saracens under his command, he invested Jerusalem, and after an obstinate siege,

and Turks, who begin their computation from the day that Mahomet was compelled to make his escape from the city of Mecca, which took place, July 16, A. D. 622, under the reign of the emperor Heraclius.

* Gibbon, vol. vi.

which lasted four months, the Christians, having obtained an honourable capitulation, surrendered the city. The conqueror would not allow them to be deprived of their churches. But by his command, the ground where Solomon's temple stood, was prepared for the foundation of a mosque, which was the first Mahometan place of worship erected in Jerusalem.*

When Persia submitted to the victorious Saracens, the Jews, who hoped for a favourable change in their affairs, rejoiced in their success. Isdesgerdi the Third, the last Persian monarch, had, according to their annals, either begun, or carried on a bloody persecution against them; giving their synagogues to the Magi, and causing their academies to be shut. The rapid conquests of the enemies of their cruel oppressors, who were either Pagans or Christians, and the frequent destruction of the churches of the latter, highly gratified their inclinations. They are even accused of having ingratiated themselves with the Saracens, by instigating them against the Christians. Those enthusiastic conquerors for some time used their prosperity with moderation; and though the Jews often changed masters by the swift succession of monarchs, they only participated in the

* Basnage, p. 572. Jerusalem was transferred from the possession of the Greek Christians, to the dominion of the Arabian Musselmans, and continued in subjection to the caliphs, about four hundred years. When Omar took the city, the inhabitants were allowed the exercise of their religion; but they were prohibited from building any new churches, either in the metropolis, or the adjacent country; from riding upon saddles, or bearing any kind of arms. They were obliged to dress in a different manner from the Mahometans, and subjected to pay tribute to their conquerors. *Ockley's Saracen's Conquests*, p. 258.

common calamities which attend great revolutions in governments. They highly extol the humanity of the first caliphs, who restored them to the free exercise of their religion ; allowed the princes of the captivity to enjoy great authority, and permitted their academies to be opened, and placed in a flourishing condition.*

A. D. 606.] A number of the Roman pontiffs have been equally indulgent to the Jewish nation with the first caliphs. In Italy, where this people were numerous in the seventh century, they were treated with moderation and kindness by pope Gregory the Great. Their general conversion was the object of his ardent desires, and earnest endeavours. In order to effect this benevolent design, he wrote to his receiver in Sicily, to abate those who professed the Christian religion a third part of the revenues they were indebted to him. He also warmly exhorted his clergy and flock to use the Jews with candour and tenderness, alleging, that they were one day to be recalled, and become a large part of Christ's fold ; and that the proper method to conduct them to the unity of the faith, was kind and friendly treatment. " Violence," said he, " will disgust those who might be allured by gentleness and charity." He strongly expressed his abhorrence of the persecution they suffered in different countries, and condemned the zeal of some of the bishops against them. He even reprehended the conduct of a converted Jew, who, in order to ingratiate himself with the Christians, set up a cross, and image of the virgin, in a synagogue. Gregory ordered the cross

* Basnage, p. 573.



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his vengeance by professing the Christian religion. This expedient, however, did not lessen the monarch's aversion to the Jewish nation.*

Heraclius was still more exasperated against the Jews, when, upon his consulting the diviners concerning the fate of the empire, he received for answer, that a circumcised nation would prove its ruin. Considering how powerful and numerous the Hebrews were in most parts of his dominions, and that they still cherished the hope of being restored to their native country, he believed them to be the people intended by the prediction. The great and frequent efforts they had made to recover their liberty, and their cruel and sanguinary proceedings against the Christians at different times, and in various places, confirmed him in this belief; and induced him to persecute them with the utmost severity. He banished them from Jerusalem, to which they had once more gained access; † and issued an edict, prohibiting them from approaching within three miles of the city. The emperor was not satisfied with persecuting this unhappy people in his own dominions; but instigated other monarchs to follow his example. ‡ The calamities which they suffered in Spain, Gaul, and other kingdoms, will be related in the following chapter.

* Basnage, p. 580. According to the account of Mosheim, "the emperor Heraclius, being incensed against this miserable people, by the insinuations of the Christian doctors, persecuted them in a most cruel manner, and ordered multitudes of them to be inhumanly dragged into the Christian churches, in order to be baptized, by violence and compulsion."—*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. p. 152.

† Previous to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Saracens, which has been mentioned in the preceding part of this chapter.

‡ Basnage, p. 581.

CHAPTER X.

The Jews in Spain are cruelly persecuted by Sisebut, the Gothic king of that country.—Decrees of the councils of Toledo.—Frequent apostasy of the Jewish converts.—The archbishop of Toledo writes in order to convert them.—They form a conspiracy against the Spanish government.—Severe laws are enacted against them.—Of the Jews in Gaul.—They are expelled by king Dagobert; and by Wamba, king of the Goths.—They found an academy in Lunel.

THE Jews, who were transplanted to Spain by the policy of Adrian, had become numerous in that kingdom, and acquired wealth by their dexterity in trade. Their affluence excited the avarice of their masters; and, as they had lost the use of arms, they might be oppressed with impunity. The emperor Heraclius, who had been engaged in war with Sisebut, the Spanish monarch, made it one of the principal articles of the peace, that the king should compel them to receive baptism, or abandon the kingdom. The religious bigotry of Sisebut induced him readily to accede to this article; and without consulting any of his bishops, and even contrary to their remonstrances, he imprisoned the most distinguished personages among this unhappy people.*

After having remained some time in confinement, large numbers of Jews, in order to preserve their wealth and lives, consented to be baptized. The estates of the more obstinate were confiscated, and their bodies tortured. Some found means to retire into Gaul, where similar miseries awaited them. **They** assert, however, that during the life of **Sisebut,** they were not even allowed the privilege of

* Mariana's History of Spain.

preferring their religion to their country, and endeavouring to escape by a voluntary exile from the evils they endured *

A. D. 633.] The conduct of the king was highly censured by Isidore, bishop of Seville, and condemned by the clergy in Spain. In the fourth council of Toledo, † in which Isidore presided, it was declared unchristian and unlawful to use compulsory measures in religion. The reasons assigned were, that God hardens, and has compassion on whom he pleases ; and that none can be saved without their own free consent. This council, however, ordained, that those whom persecution had induced to receive baptism, should be compelled, for the honour of the church, to persevere in conforming to the external rites of the Christian religion. This decree, which derogates from the liberal spirit exhibited in the former, was enacted, because the pretended converts relapsed into Judaism, whenever the immediate influence of terror was withdrawn. ‡

A. D. 638.] Chintila, who succeeded Sisenand, treated the Jews with the greatest rigour ; and appeared to be totally regardless of the sacred rights of conscience. The decree of this monarch, which commanded all his subjects to profess the Christian faith, was the signal of persecution and exile ; and an edict was passed for their total expulsion. It

* Basnage, p. 581. History of Spain.

† This council was assembled by Sisenand, who having dethroned the son of Sisebut, endeavoured to reconcile the minds of the people to his government, by prevailing upon the clergy to give a religious sanction to his proceedings. The council conformed to his views, and instructed the Goths to unite under his government.—*Basnage*, p. 581.

‡ Basnage, p. 582. History of Spain.



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By this law it was ordained, that every Jew, who refused to receive baptism, should suffer a severe corporal punishment, be exiled from the kingdom, and have all his goods confiscated.*

A. D. 653.] Multitudes of this persecuted people, intimidated by the gloomy prospects before them, were induced to conform externally to the national faith. But as their conformity was only extorted by terror, many were soon observed to apostatize. To remedy this evil, a new council was convened. The Jews, apprehending that the decrees of the assembly would be the prelude of a violent persecution against them, resolved to shelter themselves from the impending calamity. For this purpose, the most distinguished personages of their nation met, and wrote to the king in the name of their brethren in Spain, declaring that, though they had till then dissembled, they were now firmly resolved to become sincere converts, and wholly conform to the laws of the gospel. They assured his majesty, that they would no longer observe their sabbath, circumcise their children, or form any connexions by marriage with those who were unbaptized; and promised to persecute any of their brethren, who should presume to violate these engagements. They even consented, provided their lives might be spared, to be doomed to perpetual slavery, and have all their effects confiscated.†

The ample promises contained in this letter, rendered their sincerity more suspected, and their conduct, more strictly observed. It was accordingly

* Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. History of Spain.

† Basnage, p. 582. Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 223.

discovered, that they still performed the Jewish rites, and even ventured to attack the Christian religion. The king, finding the difficulty of effecting his purpose by coercive measures, ordered Julian, archbishop of Toledo, to write against them; and this prelate, in 686, published a learned treatise, in which he proves from the prophetic writings, that *Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah.*

The Gothickings and bishops at length discovered, that injuries would produce hatred, and that hatred would find an opportunity of revenge. The Jews exulted in the victories of the Mahometans, and commenced a dangerous and hostile correspondence with their brethren, who, under the administration of Chintila, had sheltered themselves from persecution in Africa. On receiving from them assurance of support, and with the secret hope of more effectual succour from the Saracens, they fixed a day to erect the standard of revolt.*

Before the appointed time arrived, their preparations had alarmed, and their intentions been betrayed to king Egica. This monarch complained of the conspiracy to the council of Toledo, and demanded the assistance and advice of the divines, who composed the assembly. Upon deliberation they resolved, that all the circumcised should be declared perpetual slaves, that their estates should be confiscated, and their children taken from them, and educated in the Christian faith.†

If from Spain we turn to a neighbouring country, we find the Jews still oppressed and persecuted.

* Basnage, p. 583. History of Spain.

† Basnage.

As soon as the Romans* were driven out of Gaul, and the Visigoths suppressed, several directions and decrees were made respecting them, and one in particular, under Childebert, [A. D. 540.] who forbade them to appear in the streets of Paris from Tuesday in the holy week to Easter Sunday. The council of Orleans about the same time enacted a similar decree, which renders it evident, that they were dispersed in several parts of France.† They were still more numerous in Languedoc. Ferreol, bishop of Uzes, was expelled from his diocese, for having treated them with too great familiarity and kindness. His motive was, an ardent desire to effect their conversion. After he had continued in exile many years, and the king had restored him to his bishopric, he fell into the other extreme, and banished the Jews.‡

Avitus, bishop of Clermont, was distinguished by his zeal for the conversion of this people, and induced several persons among them to profess their belief in Christianity. One of the new converts entered the city in his white garment, which being observed by a Jew, he threw a pot of oil of very offensive odour upon him. This outrage irritated the Christians to such a degree, that had not the bishop interposed, the offender would have been

* Gaul was shared by the Visigoths and Burgundians; when Clovis, king of the Franks, defeated Syagrius, a Roman usurper in that province, and established a new kingdom, to which he gave the name of France, or the land of freemen.—*Russell's Modern Europe.*

† The Jews who settled in Gaul at an early period, made but little figure, and are only known by some edicts of Constantine, which mention them in Belgic Gaul. They began to be noticed in the histories of the country in the sixth century.

‡ Basnage, p. 583.



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A. D. 673.] Wamba, king of the Goths in Languedoc, also exhibited a violent enmity against this people ; and issued an edict which expelled them from his dominions. . But he experienced the most determined opposition from the abbot Raymirus, and the court of Toulouse, who united to protect this persecuted race, and opposed the king's edict by force of arms. The king entrusted count Paul, his favourite, with the command of an army, which was destined to act against the rebels. . But, instead of suppressing, he united with them, took Narbonne, and caused himself to be crowned king. . At length, however, he was defeated, and condemned by Wamba ; and his accomplices, especially the Jews, felt the effects of this monarch's resentment, and were expelled from the kingdom.*.

Notwithstanding the sufferings of the Jewish nation in the seventh century, the academy which they had founded at Lunel, a city in Languedoc, began to flourish. In process of time it acquired great celebrity, and was the place where some of the most learned Jewish rabbies received their education.

* Basnage, p. 584.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the pretended conversion of the king of Chozar to Judaism.—
State of the eastern Jews in the eighth and ninth centuries.—They are favoured by several of the caliphs, who were attached to literary men.—Edict of Iman Jaaffar against them.—Al-Wathek obliges them to pay heavy taxes.—Motavel condemns them to wear a disgraceful badge of distinction.—State of the Jews under the Grecian emperors.—A false Messiah appears in Spain.—Of their state in France.—Punishment inflicted upon them by the emperor Charlemagne.—They are highly favoured by Lewis, surnamed Debonair; but their condition is less agreeable under Charles the Bald.

THE eighth century is celebrated by Jewish writers for the conversion of Chozar, a Pagan prince, to their belief. According to their accounts, he became dissatisfied with the religion of his people and progenitors; and conversed on this subject with philosophers, Christians, Mahometans, and Jews. At length, a learned rabbi convinced him, that Judaism was the only true religion, to which all others were but as the shadow to the substance, or the picture to the living original. Chozar therefore abjured his former tenets, and, after he was initiated in the belief and ceremonies of the Jews, employed himself in converting his subjects. He sent for the most learned men of this nation from all countries to instruct his people; and from that time the original Jews were held in high estimation. A tabernacle was erected, similar to that of Moses in the wilderness; to which they and the Chozrean converts repaired to the Jewish worship. The king became prosperous; triumphed over his enemies,

and enlarged his dominions by new and considerable conquests. Such is the account of Jewish writers ; but notwithstanding the degree of credit which they have endeavoured to attach to the conversion of Chozar, and of his subjects, the real existence of that prince, and of his kingdom, has always been much disputed.*

During the eighth, and part of the ninth century, the eastern Jews under the dominion of the caliphs, sustained their share in the calamities which resulted from the civil wars among their conquerors. They, however, enjoyed entire liberty of conscience under the caliph Abdalmelech, and his two successors Alwalid and Solyman. Their academies flourished, and their doctors possessed all their ancient privileges.

In the reign of Zeyd they suffered some oppressions; which were caused more from the rapaciousness of his ministers, than the cruelty of the monarch. But upon the dissolution of the government of the Ommiades under Mervan, their condition was ameliorated by the princes of the dynasty of the Abbassides.†

A. D. 740.] The caliph Almansor, who was a learned prince, patronised and encouraged literary men, and invited a large number of them to his court, without any regard to their particular religious opinions. Many Jews accepted the invitation of this monarch, and took advantage of his liberality to place their academies in a more flourishing condi-

* Basnage, p. 587. Modern Universal Hist. vol. xiii. p. 228.

† The fall of the Ommiades, and the establishment of the dynasty of the Abbassides, took place about 750.—Gibbon.



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most high God. Mohadi sent forces against the impostor, who besieged him in one of his fortresses. Upon which he first poisoned his followers, and then destroyed himself.*

[A. D. 786.] Aaron, the successor of Mohadi, was distinguished for his love of literature, and encouraged and patronized learned men of all religions, and of every profession. In particular he highly favoured the Jews, who were dispersed in his dominions, and chose one of their nation to send on an embassy to Charlemagne, the emperor of the west. He succeeded in his commission, and enjoyed a distinguished reputation at the court of Aaron. This caliph placed the academies of the eastern Jews in a flourishing condition; and they enjoyed profound tranquillity during his reign.†

[A. D. 831.] Mamoun, the brother of Aaron, was also attached to literature; and caused the most valuable Jewish works to be translated into Arabic. And though this instance of his liberality exasperated his subjects, he continued to distinguish learned men of all nations and religions. Mashalla, a celebrated Jewish astronomer, was so highly esteemed at his court, that he was styled the Phoenix of the age. During the reign of Mamoun, the famous impostor Moses appeared, who pretended that he was the great lawgiver of the Jews, whom God had recently raised from the dead.‡

[A. D. 841.] Al-Wathek, instead of imitating the conduct of the most enlightened caliphs who preceded him, became an implacable enemy to the

* Basnage, p. 591. Gibbon, vol. vii. p. 189.

† Basnage, p. 592. ‡ Ibid. p. 594.

Jews. He hated this people, because they refused to receive the Koran as an authentic revelation; and the fraudulent practices of which they had been guilty in the management of the finances, during the reign of his predecessor, increased his enmity against them. During his reign they were loaded with heavy taxes, and obliged to pay large sums into the treasury.*

[A. D. 849.] Motarakel the successor of Al-Wathek, treated the Jews with still greater severity. He compelled them to wear a cord or sash round their waists, as an invidious mark of distinction; and excluded them from all offices in the Divan, which it appears they had till then enjoyed. He forbade their riding on horses, and only permitted them to use asses or mules, with iron stirrups.

The edicts of this monarch not only extended through his empire, but spread into the neighbouring kingdoms; and these marks of infamy, in a greater or less degree, have subsisted ever since in those countries which are subjected to the Turks; and also in other parts of Europe under Christian kings. Many of Motarakel's successors treated this degraded people with equal contempt. In the reign of Mahomed, the last of the princes who succeeded him, Achmet, the governor of Egypt, revolted, and formed a new dynasty.†

If we turn from the Mahometan to the Christian monarchs, we find the Jews exposed to equal, if not greater, vexations and persecutions. The empire in

* Basnage, p. 594.

† Egypt was dismembered from the caliphate about the end of the ninth century.

the west, in the eighth century, was greatly agitated by the civil dissensions between the Iconoclasts and the worshippers of images ; and the Jews were unjustly accused of fomenting these dissensions. Leo Isauricus, the Grecian emperor, commenced his reign with the persecution of this people ; and commanded them to abjure their tenets, and embrace Christianity under the severest penalties. They saved their lives by dissimulation, and consented to be baptized, and receive the communion ; but at the same time expressed their internal aversion to the religion they had recently professed, by washing themselves in common water, and eating common bread immediately after receiving the sacraments. The patrons of images, notwithstanding the strenuous exertions of the emperor, at length prevailed. The Jews, who had pretended obedience to the mandates of Leo, being suspected of insincerity, were obliged to subscribe a new formulary, in which they acknowledged themselves worshippers of the cross, and holy images ; and prayed to God that he would inflict upon them the leprosy of Gehazi, and the fear of Cain, if they did not willingly conform to the established religion.*

Nicephorus, who succeeded Leo about the commencement of the ninth century, protected the Jews, and permitted them to live quietly under his government. They were still more favoured by his successor Michael, who tolerated all religions ; is said to have imbibed something from each denomination ; and entertained a peculiar regard for the Jews. †

* Fleury's Ecclesiastical History, vol. v. p. 43. Basnage, p. 569.

† Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 239.



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bloodshed. He was, however, prevailed upon to commute their punishment, and only the principal and most guilty suffered death.[‡] The others, who inhabited the city, were condemned to receive a box on the ear thrice a year at the gates of one of the churches, which should be named by the bishop; and to pay a perpetual fine of thirteen pounds of wax.*

Charlemagne, however, in some instances, treated the Jews with gentleness and moderation. They boasted of having the liberty of purchasing the sacred utensils and rich furniture of the churches, which the bishops and abbots, induced by luxury and avarice, had exposed to sale. And though this monarch enacted a severe law, prohibiting the clergy from carrying on this scandalous traffick, he did not exact any restitution from those of Hebrew origin, or lay any restrictions upon their commerce.†

They were highly favoured by Lewis, surnamed Debonair, whose chief physician, named Sedecias, was one of the Jewish nation. This man had acquired such an ascendancy over the monarch, that the courtiers endeavoured to conciliate his and his countrymen's friendship with the richest presents. They had an easy access to the person of their sovereign; who allowed them the liberty of

* This event, though related by many historians, is disputed by Basnage, who admits only the truth of two facts, viz. that Toulouse was besieged by the Saracens, and that the Jews in the city were ill used and buffeted in the person of their syndic. "This," says he, "was done out of hatred to the Jews, without their being guilty of the imputed crime of betraying the city; and the story of their treachery was invented, in order to authorize the punishment and the infamy."—*Basnage*, p. 598.

† *Basnage*, p. 598.

erecting new synagogues, and granted them other extensive privileges. Such powerful protection rendered them haughty and insolent, and excited the jealousy of the Christians.

Agobard, bishop of Lyons, not only prohibited them from purchasing Christian slaves, but forbade them to observe the sabbath, and carry on any commerce with the Christians during Lent. They complained of these edicts to the king, who sent three commissaries to Lyons to make inquiries into the bishop's conduct; and, upon their report, the Jews were immediately restored to their ancient privileges. Agobard, being mortified and disappointed, formed new accusations against them; but they were rejected at court, as false and groundless.*

'After the bishop found all his attempts frustrated, he resolved to take a journey to court, to solicit Lewis more effectually against the Jews. But the king, surrounded by courtiers who hated the prelate, and were attached to this people, absolutely resisted all his solicitations, and only granted him an audience when he was about to depart. The protection the outcasts of Israel found at the court of Lewis against one of the most learned bishops of the age, rendered them so popular, that it was said openly at court, that the descendants of Abraham were entitled to respect. Even some Christians observed Saturday for the sabbath, and preferred attending the sermons of the rabbies to those of the curates and monks, who at this time were extremely ignorant. It is even said, that a deacon named Paudo, quitted his office in the church, and went over to the synagogue. †

* Basnage, p. 599. Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 241. † Ibid.

The Jews under Charles the Bald, were less flourishing and popular, than they had been during the reign of his predecessor. One of the French bishops, named Remisius, ordered the clergy in his diocese, to preach every Saturday in the synagogues. This induced a number of Jewish parents to send their children to other parts of the kingdom in order to prevent their conversion. Remisius complained of their conduct to the king, and persuaded him to command the bishop of Arles, and other prelates, to follow his example. The consequence was, that many of the Jewish children were voluntarily baptized. Soon after Charles was poisoned by Sedecias, the Jewish physician, who was so famous in the preceding reign; and it was supposed he was instigated to commit this crime by his countrymen, who hated the king, because he favoured these conversions. It was, however, discovered, that many of the nobility corrupted Sedecias, and engaged him to destroy the life of his sovereign.*

The Jews were also accused of favouring the incursions of the Normans, which took place during the reign of Charles; and of treacherously betraying Bourdeaux and other cities into the hands of these invaders. They were still exposed to the ignominious sentence of being buffeted three times every year at the church door. But this indignity, which originated from a decree of Charlemagne, was not executed on all the Jews, but confined to the syndic, or head magistrate, who received this punishment in the name of the rest. In remote cities they were also liable to many insults from the populace. At

* Basnage, p. 599. Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 248.



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CHAPTER XII.

Flourishing state of learning among the eastern Jews at the commencement of the tenth century.—Their tranquillity is interrupted by internal divisions.—Of their learned rabbies.—The Jews in Egypt are persecuted by the caliph Hakem, who introduces a new religion.—They are expelled from the east.—Some of the most learned among them pass into Spain, and cultivate literature under the Saracens.—The Talmud is translated into the Arabic language.—They attempt to convert the Mahometans; and are persecuted by the king of Grenada.—King Ferdinand I. resolves to destroy them; but is prevented by the pope and bishops.—The revolution caused by the Moors in Africa extricates them from persecution.—They are favoured by Alphonso, and his grandson Peter.—The Crusaders massacre the Jews.—Disputes arise among them respecting the study of the sciences.—Of the learned rabbies in Spain and France.

A. D. 927.] WHILE Christendom was involved in darkness and ignorance, the Saracens became the patrons of philosophy in the east. The Jews, under their dominion, imitated their example, and applied to learning with assiduity and success.* New academies were erected in consequence of the rapid increase of professors and pupils; and those which had subsisted for ages were placed in a flourishing condition, under able preceptors. The Jews boast, that the famous men who appeared among them at this time, were superior to those of any preceding age, since their dispersion.†

Their tranquillity was, however, soon interrupted

* In the ninth century the Jews began to make themselves acquainted with the sciences of the Arabs. In particular they excelled in the study of medicine. From the beginning of the ninth to the end of the thirteenth century, eminent schools of philosophy flourished in the Saracen empire.—*Enfield's Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 234.

† *Basnage*, p. 601.

by internal divisions. David, prince of the captivity, a haughty and ambitious man, had, according to the Jewish accounts, found means to deliver his nation from the tribute which till then they were compelled to pay to the caliphs. After having thus augmented his authority, he reigned as absolutely as an eastern monarch. In consequence of his arrogant behaviour, frequent altercations took place between him and the heads of the academies,* which produced fatal divisions, and involved the Jews in fresh difficulties.

A. D. 1037.] The nation at this time were numerous and powerful, especially in the city of Pheruty Shiboour. A new academy was founded in this city, at the head of which was the famous rabbi Sherira, under whom it flourished about thirty years. He was a man of great learning, but a violent enemy to the Christians, particularly to the monks; and on that account more highly respected by his brethren. When arrived at an advanced age, he was succeeded by his son Hay,† who obtained such a distinguished reputation, that the Jews resorted from all parts to attend his instructions; and

* The power of the heads of the academies was almost equal to that of the princes. For the latter could not enact any laws except they were sanctioned by the former. These chiefs have had frequent insurrections against each other. The princes of the captivity and heads of the academies were both elected by a majority of votes; and sometimes both these dignities were vested in the same person.—*Basnage*, p. 602.

† The Jews pretend that he was lineally descended from king David; hence he bore the lion on his arms, as did all the kings of Judah, agreeably to Jacob's prophecy concerning that tribe. But he acquired still greater celebrity by various writings, particularly the famous cabbalistical work, styled, "The voice of God in power."—*Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 247.

styled him, “the most excellent of all the excellent.” He was placed at the head of two academies, and elected prince of the captivity. He died in 1037; aged sixty-nine years.*

The Jews, in the reign of the caliph Hakem, suffered persecution for a short time in Egypt. The object of this monarch was to abolish Islamism, and establish a new religion, of which he should be the head.† The large number of Pagans, who acceded to his novel dogmas and pretensions, flattered his vanity, and induced him to persecute the Christians and Jews, who opposed and contemned his doctrines. He obliged the latter to wear a disgraceful mark of distinction; commanded their synagogues to be shut; and compelled them to embrace his tenets. But he soon changed his opinions, and permitted them to return to their former religion.‡

A. D. 1039.] The caliphs of the house of the Abbassides, who had always favoured the Jews, having lost their authority, the sultan Gela Doullat, who reigned by the name of Cajem, resolved to extirpate this unhappy people. For this purpose he shut up their academies; banished their professors; and killed the prince of the captivity, with his family. This persecution dispersed some of the nation into the deserts of Arabia, while others sought an asylum in the west. From the period in which the Jews were expelled from the east, most authors date the total extinction of the princes of the captivity; but,

* Basnage, p. 602.

† He blended the religion of the Druses, with other tenets, which he pretended to receive from the deity.—*Basnage*, p. 605.

‡ *Basnage*, p. 605.



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But, generally speaking, it was only during their union with the Saracens in Spain,* or in the flourishing ages of the caliphs of Bagdat, that they ventured into general literature, and used in their writings a foreign, and consequently (in their view) a profane language. †

While the attention of the Christians and Mahometans in Spain was occupied by their mutual hostilities, the Jews enjoyed an interval of tranquillity. Their academies were in a flourishing state under the Saracen monarchs; and they became numerous and affluent. During this prosperous era many learned doctors appeared among them, whose erudition has been celebrated by Jewish writers. (The Talmud, however, was so little known in Spain, that they were obliged to send deputies to the Babylonian academies, to decide the disputes which arose among them. Even the prayers which they offered up on the grand expiation day, and other national fasts, were composed by one of the Babylonish rabbies.) Hasheym II. the Saracen monarch of Cordova, who was a friend and patron to the Israelites, commanded this celebrated work to be translated into the Arabic language, in order either to gratify his curiosity, or prevent their frequent excursions to Bagdat, or Jerusalem, from which it is said he apprehended fatal consequences. ‡

The wars in Spain, which raged with violence during the eleventh century, § and the revolutions to

* The Saracens subdued Spain in the eighth century.

† Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*.

‡ Basnage, p. 606.

§ About the beginning of the eleventh century, Toledo, Valentia,

which they gave rise, were in their commencement beneficial to the Jews. Rabbi Samuel Levi, being secretary and prime minister to the king of Grenada, was by him appointed chief of their nation, and exerted himself to the utmost to promote their interest and honour. For this purpose he sent for some of the most learned Jewish rabbies from Babylon and Egypt, to whom he was a liberal benefactor. His countrymen had the satisfaction of seeing his son succeed him in all his dignities. [A. D. 1055.] Their joy, however, was damped by his arrogant behaviour, which was very different from that of his father, who in the zenith of his prosperity was distinguished for humility and moderation.*

The interval of tranquillity which the Jews enjoyed, was, about the middle of the eleventh century, disturbed by an unfortunate event. Joseph Hallevi, a learned and zealous rabbi, assisted by the Arabic version of the Talmud, endeavoured to convert the Mahometans to the Jewish faith. The king of Grenada, highly exasperated at this attempt against the established religion, caused the principal offender to be apprehended and executed. A violent persecution of his nation immediately followed, and one hundred thousand families experienced its destructive effects. The severity of this monarch was more sensibly felt after a series of prosperity, which had rendered them affluent and powerful. They were apprehensive that the other sovereigns would follow his

Seville, and almost all the great cities in Spain, had their independent kingdoms.—*Russel's Modern Europe*, vol. i. p. 180.

* *Basnage*, p. 607.

example. But the persecution was quickly suppressed, and did not extend beyond the kingdom of Grenada.*

The Jews were exposed to suffer still more severe and cruel treatment under king Ferdinand. This monarch, having declared war against the Saracens, resolved to consecrate his enterprise by previously extirpating all the Israelites in his kingdom. But the Spanish prelates openly condemned and opposed this measure; and pope Alexander II. wrote a letter to them, in which he highly commended their opposition to Ferdinand's bloody design; severely reproved this monarch for his furious and unchristian zeal; and reminded him of the example of pope Gregory the Great, who had strenuously opposed similar persecution, and the demolishing of the synagogues. The united remonstrances of the pope and bishops delivered the Jews from the impending evil.†

A. D. 1080.] The revolution, caused by the Moors in Africa, more effectually extricated them at this period from persecution. Alphonso, the successor of Ferdinand, being extremely distressed by the increasing power of the Saracens, found himself obliged to befriend and caress the Jews, in order to obtain from them personal and pecuniary assistance. Accordingly he promoted them to great and lucrative offices; and even allowed them to be judges over the Christians. Pope Gregory highly disapproved of this last instance of the king's indulgence; and upbraided him with having "exalted the synagogue of Satan above the church of Christ." The remon-

* Basnage, p. 607.

† Ibid.



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them. Under the idea of procuring a blessing on their expedition, they destroyed the descendants of those, who crucified our Saviour.*

Notwithstanding all the persecutions the Jews suffered in Spain during the eleventh century, many rabbies appeared, who were distinguished for ability and learning. Samuel Cophni, a native of Cordova, published a commentary on the Pentateuch, the manuscript of which is still extant in the Vatican library. Soon after him flourished the five Isaacs at nearly the same period; one of whom, called Isaac' Alphesi, came from Africa to Spain. He was esteemed the most learned man of his age; and was chosen chief of the captivity in this kingdom. The second of the Isaacs was the son of Baruch, who derived his origin from the ancient Baruch, and pretended, that his family came to Spain as early as the reign of Titus, and had subsisted there till this time. He understood Latin, Greek, and Arabic; and was so profoundly versed in mathematics, that the king of Grenada, who was a passionate admirer of this science, sent for him to court in order to receive his instructions. This monarch treated him with such flattering distinction, that he continued to reside at his court till his death, which took place 1007. The other three Isaacs were also men of distinguished ability and learning.†

once; the phrensy was as lasting as it was extravagant. · During two centuries Europe seems to have had no object but to recover, or keep possession of the holy land; and during this period vast armies continued to march to Palestine.—*Robertson's History of Charles V.* vol. i. p. 22.

* Basnage, p. 608.

† Basnage, p. 609. *Modern Univer. Hist.* vol. xiii. p. 256.

The number of famous rabbies, who appeared in Spain during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, gave rise to disputes respecting the utility of studying the sciences. Those who had acquired a taste for literature ardently wished to make farther improvements. According to Enfield,* “the attention, which was paid to the writings of Aristotle,† both by Arabians and Christians, excited the emulation of the Jews, who addicted themselves to the study of the Peripatetic philosophy. This innovation; so inconsistent with the reverence which they professed to entertain for the law and traditions of their fathers, was exceedingly displeasing to the zealous advocates for Talmudic learning, who easily perceived, that as the one gained ground, the other would decline.” The ancient curse denounced upon the Jew who should instruct his son in Grecian learning was revived. But rabbi Solomon-ben-Abraham, who taught at Barcelona, mitigated the severity of this decree, which he had not sufficient courage to abolish; and pronounced an anathema and sentence of excommunication against all, who began to study Greek before they were twenty years old. Rabbi Mar, however, restored the Jewish students to the entire liberty of learning the languages, as well as the arts and sciences.‡

In France, during the tenth and eleventh cen-

* Enfield's Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 204.

† To facilitate the study of Aristotle among the Jews, his writings were translated from the Arabic to the Hebrew tongue. Several other ancient works, particularly the Elements of Euclid, and the medical writings of the Greeks, towards the close of the thirteenth century, appeared in a Hebrew dress.

‡ Basnage, p. 610.

turies, only a few rabbies appeared, who were distinguished for ability and learning. The most celebrated among them was rabbi Gersion, who flourished in the eleventh century. Some suppose he was a native of Germany; however, he published his book of constitutions in this kingdom. Though a long time elapsed before this work met with the approbation of the other Jewish doctors; yet it was received as a code of excellent laws about the year 1204, and its author dignified with the title of the "Light of the French Captivity."*

Jacob, the son of Jekar, one of Gersion's pupils, was a great musician and casuist; and the succeeding Jewish doctors followed his decisions with implicit reverence. Rabbi Judah, another of his disciples, also held a distinguished rank among the learned men of his nation. He composed a treatise on the rights of women; and a work on the Jewish calculations of time. According to his account their first epocha was from their departure from Egypt; they began another date from the period in which they were first governed by kings; and a third from the time Alexander the Great first entered Jerusalem, which was observed till the tenth century, during which period rabbi Sherira flourished, and obliged his nation to date from the creation of the world. He also published a number of sermons. Another of Gersion's pupils, rabbi Moses Hardarsian, or the preacher, acquired a distinguished reputation. He, and rabbi Judah, introduced the custom of preaching in the synagogues, which had been much neglected. The former was the author of a commentary on

* Basnage, p. 610.



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CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Jews in Hungary during the eleventh century.—Persecution of this people in Germany and Bohemia.—The Crusaders massacre vast multitudes of them in their march through the cities of Germany to the Holy Land.—They arrive at Jerusalem, besiege and take the city, and put all the Jews to death.—Of the second crusade.—The Jews are massacred in most parts of Europe.

A. D. 1092.] DURING the latter part of the eleventh century, St. Ladislaus, king of Hungary, convened a synod, which prohibited the Jews from marrying Christian women, or purchasing slaves who had embraced this religion. Coloman, his son and successor, also forbade their making use of Christian slaves; but he permitted them to buy and cultivate lands within the jurisdiction of a bishop. These laws clearly demonstrate, that they were numerous and powerful in this kingdom.*

The number and power of the Jews had also become great in Germany; and they had erected superb synagogues in most of the principal cities, particularly at Treves, Cologne, Metz and Francfort. They had passed from Franconia into Bohemia; and having in the eleventh century assisted the Christians against the irruptions of the barbarians, were allowed the privilege of a synagogue. They suffered indeed severe persecutions in several parts of these kingdoms; and the fanaticism of the populace frequently exposed them to destruction. A priest named Gotesçal, at the head of fifteen thousand banditti, declared war against them; and being supported and encouraged by several monarchs, passed

* Basnage, p. 616.

into Hungary, and committed the most horrid outrages upon this unhappy people. But at length it being discovered, that he pillaged the Christians as well as the Jews, he was surprised and slain with the greatest part of his army.

Not long after, the landgrave of Lininghen declared himself the persecutor of the Jews, and committed several acts of violence against them. But on his attempting to penetrate into Hungary, he was surprised and defeated. The emperor Henry IV. exerted himself in defence of this oppressed people; and ordered them to be reinstated in their abodes and property. This occasioned fresh complaints against them: and they were accused of having exaggerated their losses, in order to enrich themselves by a more plentiful restitution.*

[A. D. 1096.] Soon after, the Crusaders involved them in the most terrible calamities they had ever experienced since the reign of Adrian. These expeditions awakened all the rage of their enemies against them; and “their population seemed to have increased only to furnish new victims.” The champions of the cross, in their march through Germany to the holy land, massacred all who refused to profess the Christian religion. Fifteen hundred were burnt at Strasburgh, thirteen hundred at Mayence; and the flames being communicated to the city, it was in great danger of being reduced to ashes.† This massacre was continued from the month of April till July. According to the Jewish‡ historians, five

* Basnage, p. 616.

† Gregoire on the Reformation of the Jews, p. 5.

‡ A modern Jewish author has thus described the miseries his

thousand of their nation were either slaughtered or drowned; and the number of those, who preserved their lives by dissimulation, was much more considerable. They were so far from exaggerating, that the Christian writers make the amount of those who were destroyed vastly greater. The Batavian annalists assert, that upwards of twelve thousand were slain in their country; and all agree, that the number of those who perished in other parts of Germany* was almost incredible. Many, in the phrensy of despair, put a period to their own lives. Even some women at Treves, seeing the Crusaders approaching, killed their children, telling them, "that it was much better to send them into Abraham's bosom, than to abandon them to the Christian's." Some of the men barricaded their houses, and precipitating themselves, their families, and wealth into

nation endured from the fury of the Crusaders: "When from his solitary retreat an enthusiastic hermit preached the crusades to the nations of Europe, and a part of its inhabitants left their country to moisten with their blood the plains of Palestine, the knell of promiscuous massacre tolled before the alarm-bell of war. Millions of Jews were then murdered to glut the pious rage of the Crusaders. It was by tearing the entrails of their brethren that these warriors sought to deserve the protection of Heaven. Skulls of men and bleeding hearts were offered as holocausts on the altars of that God who has no pleasure even in the blood of the innocent lamb; and ministers of peace were thrown into a holy enthusiasm by these bloody sacrifices. It is thus that Basil, Treves, Coblentz, and Cologne, became human shambles."—*Appeal to the Justice of Kings and Nations, by M. Michael Berr.*

* Metz is, perhaps, the only city in Germany where the Crusaders did not imbrue their hands in the blood of the Jews. Lewis the Young, on his departure for Palestine, assembled his army in this place; and yet it is not said, that the Jews received any insult. The silence of history in this respect amounts to a positive proof, if we consider, that Metz then had historians.—*Gregoire, p. 242.*



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a siege of five weeks ; and impelled by a mixture of military and religious rage, destroyed the inhabitants without distinction of sex or age. Their fury rose to such a height, that all the Jews, being the successors of those who had crucified our Saviour, were most inhumanly put to death.*

A. D. 1147.] The persecutions which the Jews suffered from the Crusaders were not terminated after the conquest of Jerusalem. Other expeditions were undertaken in order to secure to the Christians the possession of the holy land, to enlarge their conquests, and to recover the city after it was retaken by the Mahometans.† The second crusade was promoted by the exhortations of St. Bernard, and supported by the emperor Conrad, and the French king Lewis VII. The hermit Rodolphus, who was commissioned to proclaim the holy war along the banks of the Rhine, earnestly inculcated upon the German princes the necessity of exterminating the enemies of Christ within their own territories. Other preachers followed his example ; and the Jews, seized with consternation, retired to Nuremberg, and other cities, in which the emperor kindly received and protected them. Many of the Christian bishops highly condemned the hermit's persecuting doctrine. St. Bernard in particular severely

they had acquired by this popular enterprize.—*Hume's History of England*, vol. i. p. 232.

* Guthrie's *History of the World*, vol. vii. p. 66. Gibbon, vol. xi. p. 85.

† From the time that Jerusalem was taken by the western Christians, that is, from July 5, 1099, to the end of the year 1162, the city was governed by five Latin kings, and the church by eight patriarchs.—*Marilie's Travels*.

censured it; and, in a letter to the archbishop of Metz, advised to have the fiery zealot banished to his solitude. Not contented, however, with writing pathetic letters upon the subject, he repaired to Germany, where he afforded an efficacious protection to the Jews by the influence he derived from his talents, learning, and virtues.*

The persecution kindled by the Crusaders was not confined to Germany, but extended through the greatest part of Europe. The public outcry was, "Let us exterminate the descendants of those, who crucified Jesus Christ; and let the name of Israel be no more remembered." But though vast multitudes fell a sacrifice to the bigotry of the princes and people, a still greater number, driven to despair by the miseries they suffered, perished by suicide.†

While our attention is engaged, and our feelings agitated in reviewing the terrible calamities which the Jews were compelled to endure, we may be led to inquire, What are the causes of the reciprocal hatred which has subsisted between them and other nations? A celebrated author, who has deeply interested himself to ameliorate the condition of this persecuted nation, has given the following answer to this query.

"The resistance of the Jews in their last war against the Romans greatly incensed the latter, who took every opportunity of inspiring all the people of the empire with their prejudices. The Jews, driven from their country, but continually elevated by the imposture of false Messiahs, who added fuel to their fanaticism, could not tamely submit to a foreign

* Basnage, p. 617. Gregoire, p. 6. † Basnage, p. 616.

yoke ; and they preserved, even to the seventh century, a spirit of sedition, which excited hatred against them.

“ Besides, people pardon each other least, for thinking differently in respect to religion ; and if there be any religion capable of offending the vanity of those, who are not followers of it, without doubt it is that of the Jews. Its divine author gave it this spirit with a view to raise a barrier between his people and the corruption of those idolatrous nations, by whom they were surrounded. Judaism is an exclusive worship ; and though it imposes the obligation of universal philanthropy, its singularity tends to make other men be considered as odious and profane. As it professes that there is only one God, the Gentiles revolted against a dogma which sapped the very foundation of Paganism ; besides they never spoke of circumcision, the most ancient of all rites, but with a smile of derision ; and the passage from ridicule to contempt is immediate. It is a principle in morals, that people do not hate what they despise : but the misfortunes of the Jews have rendered them an exception. Contempt consigned them to disgrace, and fury to torture. The Christians, beholding in them the authors of a Deicide, sometimes forgot the example of their Founder, who, when upon the cross, implored forgiveness for his executioners. Mahomet at first shewed a great respect for the Jews ; but, this sentiment soon gave place to fury. His Koran was filled with violent declamation against men, enemies to his doctrine ; and the Mussulmans, who argued with the sabre, included the Jews in the proscription of all religions



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CHAPTER XIV.

State of the Jews in various parts of the east in the twelfth century.

—Of the princes of the captivity.—The Israelites were numerous in Egypt, but only a small number was found in Palestine.—Of those in the Turkish dominions, and in Italy, Germany, and France.—St. Bernard exerts his influence in their behalf.—They are favoured by pope Innocent II. and Alexander III.—They become powerful in Spain during the reign of Alphonso VIII.

A. D. 1172.] BENJAMIN of Tudela, a city in Navarre, affirms that he visited many regions both in the east and west, in the twelfth century, for the purpose of ascertaining the situation of the Jewish people. He published an account of his travels,* and gave a minute relation of whatever was honourable and interesting to his nation. He even invented new countries, and mentioned kingdoms and cities, which did not then exist. A learned modern author, speaking of this work, and that of rabbi Petachiah, who travelled about the same period, observes, that “a wish to magnify the importance of their brethren is discernible in the writings of both; and, for their extreme credulity, both are justly censured. But, after every reasonable deduction is made on these accounts from the credibility of their narrative, much will still remain to interest an intelligent and cautious reader. †

Benjamin informs us, that the Jews in the east, in the twelfth century, enjoyed the peaceable exercise of their religion, and possessed several considerable

* This work has been translated from the Hebrew into the French, by J. P. Barratier.

† Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*.

synagogues. Four thousand of his brethren inhabited Bassorah, an island on the Tigris. Seven thousand resided at Almozal, answering to the ancient Nineveh. In this city our traveller found Zaccheus, a prince descended from the house of David, and a Jewish astronomer named Beren al Pherec, who officiated as a chaplain to Zin Aldin,* a Mahometan king. Passing through Rehoboth, in his way to Bagdat, he discovered three thousand Jews; and five hundred at Karchemish, famed for the defeat of Pharaoh Necho, and situate on the banks of the Euphrates.†

The celebrated academy of Pundebita had lost much of its original grandeur, and contained only a few learned rabbies, who superintended about two thousand of their brethren, part of whom applied themselves to the study of the law. The academy of Sora was also in a decayed condition; and that of Nahardea was only famed for a synagogue, which its superstitious inhabitants had built of materials conveyed from Jerusalem. The great men, who formerly resided in the eastern countries, had fled to the west; and the Jewish academies declined in consequence of their departure. But, though there were but few learned rabbies in the east, the Jews, according to our author's account, were still numerous; he informs us he found ten thousand of them at Obkeray, which city he pretends was built by king Jechoniah during the Babylonian captivity.‡

* It may appear surprising, that a Jewish astronomer should be chaplain to a Mahometan prince; but many of the Jews were induced to temporize, either through fear, or interested motives.—*Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 262.

† Basnage, p 6 19.

‡ Ibid. p. 620.

Benjamin arrived at Bagdat during the reign of the caliph Mostanged; who highly favoured his nation, and retained a number of Jews in his service. This prince was well versed in the Hebrew language, and had acquired some knowledge of the Mosaic law. The city of Bagdat contained about one thousand Jews, who possessed twenty-eight synagogues. They were also allowed ten tribunals, under the direction of ten eminent men of their nation, who were chosen to transact their affairs. These chiefs were, however, subordinate to the prince of the captivity. Benjamin asserts, that the person who then enjoyed this dignity was styled Lord by the Jews, and by the Mahometans the son of David, he being, according to our author, lineally descended from that monarch. His authority extended over all his brethren in the dominions of the caliph; and from Syria to Hindostan. Our traveller also affirmed, that this chief received regal honours; had an hundred guards to escort him when he visited the caliph; and that a herald marched before him, crying, Prepare the way for the Lord, the son of David. The Jewish people in the most remote parts were, he says, obliged to receive their teachers from him by the imposition of hands; and he was enabled to support his dignity by the large presents and tribute which he received from his nation.*

The existence of a succession of these imaginary potentates has been strenuously maintained by Jewish authors. Their views were to aggrandize the glory of their nation, and deprive Christians of the force of the argument furnished by the prophecy

* Basnage, p. 620.



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of his brethren, who possessed a spacious synagogue. In Hila, about five miles from ancient Babylon, he discovered four synagogues, and ten thousand Jews. Passing eastward, he arrived at the banks of the river Chebar, where he found sixty synagogues. He asserted, that the prophet Ezekiel was buried on the banks of this river; that his tomb was preserved; and that both Jews and Persians resorted to it as a place of devotion. In Cufa, once the metropolis of the caliphs, he discovered nearly seven thousand of his nation, who possessed only one synagogue.*

Our traveller found the Jews numerous in Egypt, and computed thirty thousand of them in one city upon the frontiers of Ethiopia. There were about two thousand Israelites and two synagogues at Misraim, at present Grand Cairo. The chief of all the synagogues in Egypt resided in this city; appointed the Jewish doctors; and supported the interest of his nation. Several parts of the land of Goshen were inhabited by Jews; two hundred were found in one place, in another five hundred; and nearly three thousand in the city of Goshen. About the same number resided at Alexandria, and but a few at Damietta.†

Our author found at Tyre about four hundred of his nation, most of whom were employed in the glass manufacture. There were, however, a few learned men among them, who were well versed in the Talmud. The Samaritans having abandoned their ancient capital, some of them retired to Cæsarea, where he found about two hundred, and one hundred

* Basnage, p. 620.

† Ibid.

at Sichem, which had become the seat of their religion. They were extremely strict in solemnizing their festivals, and offering their sacrifices on Mount Gerizzim.*

In Jerusalem, the ancient capital of the Jewish religion, Benjamin found only two hundred of his nation, who all resided together, and made but a mean figure in the metropolis. They were not numerous in other cities of Judea; in one of which he found only two, in another twenty. Shunan contained about three hundred. At Ascalon there were five hundred and fifty three, Jews and Samaritans. Upper Galilee contained a larger number; many of the Israelites retired into this province after the destruction of Jerusalem, and founded the famous academy of Tiberias. Yet he discovered only one synagogue in this part of Judea.†

From Palestine our author passed into Greece, and found two hundred Jews, who resided in and about Mount Parnassus, and obtained a subsistence by cultivating vegetables. There were three hundred of this nation at Corinth, and two thousand at Thebes, who were either dyers, or silk weavers. There were a small number at Lepanto, Patras, and other parts of the Turkish empire; but they were neither numerous nor affluent. When Benjamin arrived at Constantinople, he discovered about two thousand of his nation, who resided in the suburb called Galata, or Pera, where they had formerly been settled by the emperor Theodosius. They were all silk weavers, or merchants. There were besides five hundred Caraites, who were sepa-

* Basnage, p. 622.

† Ibid.

rated by a wall from the other Jews, in order to prevent all intercourse between them. The remnants of the nation in the Ottoman empire were forbidden to ride on horses throughout the streets of the cities; and were hated and insulted both by Turks and Greeks.*

From Constantinople our traveller passed into Italy: and relates the dissensions, which then reigned between the inhabitants of Genoa, Pisa, and other republican cities. He observes, that the Jews were few in these parts; and that whatever party gained the ascendancy, they were sure to be oppressed. When he repaired to Rome, he found his brethren more numerous; among whom were several learned doctors, particularly rabbi Jechiel, who was superintendant of the pope's finances. Capua was no less famed for the number and learning of her doctors, though the city contained only three hundred Jews. Benjamin reckoned five hundred at Naples, two hundred at Salerno. There were others settled at Benevento, Ascoli, and Trani. The islands of Sicily and Corsica also contained a considerable number of Jews; particularly the former, where he discovered about two hundred at Messina, and five hundred at Palermo.†

Our traveller passed from Italy into Germany, where he asserts, that he found his nation not only more numerous and affluent,‡ but also more learned, devout, and hospitable to strangers. They lamented

* Basnage, p. 624. † Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 274.

‡ Benjamin wrote an account of his travels about 1170; in seventy years, the Jews had recovered from the massacres of the Crusaders, mentioned in the preceding chapter.—Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 26.



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the banks of the Euphrates; and in the ancient cities where they were formerly computed to have amounted to nine hundred thousand.

A. D. 1147.] St. Bernard, whose humanity to the Jews has been noticed in the preceding chapter, continued to repress the violence of their enemies. He alleged, that it was necessary to tolerate them at present, in order to effect their future conversion; and made use of his influence over pope Innocent the Second, to inspire him with the same sentiments of gentleness and forbearance. When this pontiff made his grand entrance into Paris, they approached him with profound respect, and presented him the roll, or volume of their law. Upon receiving it from their hands, he returned this answer, “I reverence the law given by God to Moses, but condemn your exposition of it, because you still expect the Messiah, whom the catholic church believes to be Christ, who liveth and reigneth with the Father, and the Holy Ghost.” His successor, Alexander III. also favoured and protected the Jews, and prohibited the people from insulting them on their sabbaths, festivals, or any other occasion. Under such powerful patronage, they became flourishing, affluent, and learned in Rome, and several other cities in Italy.*

A. D. 1170.] The Jews were no less powerful in Spain during part of the twelfth century. One of them, named Joseph, was prime minister to Alphonso VIII. and had a coach of state, and guards to attend him. At length, however, he was expelled from his office, by the treachery and intrigues of

* Basnage, p. 634.

Gonzales, one of his dependents, who, having incurred the displeasure of his benefactor by his criminal conduct, resolved to escape the punishment he deserved, by effecting his ruin. Under pretence of filling the monarch's coffers, this wretch prevailed upon Alphonso to grant him eight of the principal Jews. These he caused to be put to death, and confiscated their effects. He next offered a much larger sum for twenty more. But the king thought it more honourable to seize their estates for defraying his expences, than to deprive them both of their lives and property. This unhappy people, who rejoiced to be able to purchase their lives and liberty upon any terms, voluntarily poured immense sums into the treasury. Gonzales was soon after imprisoned by the king, and his fall established their tranquillity.*

Alphonso was afterwards induced to treat the Jews with great indulgence, in consequence of his passion for a beautiful young Jewess, named Rachel, to whom he sacrificed his honour and interest. Her countrymen, seizing the advantage, grew extremely powerful and insolent, and the court and clergy were offended at the haughtiness of their behaviour. At length, the fury of their enemies rose to such an height, that they caused the young Jewess to be murdered. The nation, however, derived essential benefit from this prosperous epoch, and became numerous and affluent. Rabbi Eliakim, who was highly esteemed in Spain, and composed his ritual of all the ceremonies used in every synagogue, commonly styled, "The Ritual of the Universe," has

* Basnage, p. 635.

computed that there were twelve thousand Jews in the city of Toledo. They were also in a flourishing state at Andalusia, where great numbers applied to the study of theology and the sciences. At length, they divided themselves into three different sects, of which Maimonides, who lived at this time, has given an account. This division was regarded by him as one of the fatal consequences of the abolition of the Sanhedrin.*

* Basnage, p. 635.



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physician, astronomer, mathematician, grammarian, and poet; and, that he was so well versed in Hebrew, Chaldaic, Arabic, and other languages, that he composed in them all with great facility." His method of explaining the scriptures differed from the other rabbies; for instead of seeking after mystic interpretations, he generally adhered to the literal meaning; and gave such proofs of his genius and good sense, that the Christians prefer him to the other Jewish expositors. His most celebrated work is, "Commentaries on the Old Testament."* He died at Rhodes, 1174, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.†

Moses Maimonides, who was eminently distinguished among the learned men of this age, was born of an illustrious family at Cordova in Spain, in the year 1131. He boasted of being descended from the house of David, as did many of the Spanish Jews. He made such a rapid progress in science and literature, that his countrymen styled him the "eagle of doctors;" and asserted that, "of all their nation none ever so nearly approached to the wisdom and learning of their great founder and lawgiver as Moses the son of Maimon." At length, however, the superiority of his genius, and the vast fund of knowledge which he acquired, excited the envy and jealousy of the Jews. Perhaps also his connexion with Averroes, a celebrated Arabian philosopher, who was one of his preceptors, might

* He also wrote various theological, grammatical, mathematical, and astrological works, many of which remain in ancient libraries, not yet edited.

† Basnage, p. 626.

have led him to adopt obnoxious opinions. His writings, particularly his *Moreh Nevochim*, or resolution of doubtful questions, soon raised him many opponents. The design of this work was to explain the meaning of several difficult and obscure words, phrases, metaphors, parables, allegories, &c. in scripture. It was written for the benefit of those who were in doubt whether they should interpret such passages according to the letter, or rather figuratively and metaphorically. It was asserted by many at this time, that the Mosaic rites and statutes had no foundation in reason; but were ordained by God upon a principle purely arbitrary.* (On the other side, Maimonides argued, that the Mosaic dispensation in general was instituted with a wisdom worthy of its divine author, and explained the causes and reasons of each particular branch of it.) But he exhibited less respect for the decisions of the Talmud, than the other Jewish doctors who preceded him. Those of his nation who were most attached to these fables were highly offended. Rabbi Solomon, then chief of the synagogues at Montpellier, persuaded the doctors who studied under him to engage in defence of the Talmud. Accordingly they not only opposed the doctrine of Maimonides, but endeavoured to blast his reputation. They burnt his works, and excommunicated those who read them, and addicted themselves to the study of philosophy.†

The rabbies of Narbonne, with the great David Kimchi at their head, exerted all their eloquence in

* Basnage, p. 627. Biographical Dictionary.

† Basnage, p. 627. Modern Universal Hist. vol. xiii. p. 287.

defence of Maimonides, and excommunicated their brethren at Montpellier. This contention lasted forty years, and called forth the abilities of the learned men on both sides of the question. The schism to which this dispute gave rise was abolished in 1232.

Maimonides, finding his residence in Spain troublesome and hazardous, removed to Egypt, and settled at Cairo. His knowledge of the healing art induced the sultan of Egypt to choose him for his physician; and he employed his credit at court in protecting his nation. He also founded an academy at Alexandria for their benefit, and gained many pupils from various countries. They were, however, soon dispersed by persecution. Some assert, that this great man died in Egypt 1201; others, that his death took place in Palestine 1205.*

This learned Jew was not only master of many eastern languages, which was a singular accomplishment in his time, but was well-versed in the Greek tongue, and had read the works of the Grecian philosophers, whom he frequently quotes. He was celebrated for his knowledge of the arts and sciences, as well as languages; was eminently distinguished as a physician; and, in Talmudic learning, excelled all his cotemporaries.† His writings are too numerous to be particularly mentioned.‡

Solomon Ben Isaac Jarchi is ranked among the illustrious rabbies of the twelfth century. He was

* Basnage, p. 637.

† Enfield's Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 205.

‡ He was the author of twenty-five noted works, besides some others of less importance.—*Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 271.



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matical knowledge. He also was the author of a Commentary on the Psalms, and other books of the Old Testament. Part of this work has been translated into Latin, and inserted in the Bibles of Venice and Basil. Moses Kimchi, his brother, was also distinguished for his learning; and has written a treatise, styled the Garden of Delight, the manuscript of which was preserved in the Vatican library.*

Three celebrated rabbies, named Levi, or Halevi, appeared during the twelfth century. Abraham Halevi was a learned cabbalistical Jew, who, having placed himself at the head of the traditional party, violently attacked the Caraites; but being inferior to them in point of argument, he had resource to Alphonso VII. for whom he had performed signal services, and who rewarded him by commanding his opponents to be silent.†

Juda Levi was the author of the Cosri, a polemical treatise on religion, especially the Jewish; and a pathetic elegy, in which he deplored the destruction of Jerusalem.‡

Another learned rabbi, named Judas Halevi, was born at Cologne; and after many conferences with the Christians became a convert, and was baptized by the name of Herman. After he embraced Christianity, he entered among the regular canons of St. Augustine.§

Some learned Jewish women appeared during the

* Basnage, p. 630.

† Ibid.

‡ This elegy has been translated by Mr. Bing, and inserted in a note of Gregoire's work on the Reformation of the Jews, p. 280.

§ Basnage, p. 630.

twelfth century. The rabbi Petachiah, who visited the synagogues of his nation at that period, has asserted, that the daughter of the prince of the captivity was so well versed in the law and Talmud, that many resorted to her for instruction, and that she read lectures through the lattice of her window, in order to be heard without being seen by her pupils.

It appears from the Jewish annals, that some of the nation have been raised to the highest offices in the courts of princes. Others have acquired applause at the head of armies; in particular, the celebrated don Solomon, a Portuguese Jew, who was as much distinguished for his knowledge in philosophy, as for his skill in the military department. His merit raised him, in 1190; to the dignity of field-master-general; and he discharged the duties of his office with such fidelity, that he soon obtained the command of the whole army. The envy and jealousy of the grandees was at length excited by his valour and success. But he subdued their enmity by his remarkable humility and moderation.*

In the twelfth century several learned Jews renounced their religion. For instance, Samuel Ben Jehudah, or, as he is commonly called, Asmouil, deserted the synagogue, and professed the Mahometan faith. In order to prove the sincerity of his conversion; in 1174 he wrote a book against his nation, in which he charges them with having altered the law of Moses. This accusation was received with such applause by the Mahometans, that they forbade the quoting or translating any part of

* Basnage, p. 630.

the Pentateuch according to the Jewish or Christian copies.*

One of the Christian converts received the name of Peter Alphonso at his baptism. After he deserted the synagogue, he wrote dialogues against the Jews, and was appointed physician to Alphonso VII. king of Castile and Leon. He died in the year 1108.†

It is indeed surprising, that the learned rabbies of the twelfth century did not sufficiently enlighten their nation as to prevent their being frequently duped by impostors. But the number of those who appeared in this age was greater than in any preceding or subsequent century. In 1137, a false Christ arose in France, and engaged his followers to hold unlawful assemblies. In consequence of the impostor's crimes, the government caused many of the synagogues to be demolished. But at length he and a large number of his followers were apprehended and put to death.‡

The following year the Persians were disturbed by a Jew, who called himself the Messiah; and collected a formidable army of his nation. The Persian monarch hired him to disband his soldiers; but when the stipulated sum was paid, the king finding himself out of danger, compelled the disarmed Jews to reimburse him the money, and caused the impostor to be beheaded.§

In 1157, another false Messiah appeared in Spain. He was a native of Cordova, and was supported in his imposture by one of the greatest rabbies in that city, who had previously written a

* Basnage, p. 630. † Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 291.

‡ Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 304. § Basnage, p. 632.



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Some time after, a Jew who dwelt beyond the Euphrates, called himself the Messiah, and drew vast multitudes after him. He founded his pretensions on his having been a leper, and being wonderfully healed in one night of this obstinate disease. The Jewish doctors soon persuaded him and his followers, that this supposed miracle was not a sufficient evidence of his mission. The populace became ashamed of their blind credulity; but, as they had taken arms in his cause, a fresh persecution was raised against them. One of their writers informs us, that, exhausted with their sufferings on his account, ten thousand of this miserable people renounced their religion; which has rendered the memory of this impostor odious to the whole nation.*

In the year 1174, another pretended Messiah arose in Persia. This impostor seduced multitudes of the common people, and involved his nation in a new and severe persecution.

A Jew, named David Almusser, appeared in Moravia, in the year 1196, who set up for the Messiah, and boasted that he possessed the power of rendering himself invisible whenever he pleased. Vast multitudes followed him, and were deceived by his artifice. In order to prevent the ill consequences of his popularity, the king promised him his life on condition that he would surrender himself. He complied; but the prince caused him to be imprisoned. He had the address, however, to escape; and for some time eluded all pursuit. At length the king summoned the Jews to deliver him up; and, in

* Basnage, p. 632.

order to avoid a fresh persecution, they complied. He was put to death, and a heavy fine imposed upon his nation. *

David Alroi, or El-David, was the most famous impostor, who appeared during the twelfth century. He was a native of Almaria, which city contained about one thousand Jews, who paid tribute to the king of Persia. In the year 1199 he assumed the title of the Messiah; and being a man of learning, and well versed in all the arts of deception, he attracted many followers. After he had deluded the populace by his pretended miracles, he prevailed upon them to arm themselves in his cause. The Persian king, alarmed at the rapid progress of the insurgents, commanded the impostor to repair to court, promising, that if he proved himself the Messiah, he would acknowledge him as a king, sent from heaven. El-David, contrary to expectation, obeyed the summons, and assured the king that he was really the Messiah. Upon which he was ordered to be imprisoned till he could prove his mission by extricating himself by a miracle. He had the address to escape, and though the king despatched messengers in search of the impostor, they were unable to find and apprehend him. But at length, upon a promise of receiving ten thousand crowns, his father-in-law consented to betray and put him to death. Vast numbers who had been deluded by him were cruelly slaughtered. †

After giving an account of the false Messiahs who appeared among the Jews, Dr. Jortin remarks, “It

* Basnage, p. 632. Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 304.

† Basnage, p. 633.

may seem strange that they should have rejected Christ, who gave them so many proofs of his mission, and yet should follow every impostor who pretended to be the Messiah, without offering any sufficient or even plausible evidence of it. The reason is plain; our Saviour, by not setting up a temporal kingdom, dashed all their worldly views at once; but the claimers of the title of Messiah began with promises of delivering them from their enemies, and restoring to them their country, and their lost liberties.”*

* Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 319.



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portion of the laity. They were the only bankers, or, as the vulgar termed them, the usurers of the times. They conducted what then existed of foreign trade; and often visited the civilized south of Europe. They wrought most of the gold and silver ornaments for churches.

William Rufus, who was an irreligious prince, highly favoured this singular people; and not only permitted, but encouraged them to enter into solemn contests with his bishops concerning the true faith. It is said, that he sent for some learned Christian divines and rabbies, and ordered them fairly to dispute the question of their religion in his presence; assuring them he was perfectly indifferent between them, and that he would embrace that doctrine which upon comparison, appeared to be supported by the most solid arguments. Accordingly, it is related, that there was a public meeting of the chief leaders on both sides in London, where the Jews opposed the Christians with so much energy, that the bishops and clergy were not without some solicitude how the dispute might terminate. No other class of men were at this time sufficiently enlightened to engage with the priesthood. Some young Jews were even so imprudent as to value themselves upon their infidelity. It has been asserted, that they became so powerful and opulent towards the conclusion of the reign of William Rufus, that they not only held public disputes, but endeavoured by pecuniary bribes and other allurements to induce the poor to embrace their religion.*

* Hume's History of England, vol. i. p. 189. Molloy De Jure Maritimo, p. 400.

A. D. 1177.] Henry II. has been highly censured by monkish writers for tolerating and protecting the Jews. They were so numerous in his reign, that, possessing only one burying-ground in the city of London, they petitioned the king to allow them some new cemeteries. This request was granted; and places to inter their dead were assigned them on the outside of every city where they dwelt. In this reign one Joshua, a Jew, furnished the rebels in Ireland with large sums of money; and their opulence had rendered them so presumptuous as to ridicule the higher dignitaries of the church. We may in part attribute to them the spirit which dictated the constitutions of Clarendon.* In 1188, the parliament at Northampton proposed to assess them at £60,000; and the Christians at £70,000, towards the projected war. The Jews must, therefore, have been vastly rich, or the parliament extremely tyrannical. But this nation, from their first residence in England, were always considered as vassals to the crown, who might be pillaged according to the caprice of the reigning sovereign.†

A. D. 1189.] When Richard I. ascended the throne, this people brought large presents in order to secure the royal protection. Many having hastened from remote parts of England to Westminster, the court and populace imagined they had

* Decrees enacted by the council of Clarendon, which Henry II. convened in order to check the usurpations of the pope and clergy. *Hume*, vol. i.

† Monthly Magazine and British Register, 1796. *Molloy de Jure Maritimo*.

conspired to bewitch the king,* and an edict was issued to prevent their presence at the coronation. But considerable numbers, whose curiosity was greater than their prudence, fancied they might pass unobserved among the crowd, and ventured to insinuate themselves into the abbey. Upon being discovered, they fled in great consternation; but the people pursued them and murdered several.†

A rumour spread rapidly through the city, that the king, in honour of the festival, had given orders for the massacre of the Jews: a command so agreeable was instantly executed on all who fell into the hands of the populace. Those who remained at home were exposed to equal danger; the people moved by rapacity, and zeal broke into their houses, which they plundered, after having murdered the owners. Where the Jews barricaded their doors and defended themselves with vigour; the rabble set fire to the houses, and made way through the flames to exercise their pillage and violence. The usual licentiousness of London, which the sovereign power with difficulty restrained, broke out with fury, and continued these outrages. The inhabitants of the other cities of England, hearing of the slaughter of this unhappy people in the metropolis, imitated the example; and, though the government published a proclamation the day after the coronation, in order to suppress the fury of the populace, the persecution was continued the greater part of the year.‡

* A superstitious idea that the Jews were most of them conjurors was prevalent during the dark ages.—*Basnage*, p. 638.

† *Hume's History of England.* *Smollet's History of England.*

‡ *Hume's History of England.*



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in wealth, while they, who supposed themselves his peculiar friends and favourites, should be obliged to deprive their families of necessaries in order to defray the expenses of the crusades. Hence they persuaded themselves it would be a meritorious act to destroy the descendants of those, who crucified our Saviour, and apply their wealth to this holy enterprize. Though the king at his departure had left orders that they should not be molested; yet as soon as he quitted the kingdom their fury broke out anew. They destroyed many of these wretched people at Norwich, Stamford, and other places, and seized upon their property. The murderers took shipping as soon as possible, and fled to Jerusalem, not so much as one of them being detained by the magistrates, or any further inquiry made respecting their injustice and cruelty.*

A still more horrid transaction took place at York, where the Jews were great usurers; and where, as they lived in a splendid manner, their opulence excited envy, and increased the hatred against them. The populace in this city assembled to inflict the same barbarities upon them, which their countrymen had suffered in London, and other places. Upon which, the principal persons among this people applied to the governor of York Castle, and prevailed upon him to grant them an asylum. The place was sufficiently strong for their defence. But a suspicion arising, that the governor, who frequently went out into the city, had combined with their enemies to destroy them, they one day refused him entrance. He complained to the sheriff, and to the

* Monthly Magazine and British Register, 1796.

heads of the violent party who were deeply in debt to the Jews, and was ordered to attack the castle. The sheriff, however, repented of, and revoked the order, and the superior citizens refused their aid. But, as the fury of the populace could be appeased only by murder and robbery, an attack was made.* When the Jews found that they could not hold out any longer, and their offers of purchasing their lives with money were rejected, they took the horrid resolution of destroying themselves, one of the most desperate among them exclaiming in despair, that “it was better to die courageously for the law, than to fall into the hands of the Christians.” Accordingly, after setting fire to the towers of the castle, and destroying their wives and children, they put a period to their own lives. Five hundred perished at this time. A few who surrendered in hopes of mercy, were murdered by the populace.†

Immediately after this dreadful catastrophe, those who were indebted to the Jews, repaired to the cathedral where the bonds were deposited, compelled the officer to deliver the obligations, and discharged their debts by burning them in the

* A late writer asserts, that the leader of the rabble who attacked the castle was a canon regular, whose zeal was so fervent, that he stood by them in his surplice, which he considered as a coat of mail, and reiteratedly exclaimed, “Destroy the enemies of Jesus.” This spiritual laconism invigorated the arm of men, who perhaps wanted no other stimulative than the hopes of obtaining the immense property of the besieged. The same author also asserts, that a venerable rabbi, who was highly esteemed among his brethren, first proposed to them to perish by suicide, in order to elude the tortures which they expected would be inflicted upon them if they fell into the hands of their enemies.—*Curiosities of Literature*, vol. ii. p. 427.

† Basnage, p. 638. Anderson, vol. i. p. 224. Macpherson, vol. i. p. 83.

church, with great solemnity. They also entered and plundered the desolate houses which belonged to the Jews. The king, incensed at this insult to his authority, ordered the bishop of Ely, at that time chief justice of the realm, to make severe examples of the guilty. But before he arrived in Yorkshire, the principal offenders had fled into Scotland, and the city of London. Imputing what had happened to the ungoverned fury of the multitude, the prelate contented himself with depriving the high sheriff and governor of their offices, and levying fines upon the most opulent of the inhabitants.*

[A. D. 1199.] The cruel persecutions which the Jews suffered during the reign of Richard, had induced many of the wealthiest among them to leave the kingdom. The consequent diminution of the revenue was so sensibly felt, that John, upon his accession to the throne, used various arts to allure them to return. He granted them, upon receiving a large sum of money, a charter which confirmed all their ancient privileges; and allowed them to hold land, to build synagogues, and name a high priest by the title of Presbyter Judæorum.† Many of this oppressed people returned, and were afterwards more cruelly plundered than ever. Their exorbitant

* Basnage, p. 688. Smollet's *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 227. When the king employed Granville the justiciary to inquire into the authors of these crimes, the guilt was found to involve so many of the most considerable citizens, that it was deemed more prudent to drop the prosecution, and very few suffered the punishment due to this enormity.—*Hume's History of England*, vol. i. p. 351.

† By the canon law no Jews could erect a synagogue; for if they attempted to build these places of worship they might be seized by the crown.—*Matthew Paris's History of England. Macpherson on Commerce.*



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man submitted seven days, and on the eighth agreed to satisfy the king's rapacity. Isaac, a Jew of Norwich, became bound to pay 10,000 marks. It is asserted by some historians,* that the king, not satisfied with the vast sums extorted from this miserable people, confiscated all their property, and expelled them from the kingdom. It appears, however, that they soon returned.

A. D. 1216.] Henry III. liberated such Jews as were in prison, and ordered them to be protected against the cruelty of the Crusaders.† In 1233, this monarch founded a seminary, where Jewish converts might be supported without labour or usury. This induced many of the nation to profess Christianity; and the house continued till after their expulsion from England.‡

Upon a petition of the inhabitants of Newcastle, the king granted them the inhospitable privilege, that no Jew should reside among them. During this reign, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishops of Lincoln and Norwich, in order to expel the Jews for want of sustenance, published injunctions through their respective dioceses, that no Christian should presume to sell them any provisions under pain of excommunication. The prior of Dunstable, however, about the same period, granted to several Jews liberty to reside within his domains,

* Matthew Paris. Macpherson, vol. i. p. 376.

† The Jews were so deeply alarmed at the persecution which their brethren in France, Spain, and Germany, suffered at this time from the Crusaders, that they purchased an edict from the king to preserve them from similar outrages. *Basnage*, p. 678.

‡ *Basnage*, p. 679.

in consideration of the annual payment of two silver spoons.*

A. D. 1235.] The Jews of Norwich were accused of having stolen a Christian child and kept him a year, that they might circumcise and crucify him at the ensuing passover; but being detected previously to that period, they suffered a severe punishment. In London they were also accused of murder,† and, after enduring various vexations and torments, were deprived of a third part of all their estates. This, however, did not satisfy the insatiable king, who soon after renewed his extortions. This wretched people were accused of coining false money, and counterfeiting the prince's seal; and under these pretences were loaded with enormous taxes. In 1241, 20,000 marks were exacted from them. Two years after, a Jew, named Aaron, of York, was compelled to pay four gold and four thousand silver marks. Seven years after, the same man was accused of forgery, and condemned to pay four thousand marks of gold and fourteen thousand of silver. The high penalty imposed upon him, which it seems he was thought able to pay, may be deemed by some rather a presumption of his innocence than of his guilt.‡

A. D. 1254.] New supplies were demanded

* Monthly Magazine, 1796.

† It appears probable, that most, if not all the accusations of this kind were made against the Jews, to give a better pretence for extorting their money; for, according to Basnage, those of London were accused of murder, on their refusal to pay the great sums the king demanded. The least surmise, made upon the slightest foundation, obtained credit among their enemies, who sought their destruction.

‡ Hume's History of England.

from the Jews for carrying on the Spanish war. Irritated to the highest degree by this oppression, they requested permission to depart from England for some more propitious and friendly country.* But this they were refused, and compelled to pay part of the contribution. The following year the king renewed these extortions. He represented, that notwithstanding the taxes he had raised, he still continued poor and involved in debt ; and declared, that “ he must have money from any hand, from any quarter, or by any means.” He then demanded eight thousand marks of the Jews, and, upon their pleading insolvency, sold them to his brother Richard for that sum. It was expected he would demand a rigorous payment of the debt ; but he compassionated their situation, and was convinced of their poverty and inability.

A. D. 1262.] The hatred of the people against the Hebrew nation had, during the reign of Henry, arrived at such a height, that, when the barons appeared in arms against the king, they endeavoured to attach the citizens of London to their interest by massacreing seven hundred of this devoted race. An attempt, which was made by one of the nation to oblige a Christian to pay an enormous interest for a loan of money, is said to have afforded a pretence

* Elias, a London Jew, undertook to plead for his brethren before the council ; and made a pathetic speech, representing the impossibility of their paying the sum demanded. Several instances are related by Basnage of the Jews bribing their judges to be favourable to them. In particular, John Lunel, though in the ecclesiastical line, was accused of receiving large sums from many Jews for his protecting them at the bar, and diminishing their taxes. Page 679.



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A. D. 1287.] King Edward, however, whose prejudices against this unhappy people were increased by his expedition into the holy land, treated them with great rigour. He forbade their selling or assigning their debts without his license. He ordered all their repositories throughout the kingdom to be searched, and established an inquisition to take cognizance of those who neglected to wear the distinguishing badges. The oppression and misery under which they continually groaned appear to have rendered them regardless of character; and the frequent extortion of vast sums from them* seems to have made them imagine every method justifiable, which they could take to indemnify themselves. They were accused of adulterating the coin, circulating counterfeit money, and making fraudulent exchanges. In consequence of their guilt, and the outcry raised against them, all the Jews in England were imprisoned on one day, and two hundred and eighty executed in London, besides vast numbers in other parts of the kingdom. Their houses and lands, as well as the goods of multitudes, were sold and confiscated. The king, lest it should be suspected that the riches of the sufferers were the chief part of their guilt, ordered a moiety of the money raised by these confiscations to be set apart, and bestowed upon such as were willing to be converted to Christianity. But resentment was more prevalent with them than any temptation from their

* It was computed, that the Jews paid the crown in the space of seven years, viz. from the fiftieth year of Henry III. to the second year of Edward I. no less than four hundred and twenty thousand pounds, or two hundred and sixty thousand pounds of our modern money.—*Anderson on Commerce*, vol. i. p. 322.

poverty ; and very few could be induced by interest to embrace the religion of their persecutors.*

A. D. 1290.] About this time king Edward, prompted by his zeal and rapacity, ordered the Jews to be banished from the kingdom, and never to return, upon pain of death. He seized at once their whole property, and allowed them only money sufficient to bear their expences into foreign countries, where new persecutions and extortions awaited them.† But the seamen of the cinque ports despoiled most of them of this small pittance, and even threw some hundreds of this miserable people into the sea. The king inflicted a capital punishment upon the perpetrators of this crime. The number of those who were expelled amounted to sixteen thousand five hundred and eleven. Edward had previously banished them from his territories in France. After this expulsion, the Jews never appeared again in a body in England during three hundred and fifty years.‡

* Basnage, p. 680. Macpherson, vol. i. p. 432. Hume, vol. ii. p. 4.

† The clergy were so well pleased with the banishment of the Jews, that they granted a tenth of their benefices to the king ; and afterwards joined with the nobility in obliging him with a fifteenth of their temporalities, to make some amends for the loss he sustained by the expulsion of a people, from whom his predecessors had exacted considerable subsidies in the emergency of affairs.—*Smollet*, vol. i. p. 140.

‡ Anderson on Commerce, vol. i. p. 322. Macpherson, vol. i, p. 450. Henry's History of Britain, vol. iv. p. 46.

CHAPTER XVII.

State of the Jews in France.—They are expelled the kingdom by Philip Augustus.—They are severely persecuted under the reign of Lewis IX. who at length banishes them from his dominions.—Severe laws enacted against them by the duke of Brittany, and the councils of Lyons and Vienne.—The Jews are recalled by Philip the Bold.—They are banished by Philip the Fair, and recalled by Lewis XI.—Irruption of the shepherds, and their cruelty.—The Jews are accused of causing the rivers, wells, &c. to be poisoned.—The terrible punishment they suffered for this supposed crime.—They are banished by Philip the Tall.—They invent bills of exchange.—They are recalled by John II.—They are accused of various crimes, and cruelly treated during the reign of Charles VI.—They are finally expelled the French dominions.

WHILE the Jews in England were enduring all kinds of oppression and misery, their brethren in France were subjected to similar sufferings and persecution. About the year 1182, King Philip, surnamed the August, under pretence of piety and zeal for the honour of God, banished them from his dominions,* and confiscated their estates. They were permitted to retain only what could be collected from the sale of their furniture; for which they found it difficult to obtain purchasers. It is even said, that they were robbed of the small sums they were enabled to raise, and reduced to the greatest misery, and that many fell victims to these tyrannical proceedings. Soon after, however, the king ordered them to be recalled; and upon finding that this measure excited the resentment of the Zealots, he

* The murder of a youth named Richard, was laid to their charge, and served as a pretence for expelling them from France.—*Picart*, p. 173.



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and industry. If a Jew became a convert to Christianity, the whole of his property was confiscated to the use of his lord.* The passion for extorting wealth from this miserable race was so vehement, “that a conversion was considered as a bankruptcy, and even paradise did not possess the right of asylum.”†

Saint Lewis not only sanctioned and confirmed, but even extended these oppressive laws. He ordered the Jews to be severely fined if they neglected to wear a distinguishing and disgraceful badge on their garments, and prohibited them from having any intercourse with the Christians. During his reign, when a Jew appeared in evidence against a Christian, he was compelled to swear by the ten names of God; and his oath was accompanied with a thousand imprecations upon his own head, if he deviated from the truth. The person who administered the oath thus addressed him, “May the Lord God send you a continual fever or ague, if you are guilty of perjury; may he destroy you in his anger, you, and your family, and your effects; may the sword and death, fear and inqui-

* This singular custom of confiscating all the goods of the Jews who embraced Christianity, was first introduced into France; and is known only by the law which suppressed it, given at Basville, 1392. Thus by a strange and impious inconsistency, this wretched people at one time incurred a severe penalty by renouncing Judaism; at another epoch, those in the same country, who refused to profess Christianity, were ordered to be burnt. The practice of confiscating the property of those Jews who professed Christianity began under the feudal government, and was continued in most parts of Europe till the end of the fourteenth century.—*Montesquieu's Works. French Encyclopedia.*

† *Essay on Public Happiness*, vol. ii. p. 427.

etude, pursue you on all sides; may the earth swallow you up like Dathan and Abiram; may all the sins of your parents, and all the maledictions contained in the law of Moses fall on your head." To this dreadful imprecation the Jews were to answer three times, "So be it."*

A. D. 1238.] The most signal calamity which the Jews suffered during the reign of St. Lewis was a persecution raised against them by the Parisians, on account, as was pretended, of their sacrificing some Christian children on Good Friday, and of using their blood at the solemnity of the passover. For this imputed act of murder and impiety, they were cruelly slaughtered in the metropolis. The persecution was also extended to Brie, Touraine, Anjou, Poitou, and Maine; in which places upwards of two thousand five hundred Jews, who refused to embrace Christianity, were put to death by the most cruel tortures. Their sufferings would probably have been prolonged, had not pope Gregory IX. interposed, and written to St. Lewis, requesting him to allow them liberty of conscience.

During the king's imprisonment in the holy land † a crusade was formed in his kingdom of simple shepherds, whose professed object was to march thither and release him. They grounded their chimerical design upon revelations, and pretended they had the gift of working miracles. The enthusiastic fury spread till their army amounted to an hundred thousand men, who marched to Bourges, plundered the

* Gifford's History of France, vol. i. p. 436, 437—450.

† St. Lewis was at the head of the sixth and seventh crusades in 1248 and 1270.

Jews, and seized all their books in order to commit them to the flames. At length, however, they were subdued, and many of them put to death.*

The following year a conference was held in the presence of Blanche, the queen regent, during St. Lewis's absence, between rabbi Jechiel, a learned cabbalist, and Nicholas Donim, a celebrated Jewish convert. The French authors assert, that Jechiel, baffled and mortified by the powerful arguments of his opponent, retired in disgust to Jerusalem. While the king was under confinement in the holy land, he sent an edict to France to expel the Jews from his dominions, which was punctually executed by the queen regent.

* A. D. 1239.] The Israelites being numerous and great usurers in Brittany, the nobility and merchants united in a complaint against them to John le Roux, the duke. An act was passed which declared, that at the request of the bishops, abbots, barons, and vassals in Brittany, all the Jews should be for ever banished from that province. By this law all their debtors were exonerated, and their effects ordered to be retained; and those who had recently killed a Jew were forbidden to be disturbed. The king of France was to be requested to expel this hated race, and confiscate their property. The duke engaged for himself and his successors, for the present and future to support this law; and, if he violated it, he authorized the bishops to excommunicate him, and confiscate his lands in their dioceses without regard to any privileges. †

* *Basnage*, p. 672.

† *Ibid.* p. 671. *Gregoire*, p. 243.



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unhappy people were sacrificed to the king's extreme avarice,* for he seized upon all their wealth, and only allowed them money to defray their expenses to the frontiers. Many perished by the way with fatigue and want, and those who survived retired into Germany. Hence the Jews of that country supposed themselves of French extraction. Among those who escaped exile by receiving baptism, many relapsed and returned to Judaism.

The conversion of the celebrated Nicolas de Lyra, however, appears to have been sincere. He wrote a learned treatise against his nation, and spent the remainder of his life in the explanation of the scriptures. Most of the proselytes think themselves obliged to give a testimony of their faith by writing against their deserted brethren; but he is said to have adduced more cogent arguments against them than any Jewish convert before him. He studied some time in the university of Paris, and then entered into the Franciscan order. He died at his convent at Verneuil in the year 1340.†

A. D. 1314.] The same avarice which caused Philip to expel the Jews from France, induced Lewis the Tenth, the succeeding monarch, to recal them. He expected by this measure to recruit his finances, and thus be enabled to reduce the Flemings to subjection. The condition of their return was paying a very heavy tax; and the time of their remaining in the kingdom limited to twelve years. During this period they were at liberty to engage in trade, or support themselves by labour. They were allowed

* Basnage, p. 674.

† Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 321.

to collect their old debts, two thirds of which the king claimed for himself. They were also permitted to purchase synagogues, burying-places, and their books, except the Talmud. But they were now obliged, as before, to wear a particular mark of distinction. They were prohibited from lending money on usurious interest, written obligation, or, in short, any thing but pledges. They were likewise forbidden to dispute on religion either in public or private.*

A. D. 1320.] In the reign of Philip V. surnamed the Tall, the shepherds and other inhabitants of the country left their flocks and farms; and asserted, that they were going to Jerusalem for the relief of the holy land. With no other weapons than a pilgrim's staff they marched in great bodies, which were increased by the junction of the populace, which they met on their way. Their leaders were two profligate priests, who pretended to work miracles, and thus imposed upon the credulity of the people. They ravaged several of the southern provinces, broke open the prison doors, and enlisted all the criminals they found into their society. By these means they made themselves masters of several cities, and committed the vilest outrages and cruelties; but more particularly against the Jews. This miserable race, left to the choice of death or baptism, collected their most valuable effects; and fled before this tumultuous rabble. A considerable number of them having taken refuge in the royal castle of Verdun, in the diocese of Toulouse, were there besieged by the shepherds. They defended themselves with vigour

* Basnage, p. 674.

and desperation ; and, finding their arms fail, began to throw their children over the walls in hopes to excite the compassion of their enemies ; but in vain.*

The shepherds set fire to the fortress, and expected to satiate their rage with the slaughter of the besieged. But the Jews perceiving there was no means of escape, to avoid falling into the bands of the enemy, requested one of their brethren, a young man of great strength, to put them all to death. The wretch accepted the fatal commission, and after he had massacred five hundred he presented himself to the besiegers with a few children, whose lives he had spared, and demanded baptism. His request, however, was rejected, and he received the punishment due to his barbarity. At length a great number of the shepherds were apprehended and executed at different places, particularly at Toulouse, where they had massacred all the Jews in the city. †

A. D. 1330.] This miserable people were ten years after involved in another calamity, pretended to have been occasioned by their having suffered themselves to be bribed by the Saracen king of Grenada, to procure the poisoning of all the rivers, wells, and reservoirs of water. A leper having deposed, that he was hired by a certain rich Jew to effect this purpose, the people in several provinces, without waiting for the necessary formality, attacked the Jews, and put them to the most cruel death. Some, driven to despair, perished by suicide. At

* Basnage, p. 675. Gifford.

† Basnage, p. 664. Gifford, vol. i. p. 539.



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to the regent, who evinced a disposition to grant them a favour which they offered to purchase at a very high price. Soon after his release John published a declaration, by which he permitted them to return and remain in the kingdom twenty years. Besides the sum which they advanced for this privilege, every master of a family paid twelve florins of gold on his entrance into, and six florins yearly for the liberty of residing in France. A general poll tax was also levied upon them of one florin per head. The king strictly prohibited their exorbitant usury, and permitted them only to take moderate interest.*

During the reign of Charles VI. the Jews were accused of murdering a new convert, and other crimes,† for which some were executed, others scourged, and fines levied upon the synagogues. These severities induced many to assume the mask of Christianity.‡ The people, however, in 1380, insisted upon their expulsion, and assembled as it is said at the instigation of certain noblemen, who had borrowed large sums of this persecuted race, who though generally considered as the outcasts of society, exerted their industry with success in the acquisition of wealth. The houses of the public receivers, most of whom were Jews in Lombardy, were broke open; the chests in which the money

the Jews, and sell them the liberty of trading in France.—*Anderson*, vol. i. p. 452.

* Gifford, vol. ii. p. 269. Basnage, p. 676.

† Charles VI. during his reign, becoming deranged in his intellect, it was suspected that the Jews deprived him of his reason.—*Gregoire*, p. 22.

‡ Basnage, p. 676.

was deposited were seized, and their contents emptied into the streets ; while the registers, bonds, and all other securities for money lent, were destroyed. In one street alone thirty houses were pillaged, and all the furniture, clothes, plate, and jewels, became the prey of the populace. The Jews endeavoured to preserve their lives by flight, but most of them were intercepted and massacred ; while the few who escaped, took refuge in the dungeons of the Chatelet. The women in despair attempted to follow their husbands with their children in their arms ; but the mob forced their children from them, and carried them to be baptized.*

The government was too weak to inflict on the insurgents the punishment which their crimes deserved. The Jews, however, were re-established in their habitations ; and an order was issued by the council for every one to restore, under pain of death, whatever he had taken from them ; but the order was treated with contempt. These miserable objects of oppression, after being despoiled of their property, were exposed to prosecutions from those who had left pledges in their hands ; but an ordinance was passed to exempt them from the consequences, on taking an oath, that the property which was the object of the action had been taken from them during the tumult.†

A. D. 1394.] In the reign of Charles VI. a council, which was held on the 17th of September, passed an act for the final expulsion of the Jews from France. The provost was ordered to superintend the execution of the edict, and take an inven-

* Gifford, vol. ii. p. 269.

† Ibid.

tory of all the effects which could be found in their houses at the time of their departure. They were obliged to leave the kingdom in November; and from this last exile they begin the date of their years. The greater part of this persecuted people retired into Germany. In the city of Metz in Lorraine they preserved their ancient privileges,* the city being at the time of their expulsion a free town in the imperial territories. After it was annexed to the French dominions, the king of France continued to tolerate the Jews who were settled there, and for a long period it was the only place in the kingdom where they enjoyed a privileged abode.†

Respecting the repeated accusations brought against the Jews, of crucifying Christian children, poisoning the rivers, &c. a late author observes, “In the dark periods of the middle ages‡ the Jews, punished but in the most dreadful manner for real crimes, suffered oftener for crimes merely chimerical. The relations of their sacrificing Christian children are given by Christian historians. But even granting, that rage, madness, or a desire of revenge, may

* The Jews were established at Metz as early as the year 888, since at that epoch Gombert the dean brought some complaints against them. Sigebert de Gemblours taught in this city in the twelfth century with such success, that they eagerly resorted to hear his instructions.—*Gregoire on the Reformation of the Jews*, p. 283.

† Basnage, p. 676. Gifford, vol. ii. p. 344.

‡ The middle age, as it is called, is considered as terminating at the taking of Constantinople in the fifteenth century. Its commencement is not so well fixed by historians, some carrying it back even to the reign of Constantine, and some only to the division of the empire under Theodosius. The middle age contains a period of about one thousand years. The term dark age is sometimes used to express the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, which were the most barbarous portions of this dark period.



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CHAPTER XVIII.

The Jews in Spain are persecuted by the bishop of Toledo.—They are massacred by the Crusaders.—Raymond de Penneforte attempts to convert them.—They are favoured by Alphonso X. and James I. king of Arragon.—They are deluded by an impostor, who predicted the appearance of the Messiah.—Irruption of the shepherds.—The pestilence spreads from their army.—The Jews are accused of poisoning the rivers.—They are favoured by Alphonso XI.—Their enemies conspire to destroy them.—Fresh insurrections at Toledo.—Many Jews perish by suicide.—Of the persecutions they suffered at Castile and Arragon in the latter part of the fourteenth century.—Pope Benedict appoints a conference between them and the Christians.—A large number of Jews profess Christianity.—Of the pretended conversions by Vincent Ferrier.—Cruelty of the inquisition.—They are banished from Spain.—Terrible distress of the refugees.—They are received into, and soon after expelled from Portugal.

A. D. 1209.] THE sufferings of the Jews in Spain, were equally severe with those of their brethren in England and France. At the commencement of the thirteenth century, the bishop of Toledo perceiving them to increase in number and wealth excited the populace against them, and, putting himself at their head, entered and plundered their houses and synagogues. He endeavoured to vindicate his conduct by accusing the Hebrews of having betrayed the city when it was besieged by the Moors; but the silence of impartial historians exculpated them from the charge.*

A. D. 1212.] The Crusaders, who soon after assembled near Toledo, completed the work of destruction which the bigoted prelate had begun. They prescribed no limits to their cruelty, but made such

* Basnage, p. 659.

havock and carnage among this miserable people; that Abarbanel, a celebrated Jewish writer, considered this as one of the most severe and bloody persecutions which his nation ever suffered, and that it caused a greater number to abandon Spain than Moses conducted out of Egypt. The Spanish nobles endeavoured to interpose their authority, and to suppress these cruelties. But Ferdinand, who then possessed the sovereign power, and wished to ingratiate himself with the populace by the extirpation of the Albigenses and other sects, encouraged and promoted the persecution.*

A. D. 1250.] During the reign of James I. king of Arragon, who was distinguished for his zeal for Christianity, great efforts were made to convert the Jews. Raymond de Penneforte,† general of the Dominicans, confessor to the king and minister to the pope, used energetic measures to effect this purpose. He had already, by his reputation and address, suppressed the violence of the populace against this unhappy people; and persuaded the king that mildness and instruction were the most effectual means to induce them to embrace Christianity. Agreeably to his benevolent plan, several of the Dominican friars were chosen to learn the Hebrew and Arabic languages, and directed to apply themselves assiduously to the study of the scriptures, that they might be enabled to dispute with the Jewish rabbies in order to convince them of their errors. The attempts made to convert the Jews were, however, in general unsuccessful; though they highly

* Basnage, p. 670.

† Raymond was canonized by pope Clement VIII.

esteemed Raymond for his singular humanity and moderation.*

A. D. 1255.] Alphonso X. king of Castile, and a celebrated astronomer, encouraged and promoted learned men of all religious denominations. By his order Judah de Toledo translated and improved the astronomical works of Avicenna, a learned Arabic writer. Isaac, the son of Cid, and other rabbies, assisted him in compiling certain astronomical tables, which bear the name of the king, and do honour to his memory.†

Alphonso rewarded them with royal munificence, and became so generous a patron to the nation, that the jealousy of the Zealots was excited, and they formed new plots and accusations against them. Three villains of the city of Orsana, in Andalusia, threw the dead body of a man into the house of a Jew, and accused him of the murder. This improbable assertion gained credit, and awakened the popular fury and hatred against them. A great number of Jews were inhumanly put to death, and others fled for refuge to the houses of their Christian acquaintance. The inhabitants of Palma also rose, and destroyed many of this unhappy people. Upon this

* Raymond Martin, another Dominican, wrote a treatise against the Jews, called "Pugio Fidei," or the "Poniard of Faith." This work is considered as a learned and powerful defence of the Christian religion against the arguments of the Jews. Another monk, named Paul, of the same order, held a conference in the palace of the king with Moses Nachmanides, a famous cabbalistical Jew. Both sides claimed the victory. Paul obtained an edict from king Ferdinand, enjoining the Jews to open their houses and synagogues to him, and to furnish him with all their Hebrew books whenever he came to dispute with them.—*Basnage*, p. 660.

† *Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 304.



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synagogues in Spain. He pretended, that by his knowledge of the prophecies he had discovered the exact time of the appearance of the Messiah, which he predicted to be just at hand. This impostor even foretold the very day on which this mighty deliverer was to appear, who should gather together his elect people, subdue their enemies, and replace them in their ancient inheritance. Deceived by this prophecy and expectation of the Messiah, the Jews prepared themselves for the event by fasting and prayer, and at the time appointed repaired to the synagogues clothed in white. But discovering the imposture, they became ashamed of their blind credulity, and were exposed to the insults and derision of their enemies.*

A. D. 1320.] But the most terrible calamity which they suffered during this period was by the body of shepherds who had committed such fatal ravages in France. Having become numerous and powerful they entered Spain, and carried fire and sword into several provinces. The Jews, in particular, were the victims of their rapacity and cruelty. Many preserved their lives by surrendering their property and renouncing their religion. Those who could not be induced to make these sacrifices were instantly and inhumanly put to death.†

The pestilence which arose in the army of the shepherds, and extended through the neighbouring countries, was productive of new evils to this unhappy people. The desolation occasioned by this destructive scourge, was attributed to their malice

* Basnage, p. 664. Modern Universal History, vol. xiii.

† Basnage, p. 664.

against the Christians., They were accused of having bribed the peasants of Mesura to poison the rivers, and of having furnished them with poison for that purpose. This absurd allegation* gained credit, and caused great numbers of Jews to be imprisoned and tried. After a long confinement, however, they acquitted themselves of the crimes laid to their charge. But the king, who was unwilling to confess and condemn the injustice of his conduct, pretended that he detained them in prison in order to effect their conversion; and caused fifteen thousand who refused to receive baptism to be put to a cruel death.

A. D. 1333.] Alphonso XI. king of Castile, was the friend and protector of the Jews, being principally directed in his affairs by Joseph, one of the nation, whom he had appointed intendant of his finances. This monarch was, however, prevailed upon by his mutinous and discontented subjects to pass a decree against them, on account of a pretended indignity offered to the sacrament by a Jewish boy. The clamour of the populace was so violent, that a council was convened to deliberate whether they should be put to death or banished. The latter measure being preferred, they were commanded to abandon the kingdom in three months. Happily for them; the prince royal obtained a revisal of the process, by which it appeared, that a young Christian had inadvertently committed the supposed crime. On this deposition, the king

* The inventors of this palpable calumny were those who owed money to the Jews, and who wished to be delivered from their embarrassment without paying it.—*Gregoire*, p. 23.

recalled his edict. The acquittal of the Jews highly mortified and exasperated their enemies, who asserted, that the Christian had been bribed to give an evidence in their favour. In another city many of the nation were put to death for the pretended offence.*

[A. D. 1349.] Soon after, a fresh insurrection against the Jews broke out in Toledo, and their terror and desperation on this occasion baffles all description. One of them, perceiving the Zealots breaking into the house in order to massacre all they found, in a phrenzy of rage and despair killed his relations who had taken refuge with him, and then destroyed himself in order to avoid falling into the hands of his enemies.†

[A. D. 1396.] In the reign of Henry III. of Castile, Martin, archdeacon of Astigi, by vehemently preaching against the Jews through the streets of Seville and Cordova, exasperated the populace to such a degree, that they massacred them in both places. The persecution spread to Toledo, Valencia, and Barcelona, where some were plundered, others murdered, while the most artful professed Christianity in order to escape such acts of violence. The populous synagogues of Seville and Cordova became almost deserted. These wretched fugitives, who had fled to Andalusia and other provinces, were put to death by the inhabitants. King John, the son and successor of Henry, treated the Jews with equal cruelty. During his reign, many perished by being deprived of the necessaries of life, and those who survived were compelled to wear a disgraceful mark of distinction.‡

* Basnage, p. 665.

† Basnage, p. 667.

‡ Ibid.



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was chosen to defend the Jewish religion. The Jews at this time expressed unusual respect for the pope, who entertained them with politeness, and defrayed their expences.* But they treated Jerome with great asperity, their minds being exceedingly embittered against him, both for deserting the synagogue, and involving them in a dispute from which they apprehended fatal consequences.†

The tenour and result of this famous conference is variously related by Christian and Jewish historians. The latter, however, confess that they bribed several bishops to persuade Benedict to break off the dispute, from an apprehension that it would exasperate their enemies against them. But the pope insisted upon Jerome's performing his engagement; and four or five thousand Jews were converted upon reading his relation of the conference, which he presented to this pontiff. The high celebrity of this performance induced Joseph Albo,‡ a Spanish rabbi, to compile his articles of faith, in order to confirm the wavering minds of his brethren. He pretended, that a belief of the future coming of the Messiah was not necessary to salvation; and censured Maimonides, without naming him, for having made this an essential part of his creed. He

* They, it is said, even carried their impious flattery so far as to

mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation."—*Basnage*, p. 680.

† *Basnage*, p. 680. *Modern Univer. Hist.* vol. xiii.

‡ This rabbi, finding the arguments which were adduced to prove that the Messiah was come made a great impression upon the Jews, maintained, that a belief of his coming was not an essential article of faith, and wished to have it expunged from the creed of Maimonides.—*Basnage*, p. 344.

reduced the fundamental dogmas of the Jewish faith to three, viz. the existence of God, the law of Moses, and future rewards and punishments.*

A. D. 1413.] The following year Benedict XIII. published his constitution against the Talmud, and the usury of the Jews. But, as he was deposed soon after, all his ordinances were revoked; and it does not appear that his plans were followed by Martin of Florence his successor.

A. D. 1413.] Vincent Ferrier, who has been canonized for his miracles and zeal for converting the Jews, appeared at this time. The Christians compute, that the number whom he induced to abandon their religion amounted to twenty-five thousand. According to the Jewish accounts still more deserted the synagogues. But whatever was their number, it appears that the greatest part of them renounced their former religion, merely to avoid severe and cruel treatment. They secretly circumcised their children, observed the passover, and neglected none of the Jewish rites and ceremonies.†

The dissimulation of the pretended converts did not long pass unnoticed by the clergy, who acquainted Ferdinand, the Spanish monarch, and the pope Sixtus IV. with their conduct. Exasperated

* Addison's *Present State of the Jews*, p. 17.

† Basnage, p. 689. *Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 347. —A small number of Jews were, however, esteemed sincere converts; among whom Solomon, the son of Levi, was included. Having read a work of Thomas Aquinas, he embraced Christianity, and took the name of Paul of Burgos. Soon after his baptism he was raised to the bishopric of that city, which was his native place, and afterwards to the patriarchate of Aquileia. He left a son who succeeded him in the bishopric, and wrote a history of Spain.—*Basnage*, p. 690.

at the affront offered to the Christian religion, the tribunal of the inquisition* was directed to pay close attention to the behaviour of these delinquents; and all Christian princes were exhorted to assist in bringing them to condign punishment. This decree, which was published in most parts of Spain, filled the Jews with such consternation, that seventeen thousand immediately returned to the church, and submitted themselves to whatever censure or penance should be inflicted. Two thousand of this miserable people, part of whom confessed that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah, were put to death. Many were sentenced to a long imprisonment, and, after regaining their liberty, were ordered to wear two red crosses on their upper garments, in acknowledgment that they had deserved the flames. Nor were the sacred repositories of the dead spared; human bodies were disinterred and burned; their property was confiscated, and their children were declared incapable of succeeding to the possessions of their parents. Notwithstanding the watchfulness of the inquisition, many found means to emigrate; others were more careful to conceal their dissimu-

* The court of the inquisition was introduced into Spain in the fifteenth century by Ferdinand and Isabella; and was principally intended to prevent the relapse of the Jews and Moors, who had been, or pretended to be, converted to the faith of the church of Rome. Torquemada, a Dominican, confessor to queen Isabella, pretended that the dissimulation of the Jews would greatly injure the cause of religion. The queen listened with respectful deference to her confessor, and at length gained over the king to consent to the establishment of this barbarous tribunal. Its jurisdiction extended over all who in their practice or opinions differed from the established church.—*Watson's History of the Reign of Philip II.* vol. ii. p. 134, 135.



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was so displeasing to the Spanish nation, that he was obliged to issue a second bull to confirm it; and Mariana is almost the only Spanish writer who has given it a place in his history.*

A. D. 1492.] Soon after Ferdinand and Isabella had completed their reduction of the Moors, they issued an edict, commanding the Jews either to embrace Christianity, or quit the kingdom in four months. The people were at the same time prohibited, under the severest penalties, from affording provisions or any other assistance to those who should be found in Spain after this period. Their attachment to the law of Moses was superior to every other consideration; and the Spanish historians affirm, that eight hundred thousand persons abandoned the kingdom pursuant to this decree. The Jewish writers make the number two hundred thousand families; which, reckoning only five to each family, must have amounted to a million of souls.†

The reputation which the celebrated rabbi Isaac Abarbanel enjoyed at court, could not prevent his being included among the exiles.‡ He was born at Lisbon, 1437, of an ancient family, who boasted a lineal descent from king David.§ His parents took

* Mariana's History of Spain. Basnage, p. 691. † Ibid.

‡ Rabbi Isaac Karo was another learned exile. He retired first to Portugal, and thence to Jerusalem. He lived a perfect recluse in this city, and devoted himself to study. He composed a Commentary on the Pentateuch, partly cabbalistical and partly literal.—*Modern Universal History*.

§ He founded his pretensions on the testimony of Isaac Aben Geath, who says in one of his commentaries on the scriptures, that at the time of the destruction of the first temple, two families of the race of David went into Spain; one of whom settled at Lucena, the other at Seville; and that from the latter Abarbanel was descended. After

great care of his education, and, as he possessed distinguished abilities, he made a rapid progress in the sciences, especially sacred literature. But his ambition to figure at court induced him to turn his chief attention to politics, finance, and commerce.

During the reign of Alphonso V. king of Portugal, he was chosen one of his privy council, and filled his station with dignity and splendour till the death of this monarch. But being discarded in the reign of his successor, who hated the Jews, he fled to Castile. He was graciously received by Ferdinand and Isabella, and advanced to preferments, which he enjoyed until his countrymen were expelled from Spain. He exerted himself to the utmost to save himself and his nation from this fatal stroke. But finding all his efforts useless, he embarked for Naples, and arrived there with his family in 1493. Being educated a courtier, he ingratiated himself with Ferdinand, king of Naples; and both that sovereign and Alphonso his successor protected and employed him. He died at Venice, 1508, in the seventy-first year of his age, and was interred at Padua. Several of the Venetian nobles, and all the Jews, attended his funeral. He published many learned works,* particularly a commentary on Exodus, Deuteronomy, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other books of the Old Testament.†

the example of his father he assumed the title of Don, the usual custom among the nobles of Spain.—*Boissi Dissertations Critiques pour servir a l'histoire des Juifs.*

* Basnage, p. 692. De Rossie's Hebrew Biography.

† He applied himself to study with indefatigable ardour, and was held in such high estimation among the Jews, that some did not hesitate to pronounce him superior to Maimonides. They agree, that

The sufferings of the Jewish emigrants who embarked for other countries were inexpressible and almost inconceivable. Some of the vessels took fire, and the miserable objects of oppression perished in the flames. Others were so heavily laden that they sunk, and many were drowned. Great numbers were shipwrecked on foreign coasts, and perished with cold and hunger. One of the Spanish pilots formed the resolution of murdering all the Jews in his vessel, in order, as he pretended, to revenge the death of Christ, whom their ancestors had crucified. They represented to him that Christ, “who died for the redemption of mankind, did not desire the death but the salvation of the sinner.” The sailor in consequence of this pathetic remonstrance gave up the design of murdering them; but caused them to be stripped naked, and set down on the next shore, where part of them perished with hunger; others were destroyed by lions who came out of a neighbouring cavern. The remainder were saved by the humanity of a master of a vessel, who took them in upon seeing their miserable condition.*

The pestilence also destroyed many of these unfortunate exiles; and, to complete their calamities, those who reached the city of Fez in Africa, were refused admittance by the merciless inhabitants, and died for want of the necessaries of life. When those who sailed for Italy arrived at Genoa, they found the city afflicted by a famine, which had greatly raised

to a mind clear and penetrating he added a lively and fertile imagination, which was exhibited in his easy and copious elocution.—*Dissertations Critiques, &c.*

* Basnage, p. 698.



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Many of the Jews sought a nearer asylum in Portugal. John II.* the sovereign of that kingdom, had formerly sent some of this nation† to make discoveries on the coasts of the Red Sea; and they brought him exact and faithful accounts. They had assisted the Portuguese adventurers in the discovery of the East Indies. Notwithstanding these important services, the king consented to receive them only on condition that each one should pay him eight golden ducats, and quit his dominions at a limited time, or forfeit his liberty. On his part he engaged, when the time fixed for their departure arrived, to furnish vessels to transport them to any place where they chose to retire. The king was desirous of fulfilling his engagement; but his orders were disregarded, and the fugitives, who were about to leave Portugal, were treated in such a barbarous manner by the seamen, that many chose to remain in the kingdom and be sold as slaves, rather than expose themselves to the perils and hardships of a new voyage.‡

Emanuel, his successor, appeared at first to commiserate their sufferings, and restored to them their liberty. Their peace, however, was of short duration; and the king reluctantly sacrificed them to an alliance which he contracted with the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. The queen having declared, that “she would not acknowledge a son-in-law who permitted the enemies of God to remain in

* In the reign of John I. the Jews had their synagogues and rabbies in Portugal.

† Murphy's Travels in Portugal, p. 223.

‡ Basnage, p. 694. Murphy's Travels in Portugal, p. 224.

his dominions," he issued an edict which expelled them from Portugal, and fixed a day on which those who remained should be deprived of their liberty.

When the appointed time arrived, the king was greatly affected with the idea of expelling such multitudes of people; and resolved at least to effect the conversion of their children. He had engaged that ships should be provided for their emigration at three principal ports; but he issued a proclamation forbidding them to embark any where but at Lisbon. When they arrived at this city, he ordered all the children under fourteen years of age to be forcibly taken from their parents, in order to be educated in the Christian faith. The execution of this barbarous command was attended with the most affecting circumstances. Many of the wretched parents, in a phrenzy of rage and despair, first killed their children, and then destroyed themselves. The king had invented so many delays to retard the departure of these unfortunate exiles, that many remained in the kingdom, and were sold as slaves. Overwhelmed with these complicated afflictions, at length they consented to assume the mask of Christianity, and recovered their liberty and children. The sincerity of these pretended converts was, however, greatly suspected, and the least discovery of their predilection for the Mosaic religion exposed them to the cruelties of the merciless inquisition.*

* Murphy's Travels in Portugal, p. 690.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Jews in Germany are accused of various crimes.—They endeavour to hinder the conversion of a young man of their nation at Frankfort.—Part of the city is burned, and a number of Jews destroyed.—Accusation against those of Hagenau.—They are massacred at Bavaria and Bern.—Of several learned rabbies.—The Jews flourish at Lithuania in the thirteenth century.—Decrees enacted against them in the council of Vienna.—A regulation made at Augsburg respecting the oaths to be administered to them.—Disputes between the Rabbinites and Caraites.—Rind Fleisch excites the people in various parts of Germany to massacre the Jews.—They are protected by the bishop of Spire.—They are murdered by the Flagellants.—Persecution against them on pretence of their poisoning the rivers.—Cruelties practised against those of Bohemia.—They are accused again of poisoning the rivers, and banished the empire.—They are persecuted in various parts during the thirteenth century.

[A. D. 1222.] THE Jews have been more frequently accused of enormous crimes in Germany than in any other part of Europe. When the Persians and Tartars made incursions into this country, they were charged with favouring and assisting these enterprizes, in hopes of being delivered from the persecutions which they suffered from the Christians. They were, probably, more justly accused the same year of opposing the conversion of a young man of their nation at Frankfort who was desirous of receiving baptism.* The people were incensed at this opposition, and arms were seized on both sides. Several Christians lost their lives; and about one hundred and eighty Jews perished by the sword, or the fire they had kindled. One half of the city was consumed; and the most prudent among them were

* Basnage, p. 682.



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against those of Wurtzburg and Bern, where they were massacred in the same manner.

Notwithstanding these persecutions, the Jews in Germany boast of the learned rabbies who appeared in the thirteenth century, particularly Baruc and Eliezer de Germeciman, both of whom were famous cabbalists ; and the latter wrote a celebrated treatise, called, " The Mantle of the Lord." Meir de Rottemburgh was also distinguished for his learning, and became the judge and chief doctor of his German brethren.*

The Jews flourished in Lithuania during the thirteenth century. King Boleslaus granted them liberty of conscience and other privileges, which they preserved under his successors. Their prosperity excited the envy of the populace, who endeavoured to disturb their peace, and blast their reputation. It was observed in the council of Vienna, which was convened in 1267, that they were become so numerous and powerful that the income of the clergy was considerably diminished. It was, therefore, ordained that they should reimburse them, in proportion to what they might have considered themselves entitled, had their families been Christian. The council also enacted, that they should be compelled to demolish the new and superb synagogues which they had erected, and be contented with their former places of worship. These decrees, however, proved abortive ; for the German princes and nobles protected those who refused to obey ; and even obliged their officers to afford shelter to the unhappy victims who implored their assistance.

* Basnage, p. 684.

The clergy were, therefore, necessitated to pursue more violent measures, and excommunicated all who favoured and defended the Jews.*

A new regulation was made at Augsburg upon observing that they did not consider it a crime to violate their oaths. Previously to this time they had been compelled to swear by the saints, by the blessed Mary, or even by the Son of God. But, as they made no scruple to violate these oaths, they were obliged to swear by the name of God, and the law of Moses. Yet they supposed even these solemn engagements were annulled on the great day of expiation; and could, therefore, be of force for only one year. It is also said, that a number of their casuists authorize deception, equivocation, mental restriction, and hypocrisy.† According to a concession of the Talmud, it is lawful to dissemble for the sake of peace.‡

[A. D. 1285.] About this time the disputes between the Rabbinists§ and Caraites were conducted with great violence. Aaron Cohen, a rabbi of great learning, who was the head of the latter sect, wrote a treatise to expose the absurdities of the Talmud. He explained their articles of faith, and styled his work, “The Tree of Life,” because he supposed a belief of their dogmas necessary in order to attain eternal salvation. Though he acknowledged a resurrection, he confined it only to the true believers of the house of Israel. But notwithstanding his attempt to lessen the attachment which the Caraites

* Basnage, p. 684. Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 337.

† Grégoire, p. 81. ‡ Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 338.

§ The Rabbinists are modern Pharisees.

began to discover to tradition, rabbi Nissi, another famous doctor of this sect, was obliged at the earnest request of his pupils, to explain the Misna. Even Aaron was at length induced to give an allegorical explication of several passages of scripture. But though this relaxation in the tenets of their opponents gratified the Rabbinists,* the hatred between the two sects continued with unabated violence.†

A. D. 1264.] During the contest between Adolphus of Nassau and Albert of Austria, each of whom had been elected emperor, a fanatical peasant, named Raind Fleisch, taking advantage of the wars which raged in Germany, commenced an itinerant preacher in the Upper Palatinate, Franconia, and other provinces. He pretended that God had sent him to exterminate the Jews; and, in order to exasperate the people against them, asserted that they had stolen a consecrated host. The credulous multitude, without further enquiry, immediately seized upon those in Nuremberg, Rottemberg, and several other towns in Franconia and Bavaria, and put them to death. Others chose rather to destroy themselves, with their wives, children, and effects, than to be thrown into the flames by their enemies. Albert would gladly have suppressed this barbarous massacre; but he was afraid that Raind Fleisch, who was regarded as a messenger from God, would

* *Basnage*, p. 685.

† The hatred between these sects is carried so far, that the Rabbinists assert, that if a Caraité and a Christian happen to be in danger of drowning together, they ought to make a bridge of the body of the Caraité, in order to save the Christian.—*Gregoire*, p. 86.



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Frankfort, they agreed to an accommodation. A Jew named Cicogne, whose family was numerous in that city, being dissatisfied with the compromise, threw fire into the town house, which consumed the building, and all the records preserved in it. The flames spread to the cathedral, which was reduced to ashes. This crime was severely punished; for not only the incendiary, but all his brethren in Frankfort, a few excepted who retired into Bohemia, were put to death.*

In the course of the same year the Jews were accused of poisoning the rivers, wells, and reservoirs of water. They were suspected of this crime upon no other foundation, than that they had escaped the common mortality which took place in most parts of Europe. A suspicion being sufficient to condemn them, a new massacre ensued in several provinces of Germany, in which some were burned, and others cruelly slaughtered. Those of Metz, however, resolved to defend themselves; and having seized about two hundred unarmed Christians, put them to death in a barbarous manner. The incensed populace collected, furiously attacked, and killed twelve thousand Jews. They next set fire to their houses, which spread and raged so vehemently, that the great bell and glass in the cathedral church were melted down. The persecution of this miserable people extended over all Germany. In the imperial cities all their houses were demolished, and castles and towers built with the materials.†

Robert, the reigning count Palatine, and his ministers, endeavoured in vain to suppress the

* Basnage, p. 686.

† Ibid.

tumult and afford an asylum to an injured race, whose innocence was acknowledged by honest men. But they were opposed by some of the nobility; and the populace accused them of accepting bribes to defend the enemies of Christ. All the Jewish inhabitants of Ulm, together with their property and effects, were burned; their wretched brethren who survived in those parts were without friends or a place of refuge, the princes not daring, at so critical a time, to interpose in their behalf.

At Lithuania, however, they met with more equitable treatment. Casimire the Great, being enamoured with a beautiful Jewess, named Esther, had, at her request, granted them several considerable privileges.*

A. D. 1391.] Those Jews who had fled for refuge to Bohemia, were not better treated than their brethren in Germany. Winceslaus,† the emperor and king of Bohemia, equally discharged the cities and nobility from the debts they owed to these miserable objects of persecution. The people, therefore, considering them abandoned by that prince, attacked them at Gotha, and a terrible carnage ensued. The Jews of Spires, without distinction of age or sex, were all put to death, except a few children, who were hurried to the font to be baptized. As a pretence for this cruelty, they were accused of insulting a priest as he was carrying the sacrament to a sick person. The citizens of Prague,

* Basnage, p. 686.

† This prince, having rendered himself odious to his people by his intemperance and other vices, sought to regain their favour by his severity to the Jews.

irritated at seeing them celebrate their passover, chose that time to burn their synagogues, and those who there engaged in devotional exercises. This inhuman deed was executed without any opposition, and not one of them escaped.*

Soon after, they were again accused of poisoning the rivers and springs, and punished for this pretended crime. The persecution was not confined to Germany, but extended to Italy, Provence, and other parts. The Jewish historians assert, that the emperor was convinced of their innocence, and represented to his council, that it was impossible for them to be guilty of this offence, as the rivers and springs, which have a free and unrestrained course, cannot be contaminated by poison. But the people were so highly exasperated against this miserable race, that, in order to preserve them from more dreadful calamities, the emperor was under the necessity of issuing an edict, enjoining them to depart the country, or receive baptism. [A. D. 1400.] The Jews assert, that few at this time were induced to apostatize, or, as they expressed it, “to forsake the glory of their God.”†

Great numbers of the Jews had settled in Thuringia and Misnia. But, at the commencement of the fifteenth century, the landgraves exacted vast sums for affording them an asylum. Upon their refusal to pay an enormous tax, they were arrested and imprisoned, and obliged to give up a large part of their wealth in order to regain their liberty.‡

* Basnage, p. 687.

† Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 343.

‡ Basnage, p. 687.



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the usurious practices to which they were addicted.*

Their expulsion was probably accelerated by the appearance of an impostor, named David Leimlein. Though he had not the temerity to declare himself the Messiah, he confidently affirmed, that the mighty conqueror would appear in 1500. He styled himself chief of the army of Israel, and went to Lisbon and persuaded a young convert to return to Judaism, and act in concert with him. He gave him the name of Solomon Malcho, and exhorted him to diligently read the rabbinical writings. His pupil made such a rapid progress in his studies, that the Italian Jews affirmed his sermons were dictated by some angel. Not contented with preaching, he compiled several curious treatises, which increased his reputation. Meantime David distinguished himself by his long fasting, being sometimes six days without taking any food, and thus attracted public notice and admiration. The credulous Jews were hence induced to demolish their ovens, expecting the following year to eat unleavened bread in Jerusalem. While they were preparing for the voyage, David, perceiving that he had set too short a time for their pretended deliverance, declared, that "the sins of the nation had retarded the coming of the Messiah." This caused the infatuated people to appoint a solemn fast, in order to appease the anger of God, and hasten the appearance of their long expected deliverer.†

At length, Malcho, who declared himself the

* Basnage, p. 729.

† Ibid.

precursor of the Messiah, was so imprudent as to desire an audience of Charles V. then at Mantua. He was admitted ; but that monarch caused him to be arrested and put to a cruel death.*

* Leimlein was sent prisoner to Spain, and died there a few days after his confinement. Yet such was the infatuation of the Italian Jews, that a long time elapsed before they would believe but that he was still alive in this kingdom.—*Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 393.

CHAPTER XX.

The Jews are protected by the Roman pontiffs during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.—They are numerous in Naples.—They are massacred in Trani.—They build a magnificent synagogue in Bologna in the fifteenth century.—The Jews are persecuted by pope John III.—Massacre of those in Trent.—Alexander VI. favours and protects the Jews.—Those refugees, who seek an asylum in Naples, are persecuted by the inquisitors.—Paul III. is partial to the Jewish nation.

WHILE the other European nations oppressed and persecuted the wretched fugitives of Israel, the Roman pontiffs, with a small exception, treated them with lenity, defended them against their persecutors, and often checked the mistaken zeal of those who sought to convert them by force.* Instances of their kindness and humanity towards the Jewish nation occur in various parts of the foregoing history. As early as the seventh century they were protected by pope Gregory the Great. In the eleventh, Alexander II. condemned the persecuting spirit of king Ferdinand, and endeavoured to defend them against the rage of the Crusaders. At a later period, Gregory IX. a zealous promoter of the holy war, observing that the Crusaders in many places began their expedition with massacres of the Jews, not only loudly reprehended them, but took all proper methods for preventing such barbarity. He also interposed in their favour when the inhabitants of Hagenau accused them of murdering Christian children. He wrote a letter to Lewis IX. to stop the persecution which was raised

* Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*, p. 88.



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form advantageous connexions, soon relapsed into Judaism. A monk of Trani, resolved to punish them for their dissimulation; and, to effect this purpose, concealed a cross in a heap of earth, and charged a Jew of the city with the fact. Exasperated at this supposed crime, the people rose, and a massacre immediately followed. The tumult extended to Naples, where the Jews would have been put to death had not the nobility interposed, and concealed the most wealthy, and consequently the most obnoxious, in their houses. Pope Alexander the Fourth also sent to Naples to exert his authority in their favour.*

Clement V. who at the commencement of the fourteenth century had removed the papal seat to Avignon, exerted himself to save the Jews from the persecution of the shepherds. He excommunicated them; but the anathemas of the church made little impression on that furious people. This pontiff not only protected the Jews, but afforded them the means of instruction, and ordered that every university should have professors to teach Hebrew, and men whose education rendered them capable of disputing with and convincing the Jews of their errors.†

John XXII. his successor, was for pursuing a different method; and supposed the most probable way of effecting their conversion was to burn all the copies of the Talmud. Several of the bishops having asserted, that they had seen some of this nation ridiculing the Catholics as they carried the cross in procession, the pope was prevailed upon to

* Basnage, p. 669.

† Ibid.

issue an edict which expelled them from all the territories of the church. In order to avoid the impending evil, they applied to Robert, king of Naples and Sicily, who, being a friend and favourite of the pontiff, persuaded him, upon their presenting him with a large sum of money, to revoke his edict.

Clement VI. treated the Jews with singular kindness and humanity. When they were put to death in various parts of the kingdom upon pretence of poisoning the rivers, he exerted himself to the utmost to suppress the popular fury. He also preserved them from the cruelty of the inquisition, which raged with unrelenting fury against the Albigenses. Under his protection they even maintained a friendly correspondence with some of the members of this bloody tribunal. They presented Emeric, who compiled the directory of the inquisition, a Bible that they pretended was written by Ezra, which the Dominicans have preserved with great veneration. While they were massacred without mercy in every part of Europe, Avignon became their asylum; and Clement VI. their friend and protector, omitted nothing that could tend to soften the lot of the persecuted, and disarm the fury of their persecutors.*

A. D. 1394.] The Jews were numerous and powerful at Bologna during the fourteenth century. They had there built the most magnificent synagogue in Italy, and established an academy. Boniface IX. did not oppose their erecting this synagogue, which, by its size and beauty, excited the attention and admiration of travellers.

* Basnage, p. 670. Gregoire, p. 8.

A. D. 1412.] Though the Jews were generally favoured and protected by the popes, yet, at the commencement of the fifteenth century, John the Twenty-third issued several edicts against them. He not only raised a persecution in his own dominions, but encouraged and stimulated the Spanish government to massacre this unhappy people. Soon after, however, Nicolas II. being raised to the pontificate, treated them with great indulgence. He preserved those in his own dominions from the inquisition; and sent letters into Spain to prevent their being obliged to abjure their own religion.*

A. D. 1472.] They had not long enjoyed the patronage of this pontiff before a new persecution was raised against them. Sextus IV. had been prevailed upon to canonize one Simon, who, as was pretended, had been murdered two hundred years before by the Jews in Trent. The public hatred being thus revived, the populace, in the bishopric of Trent and in the city of Venice, plundered and massacred the circumcised. The doge and senate were obliged to interpose their authority to suppress the slaughter; but the magistrates of Trent, being less equitable, expelled the Jews from the city.

A. D. 1492.] After the Catholics in Spain and Portugal had banished the Jews, the Italians received them with open arms. Pope Alexander VI. not only relieved the wants of the unhappy fugitives, but enjoined their brethren at Rome, who had treated them with great neglect, to afford them every assistance in their power for establishing themselves in his dominions. He allowed them the

* Basnage, p. 721.



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tyranny of these merciless men. He alleged, that “as the ancient inhabitants were sound in the faith, there was not any farther need of this bloody tribunal.” Charles V. soon after [A. D. 1534.] authorized his viceroy’s conduct, by refusing to tolerate them either in Naples or Sicily. This severity, however, did not deter one Ricci, a converted Jew, from dedicating to that monarch a celebrated treatise on what he styled “Celestial Agriculture.” He was a physician in Germany and a profound cabbalist, who attempted to prove the mysteries of Christianity from that science.*.

A. D. 1539.] Paul III. was so indulgent to the Jews, and they became so numerous and powerful during his pontificate, that cardinal Sadolet inveighed against him on account of his partial fondness for an unbelieving race. He asserted, that this pontiff was kinder to them than to the Christians ; and that none could be raised to civil or ecclesiastical dignities but through their favour and interest ; while at the same time he persecuted the Protestants. Though the cardinal’s remonstrance did not produce all the effect that was desired, yet it caused a redress of the most flagrant abuses. They were, however, sometimes persecuted in Rome ; yet, it must be admitted, that there is no country in the world in which less Jewish blood has been spilled, and in which the rites of humanity have been more respected with regard to their nation, than in the ecclesiastical state.†

A learned writer has thus accounted for the kind-

* Basnage, p. 723.

† Basnage, p. 722. Letters of certain Jews to Voltaire, p. 41.

ness of the Roman pontiffs to the Jews. “The court of Rome excelled all other courts in policy, craft, and worldly wisdom. It saw the folly of expelling and distressing the Jews; it knew the use that was to be made of an industrious people, skilful in commerce, and in the management of the revenues; who had no particular dislike to papal authority, and no disposition to assist heretics, schismatics, or reformers, and had not credit sufficient to make proselytes to their own religion.”*

The persecution of the Jews during the middle ages, which has been related in the five preceding chapters, exhibits in such a striking manner the exact accomplishment of the famous prophecy of Moses, Deut xxviii. that this chapter appears to be a correct miniature picture of the leading features in their history, drawn by the pencil of inspiration. The reflecting and devout must feel an augmented veneration for the sacred scriptures, while they turn their attention to the complete agreement of the prophecies, and the events which fulfil them; and scepticism and infidelity be confounded by seeing the history of succeeding ages so accurately delineated, and contemplating, in the fate of this suffering people, a “striking phenomenon, incomprehensible to human reason.”

Among other awful denunciations against the Jewish nation, which we have seen fully accomplished in the course of this history, Moses declares, “Thou shalt only be oppressed and spoiled evermore.” Numerous instances occur of the cruel oppressions and pillages this devoted race have suffered

* Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii.

in England, France, Germany, and Spain. In the east, as well as in Europe, they have been continually subjected to heavy fines and impositions. How often in different countries have they been forced to redeem their lives by vast sums extorted from them ! Did sovereigns want pecuniary assistance to carry on their wars, the Jews were compelled to give up their riches. A massacre was generally the prelude to a plunder, as we have seen in various parts of Europe. When banished from England in the reign of Edward I. their estates, which were confiscated, brought immense sums to the crown. When Philip Augustus expelled them from France, he confiscated their estates ; yet he soon after recalled this oppressed people in order to fleece them again. They have “ every where paid for liberty to exist, and have scarcely obtained that of breathing an impure air.”

The great lawgiver of the Hebrew nation also declares, “ Thy sons and thy daughters shall be taken from thee, and given to another people.” How exactly has this prophecy been fulfilled in several countries, especially in Spain and Portugal. In the former of these kingdoms the council of Toledo decreed, that the children of the Jews should be taken from them, and educated in the Christian faith ; in the latter, when this miserable people were expelled, all under fourteen years of age were forcibly detained, in order to be baptized. In the frenzy and despair of the wretched parents at parting with their children, we contemplate the accomplishment of another prophetic denunciation : “ Thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes,



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Europe, subjected to the same toil with those animals which by their religious principles they abhor.* Pagans, Christians, and Mahometans have agreed in abusing, vilifying, and persecuting the Jews.

The sacred writer proceeds in delineating the horrid outline of their miseries, and declares, "The Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance." The calamities they have endured were indeed the greatest which the world ever witnessed. Ever since the destruction of Jerusalem they have been outcasts from society, subsisting amidst contempt and persecution. For near eighteen centuries, the nations of the earth have been treading under foot the remains of Israel. What nation ever suffered so much, and yet continued so long? The chief diversity in their condition has arisen from the various kinds of miseries to which they have been subjected. In Christendom they have been despised, calumniated, oppressed, banished, executed, and burned. The tyranny exercised against them has been as capricious as it was cruel. In France they have been at one time compelled to assume the mask of Christianity to save themselves from a cruel death; at another epoch the estates of those who renounced Judaism were confiscated. At one period, they have been banished through superstition; at another, recalled through avarice. An animated writer of their own nation has observed, "It seems as if they were allowed to survive the destruction of their country, only to see the most odious and calumnious

* Gregoire on the Reformation of the Jews, p. 52.

imputations laid to their charge, to stand as the constant object of the grossest and most shocking injustice, as a mark for the insulting finger of scorn, as a sport to the most inveterate hatred. It seems as if their doom was incessantly to suit all the dark and bloody purposes, which can be suggested by human malignity, supported by ignorance and fanaticism.”* ?

* M. Michael Berr's Appeal to the Justice of Kings and Nations, published at Strasburg, 1801.

CHAPTER XXI.

State of the Jews in the east.—They suffer from the invasion of the Tartars.—Those in the Grecian empire enjoy an interval of tranquillity.—Of their state in Media and Persia.—Agreement made between Shah Abbas I. and the Jews in the latter of those kingdoms.—A general massacre of them takes place during the reign of Shah Abbas II.—Of those in Schiraz and other parts of Persia.—Of the learned men in the academy of Sapheta.—Dissimulation of a pretended convert to Christianity.—State of the nation in the Ottoman empire.

THE number and power of the eastern Jews were greatly diminished in the thirteenth century. Nasser Ledinillah, caliph of Bagdat, being a zealous Mahometan, and extremely avaricious, became jealous of a people who exerted their abilities with success in the acquisition of wealth, and who received every pretended Messiah with alacrity and joy. He therefore soon raised a persecution against them, and compelled them all to adopt the Mahometan religion, or leave the Babylonian territories. Some departed into different parts, while others dissembled in order to avoid exile.*

Palestine was greatly depopulated by the wars which raged between the Christians and Saracens, and the government of the cities was frequently changed. The Jews, however, had still synagogues and learned rabbies in their native country. Moses Nachmanides, one of the greatest cabbalistical writers which the age produced, left Gironna, the place of his birth, retired to Judea, and erected a synagogue. On account of his profound know-

* Basnage, p. 655.



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physician, who had exasperated the Mahometans by his partiality to his nation, was charged with having poisoned his benefactor, and on the accusation condemned to suffer death. The populace soon after massacred vast numbers of his countrymen, in order to revenge the real or pretended injuries they had suffered from them during the life of Argun.*

It is probable, that the Jews in the Grecian empire were generally allowed the exercise of their religion during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; for the Greek writers of those periods severely reproach the Latins for compelling them to be baptized and assume the mask of Christianity.†

A. D. 1500.] During the wars and rapid conquests of Tamerlane, the Jews in Media and Persia were not only attenuated and impoverished, but their academies, learning, and learned men had totally disappeared. They had scarcely recovered from these disasters when they were involved in new calamities. They were numerous in Media when Ishmael Sophi, chief of the family of the Persian kings, commenced his conquests; and, astonished at his rapid and wonderful success, they began to consider him as the true Messiah. In this opinion they were confirmed by his declaring himself a prophet sent by God to reform the Mahometan religion. But Ishmael exhibited a peculiar aversion to the Jews, despised their flattery, rejected their homage, and treated them with greater severity than any of his subjects.‡

At the commencement of the reign of Shah

* Basnage, p. 659. *Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii.

† Basnage, p. 658.

‡ *Ibid.*

Abbas, the kingdom of Persia was greatly depopulated. This monarch was hence induced to confer important privileges on all strangers who would settle in the kingdom. Multitudes of people repaired from the neighbouring parts, in particular vast numbers of Jews. Their dexterity in pecuniary negotiations, and success in engrossing the commerce of the country, having excited the envy and jealousy of the other inhabitants, they complained to the king. This monarch was apprehensive, that severity to them would deter others from settling in and induce foreigners to retire from his dominions. But having found a fortunate pretence for persecuting them by the authority of the Koran, he resolved to compel them to embrace Mahometanism, or suffer death. The Mufti humanely interposed, and prevented the execution of his cruel design. It was resolved, however, to summon the principal Jewish doctors before the Sophi's tribunal.*

Shah Abbas strictly examined them respecting the abolition of their sacrifices, and other ceremonies at the appearance of Jesus Christ, whom Mahomet had succeeded. The rabbies, astonished at those interrogatories, declared that they expected a Messiah, and could not receive him whom their ancestors had crucified. Abbas was exasperated at this answer, since the Koran mentions Christ with veneration. "Why will you not believe in Christ," says he, "since I believe in him?" He afterwards asked them, "What they thought of Mahomet?" This demand intimidated and confounded them, and

* Basnage, p. 697.

sensible of the danger of discovering their opinion of the impostor, they answered, that “Moses was the great prophet, and the only one whom they ought to follow; but that they did not absolutely reject Mahomet, because he was the son of Abraham by Ishmael.” They then had recourse to prayers and entreaties for mercy; and to protestations, that their object in settling in Persia was to serve the king with fidelity and zeal.*

Abbas severely reproved them for adducing their expectation of a Messiah, as an excuse for their obstinate incredulity. “But,” said he, “to remove this vain pretence, fix a time for his appearance, I will tolerate you till the accomplishment of this period. Yet, if the Messiah, who has delayed his coming for so many ages, deceive you once more, it is just you should embrace the Mahometan faith, or be deprived of your property, your children, and lives.” He allowed them some time to prepare an answer. After mature deliberation they informed the king, that their great deliverer would appear in seventy years from the day on which they had been summoned before his tribunal. Their object was to elude the threatened punishment, expecting that neither the monarch nor themselves could survive till this period was terminated. Abbas, who was extremely avaricious, extorted vast sums for granting an oppressed people this interval of tranquillity. He engaged, it is said, on his part, that if the Messiah appeared within seventy years, all Persia was to profess Judaism. If not, the Jews were to embrace the Mahometan religion, or consent to

* Basnage, p. 697. Modern Universal History.



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massacred without intermission or pity. A few, however, found means to escape into the Turkish dominions, others into India, and many preserved their lives by abjuring their religion.* It was, however, at length observed, that the pretended converts secretly practised the Jewish rites, and the king, finding that compulsory measures could not effect a change in their minds, permitted them to retain their former religious principles. They were obliged annually to pay a large sum of money to the sovereign, and to wear a disgraceful badge of distinction. †

The Jews were numerous at Schiraz, where the Persians had a more famous academy than at Is-pahan. They pretended to be descended from the tribe of Levi. A still larger number resided at Lar, the metropolis of one of the Persian provinces, and had a quarter assigned them between the city and castle. They extended themselves on the coast of Ormus, in order to procure some part of the Indian trade, which was once conducted by their brethren, who were formerly numerous in those parts. ‡

[A. D. 1638.] Bagdat, once the residence of the princes of the captivity, was much reduced after it

* *Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 369.

† *Basnage*, p. 699. *Gregoire*, p. 16.

‡ After the king of Portugal expelled the Jews from his kingdom, he suffered them to live at Goa and other places, and exercise their religion. But in 1639 they were deluded by a pretended Messiah, whose fame extended to Portugal. Some of the Jewish converts in that kingdom, elated with the prospect of a deliverer, betrayed their secret attachment to the religion of their ancestors. Upon which the inquisition compelled all in the eastern parts, who were subject to the king of Portugal, either to suffer exile or profess Christianity.—*Modern Univer. Hist.* vol. xiii. p. 365.

was taken by Amurat IV. A large proportion of the inhabitants were Jews, who possessed a synagogue, and enjoyed the unrestrained exercise of their religion. They were, however, hated and despised by the Persians.*

The Jewish historians inform us, that those of their nation in Armenia were charged with having killed a Christian; and the murder being confessed by the accused, many of this miserable people were crucified, and others burned. Three days after, the Christian appeared; the accusation was discovered to have been invented through malice, and the confession extorted by torture. Complaint being made to Solomon II. the Armenian magistrates were forbidden to take cognizance of similar criminal cases in future, and they were ordered to bring them before the tribunal of the sultan.†

The Jews, since their dispersion, have never been numerous in Palestine, but have seen their ancient and beloved country successively possessed by Pagans, Christians, and Turks. It has indeed been frequently visited by Jewish, as well as Christian devotees. But few have fixed their abodes in a province, where they found it difficult to acquire wealth, and even procure a tolerable subsistence.

Sapheta in Galilee was the most populous and celebrated city which the Jews possessed in Palestine. Those who inhabited it were treated with more kindness than in any other part of the Ottoman empire. They have had many learned rabbies and professors, who have presided in the academy in

* Basnage, p. 699.

† Gregoire, p. 18. Basnage, p. 703.

this city, to which they sent their children to be instructed in the Hebrew language ; for it was their opinion, that it could no where else be taught with equal purity. This academy succeeded that of Tiberias, and acquired a similar reputation.*

The most celebrated cabbalist who has appeared since Simeon Jochaides, taught in this seat of learning. He was born at Cordova in Spain, hence he acquired the name of Moses Cordova. He left a cabbalistical work, entitled “ The Garden of Pomegranates.” †

Dominic of Jerusalem taught for a considerable time in the same academy. After he had completed his studies and lectures on the Talmud, he applied himself to the theory and practice of medicine, and acquired such celebrity, that the sultan invited him to Constantinople to be his physician. At length, he embraced the Christian religion, and afterwards translated the New Testament into Hebrew, and at the same time answered some objections of the rabbies against Stephen’s martyrdom. ‡

But those who have been most celebrated in the academy were, the learned Moses Trani and Joseph Karo, who presided in it about the middle of the sixteenth century. The former was a native of Trani, and taught with such success, that he was styled by his brethren, “ the light of Israel,” “ the Sinaite of Mount Sinai, and the rooter up of Mountains,” because he solved the difficulties in the

* It appears that this academy was not erected till after the twelfth century, since Benjamin de Tudela does not mention it in his travels.

† Bagnage, p. 783. Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 395.

‡ Bagnage, p. 703.



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him successively to all the orders of the clergy, and at length exalted him to the dignity of patriarch of Jerusalem. Being a man of boundless ambition, he repaired to Constantinople to obtain that see, which was vacant. He was there seized with a dangerous distemper, and perceiving death approaching, he called many Grecian bishops and a large number of his Hebrew brethren, to whom he solemnly declared, that “he had always believed the Jewish religion, and renounced the bishopric of Jerusalem to die in his old profession.” Those who heard him lay aside the mask of Christianity were filled with astonishment and consternation.*

The Jews have long been numerous in other parts of the Ottoman empire, particularly at Constantinople; they inhabited a suburb in Galata; which was called the Jewry in the time of the Crusaders. Though hated and despised by the Turks, they rendered themselves so useful by their skill in pecuniary transactions, that they carried on the greatest part of the commerce of the country, and Christians as well as Turks employed a Jewish broker in all their negociations. Among other privileges they obtained that of selling wine; and it was supposed that which they prepared was of the purest kind, because they are prohibited by their law from making any mixture.†

Michsez, a Jew, was accused of having persuaded Selim II. to attempt the conquest of Cyprus. In consequence of which, after the reduction of the island, his nation obtained greater privileges than

* Basnage, p. 701. Modern Universal Hist. vol. xiii. p. 373.

† Basnage, p. 718. Gregoire, p. 184. A. V.

the Christians, and became numerous and affluent. The sultan made choice of a Jew named Solomon Rophe, to negotiate a peace with the republic of Venice, and soon after granted them the privilege of establishing a printing-office at Constantinople and Salonichi. By this means copies of the law, which had become scarce in the east, were universally dispersed, and, in consequence of their being more assiduously studied, several eminent rabbies and heads of synagogues left the place of their birth to settle in these cities.*

In particular, Solomon, the son of Japhe, came from Germany to reside in Constantinople, where he explained the Jerusalem Talmud, and printed a comment on the Pentateuch, and several other works. Rabbi Gedaliah, another learned doctor, who boasted that he was descended from king David, left Lisbon to settle in that metropolis as a physician, and teach the laws and ceremonies of his nation. He was appointed head of the synagogue, and assiduously laboured to reconcile the Caraites and Talmudists. But both parties proved so obstinate, that his labours were ineffectual. He, however, derived the advantage of publishing several other works, as well as his own treatise of *Seven Eyes*, alluding to the vision of Zechariah.†

Many of the Jews settled at Lepanto, Corinth, and other cities in Greece. But, in consequence of the desolate state of the country, and the heavy taxes which they were compelled to pay to the Porte, they have been generally in indigent circumstances. Their condition was more eligible at Thessalonica

* Basnage, p. 719.

† Ibid.

(now Salonichi) where they have been settled ever since the time of St. Paul. They for ages have possessed a considerable academy, and in later times a printing-office has been established. In this city Moses Abelda published several of his works, the most celebrated of which were, his mystical exposition of the Pentateuch, and a moral treatise on the miseries of human life, called the "Vale of Tears." The design of this performance was to comfort his nation under their calamitous dispersion. Joseph, the son of Sen, also published a treatise "on the use of the Gemara" in this city. The famous impostor Zabathai Tzevi chose Salonichi as the theatre whereon to act his part, imagining, that, if he could impose on the doctors in this academy, it would be easy to delude his more ignorant brethren. An account of his success among his infatuated nation will be given in the following chapter.



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the Messiah and deliverer of Israel, to whom he promised a glorious kingdom of prosperity and peace. This famous, or rather infamous impostor, was born at Aleppo, of mean and obscure parents. But, as he early discovered a taste for learning, he made great proficiency in that kind of literature which was taught by his nation. As soon as he came from school he began to preach in the streets and fields, even before the Turks; and though ridiculed by them, he had the address to gain a number of disciples by whom he was greatly admired. He studied the prophecies so assiduously, in order to apply them to himself, that it was supposed his intellect was deranged. He imagined, or pretended to fancy, that he could ascend above the clouds, as Isaiah had foretold; and upbraided his disciples with their blindness, because they would not acknowledge they had seen him in the air. He also pretended to perform other miracles by the power of the name Jehovah. Upon which account some of the most intelligent Jews summoned him to appear before the synagogues and condemned him to death. But, as they could not prevail upon any to execute the sentence, they contented themselves with banishing the impostor.

He passed over to Salonichi, and, as the Jews were numerous in this city, he supposed it a proper theatre on which to act his part. But being expelled from thence, as well as from Athens, and several other Greek towns, he retired to Alexandria, where he acquired great celebrity. After travelling into the Morea and Tripoli he arrived at Gaza, and there preached repentance, and faith in himself so

effectually, 'that the Jews gave up business* and applied themselves wholly to devotion and alms. But in order to render his character more agreeable to the predictions of the prophets, it was necessary that he should be ushered in by a precursor: For this purpose he made choice of a Jew of great reputation at Gaza, named Nathan Levi, whom he easily persuaded to act this part. The time was favourable, for, according to the cabbalistical interpretation of Daniel, the Messiah was to appear in or about the year 1675.†

Zabathai Tzevi and his precursor travelled to Jerusalem. Levi, after his arrival, assembled the Jews, and abolished the fast which was to be celebrated in the month of June following, because mourning was improper at the joyful period of the Messiah's appearance. He then declared Tzevi was their long expected deliverer, and specified the time for the conquest and ruin of the Grand Seignor. Part of the nation believed in the impostor; but the most sensible men among them clearly perceived, that the intended insurrection would cause their destruction in the Ottoman empire. They, therefore, anathematized and condemned him to death, alleging, that he neither possessed the characteristics of the Messiah, nor Levi those of his precursor.

Being obliged to quit Jerusalem, he came to Smyrna, and from thence to Constantinople, where

* These were prohibited from conducting business, under the penalty of excommunication. They expected that after their Messiah had subdued the nations they should gain possession of all the wealth of unbelievers.—*Turkish History*, vol. ii. p. 176.

† Basnage, p. 702. *Turkish History*, p. 175.

he expected to gain numerous disciples. But the Jews in this city had previously received letters from twenty-five rabbies, who had excommunicated him, in which they pronounced him "an impious wretch," and declared; "that the person who killed him would render an acceptable service to God, and save many souls." This induced Tzevi to return to Smyrna, where he received four ambassadors sent by his precursor to acknowledge him as the Messiah. As Levi was a man of eminence among his brethren, this embassy greatly increased the followers of the impostor, and even imposed upon part of the learned rabbies. The multitude, dazzled by his affected humility, frequent washings, diligent and early attendance at the synagogues, and more especially by his pathetic sermons, acknowledged him for their Messiah and king, and brought him magnificent presents to support his dignity.*

In the mean time Levi was employed in persuading his nation in different parts, that Tzevi was their long-expected deliverer, who was about to subvert the Ottoman empire. He asserted that, after being concealed nine months, this mighty conqueror would appear in glory, mounted upon a celestial lion; and that a superb temple would descend from heaven, in which sacrifices were continually to be offered. While Levi was at Damascus, he wrote to Tzevi, and thus began his letter, "To the king, our king, lord of lords, who redeems our captivity, the man elevated to the height of all sublimity, the Messiah of the God of Jacob, the celestial lion, Zabathai Tzevi."

* Basnage, p. 703. Turkish History, vol. ii.



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The next step taken by the impostor was to cause a throne to be erected for himself and his queen, from which he addressed his subjects. He composed a new summary of belief, which the people were obliged to receive with implicit faith, as coming from the hand of their Messiah. Some, who had the temerity to oppose it, were compelled to save themselves by flight. Many who had been incredulous now professed to believe in him to whom they applied the prophecies of the Old Testament. When he had attained this height of authority, he ordered the Jews, who were in the habit of praying for the grand seignor in their synagogues; to erase his name from their liturgy, and substitute his own. He styled himself, “King of the kings of Israel,” and Joseph his brother, “King of the kings of Judah;” he also elected princes to govern his brethren in their march to the holy land, and to administer justice to them after they obtained the possession of their beloved country. At length, he declared he was called of God to visit Constantinople, where he had a great work to perform; and accordingly embarked in a small vessel for this city, while many of his disciples followed him by land. The sultan, being informed of his arrival, despatched orders to his vizier to apprehend and confine him in prison.*

This event, instead of discouraging, strengthened the faith of the Jews; for they recollected that Levi had predicted, that the Messiah was to be concealed nine months. They maintained that the sultan had not power to put him to death. The

* Basnage, p. 702.

criminal; upon his examination, asserted that his nation had compelled him to assume the title of king. This answer induced the vizier to treat him with great mildness, and permit the Jews to visit him in prison. Those of Constantinople were as infatuated as their brethren in Smyrna. They forbade commerce, and refused to pay their debts. Some English merchants not knowing how to recover what was owing to them, from the Jews, took this occasion to visit Tzevi, and make their complaints to him against his subjects; upon which he wrote to them as follows:

“To you of the nation of the Jews, who expect the appearance of the Messiah, and the salvation of Israel, peace without end. Whereas we are informed that you are indebted to several of the English nation, it seemeth right unto us to order you to make satisfaction for your just debts, which if you refuse to do, be it known, that you are not to enter with us into our joys and dominions.”*

Tzevi remained a prisoner in Constantinople two months. The grand vizier, who was preparing to go to Candia, did not think it safe to leave him in the city during his absence, he therefore removed him to the Dardanelles. This the Jews supposed a new miracle; and asserted, that the sultan had not power to put him to death. Having bribed the governor, great numbers repaired to the castle where he was confined, not only those who were near, but from Poland, Germany, Leghorn, Venice, and other places.† They brought Tzevi rich pre-

* *Basnage*, p. 702.

† Even the Portuguese Jews at Amsterdam composed a form of prayer to be made use of by those who went to Adrianople to visit the pretended Messiah.—*Modern Univer. Hist.* vol. xiii. p. 376.

sents, and received in return his blessings and promises of advancement. The Turks raised the price of provisions upon those who visited their pretended Messiah, and the profit induced them to connive at the attention which was paid him.

The impostor, during his confinement, commanded the Jews to celebrate his birth day with feasting, illuminations, and music; and abolished the solemn fast which had been observed on that day on account of the destruction of their temple. He despatched ambassadors to various parts to proclaim him the Messiah, and publish the miracles which he pretended to have performed. He enjoined his nation to acknowledge the love of God in giving them consolation by the birth of their king and Messiah.*

In the height of Tzevi's success, Nehemiah Cohen, a Polish Jew, came to visit him in his confinement. He was a man of great learning in the cabbala and eastern languages. It is said, that he, in his conference with the impostor, maintained, that according to the scriptures there ought to be a twofold Messiah; one the son of Ephraim, a poor and despised teacher of the law, the other the son of David, and a mighty conqueror. Nehemiah was contented to be the former, and leave the dignity and glory of the latter to Tzevi. But he accused him of too great forwardness and presumption in assuming the character of the son of David previously to the appearance of the son of Ephraim. Tzevi, exasperated at this reproof, excluded Cohen from any share in the transaction. Upon which the latter went to Adrianople, and informed the mi-



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of the wonderful works performed by Tzevi their Messiah. They reported, that when the grand seignor sent messengers to apprehend him, he caused them all to be struck dead ; but upon being requested, recalled them to life. They added, that though the prison in which Zabathai was confined was fastened with strong iron locks, he was seen to walk the streets with numerous attendants, and that his chains were converted into gold, which he gave to his followers. The Jews of Italy sent legates to Smyrna to inquire into the truth of these reports, who; upon their arrival, were mortified and astonished at the intelligence, that their pretended Messiah had embraced the Mahometan faith. But the brother of Tzevi attempted to persuade them that it was only his apparition which appeared in a Turkish habit ; that he had been translated to heaven, and that God would again send him down to earth at a proper season. He added, that Nathan his precursor, who had wrought many miracles, would soon arrive at Smyrna, reveal hidden things, and confirm their faith. But this pretended Elias was not suffered to visit the city, and though the legates saw him in another place, they received no satisfaction.*

Tzevi passed the remainder of his days at the Turkish court. He became a learned and zealous Mahometan under the instructions of Vanni Effendi, preacher to the seraglio, to whom he was a most docile pupil. Still, however, he continued to profess himself a deliverer of the Jews ; but being extremely cautious to avoid giving offence to the Turks, he declared, “ that unless his brethren would imitate

* Basnage, p. 104. Turkish History.

his example, in renouncing the imperfect elements of the Mosaical law, he never should be able to prevail with God to restore them to the holy land." This induced many Jews to repair to Constantinople from Bagdat, Jerusalem, and other remote parts; and in the presence of the grand seignor, they voluntarily professed themselves proselytes to the Mahometan religion. By this means the impious impostor ingratiated himself with the Turks, and retained his influence over large numbers of his infatuated nation. Tzevi was, however, finally beheaded by order of the sultan Mahomet.*

After the death of Tzevi, Daniel Israel, a Jew, who had dwelt at Smyrna six or seven years, undertook to persuade the Hebrew nation, that Zabathai was yet alive and concealed, and that he would re-appear after the space of forty-five years.† Some prodigies which he pretended to perform astonished many of the Jews, and induced them to credit his assertions. His supposed miracles excited the admiration of the credulous people; and he was not only followed by the populace, but he even imposed upon several eminent rabbies. In particular Abraham Michael, and Raphael Cordoso, a physician who was famous among the Jews in Candia, openly declared for him. However, part of the learned men opposed Daniel Israel, and declared him to be an impostor. In consequence of their remonstrances, the cadi expelled him from the city, and imposed a fine upon his adherents. Cordoso, who

* Basnage, p. 702.

† Daniel Israel attempted to support this assertion, by a false interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel xii. 11, 12.

maintained the impostor, was killed by his son-in-law; and his death blasted all the hopes of the Jews, and unveiled the deception.* The murderer fled into a Turkish mosque, and was converted to Mahometanism; but we are not told what became of Daniel Israel.

The denomination of Zabathaites is given to the followers of Zabathai Tzevi. The sect formed by this impostor survived him; and he actually has yet at Salonichi partizans, who outwardly professing Mahometanism, observe in secret the Judaic rites, marry among themselves, and live in the same quarter of the city without communicating with the Musselmans except for the purpose of commerce, and in the mosques. They never enter the synagogues, nor make known their schism. Hence it appears, that “the Turks pardon a secret observance of another religion in favour of a public profession of their own.”

Zabathai Tzevi had many adherents among the Jews of England, Holland, Germany, and Poland, who have continued in small numbers to our days.†

One of the Jews, named Jonathan, born at Cracow in 1690, and who in 1750 was elected grand rabbin of the three towns of Hamburg, Altona, and Wansbeck, was accused of being a follower of Zabathai Tzevi, which occasioned a very animated dispute, and produced many pamphlets.

* Many of the infatuated Jews not only believed that Zabathai was living, and would re-appear, but even celebrated the day of his birth with great rejoicings, crying, “Long live sultan Tzevi.”—*Barnage*, p. 756.

† *Gregoire's Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*. Tome ii. p. 509. Published at Paris, 1810.



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Samen, where they maintained their independence. Their capital is still called the Jews' rock.* In 1600 they were reduced to the brink of ruin; and Gideon and Judith, their king and queen, were both slain in battle. Since that time they have paid taxes to the state, but are allowed to enjoy their own government. When Mr. Bruce† was there, about 1771, they were estimated to amount to an hundred thousand effective men. Their king and queen were then called Gideon and Judith; and these names seem to be preferred for the royal family. According to the accounts of the Falasha their sovereigns are of the tribe of Judah.‡

Their Old Testament is in the Geez language, written by Abyssinian Christians and sold to them. No dispute has ever existed about the text of scripture. They have no table of various readings; no Talmud, Targum, or Cabbala; no fringes, or ribbands upon their garments, nor any scribe. They have lost their Hebrew, and only speak the language their ancestors learned in the country where they settled. They acknowledge candidly, that they have no Hebrew nor Samaritan copies, and that they trust wholly to the translation. They say the prophecy of Enoch is the first book of scripture they ever received, after which they place the book of Job. They maintained that the sceptre has never departed from Judah, and apply the pro-

* Bruce's Travels, vol. ii. chap. vi. p. 114.

† Mr. Bruce observes, "that he did not spare the utmost pains in inquiring into the history of this curious people, and that he lived in habits of intimacy and friendship with several of the most learned among them."—*Bruce*, vol. ii. p. 406.

‡ Bruce's Travels, vol. ii.

phesy of the gathering of the Gentiles to the future appearance of the Messiah.

The Falasha have no knowledge of the New Testament; but from conversation; they imagine it very absurd to suppose the Messiah is already come, who they appear to think is to be a temporal prince, prophet, priest, and conqueror.* The Jewish law is in full force among this people, and all the Levitical observances, purifications, atonements, abstinences, and sacrifices.

The Jews for many ages have found an asylum in Egypt; they were, however, in 1524, near the precipice of destruction; Achmet, governor of Egypt, having revolted against Solómon II. At the commencement of the rebellion, the soldiers plundered their houses; and Achmet imposed a tax upon them of two hundred talents. They, however, pleaded insolvency, and paid only fifteen talents into the treasury. The governor, exasperated at this refusal, commanded all the Israelites in the kingdom to be arrested and imprisoned: This order was annulled by a conspiracy against Achmet, in consequence of which he was put to death; and the Jews celebrated a feast in memory of their deliverance.†

The liberty which this people have since enjoyed in Egypt, has rendered them numerous and powerful, particularly at Cairo, where they possessed thirty synagogues.‡ They have long farmed all the customs in that city, and have acquired influence and reputation by this employment. The bashaw of Cairo every two years lets out the custom-house for

* Bruce's Travels. vol. ii. p. 413. † Basnage, p. 716.

‡ Pocock's Description of the East, vol. vi. p. 177. 45 r+8

the benefit of the grand seignor. He adjudges it to the best bidder, and it commonly falls to the lot of the Jews, because they have the art of gaining his favour either by presents or intrigues. The greater part of the Jews in Cairo are Pharisees or Talmudists. There are, however, a number of Caraites, who have a synagogue of their own. One proof of the consequence which the Hebrew nation enjoy under the aristocracy of Cairo is, that the offices of the customs are shut upon their sabbath, and no goods can pass upon that day although belonging to Mahometans and Christians.*

The Jews are also numerous in other parts of Africa, and are the principal traders in the inland provinces. Some of them were so affluent, that Muley Archey, king of Taphilet, by seizing the property of a rich Jew, was thereby enabled to achieve the conquest of the province of Quiriana, and to dispossess his brother of the kingdom of Morocco and Fez. To recompence the people for this act of oppression to an individual, he allowed them to enjoy their former privileges, and appointed Joshua Ben Hamosheth prince of that nation. His brother Ishmael, who succeeded him, was a still greater benefactor to the Jewish people. As an acknowledgment for the services he had received from Joseph de Toledo, he not only made him one of the principal officers of his household, but constituted him his envoy to the different courts of Europe; and in 1684 he concluded the peace with the United Provinces.†

* Niebuhr's Travels, vol. i. p. 102. Published 1792.

† Basnage, p. 717. Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 383.



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rous in all parts of Morocco; after they were expelled from Spain and Portugal, multitudes sought an asylum in this empire. They are not confined to towns, but have spread over the face of the whole country.

They are not only tributary in these parts, but upon every small disgust, in danger of being expelled; and can never promise themselves any permanent settlement or security. Though this unhappy people, in almost every place where they have resided, have been treated with cruelty and contempt; yet in no part of the world have they suffered more severe and undeserved oppressions than in Barbary, where the whole country depends upon their industry and ingenuity, and could scarcely subsist without their assistance.*

The lowest classes among the Moors imagine they have a right to oppress and insult the Jews, who suffer the greatest ill treatment with a patience they have acquired by being daily abused. They have not courage to defend themselves, because the Koran and judge are always in favour of the Mahometans. Their superior knowledge and address give them, however, many advantages over the Moors; and their skill in pecuniary negotiations enables them to act as agents and brokers. More industrious as well as better informed than the Mahometans, they are employed by the emperor in farming the customs, coining the money, and in

calamities, nor do the prophets promise any."—*Dissertations pour servir a l'histoire des Juifs. Gisborne on the Christian religion.*

* Lancelot Addison's Present State of the Jews. Lempriere's Tour to Morocco.

conducting his intercourse with foreign merchants, and his negotiations with foreign powers.* Thus employed, they have great opportunities for benefiting and injuring the state; and they have sufficient art to enrich themselves by every resource in their power; and find means to console themselves for the indignities they are obliged to suffer.

The Jews, in most parts of the empire, live separate from the Moors, and, though oppressed in other respects, are allowed the exercise of their religion. Many of them, however, in order to avoid the arbitrary treatment to which they are continually exposed, have professed the Mahometan religion. Upon their renouncing Judaism they are admitted to all the privileges of the Moors.

There are great numbers of Jews in the mountains of Morocco,† who are engaged in laborious employments, to which the other inhabitants are averse. This, however, does not deter others from attempting to raise themselves to eminent stations at court. One of their nation, named Pacheco, was sent ambassador to the United Provinces. He died at the Hague, 1604, and was interred with great pomp. Some time after, in the same century, two Jews were residents in Holland, from the courts of Portugal and Spain.‡

A. D. 1660.] The Jewish synagogues having been demolished in the kingdom of Fez, Muley Mahomet, when he ascended the throne, not only

* Chenier's Present State of Morocco, vol. i. p. 157.

† It has been computed that there are nearly four hundred thousand Jews in Morocco, Fez, and Algiers.—*Dissertations Critiques*.

‡ Basnage, p. 717. Gregoire, p. 201.

caused them to be rebuilt, but made one of that nation his high treasurer and prime minister. This people, however, have frequently suffered from the tyranny and caprice of the arbitrary sovereigns of Morocco. Sidi Mahomet, the emperor, having imposed a heavy tax on his son Muley Ali, commanded him to raise the sum required, on the Jewish community, "who, not being, as he said, in the road to salvation, merited no indulgence." The prince offered his father the revenues of his government, but earnestly entreated him not to oppress the Jews, and add to wretchedness, which was already too great.*

A. D. 1672.] Muley Ishmael, ingenious in finding pretences for plundering his subjects, assembled the Jews, and thus addressed them: "Dogs as you are, I have sent for you to oblige you to turn Mahometans. I have long been amused with an idle tale respecting the coming of the Messiah. For my part, I believe he is come already; therefore, if you do not fix the precise time in which he is to appear, I will leave you neither property nor life; I will be trifled with no longer."

The Jews, terrified and astonished at this address, represented the punctuality with which they had paid the enormous taxes imposed upon them. After they had, at their request, obtained a week to prepare an answer, they collected a large sum of money to present to the emperor, and informed him that their doctors had concluded, that the Messiah would appear in thirty years. "Yes," replied Ishmael, taking the money, "I understand you, dogs

* Chenier's Present State of Morocco, vol. i. p. 159.



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the Jews, though not concerned in the rebellion, were charged with treason, and cruelly racked and tortured. Several hundreds lost their lives from being suspended by long ropes, and hooked nails, on the outside of the tower walls. Others were punished by burning; some by stripes; and the greater part, by confiscation of their property, were reduced to a state of poverty. This extreme cruelty induced great numbers to leave Algiers and establish themselves in other parts of Barbary, particularly at Tunis. Many of the more religious among them, considering the persecution as a warning from heaven to leave distant countries, *resorted to Palestine and to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, as if the time of their restoration was at hand.* There are still, however, about nine thousand Jews at Algiers, who have eight public synagogues; but many of the privileges which they enjoyed before the year 1804, they no longer possess. The Jews of Algiers are allowed three wives at a time, whom they may repudiate at pleasure. They are, to a considerable extent, subject to a person of their own nation, whose decisions are despotic, and who is elected by the Dey himself. The present chief of the Jews in that city is Mr. Jacob Crav Bacri.*

Even in the heart of Africa this wretched people meet their predicted fate. At Sansanding, eight hundred miles eastward from the Atlantic, a recent traveller discovered some of the descendants of Israel. "These Jews," he observes, "in dress and appearance very much resemble the Arabs.

* *Jewish Expositor*, February, 1817, p. 76—78.

But though they so far conform to the religion of Mahomet, as to recite public prayers from the Koran, they are but little respected by the negroes ; and even the Moors themselves allowed, that though I was a Christian, I was a better man than a Jew." The full import of these words will be best understood by those who have learned from Mr. Park's previous accounts, the extreme degree of contemptuous malignity to which the Moors in that part of Africa push their hatred of the Christians.*

* Park's Travels into the Interior of Africa, 1790, p. 204, 205.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the Jews in Germany.—The bishop of Colôgne expels them from his diocese.—Victor a Carbe, abjures the Jewish religion, and writes against his nation.—Another deserter of the synagogue, attempts to persuade the emperor to order the Jewish books to be burnt.—His plan defeated by Reuchlin.—Of the effects of the reformation upon the state of the Jews.—Of their situation in Mersburg, Bohemia, and Hungary.—A false Messiah appears in Germany in the seventeenth century.

IN the three last chapters an account has been given of the Jews in Asia and Africa during three centuries. It is now time to turn to those of Europe, where their sufferings in the middle ages have been already briefly related.

At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the bishop of Cologne expelled the Jews from his diocese. Victor a Carbe, who had renounced Judaism to obtain preferment in the clerical line, wrote a vehement invective against his brethren, and highly applauded the prelate for having, as he styled it, “plucked the tares from the Lord’s field.” He advised the Christians not to dispute with his brethren, but to compel them to abjure their religion by coercive measures.

A few years after, another convert, named Pfepercorn, attempted to persuade the emperor Maximilian that all the Jewish books ought to be burned, because they were replete with fables, false accounts, and blasphemies against Christ. Some time before he had written upon the Jews celebrating the passover, and charged them with being apostates from the Old, as well as enemies to



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He even threatened the pope with rejecting his authority, and separating from the church, unless Reuchlin, and the Jews he defended, were condemned. But all his efforts were vain, and he was obliged to return mortified and disgraced. The victory which his opponent had gained exposed him to the enmity of the monkish party. But he informed them, that “he was persuaded that Martin Luther, who then began to make a figure in Germany, would find them so much employment, that they would permit him to end his days in peace.”*

The progress of the reformation in Germany proved a powerful stimulus to mental exertion. The protestant divines, more conversant with the learned languages than the monks and clergy in past ages, studied the writings of the rabbies in order to confute them upon their own principles. The Roman Catholic clergy paid more attention to the languages than formerly, and pursued the same method. Hence the Jewish publications were not only spared, but perused more than ever. The impulse was given to the European republic of letters; and even the Jews, awakened by the general activity, published several grammars and lexicons in the Hebrew language, and exerted themselves in defending their religion against their learned opponents.

A. D. 1547.] The reformation, in a great measure, freed the Jews from the persecutions to which they were continually exposed in the middle ages,†

* Basnage, p. 733. Villers on the Reformation, p. 107.

† David Levi observes; “Thanks be to God and the reformation

founded upon the charges of crucifying Christian children, and profaning consecrated wafers. They; however, entertained an extreme aversion to Luther, because he deterred some Christian princes from receiving them into their dominions.

It was determined by the theological and Lutheran faculties of Wirtemberg and Rostock, that a Christian when sick cannot call in the assistance of a Jewish physician, because they employ magical remedies ; and since the curse of heaven has been pronounced against this people, they ought not to cure the Christians, who are the children of God.*

The disputes between the Christians and Jews gave rise to a new sect among the latter, who were styled in contempt, Demi-Jews. Seidelius, one of these doctors, appeared in Transylvania, and maintained that the Messiah regarded only the Jewish nation, to whom he had been peculiarly promised in the same manner as the land of Canaan. He asserted, that the Pagan world had no more share in the former, than in the latter ; and that the whole of religion is contained in the decalogue, and written in the hearts of men. Seidelius, not being able to gain converts in Silesia, his native country, removed to Poland, and there acquired a number of followers.†

The Jews at Mersburg, who pretended to have been there settled ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, were banished from the city and diocese by the

we now enjoy several privileges and immunities in the several states in which we are settled, which our ancestors were strangers to since their dispersion.”—*Levi's Letters to Priestley*, p. 19.

* Gregoire on the Reformation of the Jews, p. 46.

† Basnage, p. 733.

bishop Adolphus early in the sixteenth century. In 1559, the emperor Ferdinand I. not only protected this oppressed people, but allowed them the privilege of having princes of the captivity in Germany, and ordered that a rabbi of Worms should be preferred before any of his nation. Among the chiefs, the rabbi Jakock, a native of Worms,* was eminently distinguished for his learning. He left four sons, who all discharged important offices, and were highly celebrated by their countrymen. †

The Jews in Bohemia, ever since the tenth century, have been generally treated with more indulgence than in most other countries, on account of some important services which they rendered the Christians against the banditti. They had built a superb synagogue, and erected an academy at Prague, over which the celebrated rabbi Falk presided. ‡ But in 1580, a conflagration having destroyed some part of the kingdom, they were accused of being accessaries to it, and were condemned. Those who escaped a cruel death were

* The Jews in Germany boasted, that their ancestors entered the country before the destruction of their second temple. Those of Worms pretended to have given good proof to the emperor and the states of the empire, that their ancestors had no concern in our Saviour's crucifixion, and that from time immemorial they had been settled in this city, which is the reason they have obtained privileges of which others are deprived. With this view they have inserted in the Toldos Jeschu the extract of a letter, which they pretend the sanhedrim of Worms wrote to the king of Judea, to dissuade him from putting Jesus Christ to death. Mr. Basnage supposes, that the author of the Toldos Jeschu was a member of the synagogue of Worms.—*Basnage*, p. 505. *Dissertations Critiques*, &c. ✱

† Ibid. p. 784.

‡ This rabbi introduced the Christian method of disputing, but he soon found it disgusted his brethren.



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dominions. Those of Moravia suffered a severe persecution in 1574, and many were put to a cruel death before their friends were able to afford them assistance. Those of Franconia were accused of setting fire to several houses in the town of Bamberg, and were plundered of their effects. Notwithstanding these misfortunes they obtained liberty to settle in the duke of Brunswick's territories at the end of the sixteenth century.*

Several learned rabbies appeared in Germany during the seventeenth century; among others a famous cabbalist, named Nathan de Spira, from Spire, the place of his birth. He published a work styled the "Good of the Land," in order to celebrate the country of Palestine; and also a cabbalistical commentary on some verses of Deuteronomy, in which he pretended to find and resolve the deepest mysteries.†

One of the most famous doctors which Germany produced in this century was Isaac Loria, author of a metaphysical introduction to the cabbala. In this work he examines the reasons which induced God to create the world. He also published several other learned treatises. Towards the conclusion of his life he retired to Palestine, and was buried at Sapheta in Upper Galilee.

A. D. 1682.] At this period rabbi Mordecai, a German Jew, who had acquired great celebrity among his brethren for his learning and austere manner of life, pretended to be the Messiah. Many of the German and Italian Jews were seduced by the impostor, and acknowledged his divine

* Basnage, p. 736.

† Ibid. p. 737.

mission. It was not long, however, before they were sensible of the folly of their blind credulity ; and the false Messiah was obliged to provide for his own safety by flight.*

* Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 306.

CHAPTER XXV.

State of the Jews in Poland.—They obtain extensive privileges from Casimire the Great.—They are also highly favoured by John Sobieski.—Of the literary Jews in Poland.—Prosperous condition of the nation at Hamburg.—Of those in Hungary.—A large council of Jews are said to have convened on the plains of Ageda in this country.—Prosperous state of the Jews at Vienna.—Of their condition in other cities in Germany.—An account of several learned Jews, who, in the seventeenth century, were converted to the Christian religion.

A. D. 1333.] THE flourishing state of the Jews in Poland, under Casimire the Great, has been mentioned in a preceding chapter; in consequence of the extensive privileges which this monarch's affection for Esther, a beautiful Jewess, induced him to grant them, they, in a manner, engrossed all the commerce in the country, and thus acquired power and affluence. The prosperous state of their affairs in this kingdom was not, however, wholly owing to the king's edicts in their favour, but may in part be attributed to their own industry, the indolence of the higher classes of society, and the oppressed state of the peasants.*

The religious zeal which caused the reformation to be banished from Poland was so capricious, as to allow the Jews an entire liberty of conscience. They not only possessed superb synagogues and academies, but were owners of land, and had at Cracow a court of judicature, which was permitted to judge of criminal, as well as civil concerns. But,

* Basnage, p. 735. Coxe's Travels to Poland, vol. i. p. 148.



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baptism, wrote thirty-seven demonstrations in order to prove that the Messiah was come, and was a divine person, distinct from God the Father.

Hamburg has been styled the “lesser Jerusalem,” on account of the multitudes of Jews who have long inhabited the city and carried on commerce. Some of this people acquired wealth, and others distinguished themselves by their knowledge in various sciences, particularly that of physic. In this city a learned rabbi, named Esdras Edgardus, having embraced the Christian religion in 1690, assiduously laboured to convert his brethren, and his efforts were in various instances crowned with remarkable success.*

The emperor Ferdinand III. granted the Jews great privileges at Prague on account of their eminent services in defending the city, when it was besieged by the Swedes in 1641. Rabbi Jehudah Leo compiled a history of the transaction, in which he highly extolled the fidelity and bravery of his brethren on this occasion ; but more especially their piety in assembling in their synagogues to offer prayers for their success ; and appeared to ascribe the preservation of the city to their petitions and merit. †

In Hungary the Jews enjoyed the privilege of farming the revenues till Ferdinand II. deprived them of it by an edict in 1630. They notwithstanding found means to elude this decree, since

* Bishop Kidder, who corresponded with him, says, that “ he has been an instrument of converting more Jews, including many rabbins, than have perhaps ever been converted by any one person in the world since the age of miracles.”

† Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 426.

Ferdinand III. was obliged to issue a new edict, which condemned those to the loss of their places, who admitted this people to any of them. Still, however, they retained their employment till the emperor repeatedly sent commissioners to expel them, the last of which arrived in 1655.*

Notwithstanding these oppressions, this kingdom, if accounts are to be credited, soon became the scene of a memorable event. It is related, that, in the year 1650, the Jews, wearied and perplexed by the miseries of a captivity protracted through sixteen centuries, resolved to hold a national council for the complete investigation of the great question, whether *the Messiah was, already come*. The plain of Ageda, about thirty leagues from Buda, was selected for the assembly. This place was chosen on account of the war between the Turks and king of Hungary, both parties having given the nation permission to convene in this part of the country. Three hundred of the most eminent rabbies, and a vast multitude of other Jews, assisted at the council; and Zechariah, of the tribe of Levi, was chosen their president and speaker. †

* Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 427.

† A narrative of the great council of Jews on the plains of Ageda in Hungary was published in the "Phœnix, or a collection of scarce and valuable papers, in 1707." An account of this assembly is also inserted in the thirteenth volume of the Modern Universal History; the authors of this work refer to Bret's narrative in the Phœnix, but mention no other authority. This part of the Universal History is supposed to have been written by Psalmanazar, and, as he was a person of great learning, and very conversant in Hebrew literature, and probably lived much with the Jews, his mentioning of it is a circumstance in favour of its credibility. It is also considered as authentic by Dr. Owen, in his "Essay on Image Worship;" and by Mr.

After the assembly had excluded all who could not prove themselves of Jewish origin, the president thus proposed the following question: "We have convened in this place to examine whether the Messiah is really come, or whether we must still expect his appearance?" Some professed themselves inclined to believe that he had already come, since the calamities which their nation had suffered during a series of ages could not be owing to their idolatry, a crime which they had carefully avoided since their return from the Babylonian captivity. But the majority of the council agreed, that the Messiah had not appeared, and that his delay was owing to their sins and impenitence.*

They next debated in what manner their long expected deliverer would manifest himself; and readily agreed, that he would appear as a mighty conqueror, and deliver them from all foreign dominion. After the session had continued six days, a learned rabbi, named Abraham, strenuously urged upon the council the necessity and propriety of strictly examining into the pretensions of the Christian Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. The Pharisees, who overruled the assembly, answered, that he could not be that distinguished personage, because he

Richards of Oxford, and lately by Mr. Whitaker in his "Dissertation on Prophecy." It is mentioned in Dr. Jortin's *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, second volume, and second edition, and in other learned works. On the other hand, the narrative is pronounced fabulous by Menasses Ben Israel, and his authority has the greater weight, because, at the very time of the publication in question, he was negotiating with Cromwell for the return of his brethren. The English Jews also treat the account of this council as fabulous; and Basnage does not mention it in his history.—*Butler's Horæ Biblicæ*.

* Modern Universal Hist. vol. xiii. p. 429, 430.



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converse with some protestant divines. But the presence of so many monks deterred them, and made them apprehend some tragical conclusion to the assembly.*

A. D. 1660.] About this period the Jews had acquired such an ascendancy at Vienna, that rabbi Zechariah obtained permission to erect a superb synagogue and academy, in order to revive religion and learning among his brethren. He endowed the latter with a sufficient pension to support twenty-four rabbies, who were to read lectures on the Talmud day and night. It was always to be open, and the doctors alternately to relieve each other. The academy, however, was scarcely completed before the emperor expelled them from the capital, and converted their synagogue into a church. After the death of the empress, in 1673, who had superstitiously attributed a misfortune which she suffered to the toleration of the Jews, they were recalled, and admitted to several high offices and titles of honour. But the populace, who envied the opulence they acquired under the government, used the most unjustifiable measures to deprive them of their wealth.†

The emperor found a new subject of complaint against the Jews, because, while he was engaged in a war with the Turks, they assisted the Mahometans in maintaining the siege of Buda, and distinguished themselves by their valour. But though their conduct was highly resented in Germany and Italy, yet, as they were subjects of the Ottoman

* Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 222.

† Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 431.

empire, they could not justly be condemned for their fidelity to their sovereign.*

During the seventeenth century the Jews were numerous and flourishing in the provinces of Servia, Croatia, Moldavia, Valencia, &c. as well as in most of the large cities in the empire. They were, however, expelled from Nuremburg, but settled in most towns in the vicinity, and possessed a synagogue at Pfurt. They were only permitted to enter the city with a guide, who was obliged to remain with them till the time of their departure. Formerly they had a synagogue and academy at Augsburg, and their rabbies and pupils were supported by the rich merchants of the place. But they have since been expelled, and obliged to purchase the liberty of entering the city at the price of a florin for every hour they remained in it. †

The Jews of Worms were charged by one of their brethren, who had renounced the religion of his ancestors, with having the name of Jehovah inscribed on the top of their synagogue, from a superstitious notion that it would be an effectual mean of preserving the edifice. But the French convinced them of the vanity of this idea, when they took the city and demolished the building. ‡

The Jews were so numerous in Frankfort, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that they were computed to have amounted to thirty thousand. But they were often plundered, exposed to all manner of ridicule, and employed in the most servile offices. A late traveller asserts, that “they were confined to live in one street, which was long,

* Basnage, p. 736.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 737.

spacious, and irregular, while their houses were separated back and front from the other citizens by an high wall. Every evening, about ten or eleven, both ends of the street were shut up, and no Jew, without special permission, suffered to quit his prison during the time of divine service among the Christians.

The intolerable hardships which this persecuted people endured in former times would have been abolished ; but the rich Jews, finding the assistance of their poor brethren highly beneficial to them in carrying on commerce, made pressing remonstrances against any change; even though it would be advantageous to themselves.”*

The Jews in Prague were so numerous in the seventeenth century as to fill a third part of the city. But, though allowed a toleration, they were hated and despised by the Christians ; and remained poor and miserable, often exposed to insults, and obliged to submit to the most degrading employments.† Their condition was more favourable in the following century ; for a late traveller asserts, that in 1780 there were nine or ten thousand of the Israelites in the city. They were remarkably industrious, and in almost every inn there is a Jew who performs the business of a servant. They are allowed entire liberty of conscience, and have artists and mechanics of their own religion, who reside in the part of the town appropriated to them, which is called the Jews' city.‡

Several learned Jews in Poland and Germany have, at different periods, been converted to Christi-

* Stolberg's Travels, vol. ii. p. 366.

† Basnage, p. 736.

‡ Riesbeck's Travels, vol. i. p. 421.



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Ernestus Maximilian Borg was also convinced of the truth of Christianity by reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and baptized at Wratistaw. In the year 1722, he published an extraordinary work with this title, "The Christian Doctrine built upon Moses and the Prophets." Another learned German Jew, named Christian Meir, was baptized at Breme. Among various other productions, in 1722, he published a tract, in order to evince, from various prophecies of the Old Testament, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah.*

* Chapman's Eusebius, p. 545.

CHAPTER XXVI.

State of the Jews in Italy during the sixteenth century.—Julius III. commands all the Gemaras to be burnt.—Of Joseph Tzarphanti and Elias Levita.—Paul IV. persecutes the Jews, but is prevented from banishing them on a false accusation.—Pius V. issues an edict against them.—Sixtus V. treats them with more indulgence, but Clement VIII. confirms the edict of Pius.—The Jews are tolerated at Venice, and Hebrew books printed in that city.—Learned Rabbies appear in Venice and other parts of Italy.—Of the Jews in Padua.—A number of Jews from Germany establish a printing office in Soncini.—Of those in Turin.—They are favoured and protected by pope Innocent XI. who attempts to convert them to the Christian religion.—They are numerous in the ecclesiastical state in the eighteenth century.—Charles, king of Naples, issues an edict in their favour.

A. D. 1554.] IN a foregoing chapter* we have seen the Jews in general favoured and protected by the Roman pontiffs ; but in Italy as well as in other countries, they have experienced various vicissitudes. Julius III. being of opinion that the interpretations of the Gemara had a dangerous tendency, commanded all the copies of the work throughout Italy to be burnt. †

Under this pontificate Joseph Tzarphanti, a celebrated rabbi, embraced the Christian religion. He was born in France, but, upon finding Jewish learning in a more flourishing state at Rome, he removed to this city and expounded the Talmud. After his conversion he wrote a friendly letter to the Jews, in which he proved, that the Messiah had really appeared. Soon after he was appointed to preach to his unconverted brethren, and to the new

* See Chap. XX.

† Basnage, p. 735.

proselytes. But his deserting the synagogue had rendered him so odious to the former, that, upon their remonstrance to cardinal Sirlet, the employment was taken from him. He wrote afterwards a treatise, styled, “The Confusion of the Jews,” in order to prove, that all the mysteries of Christianity are found in the Old Testament.*

Among the learned Jews who appeared in the sixteenth century, † Elias Levita claims the pre-eminence, and was one of the most celebrated writers which his nation ever produced. He was born in Germany, but spent the greatest part of his life in Italy. An ardent desire to acquire knowledge induced him to study with intense application ; and he was so happy as to live at a time when the learned began to recur to the original fountain of the scriptures, and revived the study of the Hebrew language. Elias, having lost all he possessed in Padua, when that city was taken and plundered, supported himself and family by teaching Hebrew. This rendered him obnoxious to his nation, who censured him with great asperity for exposing the divine oracles to the Christians by teaching them the sacred language. He, however, had the resolution to persevere in his instructions. Some have supposed that he embraced Christianity, on account of his living in habits of great friendship and intimacy with those of that religion. But, though his mind was free from that

* *Basnage*, p. 723.

† In the sixteenth century, a celebrated Jewish poetess, named Deborah, flourished at Rome, and acquired celebrity by her poetic and other works about the year 1560 ; she lived till the beginning of the seventeenth century.—*Modern Univer. Hist.*



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translated into Latin from the Hebrew all the books of the Old Testament, as well as those of the New from the Syriac version.*

A. D. 1555.] Paul IV. was the avowed enemy of the Jews, and issued several severe edicts against them. By his decrees they were compelled to sell all their lands ; to surrender many of their books to the flames ; to wear a distinguishing dress ; to nearly forego all intercourse with Christians ; and to have that part of the city where they resided shut every night. He also limited the number of their synagogues, and allowed them only one in each city, on which he imposed a tribute to be employed for the instruction of Jewish catechumens, who were willing to embrace Christianity.†

During this pontificate they were exposed to a still more severe persecution. Eighty female converts from Judaism pretended to be possessed, and, upon being exorcised, accused their unbelieving brethren with bewitching them in order to revenge their apostacy. The credulous pontiff, who entertained an extreme aversion against the Jews, resolved to expel them. But a Jesuit dissuaded him from his design by painting in strong colours the absurdity of the accusation, and strenuously enforcing the duty and necessity of making a stricter inquiry respecting the alleged crime. The pretended demoniacs, being accordingly examined by scourging, confessed that they had been persuaded to act this part by some courtiers, who hoped to have enriched themselves with the plunder of this devoted race, whether they were banished or mas-

* Chapman's Eusebius, p. 537.

† Basnage, p. 723.

sacred. Upon this discovery the courtiers were condemned to death; and the pontiff exclaimed, “I might have suffered eternal punishment for unjustly destroying the Jews, had not my good Jesuit prevented it. I will pray to God to convert them as long as I live; but I never will hate and persecute them as I have formerly done.”*

A. D. 1569.] Pius V. issued an edict against the Jews, in which he accused them of falsehood, of treachery, and of ruining the ecclesiastical state by their exorbitant usury and other crimes. By this decree he expelled them from every part of his dominions except the cities of Rome and Ancona. The reasons he assigned for permitting them to remain in his capital, were, that the people might be reminded of Christ’s sufferings, that a watchful eye might be kept over them, and that the sanctity of the place and example of the Christians might encourage their conversion. But it has been supposed, that his real motive was the promotion of commerce in the eastern parts, and that he might by this mean procure substantial advantage to the Holy See.

A. D. 1587.] His successor Sixtus V. frankly declared, that the profit he derived from the Jewish merchants was his principal motive for tolerating those of this nation. A certain rabbi named Meir, of French extraction, came to Rome at this time, and being a man of learning and address dedicated a book to this pontiff, and presented to him a flattering eulogy in verse, which was translated into Italian. After he had thus conciliated the protection

* Basnage, p. 723. Modern Universal Hist. vol. xiii. p. 327.

of the pope, he petitioned for the exclusive privilege of establishing a silk manufacture at Rome. Sextus not only granted his request, but revoked all the bulls and edicts of his predecessors to the contrary, though they had been confirmed with an oath strengthened with a menace of excommunication.*

A. D. 1593.] Clement VIII. confirmed in substance the bull of Pius V. which expelled the Jews from the ecclesiastical state. He, however, relaxed so far as to add Avignon to the cities of refuge, where they have been settled ever since with entire liberty to exercise their religion. The reason he assigned for this indulgence was, his ardent desire to effect their conversion.†

The Jews were tolerated in all the Venetian territories, and had merited this indulgence by eminent services which they performed in the wars against the Turks, particularly at the siege of Candia. They were numerous and flourishing in the capital. In 1511, David Bomberg came from Antwerp to Venice, and began for the first time to print Hebrew Bibles.‡ In order to render them more

* Basnage, p. 724.

† Ibid.

‡ Bomberg printed several Hebrew Bibles in folio and quarto at Venice, most of which were esteemed both by the Jews and Christians. The division of the Scriptures into chapters was invented by cardinal Hugo in 1240. The subdivision of the chapters into verses had its origin from a famous Jewish rabbi, named Mordecai Nathan, about 1445. This rabbi, in imitation of cardinal Hugo, composed a concordance to the Hebrew Bible, for the use of his brethren. But though he followed Hugo in the division of the books into chapters, he refined upon his invention, and subdivided the chapters into verses. And thus, as the Jews borrowed the division of the books of the Holy Scriptures into chapters from the Christians, the Christians borrowed that of the chapters into verses from the Jews.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary*, vol. i. p. 79.



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Scriptures with so much energy and strength of argument, that Luzati exclaimed, "I beseech you to permit us to be silent, and shut up our books; for if we proceed to examine the prophecies any further we shall all become Christians. It cannot be denied, that, in the prophecy of Daniel; the coming of the Messiah is so clearly manifested, that the time of his appearance must be allowed to be already past; but whether Jesus of Nazareth be the person I cannot determine." This speech closed the debate; and made such a deep impression upon rabbi Samuel and his brother Joseph, that they both formed the design of renouncing Judaism. A few months after, upon reconsidering the subject seriously and calmly, they embraced the Christian religion. In 1683, Samuel published a work in Italian, entitled, "The Way of Faith," in order to prove to his brethren, that they were no longer bound to observe the ceremonial law, but to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel.*

Another celebrated rabbi, named Mordecai Korkos, who was a native of Venice, and taught in this city in 1687, rendered himself odious to his nation by writing a treatise against the Cabbala. The Jews so highly venerate this science, that they regard every attempt to lessen its importance levelled against the fundamentals of religion; and their doctors prohibited the publication of this work.†

The synagogues of Modena, as well as those of Venice, produced several learned men, among

* Chapman's Eusebius, p. 549. In a preface to this publication rabbi Nachmias gives the account of his conversion above related.

† Basnage, p. 795.

whom rabbi Samuel, who was its chief, distinguished himself. In 1599, he published a work in this city, styled, "The Judgments of Samuel," which is a collection of Talmudic and Rabbinic decisions. Leo de Modena was also a man of learning, but a professed enemy to the Christians. He acquired great celebrity by his writings; his "Treatise on the Ceremonies of the Jews," in particular, has been highly celebrated by the learned of all nations. He intended to have translated the Old Testament into Italian, but the inquisitors prohibited his proceeding in this work. He died at Venice in the year 1654, being almost eighty years old.*

Pesaro† was the native place of rabbi Jechiel, who went from thence to Florence, where having heard for some time the sermons of an inquisitor, he repaired to Rome in order to renounce Judaism. Pope Gregory XIII. assisted at the numerous assembly where he made his recantation. Soon after, he was baptized by this pontiff, and became a public teacher. Some of the Italian sermons which he preached against the Jews at Florence, where they were very numerous, were printed in 1585.

Jacob Tzaphalon was born at Rome 1630, and had the *degrée* of doctor of physic conferred upon him by the university in this city. He taught at Ferrara, and is ranked among the most eminent rabbies in the 17th century. Among other learned works he composed a book of prayers and meditations, in which there is a petition for physicians

* Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 404.

† A small ancient city in Italy.

when they visit their patients. The authors of the Universal History observe, that “it appears this good Jew thought it necessary to implore the blessing of heaven before he went to prescribe to the sick ; and did not, like the generality of those of his profession, depend wholly upon the natural efficacy of the medicines.”*

The Jews of Padua received the title of doctors of physic, and were authorized to practise the healing art in all parts of the republic of Venice. Towards the close of the 16th century there were eight hundred of this nation at Padua, who possessed three synagogues. They had a very handsome Ghetto, or quarter assigned them, with three gates, which were shut every night. Their inscription over one of the gates begins with these words, “that the people, heirs to the kingdom of heaven, may have no communion with those who are disinherited.” There was also an academy in this city, of which the celebrated rabbi Meir was president. Menakim Rabba flourished in this seminary, and composed sermons on the four seasons of the year, which have since been published by his son ; he died in the year 1605. Rabbi Judas Azael was likewise a distinguished Jewish preacher ; and rendered himself so popular by the discourses which he delivered at Ferrara, that even the Christians attended his lectures. He was the author of a cabbalistical work, entitled, “The Thrones of the House of David.” He died in this city 1677. †

About the same period that Bomberg set up a

* Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 402.

† Basnage, p. 725. Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 406.



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Messiah. He was ordered particularly to enlarge on the miseries the nation had suffered seventeen hundred years. One third of the Israelites in Rome were obliged to be present in their turn, and the children who had attained the age of twelve years were registered among the auditors. But little benefit was derived from the institution, for the Jews either absented themselves, or attended in order to ridicule the discourses. Pope Innocent endeavoured to remedy this abuse. He prohibited the sermons* from being preached in a consecrated church, lest it should be profaned by their indecent behaviour, and appointed inspectors to impose silence upon them. But, notwithstanding all his exertions, the Jews generally persisted in their unbelief; and cardinal Barberini, who took an active part in their instruction, acknowledged that most of the pretended conversions were hypocritical and interested. †

The Jews have long been numerous in the ecclesiastical state, where, as late as the middle of the eighteenth century, they are said to have possessed nearly an hundred synagogues, nine of which were

* This pontiff obliged the preacher to make a prayer to God, but ordered it to be pronounced softly lest the names of Jesus and Mary should alarm the Jews.—*Basnage*, p. 727.

† It is said, that, in order to encourage new converts, some cardinal, or great personage, was their godfather, and made them some handsome present after baptism. They were dressed in white satin, and carried about the city in a fine coach, during a fortnight, to be seen and congratulated by the spectators; after which they appeared in a common dress, and, to prevent their apostatizing, all who were found guilty of it were condemned to the flames.—*Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 407.

in Rome.* They had also an academy in this city, and appeared to assume a kind of superiority over those in other parts of Italy, who consulted them in doubtful cases, and paid great deference to their decisions.†

A. D. 1740.] At this period, Charles, king of Naples, published an edict in favour of the Jews, permitting them to return, and reside in the kingdom fifty years. They were allowed to enjoy the full exercise of their religion, and settle in what parts they pleased; and those who had studied the healing art, were promoted to the degree of doctors in that science. These concessions excited great uneasiness among the zealous Catholics; yet the king pursued his measures, and many of the nation, from various parts of Italy, repaired to this kingdom. Soon, however, the licentiousness of the Jews caused laws, so honourable to those who framed them, and so consoling to the Hebrew people, to be revoked.‡

* Gisborne on the Christian Religion.

† Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xiii. p. 408.

‡ Gregoire's Essay on the Reformation of the Jews, p. 169.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Jews apply to the emperor Charles V. for the liberty of returning to Spain.—Cardinal Ximenes persuades him to reject their request.—Of the conspiracy of the Portuguese Jews against the house of Braganza.—Vast numbers of concealed Jews remain in Spain and Portugal.—Account of Orobio, a celebrated Spanish Jew.—Of the severity of the Spanish government.—The Spanish and Portuguese Jews claim their descent from the tribe of Judah, and refuse to connect themselves by marriage with those of other nations.—A law is enacted in Portugal which prohibits the inhabitants to call any person a Jew.

THOUGH the Jews had suffered severe persecution in Spain, and towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century were cruelly expelled from this kingdom ;* yet upon the accession of Charles V. the fugitives petitioned for liberty to return. They represented to this monarch, that “ they had conducted with honour the whole commerce of the nation, and were the most useful, and perhaps faithful subjects in the kingdom ; that, therefore, the confidence they reposed in his justice and goodness induced them to hope he would allow them the free exercise of their religion.” On this condition they engaged to present him eight hundred thousand crowns of gold.†

Charles was at first disposed to return a favourable answer to their petition, but cardinal Ximenes exerted all his influence to dissuade the king from permitting their return. He reminded him, that Ferdinand had refused six hundred thousand crowns which the Jews offered him, for the liberty of con-

* See Chapter xviii.

† Basnage.



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The rejection of this offer filled them with resentment and consternation, as their appearing in this petition, had exposed them to the tortures of the merciless inquisition.*

The archbishop of Braga, promised them, in the name of the king of Spain, that, if they would be instrumental to his restoration, they should be allowed liberty of conscience, and be permitted to profess their religion openly without incurring any penalty. The part assigned them was to set fire to the palace, and several houses in the city and suburbs, in order that while the people were engaged in extinguishing the flames, the conspirators might fly to the palace and assassinate the king. The grand inquisitor was also engaged in this plot against the government, and this was, perhaps, the first time that the inquisition and synagogue acted in concert. The meditated revolution, however, was not effected. Baeze, a rich Jewish merchant, being put to the rack, confessed the treacherous design formed against the house of Braganza, and the intended perpetrators of the crime were severely punished.†

* Vertot's *Revolutions of Portugal*, p. 82.

† Though the Jews have been accused of treason, and some other instances similar to that of the conspiracy against the house of Braganza have been proved, the greater part of these accusations were, says a late author, the children of imposture; and there are other anecdotes of a contrary nature. In 1749, Malta was saved by a Jew from a formidable conspiracy. The Turkish slaves had combined to destroy the whole order of knights in the island; and every slave had taken a solemn oath to put his master to death. This treacherous design was discovered by a Jew who kept the coffee-house.—He understood the Turkish language, and having overheard discourses which he thought suspicious, went immediately and informed the grand

The Jews, finding themselves baffled in all their legal and illegal attempts to obtain a toleration in Spain and Portugal, continued under the specious veil of Christianity to perform the Mosaic rites in secret.* Their aversion to a religion, which they were compelled to profess externally, became more implacable. The law of Moses was still privately transmitted from father to son; and the vigilance of the inquisition, and murder of so many of their brethren, which has caused them to be more circumspect, must, at the same time, have rendered them more bigoted. Many, who could no longer submit to wear the mask of Christianity, quitted their country. The greatest part of the fugitives have settled in England and Holland, and, among the Jews who reside in these countries, those of Portugal have the reputation of maintaining the most respectable characters.†

Large numbers of the Israelites have, however, remained in the dominions of Spain and Portugal, who have availed themselves of the liberty of dissimulation permitted by the Talmud. Outwardly good Catholics, but inwardly Jews; they have abounded in various ranks and professions, and have not hesitated to fill the most sacred departments

master. The suspected persons were instantly put to the torture, confessed the whole plot, and were executed. We also read of a Jew, who, during the siege of Tunis by Charles V. saved the lives of several thousand Christian slaves, whom Barbarossa intended to have put to death.—*Gregoire on the Reformation of the Jews*, p. 41. *Brydone's Tour*, p. 163.

* Vertot's *Revolutions in Portugal*.

† Southey's *Letters from Spain and Portugal*, vol. i. p. 112. Murphy's *Travels in Portugal*.

of the Romish priesthood. By pretending to an uncommon zeal for a religion which they detest, they have generally passed unobserved, if not unsuspected. Hence, it has been said, that when a house is found to be remarkably decked with images, relics, and lamps, and the owner celebrated for being the most enthusiastic devotee in the parish, there is reason to believe the family are Israelites at heart.*

These facts rest on the unquestionable authority of Jews who themselves have practised dissimulation, and are particularly recorded on the testimony of Balthasar Orobio, a celebrated Spanish Jew, who was carefully educated in the religion of his ancestors by his parents, who assumed the mask of Christianity, and outwardly conformed to the Roman Catholic worship, and abstained from the practice of Judaism in every thing except the observation of the fast of expiation. Our author was distinguished for his talents and learning; and, having studied the scholastic philosophy as it was taught in Spain, acquired such celebrity, that he was made professor of metaphysics in the university of Salamanca. But afterwards, applying himself to the study of physic, he practised the healing art at Seville with reputation and success.†

In process of time Orobio, being suspected of Judaism, was suddenly seized and thrown into the inquisition, where he suffered such exquisite

* Swinburn's Travels to Spain, vol. i. p. 104. Those Jews who, in Spain and Portugal, have been compelled to profess Christianity, are styled "new Christians."

† Biographical Dictionary, vol. ii. p. 343.



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learned divine was not able to conquer the prejudices of Orobio, who declared, at the end of the conference, that he was of opinion, “that every man ought to continue in the religion in which he was educated, since it is much easier to attack the opinions of others, than to defend our own.” He continued in Holland till the time of his death, which took place 1687.*

The great number of the dissemblers, and their existence even among the grandees and clergy in Spain, Orobio attests in the strongest terms, and relates, that many of those who assumed the mask of Christianity, even Franciscan monks, Dominicans, and Jesuits, came annually to the synagogue at Amsterdam to confess and expiate their dissimulation. †

A late author informs us, that a Catholic clergyman, who had recently quitted Spain, after a residence there of twelve years, spontaneously related to him the following circumstances: “That the Spaniards universally believe, there are among them very great numbers of concealed Jews, chiefly in the trading classes, and some among the clergy; and that the captain of a packet, with whom he was windbound at Corunna, informed him, he had met with many persons in France, South America, and elsewhere, who had freely confessed to him they were Jews, though they had lived long in Spain as Catholics; and that one of these persons had been

* Bio. Dict. vol. ii. p. 345.

† The Jews are said to have been numerous in the Spanish and Portuguese monasteries and nunneries; and that many of the priests, inquisitors, and even bishops, are of Hebrew origin.—*Modern Universal History*, vol. xiii. p. 357.

outwardly a Catholic clergyman, and really in orders as such.”*

Even as late as the close of the eighteenth century, any person believed to be a Jew, whether he had previously appeared as a Catholic or not, would still be seized in Spain, if discovered by the inquisition.† The following is an extract from a decree of the Spanish government, promulgated against the Jews, July 22, 1800. “His majesty ordered his ministers to deliver no passports to Jews intending to enter Spain, whatever might be the motive of their journey; and whether they be desirous or not of making any stay in the kingdom. He enjoined the governors of the frontiers to prevent their entrance into the Spanish territories, and to expel all who may be discovered in it. For a long time the laws of this monarchy have forbidden all the Jews to attempt a transit, or an establishment in the dominions of his majesty; a late transgression calls for a rigorous reinforcement of these laws.”

The Spanish and Portuguese Jews‡ claim their descent from the tribe of Judah; and found these pretensions on a supposition which prevails among them, that many of their ancestors removed, or

* Gisborne on the Christian Religion, p. 110.

† It is said, that in about 1755, when a terrible earthquake in Lisbon destroyed thirty thousand of the inhabitants, the Portuguese believed that the mercy of God might be obtained by burning some Jews, and other heretics, in what they call the Auto da Fe, or act of faith.—*Voltaire's Age of Lewis XIV.*

‡ It appears that the Jews have no accurate deduction of their descent or genealogy; they suppose that they are in general of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, with some among them of the tribe of Levi.—*Butler's Horæ Biblicæ*, p. 85.

were sent into Spain, at the time of the Babylonian captivity. In consequence of this supposed superiority, they, till very lately, would not by marriage or otherwise, incorporate with their brethren of other nations. They had separate synagogues; and if a Portuguese Jew, even in England or Holland, married a German Jewess, he was immediately expelled from the synagogue, deprived of every civil and ecclesiastical rite, and ejected from the body of the nation. A late instance has occurred of a Jew in Berlin, who having married the daughter of a Portuguese physician, the parents of the girl went in mourning, as for the death of a relation.*

The manners of the Portuguese Jews differ from the rest of the nation, and are more polished. They have nothing peculiar in their dress. The opulent among them vie with the other nations of Europe in refinement, elegance, and show; and differ from them in worship only.†

In Portugal, the name of a Jew is a term of such high reproach, that the government found it necessary to enact a law, which forbade any person to call another by that appellation. If a man who is styled a Jew to his face stabs the offender, the law does not condemn him; and trifling as this regulation may appear, it has produced beneficial effects.‡

* Gregoire, who mentions this fact, informs us, that it was communicated to him by a learned German Jew.—*Essay on the Reformation of the Jews*, p. 86.

† Letters of certain Jews to Voltaire, p. 28.

‡ Southey's Letters, vol. i. p. 118. Review of the Naturalization of the Jews, p. 52.



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CHAPTER XXVIII.

Account of the Jews in Holland.—One of the German Jews deludes his brethren with the promise of a Messiah.—They erect academies and synagogues at Amsterdam.—An account of Menasses Ben Israel, and several other learned rabbies, who flourished in Holland, during the seventeenth century.—Of their state at a later period.

HOLLAND has long afforded the Jews a favourite asylum; and the lenity of the government, by giving free scope to their commercial genius, has enabled them to accumulate wealth.

Basnage, who closes his history of this people with the seventeenth century, has asserted, that they enjoyed more liberty in this country, and have been more rich and flourishing there, than in any other part of the world.* Part of the Jews emigrated from Germany, the others from Spain and Portugal; and, on account of some difference in their religious ceremonies, a violent animosity has subsisted between them.†

Zeighler, a distinguished personage among the German Jews, came to Amsterdam, in order to delude his brethren, who were recently settled in the city, with the hopes of a Messiah, whom he pretended to have seen at Strasburg when he was only fourteen years old. He affirmed him to be lineally descended from king David, and that his ancestors had resided a thousand years in the kingdom of Tunis, whence they passed into Grenada in Spain, but, upon being expelled by king Ferdinand

* Basnage, p. 738.

† Basnage, p. 739. Modern Universal History.

the Catholic, they settled in Germany. Zeighler asserted, that he reserved a diadem and sword to present to the Messiah, when he should be of age to assert his dignity and appear in arms. He was then to exhibit himself as a mighty conqueror, to destroy Antichrist and the Ottoman empire, and extend his dominion over the whole world. The Messiah was also to assemble a council at Constance which was to last twelve years, and decide all religious controversies. Those who gave credit to the assertions of this impostor, regretted too late their blind credulity and infatuation.

The first assembly of Jews in Amsterdam, excited great jealousy among the citizens, who supposed them to be Roman Catholics in disguise. But in searching their houses, especially those in which they performed divine worship, they found nothing but Hebrew books, and a copy of the Mosaic law. After this discovery, they were only enjoined to pray for the preservation of the city, which they readily promised.*

Soon after, they obtained permission to build their first synagogue in this city, which they called "The House of Jacob," because a rich Jew of that name was its founder. Not long after, they erected another synagogue, which they styled, "*Neve Shalam*," the dwelling of peace; and committed it to the care of a celebrated rabbi named Joseph Vega, who composed a history of his nation down to the destruction of Jerusalem. He was succeeded by rabbi Uziel, who incurred the resentment of his brethren, by his severe animadversions on their

* Basnage, p. 789.

conduct. This induced them to build a new synagogue called "Ben Israel," to which the dissenters retired. This schism lasted about twenty years, and the disputes between the two parties were conducted with great animosity: But, in 1639, these divisions were terminated, and the three synagogues united in one.*

The Jews of Amsterdam founded academies as well as synagogues, and one of them, called, The Crown of the Law, which was built in 1643, was governed by some of the most learned men of the nation. Their flourishing state in Holland during the seventeenth century, was exhibited by a superb synagogue, begun 1671, and consecrated in the year 1673.†

Many celebrated rabbies have flourished in Holland, among whom Menasses Ben Israel was eminently distinguished. This great man was born in Portugal 1604; but his father Joseph, being persecuted on account of his religion, retired with his family to Holland. Menasses was instructed in the Hebrew language by rabbi Uziel, and made such rapid progress in this and other branches of knowledge, that after his tutor's death, he was chosen to succeed him in the rabbinical chair at Amsterdam, when he was only eighteen years old. At the age of fifteen he began to preach, and his discourses at that early period were highly applauded by his brethren. He pursued his studies so assiduously that, when only twenty, he published the first part of his Conciliator‡ on the Pentateuch, in

* Basnage, p. 789.

† Ibid.

‡ This work when completed was divided into four parts, and comprehended the remainder of the Old Testament.



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affable, and polite, he conciliated the affection and esteem of the Christians ; and some of the greatest men of the age, as Grotius, Episcopius, and others, were his intimate friends.* His great object appears to have been to promote the welfare of his nation both by his life and writings. One of his publications is entitled “*Vindicæ Judeorum*,” or a letter in answer to certain questions respecting the Jews, in which he exploded all the calumnies raised against his persecuted nation. In another of his productions, styled, “*The Hope of Israel*,” he attempted to prove, that the American natives are the descendants of the ten tribes. His works were published in Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, and English ; and part of them in Dutch and German.

Rabbi Zacutus, an eminent Jewish physician, and friend and panegyrist of Menasses, was born at Lisbon in the year 1575. His parents, who assumed the mask of Christianity, sent him to study philosophy and medicine at Salamanca and Coimbra. After having taken his degree of doctor at Morvedro, a famous university in Spain, he practised physic at Lisbon till 1624. He acquired great celebrity by his knowledge of the healing art, and was

* Bishop Huet, a learned Roman Catholic divine, observes, “*During my stay in Holland I was induced to visit Menasses Ben Israel, a very learned Jew, known to me by his reputation and his writings, for the purpose of becoming better acquainted with him, and making inquiries of him respecting several circumstances connected with the Jewish rites, and the Christian religion. His answers appeared to me acute, yet candid, and to show that he was not far distant from a knowledge of the truth, were he treated with reason and moderation, and not with that contumely and harshness commonly displayed to his nation.*”—*Aikin's Memoirs of the Life of Huet*, vol. i. p. 208.

distinguished for his benevolent attention to the poor. After having dissembled about thirty years he retired to Amsterdam, and died, in the profession of the religion of his ancestors, 1642. He was the author of a history of the principal physicians and various medical works.*

Joseph Athias, a Spaniard by birth, was first a teacher of the Talmud at Hamburg, but removed from thence to Amsterdam, and purchased a printing-office. In 1661, he published an elegant edition of the Hebrew Bible, which was reprinted six years after with additions, and is remarkable for being the first edition in Hebrew in which the verses are numbered. The states of Holland rewarded Athias with a present of a golden chain and medalion.†

Uriel Acosta was born in Portugal, towards the close of the sixteenth century. His parents were of the nobility, but originally descended from those Jews who had been compelled to profess the Roman Catholic religion. His father, however, was really a Christian, and carefully instilled the principles of religion into the mind of his son. It appears, by Acosta's account of his life, that he received a liberal education, and, having been instructed in various sciences, applied himself to the study of the law, and afterward had an ecclesiastical benefice. The activity and zeal he exhibited in the service of the church, his assiduity in explaining the evangelists and other parts of the sacred scriptures, his regular and exemplary conduct, procured him, at the age of twenty-five, the dignity of treasurer in a col-

* Modern Universal History, vol. xiii. p. 437. † Ibid. p. 438.

legiate church. But the anxiety of mind which he then began to feel respecting religion disturbed all his happiness. Being terrified with the idea of suffering eternal death, he sought relief by conforming to all the precepts of the church, by assiduously studying the Scriptures, and consulting the creed of the confessors. But still his distress increased; and at length, being reduced to a state of despair, he experienced the most terrible mental agonies.*

After Acosta had decided that he could not be saved by the religion he had imbibed in his infancy, he began to inquire into the grounds and reasons of his faith. These inquiries rendered him more and more wavering and undecided; and his dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic church induced him to study Jewish authors until, at length, he became a convert to the religion of his ancestors. But as he could not profess Judaism in Portugal, he gave up an honourable and profitable employment, left an elegant house which his father had built in the most delightful part of Lisbon, and embarked for Amsterdam with his mother and brothers, whom he had ventured to instruct in the principles of the Jewish religion, even when in Portugal. Soon after their arrival in this city they became members of the synagogue, were circumcised according to custom, and he changed his name of Gabriel for that of Uriel.†

It was not long, however, before he discovered, to use his own words, “that the modern Jewish

* Biographical Dict. vol. i. p. 63. Acosta's Account of his Life.

† De Rossie's Hebrew Biography.



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but bailed out in about ten days after. However, all the copies of his works were seized, and he himself fined three hundred florins. Yet he was not deterred from proceeding still farther in his scepticism, and, at length, he not only denied the authority of the Mosaic law, but the truth of all revealed religion.*

After he became a deist, as his patience was exhausted by the insults and indignities to which the avowal of his sentiments had exposed him, he thought it best to dissemble for the sake of peace, and returned to the Jewish church after he had been excommunicated fifteen years. He made a recantation of what he had written, and subscribed every thing as they directed. It was, however, soon discovered that he did not live after the Hebrew manner, and that he had dissuaded two Christians who came from London to Amsterdam from professing Judaism. He was summoned before the grand council of the synagogue, and, upon his refusing to make a public confession, was sentenced to a second excommunication.† After remaining seven years in a most wretched condition, being exposed to a series of persecutions, he declared himself willing to submit to the sentence of the synagogue. This concession was made in con-

* Acosta's Account of his Life.

† There are two degrees of excommunication among the Jews; the lesser which only excludes a person from some particular society, or congregation, till he repents, which he is allowed to do in thirty days; and if he does not, then the greater is pronounced, which confiscates his property to sacred uses; and deprives him of any dealings with or support from his nearest relations, as well as subjects him to many other grievous penalties.—*Abendenda's Jewish Polity.*

sequence of his receiving intimations that the judges,* being satisfied with his submission, would soften the severity of the discipline. Acosta, however, found with astonishment and indignation, that the sentence pronounced against him was executed with the utmost rigour. He was compelled to enter a synagogue full of people, assembled to see his humiliation, being dressed in mourning with a black torch in his hand. After reading a recantation of his errors, and confessing that he deserved a thousand deaths, he was subjected to a severe and disgraceful corporal punishment.

Acosta was so highly exasperated at the public infamy which he suffered, that he formed the horrid resolution of putting a period to his own life ; but determined previously, to be revenged on a relation to whom he attributed the cruel treatment he had experienced. But finding himself baffled in his attempt to kill his principal enemy, and that his design was discovered, he immediately destroyed himself, (1647) leaving a manuscript† which gave an account of his life and sentiments.

Benedict Spinoza, another extraordinary Jew, was born in Amsterdam, 1632 ; but his father was

* It appears surprising that Acosta did not implore the protection of the magistrates of Amsterdam to guard him from the violence of his nation. But he was apprehensive that the Christians would not be more favourable to him than the Jews, and relied upon the promise which the Parnassim or administrators of the synagogue made to him, and threw himself upon their mercy.—*Boissi's Dissertations pour servir a l'histoire des Juifs.*

† The above mentioned particulars relating to the life of Acosta are taken from his piece entitled, " *Exemplar Humanæ Vitæ,*" which contains a severe invective against the Jews, interspersed with objections against all revealed religion. It was published and refuted by Limborch.

originally a native of Portugal, and by profession a merchant. After having learnt Latin of a sceptical physician, Spinoza applied himself for many years to the study of theology, but began very early to be dissatisfied with the Jewish religion; and, as his temper was naturally open, he did not attempt to conceal his doubts from the synagogue. The Jews, it is said, offered to tolerate his infidelity, and even promised him a pension of one thousand dollars per annum, if he would continue externally to practise their ceremonies. If this proposal was really made, and he rejected it, his refusal was owing to his dislike of hypocrisy, or rather from a fear of the restraint it would impose upon him. He also refused a very considerable fortune to the prejudice of the natural heirs, and learnt the art of polishing glass for spectacles, that he might subsist independently.*

Spinoza would probably have continued in the synagogue some time longer; had he not been treacherously attacked and wounded by a Jew, as he was coming from the theatre. The wound was slight; but he believed the assassin designed to murder him. From that time he separated from his brethren, which was the reason of his excommunication. After leaving the synagogue he professed to be a Christian, and not only went himself to the Churches of the Lutherans and Calvinists, but frequently exhorted others to attend, and highly recommended some particular preachers. But that he was only outwardly a Christian, appears not only from his writings, but from many anecdotes which are preserved of his life. The Jews, finding all their attempts against

* Basnage, p. 741. Encyclopedia, vol. xvii. p. 693.



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In later times many learned men have appeared among the Jews in Holland, and by a decree passed in 1769, the nation in this country acquired certain political rites. The Portuguese Jews are more numerous and affluent than the German, their manners more polished, their morals generally more correct, and they are considered as the most enlightened part of the community. They excited the industry of the other inhabitants; and Amsterdam is much indebted to them for its flourishing condition.* There are a large number of Jews in Rotterdam, many of whom are as much distinguished for their integrity as for their industry and opulence. †

intellect of God; that the same soul is nothing but the idea of an human body; that this idea of the body and the body itself are one and the same thing; that God could not exist, or be conceived, were the visible universe annihilated; and therefore that the visible universe is either the same substance, or at least an essential attribute and modification of that substance.—*Bayle's Dictionary*.

* Monthly Magazine, 1809.

† Carr's Tour to Holland, 1806.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Jews remain exiled from England three hundred and fifty years.—Cromwell resolves to attempt their return.—Menasses Ben Israel repairs to England in order to solicit him in behalf of his brethren.—The protector summons a convention of divines to deliberate respecting the Jews, but is afraid of openly favouring them.—A number of this people, however, return to England and are tolerated.—Charles II. connives at their admission.—James II. was inclined to favour them.—A law enacted in the reign of queen Anne, to oblige them to provide for their children if they should embrace Christianity.—Of Moses Marcus, a converted Jew.—A bill is passed in the reign of George II. for their naturalization; but soon repealed, in consequence of the popular clamour.—State of the Jews in England since that period.

A. D. 1656.] THE Jews had continued exiled from England about three hundred and fifty years. But after the English government was changed to a republic, Holland became a respectable object of emulation. The advantages that country had derived from tolerating a people so skilful in pecuniary negotiations were too obvious to escape observation; and the policy of Oliver Cromwell induced him to attempt to restore their industry and wealth to Great Britain.*

The first intercourse between the protector and the Jews was managed by one Henry Martin, upon whose intimation a deputation of this people waited on the English ambassador residing in that city, and entertained him with concerts of music in the synagogue. By his intercession they obtained per-

* Life of Cromwell.

mission from the instrument parliament* to send a public envoy to England with proposals for their admission into the kingdom. The celebrated Menasses Ben Israel, who was deservedly held in high estimation by his brethren, was chosen to conduct the negotiation.

This venerable rabbi, after his arrival in England, presented an address to Cromwell, recognizing his authority, and soliciting his protection. “For our people,” said he, “presage that the monarchical government being now changed into that of a commonwealth, the ancient hatred towards them would also be converted into good will; and that the rigorous laws, if any were yet extant, made against so innocent a people, would happily be repealed.” He also printed and dispersed a declaration to the commonwealth, and a treatise, containing several arguments for toleration, addressed to the justice of the principled, the prudence of the reflecting, and the prejudices of the multitude.†

Cromwell was inclined to recal the Jews; but, being apprised of the unpopularity of the measure, and desirous of conciliating the favourable opinion of the clergy, he summoned a convention of divines and other influential men to debate whether it would be advisable to readmit them to settle in the kingdom. He declared to the assembly, “that since there was a promise of the conversion of this people, and the gospel in its primitive purity was preached in Eng-

* A name given to a parliament convened by Cromwell, according to a form which he had prescribed in a paper styled, “the instrument of government.”

† Monthly Mag. and British Reg. 1796. Life of Cromwell, p. 346.



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residence, not a single act of the British legislature was passed to settle them in the country. Not even so much as a single proclamation was made in their favour, though they were ready to advance immense sums for an establishment. It is even said, that they offered to prove Cromwell the Messiah,* but that he was ashamed of the proposal, and rejected it with contempt.

About the same time that Menasses Ben Israel came to England to solicit the re-admission of his brethren, a deputation of Asiatic Jews arrived with the celebrated rabbi Jacob Ben Azabel at their head. It is asserted, that it was their object to make private inquiries in order to ascertain whether Cromwell was not their expected Messiah! These deputies, pretending other business, were several times indulged by the protector with a private audience. They offered to purchase all the Hebrew books and manuscripts belonging to the university of Cambridge, but he rejected the proposal with contempt. They afterwards, it is said, embraced an opportunity to inquire among his relations where he was born, and whether any of his ancestors in the male line could not be proved of Jewish origin. These inquiries, however, were not conducted with all the secrecy such a scheme required, and the real motive of their coming to England soon transpired at

thirdly, that they should maintain their own poor.—*Wetherby's Vindication of the Jews*, p. 4.

* Gregoire adduces the life of Cromwell by Gregorio Leti as a proof of this fact. "We find there," says he, "an account of the deputation of the Jews to the protector, who, instead of assuming the quality of Messiah, was very angry at their request."—*Gregoire's Essay on the Reformation of the Jews*, p. 244.

London; and, on account of the scandal they had occasioned, they were expelled the kingdom.

Soon after, another deputation, with Menasses Ben Israel again at their head, arrived in England. But still Cromwell did not dare to give them a licence to settle in the kingdom. He only connived at their admittance, and granted them a toleration.*

Charles II. gained by bribes, and indifferent to all religious professions, connived at their settlement; and, as he introduced the sale of patents of denization, their number increased. But the parliament of England has never abrogated the decree which expelled them, and they are considered as aliens in the eye of the law.† They were not permitted to purchase houses, nor practise professions which might ennoble their genius and dignify their nation.‡

James II. whose disposition to tolerate Dissenters exasperated his subjects, remitted the alien duty upon all goods exported in favour of the Jews. This was universally resented by the English merchants, who were apprehensive that the same duties would also be remitted upon imported goods. Petitions from various mercantile companies were offered against this regulation, which to the great joy of the Christian merchants, was superseded after the revolution.§

During the reign of queen Anne, a bill was

* Gentleman's Magazine, 1810. † Blackstone, vol. iv. p. 372.

‡ Gentleman's Magazine, 1810.

§ When William, prince of Orange, was preparing to dethrone James II. his father-in-law, Schwartzau, a Jew of Amsterdam, lent him above eighty thousand pounds sterling, telling him, "If you are successful, pay me; if not, I shall lose my money with pleasure."—

Gregoire's Essay, &c. p. 42.

passed obliging the Jews to provide for their Protestant children.

It appears, that in 1723, the church of England was deeply interested in the conversion of this extraordinary people; for we find a Jewish proselyte patronized, and his work, exposing the absurdities of the Talmud, sanctioned by a primate of the day.* This convert, named Moses Marcus, was descended from a respectable family in the city of Hamburg, and born in London 1701. His parents, who resided in this city, and were in affluent circumstances, endeavoured to procure him every advantage in their power; and he was carefully instructed in Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Rabbinical learning. Being sent to Hamburg to complete his education, he formed an acquaintance with several German Protestant clergymen, with whom he conversed upon the difference between the Jewish and Christian faith. He then applied himself to studying the New Testament, and became convinced, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah. In 1721, his father, who had been on a voyage to India, returned with immense riches, and sent for his son from Hamburg. Marcus soon informed him of the change which had taken place in his religious sentiments. His father threatened him with being totally disinherited, and even with the loss of life, if he embraced Christianity. On the other hand, he made him the most alluring and magnificent offers to induce him not to desert the synagogue. But, his faith being confirmed by further conver-

* Dr. Wilkins, Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom Marcus dedicated his work.



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ting them to a participation of the civil rights of British subjects, they would contract a warm attachment to the English constitution and country, and diminish the public burdens ; that a great portion of the funds belonging to foreign Jews, it was our obvious interest to induce them to follow their property, and spend their income in the kingdom ; and that, connected as they were with the great bankers and monied interest in Europe, their residence in the country would, in case of future wars, give the inhabitants a great command of capital, and facilitate their loans. They supposed that passing the act would encourage the most affluent of the nation to emigrate from foreign parts to Great Britain, increase the commerce and credit of the kingdom, and set a laudable example of industry, temperance, and frugality.*

On the other hand, those who opposed the passing of the bill argued, that the peculiar rites of the Jews were formidable obstacles to their incorporation with other nations ; and that if they were admitted to the rank of citizens, they would engross the whole commerce of the kingdom, gain possession of the landed estates, and dispossess the Christian owners. They also asserted, that it was impious to gather a people whose dispersion was foretold in the sacred Scriptures, and who, according to the prophecies, were to remain without country or habitation, until they should be converted and collected together in the land of their ancestors ; and that an attempt to incorporate them, previous to their renouncing their religious tenets, directly

* London Mag. 1754, p. 538.

opposed the will of heaven ; by endeavouring to procure for them a civil condition while Jews, which, it is predicted, they should not enjoy till they became Christians.*

The lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of the city of London, presented a petition to parliament, which expressed their apprehension, that the bill, if passed into a law, would tend greatly to dishonour the Christian religion, and endanger the excellent constitution. Another petition to the same purpose was presented to the house, subscribed by the merchants and traders in London. But notwithstanding the general opposition, the bill passed the ordeal of both houses, and his majesty vouchsafed to give it the royal sanction.†

This act, which during the last session had triumphed over the most obstinate opposition, soon became an object of national horror and execration. Every part of the kingdom resounded with reproaches of the ministry, who had enforced such an odious measure. It was vehemently opposed from the pulpits,‡ by the corporations, and by the populace. In consequence of which, by the next session of parliament, instructions were sent to almost all the members to solicit the repeal of this obnoxious bill.§

* Smollet's Continuation of Hume.

† Ibid.

‡ Among the clergy, however, Dean Tucker took a decided part in favour of the naturalization of the Jews, and wrote ably in defence of this measure. The opponents of the bill, treated him with great rudeness and virulence on this occasion. He was not only severely attacked in pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines ; but the people of Bristol burnt his effigy dressed in canonicals, together with his letters on behalf of naturalization.—*Public Characters*, vol. i. p. 140.

§ London Magazine.

The British minister did not attempt to resist the torrent; but was amongst the foremost who spoke in favour of the repeal. He was answered with much force of reasoning by Thomas Potter, Esq. Sir George Lyttleton made an elegant speech in favour of toleration, in which he asserted, that “the greatest mischief which can be done to religion is to pervert it to the purposes of faction; and that heaven and hell are not more distant, than the benevolent spirit of the Gospel, and the malignant spirit of party.” The bill was, however, repealed by an act, which received the royal assent the same session. The bishops had generally appeared satisfied with the indulgence granted to the Jews, and they acquiesced also in the repeal of the bill.* But, though the nobility in general concurred in the expediency of the latter measure, a few among them viewed it as too great a sacrifice to the bigotry of the populace.†

The parliamentary leaders of the people, endeavoured, (but their attempts were successfully opposed by Mr. Pelham and Mr. Pitt,) to repeal so much of an act for naturalizing foreigners in America, as did not exclude the Jews. It has been asserted, that the spirit of intolerance was excited by those who resented the zeal and loyalty with which they were known to oppose the late rebellion. Among many instances are the following. Two Jewish merchants had some armed ships in a river, loaded with goods for foreign markets. But upon being apprized that they were wanted by the go-

* Smollet's Continuation of Hume.

† Belsham's History of Great Britain, vol. ii. p. 386.



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mation, and that they could not at any period boast of more learned and enlightened rabbies, than Dr. Hirschel* and Dr. Mendola.”† Among the learned Jews who have appeared in England, David Levi‡ and D’Israeli§ are eminently distinguished.

The Jews in London, are divided into those of the Portuguese and German synagogue, each of which has separate regulations for its own internal government. The brokers, and most respectable merchants among them, are chiefly of the former. But those of the German are far the most numerous, and, with the exception of a few wealthy individuals, who carry on trade with probity and honour, it is said, they are generally poor, and frequently dishonest, and that some of them conduct their fraudulent designs, by circulating counterfeit money, and by receiving, and selling stolen goods. The reproach arising from their iniquitous practices, has engaged the attention of the respectable part of both synagogues ; but attempts to remedy the evil, have generally proved ineffectual.||

* Dr. Hirschel, the presiding rabbi of the German synagogue, was born in London, 1762, at the house of his father Hirsch Levin, who was at that period chief rabbi in the city. Some time after, he removed to Berlin, and his son was called to officiate in London, 1802.

† Dr. Mendola, the presiding rabbi of the Portuguese synagogue, is a native of Leghorn.

‡ The celebrated author of the *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, *Account of the Ceremonies of the Jews*, *Translation of the Pentateuch*, *Letters to Dr. Priestley*, and other learned works.

§ M. D’Israeli, who is said to be of Jewish origin, in early life discovered a taste for polite literature, and is the author of a number of elegant poems, besides the *Curiosities of Literature*, *Vaurien*, a philosophical novel, and other works.—See *Public Characters*, 1789, vol. i. p. 462.

|| Colquhoun’s *London Police*, p. 20, 21.

The Jews in all their synagogues, on their sabbath days, and solemn festivals, exhibit their loyalty, by using a form of prayer for the prosperity of the royal family in Great Britain. And it must be considered as highly creditable to this people, that the heads of the different synagogues in London, and other distinguished men among them, have lately addressed to their brethren a strong exhortation, “to obey the laws; not to carry on any trade on the Christian sabbath; not to keep houses of ill fame, nor to commit other irregularities, under their high censure, and forfeiture of the privileges attached to them, as belonging to their community.”*

The Jews in England, contribute towards the poor's rates, equally with the other inhabitants. The Jewish population in London, and of course the number of their poor, having much increased of late years, some means for ameliorating their condition were found expedient; and certain propositions with that view, were suggested by J. Van Oven, Esq. a learned and distinguished member of their community, in two letters addressed, in 1801, to Mr. Colquhoun, author of the Police of the Metropolis; and the consequence has been the erection of a Jews' hospital at Mile End, entitled, *N'vy Tsedek*, or the Charity Workhouse, which was opened in June, 1808, “for the reception and support of aged men and women, as well as the education and industrious employment of youth of both sexes.” They are chiefly indebted for the accumulation of a fund which laid the foundation of

* Adam's Religious World Displayed, vol. i. p. 44.

this establishment, to the liberal and philanthropic exertions of Benjamin and Abraham Goldsmid,* Esqrs. two eminent Jewish merchants.

Different calculations have been made respecting the number of the Jews in England. According to Mr. Colquhoun they amount to twenty six thousand.† Others have supposed, that their total number does not exceed sixteen thousand. They have now five synagogues in London, viz. one called Portuguese Jews', three called German Jews', and one which is a kind of chapel of ease at Westminster, or in the Strand. Of these, the chief is the great synagogue in Dukes' Place, in and near to which street, most of the Jews in London now reside, as formerly in the Old Jewry.‡

* Both these gentlemen have recently perished by suicide. They were eminently distinguished as the lovers and patrons of literature, for the honour and promptitude of their commercial transactions, and their active benevolence, which was not confined within the boundaries of their own peculiar people. The Marine Society, the Royal Humane Society, and other charitable institutions, have publicly expressed their gratitude to them. Abraham Goldsmid, in particular, has been described by Van Oven, as "a man who is an honour to his species in general, and to his nation in particular." He was born in 1757, and early initiated into the mercantile life. This man, who was reckoned the greatest commercial character of the age in which he lived, was remarkably successful in the acquisition of wealth, and celebrated for his munificence to charitable institutions. But, after a series of prosperity, he experienced a severe reverse of fortune, which exposed him to bankruptcy; in consequence of which he became melancholy and deranged; and finally put a period to his life, Sept. 23, 1810, aged fifty three years.—*Commercial Magazine, November, 1810.*

† London Police, p. 21.

‡ Adam's Religious World Displayed, vol. i. p. 72.



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a revelation from God. The success that attended this benevolent attempt, does not appear, however, to have been considerable.*

Joseph II. emperor of Germany, by a memorable edict (1781) conferred many privileges upon the Jewish people. He granted them the right of exercising all the arts and trades ; of following agriculture, and freely pursuing their studies at the schools and universities.† This monarch also called them to military services, and had a large number of Jews enrolled among his troops. There was a benediction printed, which was given by a rabbi in Prague to twenty-five Bohemian Jews enrolled as common soldiers, in which he exhorted them to conciliate, as much as possible, the practice of their religion with their service. He gratified each of them with a cord of silk named *Zizim*, and a pair of *tephilim*, or a kind of leather band, to which is attached a parchment, on which the decalogue is inscribed. In the course of the war which was terminated by the division of unhappy Poland, one army had about six Jewish battalions.‡

The emperor Leopold, the successor of Joseph the Second, granted to the Israelites dispersed through his hereditary dominions, the privilege of being admitted, if properly qualified and educated, to academical degrees in the lay faculties, and also the liberty of acting as advocates, and pleading as such, either for their brethren, or for Christians.

* Jewish Repository, vol. i. p. 1.

† Coxe's History of the House of Austria, vol. iii. p. 577.

‡ Gregoire's Histoire des Sectes Religieuses, tom. ii. p. 38.

In 1791, a Jew was admitted to the degree of doctor of civil law in the university of Prague.*

In the states of the king of Prussia, the Jews at a recent epoch were vexed by certain regulations. The father of a Jewish family could marry but one of his sons, rarely could he obtain permission to marry a second, and all the others were condemned to celibacy. Each Jew who took a wife, was also obliged to purchase a certain quantity of porcelain, the refuse of the royal manufactory. These regulations were abolished in 1809 ; and the Jews in the Prussian dominions, are now assimilated in many respects to the Christians.†

It is but justice to the Jews to acknowledge, that the learning and liberality of mind exhibited by several of their nation upon the continent, have probably paved the way for the steps which have been taken in their favour. Among those who have promoted the literary improvement, and raised the reputation of their brethren, Moses Mendolsohn is eminently distinguished.

This illustrious philosopher was born at Dessau, a city of Anhalt in Upper Saxony, in 1729. He received the rudiments of his education from his father, who was a Jewish school-master. In these schools, which were formed merely for the children of the Hebrews, the summit of their education terminated with an introduction to the Talmud, and the student wasted the season of youth, in studying this vast collection of fabulous legends and superstitions.‡

* Coxe's History, &c. p. 577.

† Gregoire's Histoire, &c.

‡ Monthly Magazine, 1798.

Mendolsohn, who possessed a vigorous and original genius, united with an ardent desire to acquire knowledge, soon selected from the mass of rabbinical writings, the superior works of Maimonides. But such was his intense application, and the irritability of his frame, that, at the early age of ten years, he was attacked with a nervous disorder of a very peculiar nature. In addition to this misfortune, he suffered all the embarrassments of poverty, being obliged to travel on foot to Berlin to find employment for subsistence. He lived in the city several years, indigent, unknown, and often destitute of the necessaries of life. This houseless wanderer was, at length, invited by a rabbi to transcribe his manuscripts; and this man initiated him into the mysteries of the theology, the jurisprudence, and the scholastic philosophy of the Jews.*

A Polish Jew named Israel Moses, who was distinguished for the freedom of his inquiries and his love of philosophy, taught him Euclid's Elements from the Hebrew version. After the premature death of his beloved friend, Dr. Kisch, a Jewish physician, supplied him with books, and devoted some part of his time to the instruction of a student, whose strength of intellect he had the discernment to perceive, and the affection to aid. Under the instruction of this valuable friend, he was soon enabled to read Locke in a Latin version.

In 1748, Mendolsohn formed an acquaintance with Dr. Samuel Gumpertz, another learned Jew, who to his professional studies added a knowledge

* Monthly Magazine, 1793.



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he gained the prize from the Berlin academy, for his essay on the evidence of the metaphysical science.

After these publications, amidst the daily occupations of commerce, he still retired to his studies, and composed elementary books for the children of his neglected nation. To raise the degraded character of his brethren was the favourite object, which he always had in view. One of his publications, styled, "The Ritual of the Jews," was formed under the direction of the chief rabbi Hirsch Levin.*

The tranquillity of Mendelsohn's life was at length disturbed, by his publishing a work, entitled, "Jerusalem," in which he pretends, that the Jews have a law, and not a revealed religion; that dogmas can never be revealed; and that the only doctrine of his nation is the religion of nature. His advancing these opinions gave rise to a controversy, which agitated his feeble and sensitive frame to such a degree, that it is supposed to have occasioned his death. Zimmerman, who was personally acquainted with him, informs us, "that his nervous system was deranged, in an almost inconceivable manner."† His whole character was a too subtle composition of

* Monthly Magazine, 1796. In Prussia, the rabbi was *ex-officio* the chancellor of orphans, and could claim this right from the ordinary channel of the government. He was the adjudicator of disputed testimonial property, and responsible for the just performance of his office. The important charge thus devolving upon the chief rabbi in Prussia, occasioned a demand on the part of Frederick II. for the translation of the code of laws on that subject, which was effected by Hirsch Levin, father of the present presiding rabbi of the German synagogue in London, in conjunction with Mendelsohn.—*European Mag.*—March, 1811.

† Zimmerman on Solitude.

genius and sensibility, and his whole life a maulady. He died of an apoplexy, 1785, aged fifty three years. It has been said of Mendolsohn, that “ he instructed his fellow citizens as a father, and his rivals he cherished as a brother.” His soft, modest, and obliging disposition, procured him the esteem of the superstitious and incredulous, and at his death, he received from his nation the honours which are usually paid to the first rabbies.

Beside the works above mentioned, he published letters to Lavater, a version of the Pentateuch in German for his countrymen, general principles of the Belles lettres and fine arts, and several other ingenious productions.

“ The renown of Mendolsohn was the electric spark which awakened the genius of the Hebrews ; and he had for his coteremporaries and successors distinguished men.” Mark Eleazer Bloch, a Jewish physician, who was born in Anspach and settled in Berlin, was said to be the first naturalist of his age. His splendid work, on fishes, and aquatic animals, was esteemed superior to any preceding publication on that subject. He died in the year 1800.—Solomon Maimon,* a great metaphysician, whom some have considered more profound and philosophical than Mendolsohn, but not equal in elegance of diction.—Mark Hertz, a professor of natural philosophy, who had four hundred auditors of the first rank and genius in Berlin. He spent his life in this city, and published works on philosophy and

* Maimon was attached to the philosophy of Kant, to whom he dedicated one of his works. He published memoirs of his life in 1792, and the following year a work on the progress of philosophy.

medicine.—Leon Gamparte, who distinguished himself by a work on literary subjects and the drama.—Ben David, president of the society of the friends of humanity at Berlin, and author of several profound works, who has endeavoured to apply algebra itself to the theory of taste in the arts.*

There has been of late a literary journal in Berlin, composed in Hebrew by several intelligent Jews, in which the reveries of the Talmud are attacked with argument and ridicule. Under a new form, with the title of Soulamith, the journal is renewed at Dessau, and published in the German language. It is edited by Mr. Frankel and Wolf, men of ability and learning; the former of whom is counsellor of the Israelitish consistory at Cassel.

Many intelligent Jews do not approve of having separate schools, exclusively appropriated to the children of their own nation. But the prejudices of the Christians by rejecting them, or at least attaching a kind of stigma to Judaism, induced them to establish particular schools in different cities in Germany; as in Nuremberg, Furth, Breslau, Koningsberg, &c. They have also such schools at Berlin, Frankfort on the Maine, Dessau, and Seezen, particularly for poor children. They have been almost all established and supported by voluntary contributions. These schools, which are now in exercise, have their regulations printed with several elementary works written for their benefit.†

In 1796, a society of Jews, chiefly young men, founded some particular schools at Dessau for the

* Gregoire's *Observations nouvelles sur les Juifs*.

† Gregoire's *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii. p. 584.



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than fifty ; but they are daily increasing. The arrangement of the building and the administration of the establishment may serve as models. There, as well as at Dessau, the children are distinguished by neatness, good order, and an air of health and content. The poor are admitted gratis, and the others pay according to their abilities. They are taught the Hebrew, Latin, French, and German languages ; geography, history, oratory, natural history, mathematics, technology, &c.*

At Seezen, they add to the above the Greek language and music. It is also intended to establish a school of industry. Each student is to have a small plot of ground allotted to him, which he is to cultivate with his own hands. It is one object of the school to detach the Jews from commerce, the spirit of which is so deeply rooted among them.

In these schools, the pupils are taught the elements of such knowledge as is necessary in every station in life, the acquisition of which prepares the way for the developement of the greatest talents with which they are endowed. The pupils, when very young, are able to converse with facility in the French and Latin languages, as well as on various subjects of instruction, and solve very complicated arithmetical problems, and make mathematical demonstrations. (These details attest the capacity and diligence of the pupils, who are all Jews, and the well directed efforts of the preceptors, some of whom are Jews and some Christians, who reside together in the most perfect harmony. †)

* Gregoire's *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii. p. 386.

† Gregoire's *Histoire*, &c. tom. ii. p. 387.

Beside the ascetical books with which they are provided, Schottlænder has compiled for the students a collection of poems and moral precepts, selected from various authors. He has inserted the thirteen fundamental articles of the Jewish faith by Maimonides ; an abridged history of the Hebrew language ; the second canto of the Moysiade, an epic poem by Hartig Vezelize, a rabbi who lately died at Hamburg ; and other instructive and interesting works.*

The Jews of Frankfort upon the Maine cite with applause Wolf Heidenheim, a learned orientalist from Rodelheim, a borough near the city ; Lipman Buschental, a young poet ; Heidelsheim, deputy from his co-religionists to the sanhedrim at Paris ; and Geisenheimer, who is gone to study the method of Pestalozzi at Yverdun with one of the institutors of their Philanthropin, or school for the poor. Geisenheimer, associating music with poetry, and restoring the two arts to their true destination, has compiled for the pupils a collection of poetry. This establishment, to which the prince primate gives six hundred florins annually, prospers, and makes sensible progress.†

The Jews laboured without ceasing to obtain their political restoration to a city, where they have been for several centuries oppressed. A proverb said formerly, that at Frankfort the Catholics had the churches, the Calvinists the riches, the Lutherans the places. What then had the Jews ? Outrages and persecution on the part of the Christians. Opinion stigmatized them in such

* Gregoire's Histoire, &c.

† Ibid.

a manner, that, confined in the narrow paths of the ramparts, they dared not, under penalty of being insulted, enter into the large alleys which served for walks to the Christians. The Jews, shackled in their commerce, were victims to regulations which raised a wall of separation between them and the Christians.*

An infamous toll placed the Jews on the level of cloven-footed animals. By the efforts of Jacobson and Breinteinbach, between twenty and thirty German princes have repaired this outrage done to the human race, by abolishing these tolls. The primate of Germany set the example, Frankfort being part of his territories. The Jews hoped, that under this prince all their grievances would be redressed. But a regulation was forced from him in 1807, which limited the number of Jews to five hundred families. The community gives twenty two thousand florins for the liberty of residing in the city. Their street is a kind of Ghetto out of which they cannot establish themselves. An Israelite in proportion to his means, pays more contributions than a Christian ; he pays for the right of protection for himself and each of his sons. The women, if unmarried at the age of twenty-five, are subject to the same imposition. The Jews are obliged to make presents to various functionaries on new year's days, fairs, and other times, which are to continue till the death of those who receive them. If they establish a manufacture, or hire a farm, they can employ only Jewish labourers. Those who are merchants can only sell in two streets except their

* Gregoire's Histoire, &c.,



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In other parts of Europe as well as Germany and Prussia, the Jews appear to be making improvements in literature; and their exertions have been encouraged, and their condition ameliorated in

numbers several Israelites who have enlisted of their own accord. Others march from pure patriotism, after having furnished their substitutes, and others serve also as substitutes.

“As President of the Israelitish consistory, I labour incessantly in clearing as far as possible the chaos of our interior constitution. Some enlightened rabbies and secular members of the college, exert themselves in the same pious work. We already see the country towns adopt more simple and better regulated courses. We may also hope from that quarter for a more happy and consoling futurity.

“A new regulation relative to the synagogues puts an end to different abuses that are found in our divine service, and renders it more worthy of its object.

“Better schools, particularly religious schools, have been established in different parts of Westphalia. As for my institute at Seezen, I particularly apply myself to educate in it artizans and artists.

“I have caused to be raised in the inclosure, a temple of a beautiful style, and regular architecture. I have caused to be built in it an organ; it is surmounted by a tower and bell.

“On the seventeenth of July, 1810, I celebrated the dedication of the Temple. The ceremony was august and solemn, notwithstanding every thing breathed in it the most open gaiety. There were present several hundreds of all religious denominations, particularly Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed clergymen, besides the Israelites.”

The inscriptions upon the new synagogue, which is styled by the Jews, “The Temple of Jacob,” are as follows:

On the eastern part of the edifice:

“Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.”

On the south side:

“Have we not all one father? Are we not all children of the same Creator?”

On the western part:

“Hearken also to a stranger, who is not of thy people Israel, but shall come from a distant country for the love of thy name.”

The north portico is decorated with two hands joined together, inscribed with these words;

“My house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”

See Dedicace du temple de Jacob, a Seezen.

several kingdoms. They were formerly excluded from Russia, but there are now probably two millions of Jews in that empire, of which number, about four hundred thousand inhabit the Russian provinces of Poland. In 1805, Alexander, emperor of Russia, published an Ukase, which, among other privileges, granted them the liberty of educating their children in any of the schools and universities in the empire; or they were allowed to establish schools at their own expense.* In 1817, another Ukase, published by the same emperor, offered portions of land, with peculiar privileges annexed, to such Jews in his dominions, as would embrace the Christian religion.

A colony of Caraites Jews reside in a fortress in the Crimea, and enjoy the free exercise of their ancient customs and peculiar rites. These Caraites deem it an act of piety to copy the Bible, or pious commentaries upon the text, once in their lives. All their manuscript copies of the Old Testament begin with Joshua, and even the most ancient did not contain the Pentateuch. That part of the Bible was kept apart, but only in a printed version, for the use of schools. In the synagogues, with the exception of the books of Moses, every thing was in manuscript. The difference between them and the other Jews consists in a rejection of the Talmud, a disregard to every kind of traditions, to all rabbinical writings or opinions, all marginal interpolations of the text of scripture, and in a measure of their rule of faith by the pure letter of the law. They pretend to have the text of the Old

* Repertory, June 28, 1805.

Testament in its most genuine state. The character of the Caraites is directly opposite to that which is generally attributed to their brethren, being altogether without reproach. Their honesty is proverbial in the Crimea; and the word of a Caraites is considered equal to a bond. Almost all of them are engaged in trade or manufacture. They pay great attention to the education of their children, who are taught publicly in the synagogues.*

The Jews have also obtained privileges in Sweden. In Denmark, where they have enjoyed sufficient liberty, we find many distinguished characters, even some painters. Their mode of education is daily improving, and the exertions of Jewish parents are seconded by the Christians; among others, by the celebrated Munter. In 1803, an establishment was formed in Copenhagen, for the instruction of Jewish youth. It is a species of free school, and well endowed. At the end of the year 1805, the number of pupils was forty. A public examination was held in 1806, and it appeared that they had made great progress in the Hebrew, French, and German languages, in geography, and in natural history; and, in short, that this establishment was in a very flourishing condition.†

* Dr. Clark, a late traveller, entered this fortress, and conversed with a rabbi, who, he says, "was highly esteemed and exceedingly well informed, and had passed a public examination with distinguished honour at Petersburg, after having been sent for expressly by the empress Catherine."—*Clark's Travels in Russia, Tartary, and Turkey*, p. 387.

† Transactions of the Parisian Sanhedrim, p. 124.



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which gave them liberty to reside and carry on trade in the city, according to their ancient privileges. In 1632, Lewis XIII. by new letters patent, confirmed those of his predecessor; and, though this monarch had, in 1615, expelled the Jews from France, they still were permitted to reside and trade in Metz and Bourdeaux.* In 1644, the city of Metz contained seven hundred and ninety five of Hebrew extraction, who, seventeen years after, obtained new letters patent, with the additional liberty of trading in all kinds of goods. The merchants opposed the extension of their privileges; but their attempts were repeatedly defeated, and the parliament of Metz inflexibly maintained the rights of the Jewish community.†

In 1718, the different bodies of merchants in Metz united to demand of the king, that the number of Jews should be reduced, as they were a public charge, and that they should not be allowed to have any other commerce but that of lawful interest. In consequence of this request, his majesty ordained, that the letters patent of his predecessors should be executed according to their form and tenor, and therefore permitted only four hundred and eighty families to continue in the city. Even this indulgence was granted them upon condition that they should reside in the quarter assigned them, and be obtained from the king absolute liberty of conscience for him and his family.—*Basnage*, p. 676.

* The legal existence of the Jews in Bourdeaux is traced from the year 1650. They obtained at that epoch, under the denomination of merchants in Portugal, called “new Christians,” letters patent by which they were permitted to acquire real estates in France.

† *Gregoire on the Reformation of the Jews*, p. 263.

prohibited, under penalty of a heavy fine, from having houses in any other part of the city. The disputes between them and Christians were to be referred to the judges and consuls of Metz; and there was an appeal to parliament in cases subject to it. But they were permitted to bring before the rabbies or chiefs of their community, disputes with their co-religionists respecting their police, religion, customs, ceremonies, and impositions. They paid the king an annual tribute of twenty thousand livres.*

“ From time to time the Jews of both sexes have been converted at Metz; there was even a house with some funds attached to it for those who had been baptized.”

“ The Jews had in Lorraine several synagogues, of which two were at Nanci. That of Luneville has been built about twenty-five years. But Alsace was the province in which they were the most numerous; they had there fifty-two synagogues, but none at Strasburg, where they had not even the right to sojourn. Since the French revolution the number of them in that city is computed from five to six thousand; other cities in France contain a small number of them, but they are more numerous in Paris than in any part of the kingdom.”†

* French Encyclopedia. This tribute was paid by the Jews of Metz, and of the Messin country, under the denomination of duty of *habitation, protection, and toleration*. After they obtained the rights of citizens, these duties were suppressed and abolished, without any indemnity to the owner of and contractor for the said tribute. — *Transactions of the Sanhedrim*, p. 5.

† The paragraphs which are marked with inverted commas, are translated from a letter which the compiler was favoured with (September 1810) from M. M. Gregoire, formerly bishop of Blois, member of the conservative senate, &c.

“ At Bourdeaux, Bayonne, and some neighbouring cities, there were many thousands of Spanish and Portuguesé Jews, thus named from the countries from which their ancestors have been expelled. They had more extensive privileges than the German Jews, that is, those of Alsace, Lorrain, &c.”

“ Avignon, formerly subject to the popes, and Nice to the king of Sardinia, had also, and still have colonies of Israelites, become French by the union of the countries.” The celebrated Gregoire having been appointed member of the convention to organize the department of the maritime Alps, took care at Nice to secure to them the enjoyment of the rights of citizens which the law allowed them.

“ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the history of the Jews in France offers a very few anecdotes to collect, which proves, that they were generally tranquil during these periods, and had not to experience those bloody catastrophes which desolated them in preceding ages. But the public contempt was exhibited by avoiding their society, and sometimes an ignorant populace insulted them. In various places they were obliged to wear a distinctive mark in their dress; those of Metz had a black mantle and a white band. This singularity of costume made them known, and the bad effect which it produced was to designate them in a more special manner for insults. However, the progress of knowledge has insensibly attenuated the prejudices against them.”*

In 1767, six mercantile societies in Paris printed a remonstrance against the admission of the Jews

* Letter from Gregoire.



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The decree, however, which was passed in 1790, acknowledged as active citizens those Jews only, who, previously to 1789, had obtained letters of naturalization. In order to remove those limitations, the national assembly, in 1791, ordained, that all of the Jewish persuasion who would take the civic oath, and unite the other qualities required by the constitution to enable them to be active citizens, should be considered as such. All the Jews in France hastened to take the oath, which constituted them citizens.*

At the time of that famous decree which, in 1791, gave the Jews a country, many, in congratulating their brethren on the greatness of the boon, addressed to them instructions on the full extent of their duties, and proved the necessity of altering in their habits and manners whatever might tend to perpetuate prepossessions and prejudices against them.

A moral revolution must, however, be the result of time and experience. And, notwithstanding the improvements made by a number of intelligent Jews, the usurious practices of some in the departments in the north of France, caused several French writers to propose annulling the act, which granted them the privileges of citizens. The complaints made against the Jewish community gave rise to the decree of May 30, 1806, by which it was enacted, that "an assembly of the principal Jews shall

* It was on the report of Gregoire, then bishop of Blois, who had eminently distinguished himself by his exertions in favour of the Jews, that the national assembly passed the decree, which put them on a level with the rest of the citizens.—*Transactions of the Sanhedrim*, p. 330.

be convened in Paris, and that commissioners shall be appointed to make known to them the royal intentions, who shall, at the same time, collect their opinions as to the means they deem the fittest to re-establish among their brethren the exercise of mechanical arts and useful professions, in order to replace by an honest industry the shameful resources to which many of them have resorted from generation to generation these many centuries.”*

It was also enacted, that “there shall be a suspension for a year from the date of the present decree of all executions of judgment and bond obligations, except so far as to prevent limitation obtained against husbandmen not traders, of the departments of La Sarre, La Roer, Mont Terrible, Upper and Lower Rhine, Rhine and Moselle, and Vosges, whenever the bonds entered into by these husbandmen are in favour of Jews.”

Respecting the formation of an assembly professing the Jewish religion, it was decreed, that “they should be convened in Paris, on the fifteenth of July next; that in all the departments of the empire where there were five hundred of them, a deputy should be named, and five deputies for a thousand.” They were “to be nominated by the prefects, from among the rabbies, the land-holders, and other Jews, the most distinguished for their integrity and knowledge.”†

In compliance with the mandate, the Jewish deputies arrived in Paris in the July following; on the twenty-sixth of the month they assembled, and

* Transactions of the Sanhedrim, p. 105.

† Ibid. p. 106.

were met by Buonaparte's commissioners. Abraham Furtado, a merchant from Bourdeaux, who had acquired a distinguished reputation both for his talents and virtues, was chosen president. At the second sitting, the commissioners put twelve questions to them, relating to the internal economy of the Jewish nation, and the allegiance due by them to the French government.*

A declaration preceded the answers of the Jewish deputies, which declared, in the name of all the Frenchmen professing the religion of Moses, that their religion makes it their duty to consider the law of the prince as the supreme law in civil and political matters; that, consequently, should their religious code, or its various interpretations, contain civil or political commands, at variance with those of the French code, these commands would of course cease to influence and govern them, since they must, above all, acknowledge and obey the law of the prince; that in consequence of this principle the Jews have, at all times, considered it their duty to obey the laws of the state; and that, since the revolution, they, like all Frenchmen, have acknowledged no other."†;

The questions proposed to the assembly of Israelites were generally answered in a manner agreeable to Buonaparte. The epitome of their answers; is as follows: they declared in the first place, that in all European countries they conformed to the general practice of marrying only one wife. ... But that, as several individuals in some preceding ages indulged in the practice of polygamy, a synod was

* Transactions of the Sanhedrim. מלחמה ודבר ו † Ibid. p. 150.



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hibition in the Mosaic law in general, applies only to nations in idolatry. The Talmud declares, that modern nations are not to be considered as such, since they worship, like us, the God of heaven and earth. And accordingly there have been, at several periods, intermarriages between Jews and Christians, in France, in Spain, and in Germany; these marriages were sometimes tolerated, and sometimes forbidden by the laws of those sovereigns who had received Jews into their dominions. Unions of this kind are still found in France; but the opinion of the rabbies is against these marriages. They asserted, that although the religion of Moses has not forbidden the Jews to intermarry with nations not of their religion, yet as marriage, according to the Talmud, requires religious ceremonies called *Kiduschim*, with the benediction used in such cases, no marriage can be religiously valid unless these ceremonies have been performed. The rabbies, being therefore unwilling to bless marriages between Jews and Christians, they were declared valid in a civil, but not in a religious sense.*

In the answers of the deputies to the three questions concerning the relations and conduct of the Jews towards Frenchmen, and the duties which they owed the nation since they were admitted to the privileges of citizens, the assembly declared, that the descendants of Israel considered Frenchmen as their brethren, and not as strangers; that the true spirit of the law of Moses is consonant with this mode of regarding them, since, when they formed a settled and independent nation, their lawgiver,

* Transactions of the Sanhedrim, p. 152, 153.

commanded them to love the strangers, for, says he to the Israelites, ye were strangers in the land of **Egypt**. They declare, that they are bound to love all as their brethren who observe the precepts of the **Noachides**,* whatever their religious opinions may otherwise be ; that it is their incumbent duty to visit their sick, bury their dead, assist their poor, and perform every act of humanity towards them, as well as the Israelites ; and, in short, that all the principles of their religion, as well as gratitude for the recent favours they have received from the government, induce them to consider France as their country, and Frenchmen as their brethren ; that, consequently, the duty prescribed towards Frenchmen not of their religion is the same as that between Jews themselves ; and that they do not admit of any other difference but that of worshipping the Supreme Being, every one in his own way. At the present time especially, when they are incorporated with the great nation, they declare, that it is impossible for a Jew to treat a Frenchman not of his religion in any other manner than he would treat his Israelitish brethren, and that they consider the duty of defending their country as equally sacred and honourable. As a proof of this, during the last wars French Jews have been seen fighting desperately against their brethren, the subjects of countries then at war with France.†

* These precepts are, to abstain from idolatry, from blasphemy, from adultery, and not to kill or hurt our neighbours, neither to rob, steal, nor deceive, to eat only the flesh of animals killed, and, in short, to observe the rules of justice ; and take care that it be impartially administered to all.

† Transactions of the Sanhedrim, p. 178—180—182.

In answer to the questions concerning the nomination and jurisdiction of the rabbies, it was asserted, that since the revolution, the majority of the heads of families name the rabbies whenever there is a sufficient number of Jews to maintain one, after previous inquiries into the morality and learning of the candidate. This mode of election is not, however, uniform ; it varies in different places ; and to this day, whatever concerns the election of rabbies is in a state of uncertainty.*

The assembly declared, that the rabbies exercise no kind of police jurisdiction among the Jews ; that the qualification of rabbi is no where to be found in the law of Moses, nor did exist in the days of the first temple, but is only mentioned towards the end of those of the second ; yet that after the Israelites were totally dispersed, and had formed small communities in different places, a rabbi and two other doctors constituted a kind of tribunal, called “ a house of justice ;” the rabbi being judge, and the other two his assessors. The attributes, however, and even the existence of these tribunals, have, to this day, always depended on the will of the governments under which the Jews have lived, and on the degree of toleration they have enjoyed. Since the revolution, these rabbinical tribunals are totally suppressed in France and Italy. The Jews, raised to the rank of citizens, have conformed in every thing to the laws of the state ; and accordingly the functions of rabbies, wherever any are established, are limited to preaching morality in the temples, blessing marriages, and pronouncing

* Transactions of the Sanhedrim.



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a principle of charity, and not as a commercial regulation. According to the Talmud it is to be considered as made to a man in want; for in case of a loan to a merchant, even a Jew, profit adequate to the risk should be considered as lawful. The Mosaic law forbids all manner of interest on loan, not only between Jews, but between a Jew and his countrymen, without distinction of religion. The loan must be gratuitous when it is not intended for commercial speculations. These humane laws, however, were made for a people who then formed a state, and held a rank among nations.

“If the remnants of this people, now scattered among all nations, are attentively considered, it will be seen that, since they have been driven from Palestine, they no longer have had a common country, they no longer have had to maintain among them the primeval equality of property. Although filled with the spirit of their legislation, they have been sensible that the letter of the law could no longer be obeyed when its principle was done away; and they have, therefore, without any scruple, lent money on interest to trading Jews, as well as to men of different persuasions.*

“It is an incontrovertible point according to the Talmud, that interest, even among Israelites, is lawful in commercial transactions, where the lender, running some of the risk of the borrower, becomes a sharer in his profits.” This is the opinion of all the Jewish doctors.†

The birth-day of the French emperor, was observed by the Jewish deputies on August 15th,

* Transactions of the Sanhedrim, p. 200, 201. †

† Ibid.

1806, as a day of thanksgiving. On this occasion the grand synagogue was superbly illuminated and ornamented. The imperial eagle was placed above the altar; vocal and instrumental music was performed; sermons and animated orations delivered; and a collection made for the poor of all religious denominations.*

On the eighteenth of September the deputies were again convened, and assured, by a discourse read to them by one of the emperor's commissioners, of the satisfaction their answers had given his imperial majesty. At the time it was declared "to be the emperor's intention to secure to them the free exercise of their religious worship, and the full enjoyment of their political rights. But that, in return for his gracious protection, his majesty required a religious pledge for their strict adherence to the principles contained in the replies to the queries proposed to them, and that the answers of the Jewish deputies, converted into decisions by another assembly, of a nature still more dignified and religious, might find a place near the Talmud, and thus acquire, in the eyes of the Jews of all countries, and all ages, the greatest possible authority. For this purpose it was deemed requisite to convene the grand sanhedrim, which, according to ancient custom, will be composed of seventy members exclusive of the president. The duties of this venerable assembly shall be to convert into religious doctrines the answers which have been given by the Jewish deputies, and also those which may result from the continuance of their sittings."†

* Transactions of the Sanhedrim.

† Ibid.

The momentous event of convening a grand sanhedrim was announced to the dispersed remnants of the descendants of Abraham, in a grateful and pathetic address to the synagogues of Europe, signed by the president and two leading members. This address was soon after answered by one of concurrence and congratulation from the Jews of Frankfort upon the Maine.*

The grand sanhedrim assembled in Paris, 1807, and the number and distinction of the spectators greatly increased the solemnity and grandeur of the scene. Numerous addresses were read, and animated orations delivered. This venerable assembly passed and agreed to various articles respecting the Mosaic worship, and sanctioned the answers previously given by the Jewish deputies. A decree was enacted, consisting of seventeen articles, establishing a synagogue and a consistory in every department which contains two thousand individuals professing the religion of Moses.

The seats of the synagogues were to be in the most populous cities; and each of them was to be superintended by a rabbi and two elders. No one can be a member of the consistory who has addicted himself to usurious practices. Among other functions which are to be exercised by the consistory, they are to see that the rabbies do not, in public or private, give any instructions or explanations of the law, in contradiction to the answers of the assembly confirmed by the decisions of the grand sanhedrim. They are also directed to do all in their power to encourage the Israelites to follow agriculture and

* Transactions of the Sanhedrim.



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who translated from Hebrew into Italian verse a work of rabbi Ghevriol, on the "wonders of creation."*

Notwithstanding the great improvements which have been made by a number of literary Jews, the French emperor appears to be dissatisfied with the manner of life which is still pursued by some of the nation. The last decree which was issued concerning them, in March 17, 1808, "forbids them, indiscriminately to pursue their speculations, and excuse themselves from honest labour. In order to partake of the fruits of the earth in his large dominions, they must till the ground. The rich are enjoined to purchase rural property, and to abandon the low pursuits of sordid avarice. This decree also annuls all obligations for loans made by Jews to minors without the sanction of their guardians; to married women without the consent of their husbands; or to military men without the authority of their superior officers. Bills granted by French subjects to Jews must be demanded, unless their holders prove that the full value was given without fraud. All debts accumulated by interest above five per cent. are to be reduced by the courts of law; if the interest growing on the capital exceed twenty three per cent. the contract is to be declared usurious. No Jew is to be allowed to trade without a patent, which patent is to be granted to such individuals only, as produce a certificate to the prefects that they are no usurers. These regulations are to be

* Similar improvements with those in France and Italy have been made by the Jews in Germany and Holland. See the preceding and following chapters.

continued during ten years, in the hope, that after that period there will be no difference between the moral character of the Jews and the other citizens of the empire; if the contrary should appear, the law will still be continued in force.”*

An English Israelite, in a letter addressed to the sanhedrim of Paris, highly reprimands the conduct of this assembly, and charges many of the members with having little estimation, not only for the law of Moses, but for every species of revealed religion. The author asks them, “what suffrages they have received from the Jewish societies who are not subjects of France? Have,” says he, “any of our brethren of Constantinople, of Aleppo, of Bagdat, or Cochin; or have any of our congregations, not under the dominion of France, sent deputies to join you? or have they demonstrated any approval of your proceedings? In England they would hold no communion with you either on religious or political subjects, especially as the local welfare of the country so imperiously forbids it.”†

As the Jews in Holland united with those of France and sent deputies to the sanhedrim, an account of their state in that country previous to this period, and the events which gave rise to their union with France, will be given in the following chapter.

* Nicholson's British Encyclopedia, published 1809, vol. iii.

† Letter to the Sanhedrim, 1808, p. 32.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Of the Jews in Holland.—They are prohibited from the exercise of the arts and professions.—Conduct of the Syndics.—The intelligent Jews in Amsterdam concert a plan, and present it to government.—They are opposed by the Syndics, and form a new community.—Of their altercations with the Syndics.—Regulations of the new community.—An account of the literary Jews in Holland.—Three deputies from the schismatical community in Holland are sent to the grand sanhedrim at Paris, and agree to the decisions of that assembly.

*SIXTY thousand Portuguese and German Jews inhabit Holland. Amsterdam contains nearly two thirds of this number. The toleration which their ancestors found in this country was happiness, compared with the cruelties that were exercised towards them in other parts of the world.† Yet in Holland as elsewhere some lucrative and honourable employments were shut upon them, and they were forbidden the exercise of the arts and professions. The burgomasters of Amsterdam enacted an ecclesiastical law, by which they were placed under the control of the Syndics. These Syndics or Parnassim, constituted absolute masters of their co-religionists, had authority to excommunicate them. A fine of one thousand florins was the penalty of him who dared to complain of the proceedings of the Syndics. A sentence to be ignominiously scourged was pronounced against him who purchased meat of any butcher but that of the commu-

* The whole of this chapter is an abridged translation from Gregoire's *Histoire de Sectes Religieuses*.

† See chapter xxviii.



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The Syndics instituted twenty-three suits against twenty-three members of the new community, in order to subject them to the fine of one hundred florins, by virtue of an article in the law before cited, which had been repealed. The defendants, confident that the issue of the suit must be in their favour, waited the decision with impatience; and earnestly entreated that it might be pronounced by the tribunal. But the Syndics obtained a continuation of the cause, and the defendants were subjected to the payment of considerable sums for costs.

The new community have discarded from their liturgy, those prayers which contain imprecations against other sects.

In general, among the Jews, the ceremony of interment is performed with great precipitation; sometimes in twenty-four and sometimes even in twelve hours after the decease. This abuse, which every wise police should prevent, is not permitted in the new community; which prohibits the interment within forty-eight hours, unless for urgent reasons, attested by the physicians appointed to act on such occasions.

This community has never found effectual support from the intermedial governors of Holland; except the grand pensioner Schimmelpennink. But, in general, the professors of the predominant religion have succeeded in keeping the Jews and Catholics from places of trust.

Amsterdam and the Hague have witnessed societies, the express design of whose formation was, to render Jewish children more easily admissible to

the apprenticeship of trades. Yet, scarce a Christian in Amsterdam would admit them to his shop. At the Hague, not one of them would be received. After this, it is not surprising, that of three hundred Jewish families in this city, but four or five individuals are artizans. A Jew of Amsterdam, who supported by his exertions a superannuated mother, could not, till after difficulties and delays, obtain permission to pursue the business of a locksmith.

A society whose views embrace all Holland, and that has published the most interesting works on various branches of popular instruction, and adopted for its motto, *Pro bono publico*, has, in the first article of its regulations, excluded the Jews.

The same remark applies to another society, the *Felix Meritis*. They too had resolved to admit only Christians; and therefore excluded Vanlann, a Jew, a physician and mechanic, and the inventor of many astronomical instruments, one of which has been named *Tellurium Laniene* by M. Van Swinden, who himself in the same society has read three memoirs in praise of the discovery.

This exclusion falls upon many others; for an academy might be formed of the literary Jews that now honour Holland with their residence; among whom are Belinfante, Desolla, Cappadoce, and Asser. The catalogue would be incomplete without adding the names of the physicians at the Hague; Heyman, Polak, and Stein, professor of botany, who has published a dissertation de *Hydrope*—Pinto the younger, author of a work on the efficacy of the principle of oxigene in the animal body, &c.—Heilbron, physician of Amsterdam, who has been

six times crowned by the academy of sciences at Rotterdam—Salomon, physician of Leyden, author of various works, who could never obtain employment in that city till he joined the sect of the Remonstrants—David, a physician, who came at his own expense to Paris to obtain information concerning vaccination, which he first introduced into Holland, and which has since been promoted by societies, one at Amsterdam for the Jews, and the other at Rotterdam for the poor—Almeida, captain of a ship of war, who, in a naval action in 1781, distinguished himself against the English, and received a medal of honour—Asser the elder, one of the first counsellors of his age in maritime laws and insurances—Lemon and Bromet, whose writings have greatly contributed to the reformation of the Jews in Holland. Three persons among the Israelites have been representatives of the people; the two last mentioned, and Acosta Athias, who presided at the national assembly. At the bar of Amsterdam are three Jewish advocates, Charles Asser, Mendez, and Meyer. The last named was received at the bar when only sixteen years of age, being a pupil of professor Cras, who was acquainted with every language in Europe. Meyer, in 1804, published a treatise proposed by the academy of Berlin, “Whether the moral tendency of an action should be taken into consideration in the formation and application of penal laws?” The work arrived after the decision of the academy, otherwise it would, probably, have received the prize.

The Syndics refused the invitation to unite with the sanhedrim of Paris without consulting the



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CHAPTER XXXIII.

Of the Jews in the Ottoman empire.—They are numerous in Constantinople and Salonichi.—Some particulars respecting those of Aleppo and Palestine.—Of the independent Jewish tribes in the high lands of Hedjas in Arabia.—An account of their emigration into China and India.

AFTER having in the preceding chapters surveyed the favourable change which has taken place in the condition of the Jews in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we follow them to the east, where they have experienced fewer vicissitudes. It appears, from the accounts of late travellers, that there has been little alteration in their fate in the eastern countries since the seventeenth century, when Basnage closed his history. He has computed that there were, at that epoch, one million in the grand seignior's empire, above eighty thousand of whom resided at Constantinople and Salonichi; and that there were thirty synagogues, and an hundred and five thousand families in the former of these cities.*

Though the Jews in the Turkish empire are held in detestation, and exposed to undistinguishing contempt, they have rendered their services indis-

of which, through the supineness and indolence of the Turks, has fallen into their hands.

It is said, "that the Jews in Constantinople are less affluent and more ignorant than those in Europe. A few among them are physicians, but none

* Basnage, p. 718.

farmers. They are chiefly brokers, bankers, or traders, and devote themselves to every kind of traffic, even the lowest.”*

The Jews in the Ottoman empire pay a heavy tax to the Porte for the right of exercising their religious worship ; and they are subject to a chief of their own nation, called Cocham Pascha, whose power over them is said to be even greater than that which the patriarch exercises over the Greek Christians.†

The Jews at Aleppo are computed at about five thousand. They possess a synagogue, in which they have a manuscript of the Old Testament, said to be very ancient. They are distinguished by the colour of their babooge, and the form of their turban ; the former of which is orange, and the latter blue. They all wear beards, even foreign Jews are obliged by the priest to submit to this custom.‡

They speak more corrupt Arabic than the Christians. Their morning salutation on the sabbath is frequently Hebrew, and extends only to a few words, none of them speaking it familiarly, though many read it. In writing Arabic they often use Hebrew letters, as they are said to do in other places with the language of the country. Their children are sent to the reading school, but seldom get beyond their psalter. Their books are chiefly supplied from Venice.

Few of them are either manufacturers or mechanics. The principal part are either merchants

* Olivier's Travels to the Ottoman Empire, published 1802.

† Zimmerman's Political Survey of Europe.

‡ Russell's Account of Aleppo, vol. ii.

or bankers ; the others are chiefly brokers, grocers, or pedlars. The established bankers of the seraglio are Jews, and, by being employed to act in that capacity by most of the great men, they acquire an extensive influence over those who despise and contemn their religion. They are generally more sober than the Christians.

Their chief priest is called *Khakhan*, or *great Khakhan* ; but the title is also extended to priests in general. They are much respected by their own people, over whom they exercise both temporal and spiritual power ; but the latter is always subject to an appeal to the Turkish authority. The scriptures are read by them in Hebrew, and explained according to the traditions of former times. Their schools are kept by inferior priests.*

They so strictly observe the sabbath, that they do no business on that day, and allow no fires to be made in their houses, except in case of sickness, and even then it is generally done by a Christian servant. The poor people on such occasions are assisted by Arabian women, who cry along the streets, " Fire to sell." This is done every sabbath. On the sabbath they remain long at table, drinking wine and singing psalms, but their music does not conform to European modes.†

The Jews, more frequently than the other inhabitants of Aleppo, believe in the existence of evil lepsy, madness, and certain other maladies. In such cases they not only call in their own rabbies, but the Mahometan scheiks to exorcise them.

* Russell's Account of Aleppo, vol. ii.

† Ibid.



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tion levied on the able bodied men, ten crowns a year on the rich, six on the middling, and three on the lower classes.*

In Palestine, where the Turks and Arabs unite in oppressing them, few comparatively are to be found. Yet a learned inquirer, who passed some time at Jerusalem during the spring of 1800, supposes that the city, at that period, contained three thousand Jews.†

* Russell's Account of Aleppo.

† Mr. de Chateaubriand, a celebrated French author, who visited Palestine in the year 1807, has given the following account of the miserable condition of the Jews who still reside in Jerusalem.

After a striking description of the piety and humanity of the Christian monks who constantly perform their devotions at the tomb of our Saviour, he observes, "While the New Jerusalem is seen shining in the midst of the desert, you may observe between Mount Zion and the temple, another spectacle of almost equal interest; it is that of the remnants of another people, distinct from the rest of the inhabitants; a people individually the objects of universal contempt; who suffer the most wanton outrages without a murmur; who endure wounds and blows without a sigh; who, when the sacrifice of their life is demanded, unhesitatingly stretch forth their necks to the sabre. If a member of the community thus cruelly proscribed and abused happens to die, his companion buries him clandestinely during the night in the valley of Josaphat, within the purlieus of the temple of Solomon. Enter their habitation and you find them in the most abject squalid misery, and for the most part occupied in reading a mysterious book to their children, with whom again it becomes a manual for the instruction of succeeding generations. What these wretched outlaws from the justice and compassion of the rest of mankind did in past ages, they do still. Six times they have witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, and are not yet discouraged; nothing can operate to divert their looks from Zion. We are surprised, no doubt, when we observe the Jews scattered over the face of the earth; but to experience an astonishment more lively, we have but to seek them in Jerusalem. The legitimate masters of Judea should be seen as they are in their own land, slaves and strangers; they should be seen awaiting, under the most cruel and oppressive of all despotisms, a King who is to work their deliverance. Near the

The Jews in Arabia are regarded with extreme contempt; and, as in Turkey, despised alike by Mahometans and Christians. They abound in Yemen, the region anciently known by the denomination of Arabia Felix. Yet they are not permitted to reside in cities, but dwell as in other parts of Arabia, in a separate quarter without the gates. Their quarter adjoining to Sana, the capital, contains two thousand. They carry on a great trade, and are the best artists in Arabia. One of their merchants, named Oraeki, had been during twenty-eight years, under two successive imans of Yemen, comptroller of the customs, and of the royal buildings and gardens. But in 1760, he fell into disgrace, and was imprisoned and fined fifty thousand crowns. At the same time fourteen synagogues in the Jewish quarter at Sana were demolished by order of government, together with all private houses above a certain height, beyond which none were afterwards to be raised.*

The highlands of Hedjas are possessed by a number of independent sovereign scheiks. The most numerous and the best known of these communities is that which the Jews have formed upon the mountains lying to the north east of Medina. That tract of country is called Kheibar, and the Jewish inhabitants are known in Arabia by the name of Beni Khiebar. They are governed by their own temple, of which there does not remain "*one stone upon another,*" they still continue to dwell; and with the cross as it were planted upon their heads, and bending them to the earth, still cling to their errors, and labour under the same deplorable infatuation."—*American Review*, No. 1, January, 1811.

* Niebuhr's Travels.

independent scheiks, and are divided into three tribes. Their settlement appears to have subsisted for more than twelve centuries ; they are surrounded with deserts, and the natural advantages of their situation have enabled them to preserve their freedom.*

The Jews in this district do not maintain any intercourse with their brethren in Asia, and are therefore supposed to belong to the sect of the Caraites, who are few in number, much dispersed, and detested by the sect of the Pharisees.

The Jews settled themselves in China under the dynasty of the Han, which began in the year 206 before Christ, and ended 220 years after his birth ; but it is not known at what part of the period they appeared in the empire. They not only increased in number and wealth, but were distinguished for literature and raised to offices, being governors of provinces, and mandarins. The principal places of their abode were Ham-tehen, Peking, and Cai-fong-fou. By degrees their affairs began to decline, and many embraced the Mahometan religion. After this change took place among the Jews in Peking and other parts, they were only found in Cai-fong-fou, the capital of the province of Honan, which is an hundred and fifty leagues from Peking. Those in this city were, at length, involved in various calamities ; their synagogue was inundated, in 1446, by the river Hoango. They also suffered by fire during the administration of Ouanhi, who reigned from 1573 to 1620 ; and another desolating inundation took place in 1642.†

* Niebuhr's Travels.

† Brotier's Notes to Tacitus, vol. iii. p. 578.



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able to investigate their usages in such an accurate manner as could have been wished. But from their blending fictitious tales with the facts recorded in scripture, and even in the five books of Moses, he concluded these Jews were of the Talmudic sect. He observes, however, that this can only be determined by one versed in the scriptures, and well acquainted with the Hebrew language.*

Their synagogue fronts the west, and when they address their prayers to God they turn towards that quarter. In the middle of the synagogue stands a magnificent chair raised very high, and richly adorned with crimson velvet, gold fringe, tassels, &c. This they style the chair of Moses, on which every sabbath, and on days of great solemnity, the law and other parts of the Old Testament are read. The synagogue is also furnished with a table of incense, magnificent candlesticks, large candles, a censer, perfumes, and a painting, on which the names and titles of the emperor are superbly engraved. There were also thirteen tabernacles placed upon tables, and surrounded with rich curtains, in each of which the Pentateuch, or sacred roll of the law, is shut up. Twelve of these tabernacles represent the twelve tribes of Israel, the thirteenth Moses.†

The Chinese Jews strictly observe the sabbath, and do not kindle any fire, or dress any food on that day. They also observe circumcision, and several other ceremonies mentioned in the Old Testament; in particular the passover, feast of unleavened bread, the week of Pentecost, of tabernacles, and other

* Modern Universal History, vol. viii. p. 137.

† Winterbotham's History of China, vol. i. p. 111, 112.

occasional festivals and fasts. They pray and read the law with the thaled or veil over their faces; in remembrance of Moses. They also abstain from blood, and retain the Jewish manner of killing their animals and preparing their food.

In some cases, however, they readily comply with the Chinese customs, and address the Supreme Being by the appellation which is made use of in this country; which is, "Lord of Heaven," "Creator of all things," &c. They also honour Coñfucius, and imitate the solemn rites which the Chinese pay to their ancestors. Contiguous to their synagogue is a large hall, in which they burn perfumes in honour of their Chimgins, or great men of their law. But instead of such pictures as are used by the Chinese, and forbidden by their religion, they have a number of censers. The largest of these, which is intended for the patriarch Abraham, stands in the centre of the hall. The next were those of Moses, Joshua, Esdras, and several other illustrious persons of both sexes. The mandarin who is over them is also entitled to have his tablet set up in the hall, inscribed with his own name, and all his titles.*

The Jews informed father Gozani, that their ancestors came from the west, from the kingdom of Judah, which Joshua conquered after they left Egypt, had crossed the Red Sea, traversed the desert, and that the number of Jews who left Egypt amounted to six hundred thousand. They also gave him to understand, that they had formerly been numerous in the empire, but were then reduced to only seven families. They form alliances with each

* Winterbotham's History.

other, and never connect themselves with the other inhabitants of China.

When father Gozani spoke to them of the Messiah, promised and announced in the Holy Scriptures, they exhibited great astonishment. But when the missionary informed them, that the Messiah had already appeared, and was called Jesus Christ, they replied, that they had heard of a holy man named Jesus, who was the son of Sirach, but that they were entirely ignorant of the new Jesus of whom he discoursed.* They had not any knowledge of some of the books of the Old Testament, and had lost others in the inundation which took place October 29, 1642.†

Dr. Buchanan, while he resided in India, was assiduously engaged in investigating the state of the inhabitants.‡ “The Jews,” says he, “are numerous in India, and reside in a town, about a mile distant from Cochin, called Jews’ Town. It is almost wholly inhabited by this people, who have two respectable synagogues. Among them are some very intelligent men, who are not ignorant of the present history of nations. There are also Jews here from remote parts of Asia, so that this is the fountain of intelligence concerning that people in the east, there

* A modern traveller observes, that “if this be really the fact, their ancestors could not have been any part of the ten tribes who were carried into captivity, but may rather be supposed to be among the followers of Alexander’s army, which agrees with their own account of the time they first settled in China.—*Barrow’s Travels in China*, 1805.

† *Modern Univer. Hist.* vol. viii. p. 139.

‡ Dr. Buchanan’s first tour to Cochin was in November, 1806, and he remained in the country till February, 1807. He again visited it in January, 1808.



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in the year from the creation of the world four thousand two hundred and fifty, (A. D. four hundred and ninety;) and this plate of brass we still have in possession.

“ Our forefathers continued at Cranganor for about a thousand years, and the number of heads who governed were seventy-two. Soon after our settlement, other Jews followed us from Judea; and among these came that man of great wisdom, rabbi Samuel, a Levite of Jerusalem, with his son, Malabaric language and character; and is now so old that it cannot be well understood. The Jews preserve a Hebrew translation of it which they presented to the learned author. This ancient document begins in the following manner according to the Hebrew translation:

“ In the peace of God the king, which has made the earth according to his pleasure. To this God I, Airvi Brahmin, have lifted up my hand, and have granted by this deed, which many hundred thousand years shall run—I, dwelling at Cranganor, have granted, in the thirty-sixth year of my reign, in the strength of power I have granted, in the strength of power I have given in inheritance to Joseph Rabban.”

Then follow the privileges of nobility, such as permission to ride on an elephant; to have a herald to go before to announce the name and dignity; to have the lamp of the day; to walk upon carpets spread upon the earth; and to have trumpets and cymbals sounded before him. King Airvi then appoints Joseph Rabban to be “ chief and governor of the houses of congregation, (the synagogues) and of certain districts, and of the sojourners in them. What proves the importance of the Jews at the period when this grant was made is, that it is signed by seven kings as witnesses. There is no date in this document, further than what may be collected from the reign of the prince, and the names of the royal witnesses. Dates are not usual in old Malabaric writings. One fact is evident, that the Jews must have existed a considerable time in the country before they could have obtained such a grant. The tradition before mentioned assigns for the date of the transaction, the year of the creation 4250, which is in Jewish computation, A. D. 490. It is well known, that the famous Malabaric king, Ceram Perumal, made grants to the Jews, Christians, and Mahometans, during his reign; but that prince flourished in the eighth or ninth century.—*Christian Researches*, p. 220, 221.

rabbi Jehuda Levita. They brought with them the silver trumpets, made use of at the time of the jubilee, which were saved when the second temple was destroyed ; and we have heard from our fathers, that there were engraven upon those trumpets the letters of the ineffable name.* There joined us also from Spain and other places, from time to time, certain tribes of Jews who had heard of our prosperity. But, at last, discord arising among ourselves, one of our chiefs called to his assistance an Indian king, who came upon us with a great army, destroyed our houses, palaces, and strong holds, dispossessed us of Cranganor, killed part of us, and carried part into captivity. By these massacres we were reduced to a small number. Some of the exiles came and dwelt at Cochin, where we have remained ever since, suffering great changes from time to time. There are amongst us some of the children of Israel, (Beni Israel) who came from the country of Ashkenaz, from Egypt, from Isoba, and other places, besides those who formerly inhabited this country.†

“ The native annals of Malabar confirm the foregoing account in the principal circumstances,‡ as

* This circumstance of the Jubilee trumpets is to be found in a similar account of the Jews of Malabar, published in the “ history of the works of the learned” for March, 1699. It is not necessary to suppose that these trumpets belonged to the temple, for it is well known, that in every considerable town in Judea there were jubilee trumpets.—*Buchanan’s Christian Researches*.

† *Buchanan’s Christian Researches*, p. 218—220.

‡ The above account is also confirmed in the principal circumstances by the testimony of Moses de Paiva, a Portuguese Jew of Amsterdam, who, having visited Cochin in 1686, published on his

do the Mahometan histories of the later ages, for the Mahometans have been settled here in great numbers since the eighth century.

“ The desolation of Cranganor the Jews describe as being like the desolation of Jerusalem in miniature. They were first received into the country with some favour and confidence, agreeably to the tenor of the general prophecy concerning the Jews, for no country was to reject them ; and after they

return to Europe an account of his tour, which is now become very rare, and contains what follows :

“ In the year four thousand one hundred and thirty of the creation of the world, after the destruction of the second temple by Titus, seventy or eighty thousand Israelites penetrated as far as the coast of Malabar. The king Cheram Iberimal assembled, and gave them the city of Cranganor, with a certain extent of territory and divers privileges, which were engraven on tables of brass. These Israelites brought two trumpets of which the Levites in the temple made use. Cranganor having at length been taken from them, they took refuge in Cochin.

“ The Jews of Cochin,” says our author, “ loaded him with civilities, and gave him a number of entertainments. Though the climate had rendered them so swarthy that they were almost mulattoes, they would have considered themselves dishonoured, if they had eaten, drank, or prayed with the black or negro Jews of Malabar, because the last were descended from the slaves in the service of the Jews at Cranganor, who were afterwards emancipated. The negro Jews had nine synagogues, three in Cochin, and the others in the vicinity. In the French translation of the travels of P. Paulin de St. Barthelemy it is said they formed four hundred and sixty families.” This account is copied verbatim from the relation of Paiva ; and the elements of which his calculation is composed give as a total number four hundred and sixty-five. The other Jews ground their aversion towards them on the pretence, that the Malabar Jews have been mixed with the Canaanites and the Ishmaelites. But though they have separate synagogues their worship is the same. Thus we see a diversity of colour, but none of sect.—*Gregoire's Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii.



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to despotic princes ; but the men move much about in a commercial capacity, and the same individual will pass through many extensive countries. So that when any thing interesting to the nation of the Jews takes place, the rumour will pass rapidly throughout all Asia.”*

* Buchanan's Researches in Asia, p. 221, 222.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Of the Jews in America.—Of their settlement in Surinam and Jamaica.—But few have settled in New England.—Of Judah Monis.—State of the Jews in New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Virginia, and Georgia.

THE exact time in which the Jews first entered America, cannot be ascertained. But it appears, that there were some of the nation in the Spanish colonies, at the time when they were expelled the parent country by Ferdinand and Isabella.

The inhabitants of the colonies which belonged to France; in their severity to the Jews imitated the conduct of the parent country. The first article in the edict of March, 1605, enjoined the French officers to expel them from their American colonies; and commanded them to depart within three months, under the penalty of the confiscation of their goods.*

The history of the Jews in Surinam, who emigrated from Holland, has been compiled by a society of Portuguese Jews, who resided in that country. It appears from this work, that, in the year 1639, David Nasi, a Portuguese Jew and a native of Brazil, obtained permission from the West India company in Holland to form a colony in the island of Cayenne. His countrymen who accompanied him were to be allowed the full enjoyment of every civil and religious privilege, on condition that they should grant the same without reserve to all who might choose to be their fellow colonists. On the conquest of this island by the French in 1664,

* French Encyclopedia.

Nasci and his followers retired to Surinam, which then belonged to the English, who not only allowed them the free exercise of their religion, together with every civil privilege and all the immunities which the peculiar rites of their law rendered necessary, but also permitted them to erect a court of judicature in which all civil cases beneath a certain amount between individuals of their community should be determined by their agents. All these privileges were confirmed to them by the Dutch, who took possession of the settlement 1667.*

Thus secured in the enjoyment of their liberties, the Jews soon became a numerous and flourishing society. In 1689, they possessed forty plantations, and a large number of slaves. According to their account they have always been useful citizens, who were disposed to make every exertion for the welfare of the community, and have often sustained more than their share of the public burdens. They complain of having frequently suffered injustice and oppression in consequence of the arbitrary spirit of some of the governors, and the jealousy of some of their fellow colonists. However, notwithstanding these disadvantages, and the invidious partiality and contemptuous treatment which they often experienced, they increased in numbers and wealth. In 1760, no less than one hundred sugar plantations were possessed by the individuals of the community. The year 1799 appears to have been the most prosperous era of the colony.

In Paramaribo, the capital of the colony, the Dutch Calvinists, Lutherans, and Moravians, had

* Monthly Review, 1792.



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to pay us the honours of the New Jerusalem. For this purpose they were at much expence, and their attentions merit my gratitude.* I became acquainted with two Jews, whose erudition and powers are astonishing. The one is named Joseph Barious, and the other Isaac Nasci. The last is an extraordinary man, if we consider that he never has been out of Surinam, where he was born; received no aid but from his own genius; and has risen above the errors of his sect. His knowledge of history is profound; and he has studied methodically Arabic, Chaldean, and rabbinical Hebrew. Yet this man, who passes eight hours every day in his study, and has a correspondence with the most celebrated men in Europe, employs himself as the meanest of his countrymen, in buying and selling old clothes. He has composed a Dictionary in the Indian Calibi language, and thinks he finds the themes in it to be Hebrew.”*

The Jews were early settled in Jamaica, being attracted by the gold and silver brought into circulation, and the mild disposition of the government towards them. In the reign of William III. of England, the council of the island addressed the crown to expel them from the British dominions, because they were descended from those who had crucified our Saviour; but the king refused to comply with their request. In these days they were not taxed as other subjects, but obliged to raise a certain annual tribute which the assembly varied at pleasure. Though the government was compa-

* The compiler of this History was favoured with the above account from the Rev. Mr. Bentley of Salem.

ratively mild, they suffered some oppression. At length, however, they began to make a considerable figure, and were permitted to erect synagogues and perform divine worship according to their own ritual. Their knowledge of several languages, and acquaintance with their brethren dispersed over the Spanish and other West India colonies, contributed greatly to extend the trade and increase the wealth of the island. Though they are excluded from filling any post in the government, they are required to bear arms in the militia, and have shown themselves useful subjects on many occasions. They are not, as in many other parts, loaded with unequal and oppressive taxations, and have the privilege of purchasing landed property, and in the possession and enjoyment of it they are protected equally with other subjects.*

The tranquillity this people enjoy under the government is, however, disturbed by their own religious schisms. They are divided into two parties, one of which is called the Smouse Jews, which is an epithet of contempt. Their brethren regard them as heretics, because they have relaxed in the observance of some of their rituals, and formed alliances by marriage with Christians. They have, therefore, a distinct meeting at a private house, where they vociferate to the great disturbance of the neighbourhood.†

* Long's History of Jamaica, vol. ii. p. 293. They enjoy almost every privilege possessed by the Christian whites, excepting only the right of voting at elections, of being returned to serve in the assembly, and of holding any office of magistracy.—*Edward's History of the West Indies.*

† Long's History of Jamaica, vol. ii. p. 296. Gregoire's *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii. p. 360.

The chief men among the Jews in Jamaica are worthy characters, who strive to gain an honest living and assist their indigent brethren. There are no common beggars of this nation, the elders having an established fund for the relief of the poor. There are among this people several very opulent planters and capital merchants; and it is said, that those in this island are not such rigid observers of the Mosaical ritual as in other countries. Being allowed the public exercise of their religion, they have erected two or more synagogues.*

The Jews have never been numerous in New England; but among those who settled in the colonies some have been distinguished for the respectability of their characters. Judah Monis, a Jewish convert to the Christian religion, was admitted a public teacher at Harvard University. He is stated to have been a native of Algiers, who probably received his education in Italy, though we know nothing of him till his arrival in this country. But after he came to Boston he seems to have been soon invited to fill the office of Hebrew instructor in the university, where he was settled March 27th, 1722. Before he could be admitted, it was rendered necessary by the statutes, that he should change his religion, which he professes to have done with perfect disinterestedness, though he continued till his death to observe the seventh day as the sabbath. From the address delivered upon the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Coleman of Boston, it may be suspected that doubts were entertained of the sincerity of his declaration. The expressions,

* Long's History.



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observation, learning and intelligence, his conversation was highly entertaining and instructive. He was born at Hebron, and educated there and at Jerusalem. He had travelled all over the Holy Land, and visited many cities in Asia and Europe. The doctor was greatly delighted with his society, and had frequent intercourse with him for the purpose of acquiring the pronounciation of the Hebrew; of ascertaining the meaning of ambiguous expressions in the original of the Old Testament; of learning the usages of the modern Jews; of conversing on past events relating to this extraordinary nation, as recorded in sacred history; and of tracing its future destiny by the light of prophecy. They cultivated a mutual friendship when together, and corresponded in Hebrew when apart.”*

The rabbi, not long after his arrival, attended his worship by agreement, and heard him discourse in an affectionate manner on the past dispensations of God’s providence towards his chosen people; on his promised design of rendering them an exalted nation in the latter day glory of the Messiah’s kingdom; and on the duty of Christians, and of all nations, to desire a participation in their future glorious state.†

“So catholic was the intercourse between this learned Jew and learned Christian, that they often spent hours together in conversation; and the information which the extensive travels of the Jew enabled him to give, especially concerning the Holy Land, was a rich entertainment to his Chris-

* Dr. Holmes’s Life of President Stiles.

† Ibid.

tian friend. The civilities of the rabbi were more than repaid. The doctor very frequently attended the worship of the synagogue at Newport, not only when rabbi Carigal officiated, but at the ordinary service before his arrival, and after his departure."

With six other rabbies of less eminence he became acquainted, and shewed them every civility, while he maintained a friendly communication with the Jews in general in Newport. Such rare and unexpected attentions from a Christian minister of distinction could not but afford peculiar gratification to a people, conscious of being a proverb and bye word among all nations. To him they accordingly paid every attention in return, and expressed peculiar pleasure in admitting him into their families, and into their synagogues.

Dr. Holmes in concluding this account judiciously remarks, that "this civility and catholicism towards the Jews is worthy of imitation. It is to be feared that Christians do not what ought to be done towards the conversion of this devoted people. While admitted into most countries for the purposes of trade and commerce, instead of being treated with that humanity and tenderness which Christianity should inspire, they are often persecuted and condemned as unworthy of notice or regard. Such treatment tends to prejudice them against our holy religion, and to establish them in their infidelity."*

A respectable rabbi† of New York has given the following account of his brethren in the United States.

* Holmes's Life of President Stiles.

† Rev. Gershom Seixas, the presiding rabbi.

“ There are about fifty families of Jews in New York, which, with a number of unmarried men, make from seventy to eighty subscribing members to the congregation *Sherith Israel*, which is incorporated by an act of the legislature of the state, empowering all religious societies to hold their property by charter, under the direction of trustees chosen annually by the communicants of the society, according to certain rules prescribed in the act.*

“ The trustees have the management of all the temporalities, as is customary in other societies. They have one synagogue established conformably to the customs and forms of prayer used among the Portuguese Jews in Europe. Their public service is altogether in the Hebrew language, excepting in particular cases provided for in the constitution of the society. There were some Jewish families in the city when it was owned by the Dutch ; but the documents which are among the archives of the congregation, do not extend farther back than about one hundred and fifty years.

“ Some of the Jews who settled in New York were of Portuguese, others of German extraction, besides Hollanders. There are also the descendants of those who arrived after New York became an English colony. The Jews had the right of soil under the Dutch government, and the English never attempted to deprive them of it ; on the contrary, they granted letters patent to several Jewish families in the time of queen Anne, who had arrived in London from France among the Huguenots, to settle in North America.

* See laws of New York.



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nation in Charleston. The seats in the Jewish synagogues are often crowded with visitors of every denomination. The episcopal functions are now discharged by the Rev. Cavalho, late professor of the Hebrew language in the college of New York.

“The Jews in Charleston enjoy equal literary advantages with the other members of the community. Most of the parents being rich, the prejudice is here despised, which confines the important object of education to the tenets of religion; and the Hebrews can boast of several men of talents and learning among them. Those Jewish children who are intended for professions, receive a handsome classical education. There is now in the city an academy, where the French, Italian, Latin, and Greek languages are taught, together with other branches of learning. The Rev. Cavalho, mentioned above, also teaches the Hebrew and Spanish languages.

“The dress and habits of the Jews in Charleston do not distinguish them from the other citizens. Open and hospitable, as Carolinians generally are, they unite, with considerable industry and knowledge of commercial affairs, rather too much of that love of ease and pleasure, which climate, as well as national character, tends to nourish. Individuals, however, among those in this country, for their enterprize and judgment, have been entrusted with municipal offices; and one has held a seat with honour to himself and his constituents among the representatives of the state.

“The institutions which the Jews have established in Charleston, are chiefly religious and

charitable. They have built an elegant synagogue. They have also societies for the relief of strangers, for attending the sick, and for administering the rites of humanity and burial to the dying and the dead. The most modern institution is a society for the relief of orphans. The capital is already considerable, and it is yearly increasing. The children receive every advantage which is necessary to enable them to be well informed and honourable citizens of their country.”*

In Richmond, (Virginia) there are about thirty Jewish families, who are now building a synagogue; but they are not as yet incorporated. The number of unmarried men is unknown, though there may be about an hundred scattered throughout the state, who are and will become members of the congregation. At Savannah in Georgia there are but few Jewish families, who assemble at times, and commune with each other in public prayers. The United States is, perhaps, the only place where the Jews have not suffered persecution, but have, on the contrary, been encouraged, and indulged in every right of citizens.†

The Jews in all the United States, except Massachusetts,‡ are eligible to offices of trust and honour; and some of them in the southern states are in office. They are generally commercial men, and a number of them considerable merchants.

* The above account is an abridgment of a letter written Jan. 1811, by Mr. Philip Cohen, a respectable Jewish merchant in Charleston.

† Extract of a letter from Rev. Gershom Seixas.

‡ According to the Constitution of Massachusetts, those who are chosen to fill important offices, must declare their belief of the Christian religion.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Of the rites and ceremonies of the Jews.—Of their synagogue worship.—Method of observing the sabbath.—Of their celebration of the festivals of the new moon; the passover; days of Pentecost; feast of trumpets; of tabernacles; and of Purim.—Of the feast at the dedication of the temple.—Of the Jewish feasts on the great day of expiation, on the destruction of the temple, and other occasions.—Government and discipline of the Jewish church.

THE Jews, since the destruction of their temple, have not offered any sacrifices; and several religious rites, which were enjoined upon their ancestors, cannot be observed by the nation in modern times, on account of their being local, and confined to the promised land. Such, for instance, as the offering of the sheaf of the first fruits of barley harvest on the morrow of the passover; the two wave loaves made of fine flour, which were the first of the wheat harvest, and offered on the morning of the feast of Pentecost; the basket of all the first fruits of the earth, with the offering of him who brings it;* the cities of refuge;† the tythes to the priests and Levites, and to the poor; the sabbatical year‡ for the land to rest; and also the year of jubilee, when there was to be a general release of lands, servants, pledges, &c. the cleansing of the leper; with various other local ceremonies too numerous to be mentioned.§

There are other directions respecting their political state and government, contained in their code

* Deuteronomy xxvi. 2.

† Numbers xxvi. 6—11.

‡ Leviticus xxv. 2, 3.

§ David Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews, p. 221.



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press, in commemoration of the ark of the covenant, which was in the temple. Here the Pentateuch is deposited, written on a volume or roll of parchment with the utmost exactness, and wrapped up in silk curiously embroidered. When the Jews say their prayers in the morning they put on a talith or veil over their other clothes, and a robe with fringes at the four corners, with tassels, called Tzitzith ; and also the Tephilin or Phylacteries.*

All the rites, precepts, and ceremonies of the Jews, which are not contained in the Pentateuch, are founded upon and derive their authority from the Talmud. There is, however, some variation in their customs and ceremonies, and in the liturgies which the nation have made use of at different times, and in various countries. The German, Polish, and Russian Jews follow the same ritual. But the Spanish and Portuguese have another, which still varies from that of the Italian and Levantine Jews, those of Jerusalem, China, and some other places. But in the principal points of belief and observance they all agree.†

* “It is an article of faith among us,” says David Levi, “that every Jew must every morning, during the time of reading the Shema, and saying the nineteen prayers at least, have on the Phylacteries, because it is a sign of our acknowledging the Almighty to be the Creator of all things, and that he has power to do as he pleases ; and therefore on the sabbath, and other festivals, we do not put on the Phylacteries, because the duly observing of them is a sufficient sign of itself, as expressed in Exodus xxxi. 12.”—*Ceremonies of the Jews*, p. 190.

† Ockley’s translation of Leo Modena’s *Ceremonies of the Jews*, p. 4. There are three divisions or classes of modern Jews, who are variously denominated from the countries where the arrangements of their liturgies took place, and are known by the designations of German, Portuguese, and Avignon, or Italian Jews.

In the synagogue worship, the Cohen or priest leads the devotional exercises by chanting prayers ; but laymen are admitted to read the book of the law to the people ; the precedence is, however, given to the priest. After prayers, the rabbies frequently deliver a sermon ; but their discourses are not composed in Hebrew, which few of the Jews at present perfectly understand, but in the language of the country where they reside. The passages of scripture and sentences from the doctors are, however, quoted in the Hebrew, and explained.*

The Jews venerate the sabbath above all other festivals, and observe it with the utmost strictness on account of its being enjoined in various parts of scripture, particularly in the decalogue. On this day they are forbidden to kindle or extinguish any fire ; the food is, therefore, prepared on Friday. They are also prohibited from discoursing on any kind of business,† from carrying any burden, from riding on horseback, in a carriage, going by water, or walking above a mile from the city or place where they reside, or playing upon any musical instrument.‡ They are likewise forbidden to inter their dead, or mourn, or fast on the sabbath ; but are sometimes permitted to circumcise a child, be-

* Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews.

† David Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews, p. 7, 8—17. The rabbies have reduced the several works forbidden on the sabbath under thirty-nine heads, and enumerated the species under these generals.

‡ Vocal music is very common in their synagogues, but instrumental music is seldom used ; yet not because it is deemed improper, for the synagogue in Prague had an organ ; but because it cannot be performed on the sabbath or holidays.—*Adam's Religious World Displayed.*

cause that ceremony must be performed exactly on the eighth day.

The sabbath begins on Friday, an hour before sun-set both summer and winter, for they suppose the day commences from the preceding evening, according to Genesis i. 5. and "the evening and the morning were the first day." As soon as the time arrives they leave all manner of work, and, having cleansed and decorated themselves in honour of the holy day, repair to the evening service. The women are bound to light a lamp with seven cotton wicks, in remembrance of the days of the week, saying, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God! king of the universe, who has sanctified us with his commandments, and commanded us to light the lamp of the sabbath." The reason why this ceremony is invariably assigned to the women is, that as their original mother, by her crime in eating the forbidden fruit, first extinguished the lamp of righteousness, they are to make an atonement for that sin by rekindling it, in lighting the lamp of the sabbath.*

They then spread a clean cloth upon their table, and set two loaves of bread upon it, baked on Friday, and covered with a napkin, in memory of the manna which fell with dew under and above it, yet descended not (for on the Friday they had a double portion) on the sabbath. When they are placed at table, the master of the family takes a cup of wine repeating the three first verses in the 2nd chapter of Genesis, and after giving God thanks, and enjoining them to observe the sabbath,

* Levi's Ceremonies, &c.



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next day in honour of the festival. On this holy day they beseech God to be merciful, and grant them an inheritance in that day, which is all sabbath, and eternal rest.* In the evening, as soon as the stars appear, they suppose the sabbath is ended, and that it is lawful to do any work after they have attended the evening prayers at the synagogue.

The Jewish year is either civil, or ecclesiastical. The civil year commences in the month Tishri, or September. The Jews have a tradition that the world was created on the first day of this month, and from this epoch they compute the age of the world, and make use of this date in all their civil acts. The ecclesiastical year commences about the vernal equinox, in the month Nisan, which answers to part of March and April. All the religious rites and ceremonies are regulated by the ecclesiastical year.† On the first of every month they celebrate the feast of the new moon, praying God to restore them to the holy city, and erect the temple at Jerusalem, where they could render the offering for the feast according to the law, Numbers xxviii. 11.‡

On the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, the celebration of the passover commences, and imme-

* Meaning the kingdom of the Messiah; for they suppose that the world is to continue six thousand years, (according to the six days of the creation) and the seventh to be that of the Messiah. It is that which is here alluded to, as being the day which is all an entire sabbath.—*David Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews*, p. 206.

† The Jews call the seventh month of the civil, the first of the ecclesiastical year, because at the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, it is enjoined, that “this month shall be unto them the beginning of months, and the first month in the year.”—Exodus xii. 2.

‡ *David Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews*.

diately after the feast of unleavened bread; the whole includes eight days. On the evening preceding the festival, the first born of every family observes a fast, in remembrance of God's mercy in protecting the nation. During the whole of this feast the Jews are obliged to eat only unleavened bread,* and refrain from servile labour. The two first and two last days are kept as strictly as the sabbath, only they permit fires to be kindled, and prepare food. As they cannot now offer the paschal sacrifice, the passover cakes are placed on the table with some bitter herbs, and they eat a piece of unleavened bread instead of the paschal lamb. The festival concludes with psalms and thanksgivings to God for their great deliverance, and petitions that he would put a period to their captivity and bring them to Jerusalem.

The feast of Pentecost commences seven weeks after the passover, hence it is called the feast of weeks. It is also styled in scripture, the day of the first fruits, because on that day they offered the first of their fruits in the temple. At present this festival is observed two days, during which time all servile labour is prohibited. As it was instituted to recall the remembrance of the law's being given at Sinai, that part of scripture, which declares the delivery of the decalogue, is solemnly read in the synagogue, and all those passages from the prophets which correspond with the subject. They generally have a sermon delivered in praise of the law. Their prayers are suitable to the occasion, con-

* They begin the passover with carefully searching the house, and removing every thing which has had leaven in it.

cluding with petitions for their deliverance from captivity, and for the welfare of the government under which they dwell.*

The feast of trumpets is observed on the first and second of Tishri, or September, the seventh of the ecclesiastical and first of the civil year; hence the first of this month is called new year's day. On this festival, besides a portion from the law and prophets, part of the two first chapters of the first of Samúel are read. They then pray for the protection of the government under which they reside, and blow the trumpet, which is made of a ram's horn, † saying, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God! king of the universe, who has sanctified us with his commandments, and commanded us to hear the sound of the trumpet." After this ceremony, they repeat with a loud voice the following verse, "Happy are the people who hear the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

On the morning of the second day they repair to the synagogue, and repeat nearly the same prayers as on the preceding day. They then read the 22nd chapter of Genesis, which gives an account of Abraham's offering his son Isaac, and God's blessing him and his seed for ever. For, according to their received tradition, that great event took place on that day. They, therefore, beseech the Almighty through the merits of this memorable event to bless

* David Levi's Ceremonies, &c. p. 78.

† The trumpet is made of a ram's horn in remembrance of Abraham's seeing a ram caught by the horns in a thicket, which he took and offered for a burnt offering to the Lord, instead of his son.—*Genesis* xxii. 12—15.



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seven of the laws from out of the ark and carry them to the altar, and those who are possessed of the palm branch, &c. with the reader at their head, go seven times round the altar, in remembrance of the sabbatical years, singing the 29th Psalm. On the evening of this day the feast of solemn assembly commences, which being a time of rejoicing, they assemble and entertain their friends; but are strictly enjoined not to do any servile labour. They read passages from the law and prophets, and entreat the Lord to be propitious to them, and deliver them from captivity. On the ninth day they repeat several prayers in honour of the law, and bless God for his mercy and goodness in giving it to them by his servant Moses, and read that part of scripture which makes mention of his death. After going to the synagogue in the evening, and saying the usual prayers, the festival is concluded.*

On the fourteenth of Adar, or March, the Jews celebrate the feast of Purim, in commemoration of their deliverance from the destruction designed by Haman. This festival is observed two days, and derives its name from Esther ix. "Therefore they called these days Purim." Previous to the feast, a solemn fast is observed in remembrance of Esther's fasting. The whole book of Esther written on parchment is repeatedly read during the feast, and as often as the name of Haman† is mentioned it is

* David Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews, p. 125.

† In some places the reading is concluded with curses upon Haman and his wife, and blessings upon Esther and Mordecai. They had a custom in some countries of erecting a gibbet, and hanging up a man in effigy to represent Haman's punishment. But this custom has been for a considerable time disused, because it was insinuated, in

customary for the children (who have little wooden hammers) to knock against the wall, as a memorial that they should endeavour to destroy the race of Amalek. Part of the first day is spent in feasting and rejoicing, sending presents to each other, giving liberally to the poor, in visiting their friends, and entertaining them by all kinds of diversions.

The Jews, at the present day, observe many festivals which were not appointed by Moses. In particular they celebrate the dedication of the altar, which was instituted by the Maccabees, in remembrance of the victory they obtained over Antiochus Epiphanes. This tyrant, having profaned the temple, reduced them to the necessity of cleansing and dedicating it anew. The festival is observed in a splendid manner, and lasts eight days; and is appointed to be kept by lighting lamps. The reason they assign for this ceremony is, that, after they had purified and dedicated the temple, there was only enough of pure oil left to burn one night, which miraculously lasted eight nights, till they were able to obtain a fresh supply.

The great day of expiation is observed by the Jews, though they have no high priest to officiate, nor temple wherein to offer the sacrifice. Before the fast commences, they think it a duty incumbent upon them to ask pardon of those they have offended; to make restitution to those whom they have defrauded of any property; to forgive those who have offended them; and, in short, to do every

the dark ages, that they did it in contempt of Christ.—*Basnage*, p. 453.

thing which may serve to evince the sincerity of their repentance.* This great fast is observed on the tenth day of the month Tishri, or September. In the preceding evening† they repair to the synagogue, where they remain saying prayers upwards of three hours; and when they return from the synagogue they may not taste any kind of sustenance; and are even prohibited from taking one drop of water. They are also forbidden to do any kind of labour, even to kindle a fire, and observe this day as strictly as the sabbath.

At six in the morning they attend the synagogue, and offer those prayers and supplications for the pardon of their sins, which are peculiar to the occasion. In the course of the service, various portions of scripture are read, particularly part of Leviticus xxvi. Numbers xxix. and Isaiah lvii. They mention in their prayers the additional sacrifice of the day, and entreat God to rebuild their sanctuary, to gather their dispersions among the Gentiles, and conduct them to Jerusalem, where they may offer the sacrifice of atonement, agreeably to the Mosaic law. In the afternoon service, besides portions from the law and prophets, the greatest part of the book of Jonah is read in the synagogues. They beseech God to be propitious, and forgive their sins.

* Maimonides affirms that the goat Azazel expiated both great and small sins which were repented of, and that repentance, supplying the place of sacrifice, has at present the same effect, provided it is accompanied with renunciation of sin.—*Basnage*, p. 450.

† All the commanded ordinary fasts of the Jews begin in the evening, and they neither eat nor drink till they can see the stars the following evening.



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some offence against God. They fast also on the vigil of the new year, and some on that of every new month. Several other fasts and festivals have been instituted, but not generally received, and are not observed at present.*

The Jewish church is, at present, governed by a presiding rabbi in the city or town where they may be settled, who attaches to himself two other rabbies, and these three combined form a kind of tribunal in sacred or religious cases, and frequently determine private disputes. This tribunal is termed *Beth Din*, or the house of justice. As the priesthood is at present totally abrogated, having ceased with the temple, the term high priest is an exploded one, no presiding rabbi now exercising the functions of this pontiff, which were only applicable to the temple. Hence the choice of rabbi is not confined to the tribe of Levi; although that tribe be the only one that they conceive can now be at all distinguished. Its members are all at present considered as laymen. They have notwithstanding some trifling distinctions paid them in the synagogue service; for those among them that are descended from the priests, who are called *Cohen*, or in the plural *Cohenim*, perform the benediction, and are called first to the law. They also personate the priest in the ceremony of redeeming the first born, and have some other complimentary precedencies paid them. The Levites, i. e. those who are descendants from the singers in the temple, are second in rank, and are called next to the law, and wash the hands of the *Cohenim* before they go to the benediction, &c. With all this the rabbi has

* *Leo Modena's Customs, &c. of the Jews*, p. 137.

nothing to do, unless he be of this tribe. The ministry of a presiding rabbi, elected for that purpose from the general mass of learned rabbies in the congregation, whose head he is, consists of nothing more than that, as a spiritual director, he solves questions which arise in the ceremonial observances; occasionally preaches, marries, superintends divorces, and the ceremony of throwing the shoe, called Chalitzah,* &c. He is generally allowed a competent salary, which, together with perquisites, renders it unnecessary for him to engage in any secular business, nor is it thought honourable; although it is said, that, in a few instances, some presiding rabbies in Germany and Italy, have been engaged in trade, through the medium of some intervening friend.†

Other rabbies may follow any worldly occupation, as the title of rabbi is merely honorary, and does not confer any priestly ordination, or sacred character.‡

* Marriage, in all regular societies, is always performed by the presiding rabbi, or by some one deputed by him: but a marriage solemnized with the due ceremonies by any other orthodox Jew is valid. The ceremony of throwing the shoe takes place when a Jew refuses to marry his brother's widow, and is grounded on Deuteronomy xxv. 9.

† Adam's Religious World Displayed, (published 1809,) vol. i. p. 48, 49.

‡ Ibid.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Of the religious tenets of the Jews.—Articles of faith which were drawn up by Maimonides in the eleventh century.—Explanation of their belief respecting several articles.—Prevalence of infidelity among them.—Of the ancient sects which remain at present among the Jews.

THE religious tenets maintained by the modern Jews coincide with the confession of faith which the celebrated Maimonides drew up at the close of the eleventh century, which is as follows :

1st. “ I believe, with a true and perfect faith, that God is the Creator, (whose name be blessed) governor and maker of all creatures, and that he has wrought all things, worketh, and shall work for ever.

2nd. “ I believe, with perfect faith, that the Creator, (whose name be blessed) is *one* ; and that such a unity as is in him can be found in none other, and that he alone has been our God, is, and for ever shall be.

3d. “ I believe, with perfect faith, that the Creator, (whose name be blessed) is not corporeal, nor to be comprehended with any bodily properties ; and that there is no bodily essence which can be likened unto him.

4th. “ I believe, with perfect faith, the Creator, (whose name be blessed) to be the first and last, and that nothing was before him, and he shall abide the last for ever.

5th. “ I believe, with a perfect faith, that the Cre-



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The Jews consider the unity of God as one of the most essential of the above articles. "The Christians and Jews," says Basnage, "separate at the second step in religion, for after they have united in the adoration of one God, absolutely perfect, they find immediately after the abyss of the trinity,* which entirely separates them." The Jewish nation, ever since their dispersion, have been vehemently opposed to the Christian doctrine of the trinity, which, they suppose, destroys the unity of the Supreme Being.

The twelfth article of the creed of Maimonides, or the expectation of the promised Messiah, is the leading tenet and distinguishing feature in the religion of the modern Jews. Infatuated, however, with the idea of a temporal Messiah and Deliverer, who is to subdue the world, and reinstate them in their own land, the Jews still wait for his appearance. But they have fixed neither the place whence, nor the time when he is to come, for though many have endeavoured to calculate upon the seventy weeks of Daniel, they discourage all attempts this way,† and deem them improper, since a miscalculation may

* Some learned Christian writers, however, find the doctrine of the trinity in the Jewish Cabbala, and suppose, that the three principal Sefhiræ are meant for the three persons in one essence, and the other seven, the seven spirits, or seven orders of angels that stand before God. But Basnage, who assiduously applied himself to studying the history and opinions of the Jews, supposes, that all the ten Sefhiræ are alike to be considered as the attributes of God, and explodes the idea of finding the doctrine of the trinity in the Cabbala.—*Maurice's Indian Antiquities*, vol. iv. p. 454. *Horæ Solitariae*, vol. i. p. 358, and *Basnage's History of the Jews*, p. 200.

† The rabbies have denounced the most dreadful anathemas against all who shall attempt to calculate the time of the Messiah's appearance.

tend to shake the faith of the ignorant ; and Maimonides had an eye to this in the composition of this same article, “and although he retard his coming,” &c.

Finding it difficult to evade the force of those texts in Isaiah, &c. which speak of a suffering Messiah, some have had recourse to the idea of two Messiahs, who are to succeed each other, one Ben Joseph of the tribe of Ephraim, in a state of humiliation and suffering ; the other, Ben David, of the tribe of Judah, in a state of glory, magnificence, and power. This, however, is said not to be a settled belief, but an opinion exhibited in a book of Medrash, or commentary. And yet something very like it seems to have been the tenet of the rabbies ; for Abarbanel observes, that “although when they first go up from the captivity, they will “appoint themselves one head,” (Hosea i. 11.) who he says is the person called by the Rabbins,* Messiah Ben Joseph, as he will be slain in battle ; Israel will then seek David their king, a rod from the stem of Jesse, whom God will make choice of for to reign over them.”†

As to the character and mission of their Messiah, “he is to be of the tribe of Judah, the lineal de-

* Rabbies is the modern title, but when we are speaking of the ancient Mishnical and Talmudical doctors, the term rabbins is then more properly used.—*Adam's Religious World Displayed*.

† (Abarbanel on Hosea iii. 5.) Mr. Levi says, that “this opinion of the rabbins, concerning the death of this personage, was what gave rise to the Christian system of a suffering Messiah, as the prophecies of the Old Testament do not inculcate any such principle whatever.”—*Dissertation on the Prophecies*, p. 100, quoted in *Adam's Religious World Displayed*.

scendant of David, and called by his name. He is to be endowed with the spirit of prophecy, and his special mission is to restore the dispersed sheep of Israel, plant them safely in their own land, and subdue their enemies, and thereby bring the whole world to the knowledge of the one true God."

His coming and their restoration have not yet taken place, "because they are still unworthy of being redeemed, and have not repented, or have not yet received the full measure of their punishment." At the same time they insist that their redemption is not conditional, but will take place at the appointed time, though they should not repent; that God will not restore and redeem them for any merit of theirs, (for there will doubtless, even then, be many wicked and unbelieving among them) but for his name sake, "for the sake of the few righteous, and also in consideration of what they will be after their redemption, when they will all be good and righteous.* Those therefore, who are righteous in captivity, will happily attain to the redemption. But those that are wicked will be destroyed in the wars and troubles which will take place before their final restoration."†

They believe, that "Judea will finally be the seat of those wars which will precede their redemp-

* "They will," says a celebrated Jewish writer, "no more follow their irregular desires, and their cupidity, for the great and stupendous miracles, that will then be performed in their sight, will make such a lasting impression on them, as entirely to destroy their evil imagination; and incline them to all good; so that they will then be in the same state that Adam was in before his fall." Thus David Levi interprets Ezekiel xxxvi. 26.

† Adam's Religious World Displayed.



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chérubim, fire from heaven, &c. the same as their fathers enjoyed in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and in Solomon's temple. And, in fine, then will idolatry "wholly cease in the earth, and all men acknowledge the unity of God and his kingdom, agreeable to what Zechariah said, chap. xiv. 9."* Such are the expectations of the Jews in regard to the Messiah and his kingdom, which they still avow to be not of a spiritual, but of a temporal nature."

The Jews believe that two great ends are to be effected by the resurrection, the one particular, and the other general. Accordingly David Levi observes, "that which is particular is for his brethren; and the other which is general, is for them and all the other nations."†

Several other doctrines are maintained by the Jews, which are not contained in the thirteen ar-

* Levi's Dissertation on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 228, quoted in Adam's Religious World Displayed, vol. i. p. 24. According to this author, "All those that shall be restored shall serve God together in unity; for then there shall be no separation of the tribes, no division of the kingdom, and no calves in Dan and Bethel; and on account of the great and stupendous miracles which will then be wrought by God for the deliverance of the nation, all nations will sanctify him as a great and holy God."—*Levi's Dissertations, &c.*

† "The first great end," says David Levi, "which I call a particular one, as it is for the Jewish nation only, is to effect, that those who have been persecuted and slain, during this long and dreadful captivity, for adhering to the true faith, may enjoy the salvation of the Lord, according to what the prophet says, (Isaiah xxvi. 19, and lxvi. 10.) The second great end, which I call a general one, because it affects all mankind, whether Jews, Gentiles, or Christians, is to bring all nations to the knowledge of the true God, and to effect that the firm belief of his unity may be so unalterably fixed in their hearts, as that they may attain the end for which they were created, to honour and glorify God, as the prophet observes, Isaiah xliiii. 7." *Levi's Dissertations, &c.*

ticles. The rabbies acknowledged, that there is in man a fund of corruption ; and the Talmud speaks of original sin thus : “ We ought not to be surprized that the sin of Adam and Eve was so deeply engraven, and that it was sealed as it were with the king’s signet, that it might be thereby transmitted to all their posterity ; it was because all things were finished the day that Adam was created, and he was the perfection and consummation of the world, so that when he sinned, all the world sinned with him. We partake of his sin, and share in the punishment of it, but not in the sins of his descendants.”*

The rabbies teach, that the evils in which men were involved by sin will be removed by the Messiah. They do not, however, entertain the idea that this illustrious personage will make an atonement for sin ; this they suppose is done by the fulfilling of the law, and circumcision.†

The Jews maintain, that the souls of the righteous enjoy the beatific vision of God in paradise,‡ and that the souls of the wicked are tormented in hell with fire and other punishments. They suppose, that the sufferings of the most atrocious criminals are of eternal duration, while others

* Fleury’s Ancient Israelites, p. 341.

† Basnage, p. 371. They pray God to remember unto them the merits of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.—*Levi’s Ceremonies, &c.* p. 78—115.

‡ One party of Jews, with Maimonides at their head, suppose that the souls of the righteous after death are to inhabit the garden of Eden till the appearance of the Messiah, at which epoch their souls are to be united to their bodies, and enjoy the delights prepared for them by the Messiah during a thousand years. This opinion is supported by Menasses Ben Israel and Abarbanel.—*Basnage*, p. 391.

remain only for a limited time in purgatory, which does not differ from hell with respect to the place, but to the duration. They pray for the souls of the dead, and imagine that many are delivered from purgatory on the great day of expiation. .

They suppose that no Jew, unless guilty of heresy or certain crimes specified by the rabbies, shall continue in purgatory above a year; and that there are but few who suffer eternal punishment. Maimonides, Abarbanel, and other celebrated Jewish writers maintain the annihilation of the wicked. Others suppose, that the sufferings of hell have the power of purifying souls and expiating sin.*

Some eminent Jewish writers assert, that it is a mistake to suppose that their nation are intolerant. "They hold indeed, that all men are obliged to observe what are called the Noachides, or seven precepts of the sons of Noah; but it is the unanimous opinion of their rabbies, that the Sinaite covenant, or law of Moses, is obligatory on those of their nation only." They say, "It was a covenant between God and the Jews, that they therefore are bound to the observance of it; but that it is not binding to the rest of mankind; for if they do but keep the law of nature, that is, the precepts of the Noachides, they maintain that they thereby perform all that God requires of them, and will certainly by this service render themselves acceptable to him, and be partakers of eternal life."†

* Basnage, p. 390. Picart's Religious Ceremonies of the Jews.

† Levi's Letters to Dr. Priestley, p. 16, 17, and Maimonides on Repentance, chap. iii. quoted in Adam's Religious World Displayed.

Mr. Schott, director of the institute at Seezen, pronounced a discourse at the dedication of the temple in that place, July 17th, 1810,



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This statement is confirmed by a distinguished Jewish writer; David Levi complains, that there are two different parties in the nation who slight the prophecies which speak of their future restoration, and ridicule the idea of a Messiah coming to redeem them. The one consists of such as call themselves philosophers, enlightened men, who, says he, “are perfect deists,* not believing a syllable of revelation,

convinced the laws of Moses are no longer binding upon them, as not being adapted to their circumstances at this day, they are willing and ready to become Christians as far as relates to the moral doctrines of Christianity, provided they shall not be required to believe the miraculous part of the Christian creed, and above all, the divinity of Jesus Christ; and provided they may be admitted to enjoy all the rights and privileges enjoyed by the members of the established religion.

They ask Dr. Teller’s advice on this plan, and whether he thinks it practicable? This gentleman has published an answer, in which he informs them, that they do well to believe as much of Christianity as they can, and that if they cannot in conscience believe more, they do well to profess it; but as to the question whether their fragment of faith ought to entitle them to share the civil and political privileges enjoyed exclusively by entire Christians, it is not in his province, but belongs to the civil authority of the country to decide.

Mr. de Luc, a celebrated chemist and theologian, has published a letter to these Jews, in which he boldly advances to meet them on the ground Dr. Teller eludes; he tells them that “far from scrupling points of Christian doctrine, they ought not even to abandon the standard of Moses; that the history of the earth and its present appearance are the strongest of all possible testimonies to the truth of the Mosaic history, and that if they would only take the pains to be better natural philosophers, they will not be so ready to renounce their faith as Jews.” There have been numerous pamphlets more written and published upon this subject, which made, as the French term it, a great sensation in the north of Germany.—*Letters from an American resident abroad on various topics of foreign literature, published in the Port Folio, 1801, Monthly Magazine, vol. x. 1800, and Gregoire’s Histoire des Sectes Religieuses, tom. ii.*

* Levi’s Dissertations on the Prophecies, vol. ii. Mr. Levi seems to view it as one reason why infidelity gains so much ground among

and not ascribing our sufferings to the immediate providence of God, but to a concatenation of causes in a political light." The other party are such, as either through the length of the captivity, or the easy circumstances that they are in, and the splendid and voluptuous manner in which they live, neither look for nor desire a restoration."*

The same author remarks, that "both these parties, nevertheless, adhere to the body of the nation, and outwardly conform to the Jewish rites; they thus remain Jews; are denominated God's people, the same as the true believers of the nation; and in like manner bear God's covenant in the flesh." "Even those of the nation that have not the least spark of religion in them, would yet be highly offended at being called Christians, Gentiles, or apostates."†

An ancient Jewish writer numbers among the children of Israel four sects, viz. the rabbinists, his nation, that "many wish not to be shackled with the burden of the ceremonial law."

* Dr. Adam Clarke informs us, that a Jewish rabbi, a man of extensive information and considerable learning, lately observed to him, "that as Moses had to do with a grossly ignorant, stupid, and headstrong people, he was obliged to have recourse to a pious fraud, and pretend that the laws he gave them were delivered to him by the Creator of all things, and that the time was not far distant when all the civilized world would be of one religion, that is, deism. When our author expressed his surprise at hearing a Jew talk thus, and asked him if any of his brethren were of the same mind, he answered, "Yes, every intelligent Jew in Europe, who reflects upon the subject, entertains the same sentiments."—*Clarke's Translation of Fleury's Ancient Israelites, English edition.*

† "This," says Mr. Adam, "is no doubt wonderful, and may be adduced as a proof of the truth of prophecy, and that the Jews are held together by an invisible and Almighty hand."—*Religious World Displayed, vol. i. p. 25.*

the Caraites, the Samaritans, and the disciples of Anan ; but the account which he gives of the last, contains no particulars ; they appear to hold the middle rank between the Caraites and Talmudists.*

The Rabbinists, or modern Pharisees, form the bulk of this nation. The two branches of Portuguese and German Jews are of this denomination, which includes all who admit traditions, &c. They, however, differ in practice from the ancient Pharisees, as they are far from affecting such an extraordinary sanctity.†

The Caraites reject the Talmudic traditions, and for that reason they are detested by those who admit them. In the last age a Caraites was at Frankfort on the Maine, and narrowly escaped being assassinated by the Jews of that city. A few of this denomination may be found in Turkey, in Europe, in cidevant Poland, and in the Ukraine, where they cultivate the land. There is a very ancient and interesting body of Caraites, in a fortress called Dschoufait Kale, near Bahchisaray in the Crimea, who possess and often use a translation of the Old Testament in Jagatai Tartar. An approximate calculation, made about the middle of the seventeenth century, gives only four thousand four hundred and thirty for their total number.

The sect of the Sadducees have made but little figure since the destruction of Jerusalem. A few indeed are said still to subsist in Africa, and some other places ; but they are rarely found, at least there are but few that declare themselves of these

* Gregoire's *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii. p. 308.

† Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*.



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CHAPTER XXXVII.

An account of the Samaritans.—After the destruction of Samaria, the principal place of their residence has been Naplouse, the ancient Sichem.—Their history was investigated by Joseph Scaliger, by Ludolph, and Huntington; and in the present century by the Senator Gregoire.—Recent account which was received from the Samaritans respecting their condition, belief, and customs.

*THE Samaritans were scattered in small numbers over several countries of the east; they had synagogues at Cairo, in Damascus, Jaffa, Gaza, Ascalon, and Cesarea. But after the destruction of Samaria, their chief place has always been Naples, or Naplouse, the ancient Sichem, the birth place of Justin Martyr, at some distance from Samaria, with which it has been improperly confounded by Herbelot, founded no doubt on the testimony of Stephen of Byzance, while he might have kept to that of St. Jerome, who lived in Palestine. Maundrell, and with him all the modern geographers, place Naplouse or Sichem between the Ebal, or Mount of Curses, and the Gerizim, or Mount of Blessings, which is held sacred by the Samaritans. They pretend, that Gerizim is understood in that passage of Deuteronomy, which enjoins all males to present themselves three times a year before the Lord.

Benjamin of Tudela asserts, that he found only one hundred Samaritans, poor and miserable, at Sichem, where they continued to offer sacrifices.

* The whole of the account of the Samaritans is translated from a late work of the senator Gregoire's, entitled, *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*.

This author is discredited ; but his account is confirmed by those travellers who followed him. Beauveau pretends, that the whole number of Samaritans at Naplouse, when he visited the city, did not exceed one hundred and fifty individuals.

The Chronicles of the Samaritans report, that, in the time of Adrian, they placed the figure of a pigeon on the summit of Gerizim, which made itself heard when a Samaritan came to pray on this mountain ; and that on this pretext, the Jews accused them of worshipping a dove.

Joseph Scaliger, having written to the Samaritans of Cairo and Naplouse, received, in the year 1590, an answer in Hebrew, which the learned Sylvester de Sacy translated into Latin from the autographs deposited in the national library, and which have been inserted in a journal of biblical and oriental literature. “ We are ignorant,” say they to Joseph Sullami, which is the name they give to Scaliger, “ what is thy faith ? thou declarest that from thy youth thou hast loved our law ; we cannot transmit to thee, by the hands of the uncircumcised, the copy which thou demandest. Send us two worthy, pious, prudent, and learned men, if thou wouldst know our law ; send us also alms for the treasury of Israel.” On the part of their high priest, they demand a present of stuffs for sacerdotal vestments. They consider themselves of the tribe of Joseph by Ephraim, and boast of having a grand pontiff of the race of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron. He is, according to them, the two hundred and twentieth from Aaron ; like him he has a son named

Phinehas, and these pontiffs never leave the inside of the temple. The Samaritans offer sacrifices ; they give the shoulder and some other parts to the priest. They celebrate seven feasts ; they are monogamists, and practise the legal ablutions. They reproach the Jews with not observing continency ; with going out of the city and lighting fires on the sabbath, and not obliging children to fast on the days prescribed by the law until they are seven years old, whilst among the Samaritans they except from this obligation only children at the breast.

A Jew of Palestine, being at Frankfort on the Maine, in 1684, Ludolph sent by him a letter to the Samaritans. He received answers, which are inserted by Morin in his *Antiquitates Ecclesiæ Orientalis*. The last reply, which was made in 1689, did not reach him till 1691. They asked whether there were any Samaritans in his country ? We have here, say they, a small number, who are very poor. They thanked him for the present of money which he had sent them, and requested new assistance to repair their holy place.

Ludolph, who inherited from Scaliger an ardent desire of renewing the correspondence with the Samaritans, wrote once more on the subject to Robert Huntington. This man, who was born in 1636, and died in 1701, was agent of the English factory at Aleppo. While travelling in Palestine, he visited Naplouse, where he found thirty Samaritan families, the remains of the Cutheans. There are, he asserts, perhaps as many at Gaza. It appears by a letter which they wrote to Joseph



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manded of Huntington if there were any Hebrews in his country, he replied affirmatively, and added, that in England they were called Jews. But as he informed them he read Samaritan with facility, they pretended that a Samaritan alone could have taught him, and that the Hebrews in England were their brothers. "It is not true," says Huntington, "that I persuaded them that they had brethren in my country; I supported the contrary opinion, but they would not believe me."

In this persuasion, the Samaritans, in 1672, sent to him at Jerusalem a copy of their law for their brethren in Great Britain, with a letter in the Hebrew language, (Samaritan characters) written by Merchib-Ben-Jacob, the most distinguished personage among them; it is written from Naplouse, near to Gerizim, the habitation of God, and addressed to their brethren in the city of England. They demand of them if they are Samaritans, if they believe in the holy mountain Gerizim; they solicit presents, as both Jews and Christians had sent presents to their holy places.

Huntington enclosed and transmitted the whole to Thomas Marshal, a learned Oxonian, who replied, and kept up a correspondence with them until the time of his death, which happened in 1685. Marshal spoke of the disobedience of the first man, which had rendered us all children of Belial, and brought death and a malediction upon all his descendants. He questioned them concerning the Shiloh, recalled to their remembrance the promise of a deliverer, and insensibly led them to recognize Jesus Christ. On the other side, the Samaritans

exhibited their doctrines, declaring that they had no images, repelled the charge of idolatry, and the accusation of adoring a dove, (an article which they never could forget) and requested alms. Their letters were translated into German by Schnurrer, professor of Tubingen. The care with which they have preserved the Samaritan Pentateuch attests its authenticity. Huntington here acknowledges the hand of divine providence in preserving this further proof of religion, and additional argument against incredulity, before the extinction of this feeble colony. Huntington believed that this epoch was at no great distance; but the following details prove, that he was deceived in this particular.

While Gregoire, bishop and senator, was occupied with his researches concerning the Hebrew nation, upon finding nothing in modern history respecting the Samaritans, since their letters to Joseph Scaliger, Huntington, Marshal, and Ludolph, and an age having elapsed since the latest of these accounts have been received, he, being eager to collect information, digested a series of questions, which the minister of foreign relations had the kindness to transmit to the French consuls at St. Jean d' Acre, Tripoli, Syria, and Aleppo. Their responses, which arrived in 1808, attest a zeal at once enlightened and courteous.

“The Samaritans,” (said the consul of St. Jean d' Acre) “persist in believing that the English Jews are of their sect. They live in the most abject poverty. Those whose condition is most tolerable are in the service of the chief of the country. This employment just affords them bread. The

others endeavour to gain it by industry ; they inhabit deserted old houses in a bad quarter of Naples.

“ The desk on which they place the holy scriptures is surmounted by the figure of a bird, which they call *Achima*, a word peculiar to their sect. When they invoke the Supreme Being, they do not say *Adonai*, like others, but *Achima*. From this they are supposed to adore the divinity, under the symbol of this bird which has the form of a dove.

“ If they are forced in their employment to touch a stranger, or his garment, they purify themselves as soon as possible. They marry only among themselves. The dead are considered impure ; they cause them to be buried by the Turks and Christians. The men have the manners of the wretched of all countries, being intemperate. A few of their women have disordered manners, but without publicity.

“ At their passover they go annually upon Gerizim to offer a sheep for a sacrifice. Formerly each family, at least the most considerable, sacrificed a sheep and a lamb ; but their means being straitened, they content themselves at present with a general offering.”

The reply of the consul of Tripoli proves that the taste for ancient literature is hereditary to the family of Guys. He examined the accusation levelled by the Jews against the Samaritans relating to their pretended adoration of a dove, and saw in it only a commemorative symbol of the bird which brought to Noah the sign of peace. He was led to examine an accusation too visibly marked by calumny



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There are among them some Serafs, (brokers) particularly the Seraf-el-Beled, or Seraf of the governor. The Turks in Naplouse leave them in quiet; Gezar Pacha, however, would have molested them, but they escaped by pretending they were Jews. The Samaritans speak Arabic and corrupt Hebrew.

To this information the consul of Aléppo, wishing to add some more particulars, transmitted directly to the Samaritans of Naplouse, the questions of Gregoire amplified, and obtained from the chief of their synagogue an answer in Arabic, which was translated into French* by Corances, jun.

“ To Mr. Corances, senior consul of France at Aleppo.

“ We have received your kind letter in which you propose thirty questions concerning the religious doctrines of the Samaritan nation. You demand a circumstantial reply, and we will grant your request.

“ We beseech you to continue the correspondence, for your letter gave us extreme pleasure.

“ You desire to know in what places the Samaritans are now found? You will find an answer to this question among the others; but we desire you to examine the letter which you have received from Paris, and see if any mention is there made of those who are at Genoa, for we have received two letters from them which inform us, that our nation is much more scattered over Europe than Turkey, and that their number amounts to one hundred and

* The 21st article will appear undoubtedly very obscure, and even unintelligible.

twenty-seven thousand, nine hundred and sixty souls. Do us the favour to enquire of the senator Gregoire, whether he has any knowledge of these Samaritans; and request him to establish through your medium, a correspondence with them, with us, and with those who are in Russia.

“ The 14th of July according to the Grecian calendar ; the year 6246 of the Hebrew era, since Adam ; the year 3256, since the departure of the Israelites from Egypt ; Tuesday 3d of Jumaelhi, 1223, (of the Hegira.)

“ Signed Salame Kahenm Kahenm, of the Samaritan nation at Naplouse.

“ P. S. We request a speedy reply.”

“ I Salame, Son of Tobias, Levite, priest at Sichem, praise the Lord. Amen.

“ Article 1st. There are no Samaritans to be found in our eastern countries excepting at Naplouse and Jaffa ; but it is now a hundred years since we received letters from Genoa, brought by a European, who was going to Jerusalem, and had a Hebrew Bible, written in a character similar to ours.

“ Art. 2d. It is now a hundred years since there have been any Samaritans in Egypt.

“ Art. 3d. The Samaritans at Jaffa and Naplouse amount to two hundred persons, men, women, and children.

“ Art. 4th. They consist of about thirty families, and dwell in the quarter of Rhadera, which was named by our lord Jacob, the king of the Samaritans, and where he resided, as is written in our holy Bible.

“ Art. 5th. The origin of the Samaritans is de-

rived from the true Israelites. We are really descended from our lord Jacob, called Israel, from whom sprang the twelve tribes, who entered into Egypt, amounting to seventy persons, and went out again by the number of six hundred thousand. After the miracles performed by their minister in Egypt, and in the desert by our lord Moses, son of Amram ; and who entered into the land of Canaan, where we, the descendants of the first settlers, still continue, after all the migrations which have happened to us. We are of the tribe of Joseph, son of our lord Jacob the Israelite.

“ Art. 6th. This is the difference between the Jews and ourselves ; the law is one, and consists of six hundred and thirteen precepts according to both. The only difference between us concerns the purification, which we observe, but which they cannot, because they are no longer masters of Jerusalem.

“ Art. 7th. Their law is exactly the same as ours from the beginning to the end, but we pronounce it differently from them.

“ Art. 8th. Our law is written in the true Hebrew language, the same which was found written on the tables of precious stone containing the ten commandments given by God to Moses. Some rabbies from Jerusalem, having examined the writing of our law, acknowledged it for the ancient Assyrian, handed down on the tables of precious stone.

“ From this we shall never deviate, and conformably to the word of God, “ neither add nor diminish.”

“ Art. 9th. There is then no difference between our law, and that of the Jews, except in the characters.



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precept there meant, “Hear, O Israel, God is our God, he is one, &c.”

“After all these prohibitions, how can we adore images of gold in an apartment, and pervert the worship of the true God to that of a turtle dove, or other animals wrought by men’s hands ?

“God says again, Thou shalt fear and adore the Lord thy God, and continue in his religion ; thou shalt swear by him. How then can we worship images, and forget his commands ? There are many similar precepts. God is our God, and we adore him at all times.

“Art. 13th. The sacrifice of sheep and lambs is the foundation of our law, and at the epoch of the tabernacle established by Moses, there were in the interior of it many altars for sacrifice, each for a certain era. One was an altar of expiatory sacrifice, the other for peace offerings. Moses ordained, that every day the chief of the tribes of Israel should offer a sacrifice morning and evening. This took place while the tabernacle stood. After the end of the time of grace, and the destruction of the tabernacle, our chief priests, of the family of Aaron, ordered us in place of the sacrifices, to make a prayer for a testimony of our fear of God, and to solicit from him pardon and indulgence.

“Art. 14th. The feast of the passover, which God commanded all Israel to observe, is in a fixed and invariable time, which is the first month of the year, as it is said, This is a law for all ages, on the first month, the fifteenth day, at the setting of the sun, it is to be observed in the chosen place, which is

Mount Gerizim. We eat it at midnight, according to the rites prescribed by the law, and that once a year.

“ Art. 15th. We offer our victims with the rites which are commanded, as it is said, “ You shall take a lamb of the first year, without blemish, from the goats or from the sheep, and keep it until the fourteenth day of the month ; you shall roast it in the fire, and eat it in haste rejoicing.” This sacrifice is accompanied by other ceremonies, too long to be detailed.

“ Art. 16th. These sacrifices ought to be offered on Mount Gerizim ; but for the last twenty years we have made them in the city, as we cannot now repair to the mountain.

“ Art. 17th. We offer our sacrifices in the open air, because God said to our lord Moses, Say to Pharaoh, Let us go three days' journey (from the city) and sacrifice to the Lord our God.

“ It was at first commanded that these sacrifices should be offered in the country. After the entrance of the people of Israel into Canaan, Mount Gerizim was chosen for this purpose, as God has declared in his law. The sacrifice of the passover must not be made in any of the inhabited places which the Lord has given you, but only in the spot which God has designated for this purpose. This place is the mountain above mentioned ; this renders it evident, that it can be offered but once a year. Those who are not present at this solemnity ought to celebrate it in the second month.

“ Art 18th. To the question when, and why sacrifices have ceased ? we reply ; that God forbid

that we should omit them, while it is in our power to perform them; but only for twenty years past, instead of Mount Gerizim, we offer them in the city, because it is comprised in the chosen place. Therefore we exactly observe the prescribed rites.

“ Art. 19th. We have a Levite priest of the race of Levi, but no Iman, or grand pontiff. In this country, we have had no priests of Aaron for one hundred and fifty years past.

“ Art. 20th. The grand pontiff is called in the law in Hebrew Hakchem Haggadol, and in Arabic illustrious chief, (raies et djalil). His functions, and those of all the tribe of Levi, are prescribed by the law. He may take the tithe of our sacrifices and property; he is to judge according to what is written in the law. He has also other privileges which would be too long to detail.

“ Art. 21st. You inquire whether the Samaritans are divided into different classes, and what are these divisions? There exists among us some known and observed divisions. These are the engagements which God entered into with our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and before these with Noah, and also with Phinehas, by which he established him Pontiff. We have likewise the divisions of heaven, and three engagements with Moses; and the Hebrew sea, which appears in the eclipses of the sun and moon, and the conjunctions by which we know on what day of the week the first of the month commences. We also know by this means the day of the feast which we celebrate, and on what day of the week it will take place. We have many other divisions; but these are all whose names it is neces-



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“ We cannot marry, but conformably to the rules, and in the degrees permitted by the law.

“ Art. 26th. Our dress is different from that of all other nations. We always wear a turban ; but on sabbaths and festivals, when we go to the temple, we dress wholly in white.

“ Art. 27th. Our population was scattered over Egypt, Damascus, Ascalon, and Cesarea. But six hundred years have elapsed, since these were carried away by the Franks, and are now found in their country. This is the cause of our diminished population. We have been reduced by the migrations which have taken place in past ages, according to the will of God.

“ Art. 28th. Our usages are, the observation of the commandments concerning holy days, and the sabbaths ; the observation of the degrees permitted and prohibited in marriage. The prayers which were ordained by God, and enjoined by the priests of Aaron, in place of the daily sacrifices which were abolished after the destruction of the tabernacle of Moses. Since that epoch, prayers were instituted for every festival, with particular ceremonies. There are three prayers for the sabbath, and each holy day has appropriate ones, as the prayers peculiar to the passover ; the feast of seven days, when we eat unleavened bread ; the pilgrimage to Mount Gerizim ; the feast of Pentecost, which is observed a certain number of days, and is terminated by a solemn festival in which we present ourselves before God. At that time we do not sleep, and employ ourselves without ceasing, day and night, in reading the law, and praising God. The fifteenth

is the feast of tabernacles, which has its own appropriate ceremonies, and we are also to appear before God.

“ Finally, the twenty-second is the festival of the closing of all the holy days, with ceremonies conformable to the orders of our high priests. All the above mentioned festivals are performed according to the commands of God.

“ Art. 29th. By an express order, given by God to Abraham, we observe circumcision, which is performed on the eighth day at sun-rise, and we observe all the ceremonies commanded on that occasion ; we cannot alter or disobey a single article.

“ Art. 30th. We say our prayers turned towards Mount Gerizim, which is the house of God, and of his angels, and where the Deity exhibits his majesty, and the place for the sacrifices, enjoined in the law. Our faces are therefore turned towards this place during prayer. According to the order of our pontiffs, prayers are now substituted for the sacrifices of sheep, which were offered morning and evening.

“ The 15th of July, according to the Greeks, in the year 1808, of Jesus Christ.”

The learned author to whom we are indebted for this recent account of the Samaritans observes, “ that during one hundred and nineteen years the communication between this sect and the Europeans had entirely ceased. The answer which I obtained to my queries, preserves a traditional chain of documents concerning them. Conformably to the promise which they exacted, I wrote to undeceive them respecting the opinion they had formed, that persons

of their sect were to be found in Russia and Genoa. They are not known in any part of Europe, and every circumstance concurs to induce us to believe, that those of Jaffa and Naplouse are the only Samaritans in existence. What they say of the transmigration of their brethren, who were carried to Europe by the Franks, appears to be totally destitute of proof. My researches into the history of the Crusades has afforded me no information to confirm their assertion.

“ Under the name of the Palestine Association, a society has recently been formed in England, the object of whose labours is every thing relating to the holy land, and the adjacent countries. The amiable and learned Hamilton of the academy of Calcutta is the president. The barriers interposed by war and politics between different parts of the globe deprives me of the means of corresponding with him ; but if some happy circumstance should place this account before his eyes, he will find in it the expression of my esteem, and my desire that he and his worthy coadjutors should second my researches concerning the Samaritans.”



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In order to realize his designs, Israel assumed the mask of exemplary piety, and joined to his name that of Balschem, or possessor of the name of God. The propensity of ignorant and credulous men towards the occult sciences procured him, in less than ten years, more than ten thousand followers, whom he called Chasidim. This name designated those men, who not content to follow the ritual laws of Moses, laboured to unite themselves more intimately to the Deity by their sanctity. But it was soon discovered, that the connexion between rabbi Israel and his disciples did not conduce to the end he had announced, and that their intentions and their actions were hostile to the principles of piety and morality. It was this which induced the Talmudist Elias, grand rabbin in Wilna, in concert with the elders of the synagogue of Brod, to write a work against the new sect, in order to prove, that it was injurious to the Jewish religion, and to the state. Elias, being near his death, enjoined all who visited him, to proclaim, that whoever loved God and man, ought carefully to shun all communication with the Chasidim, who, under the mantle of hypocrisy, concealed the most profound immorality.

The artful Israel Balschem, seeing it was necessary to strengthen his party to oppose the orthodox, exerted himself to gain the most opulent people, and published a work, which is the code of his doctrine, and which contains abominable principles. He prohibits his adherents, under the most severe spiritual penalties, to cultivate their minds. Those who possess information ought to suppress it; for it is dangerous, said he, to permit reason to interfere in

matters of religion. He is not willing that those who pray to God should melt into tears ; for the father beholds with more pleasure his children cheerful and happy, than discontented and sorrowful. Israel Loebel, the writer of this narrative, observes, that “ these ideas are contrary to the Jewish law ; for Moses commands us to study the laws of religion and the state. For why should God have given us reason, if we do not apply it to enlarge our religious knowledge ? Is it not our special destiny on earth to endeavour to approach the divinity ? The successors of Moses in the dignity of prophets have thought and taught like him.

“ If prayer is not accompanied with a fervent elevation of the heart to God, what is it, but an assemblage of insignificant words ? Are not the tears shed in prayer often signs of true devotion ? Do not the Talmudists teach, that in order to increase it, it is necessary to pray slowly, and without clamour ? Many of our nation, indeed, maintain that a large part of the ceremonies joined to prayer are superfluous ; yet they serve to strengthen our recollection.”

The following is a specimen of the maxims of this sect :—If any one has committed, or wishes to commit sin, he can promise himself absolution from his leader, without subjecting himself to a change of conduct, and leading a regular life. This detestable principle, especially among those who have received but little instruction, increased the number of Balschem's partizans to such a degree, that they amounted to forty thousand at the time of his death,

which took place fifteen years after the sect was founded.

At that time, his plan, both interior and exterior, assumed a new form. To a single leader they substituted many directors, who, to defend their doctrine, printed various works, after having published two posthumous ones attributed to their founder.

One of these productions, called *Kesser Schemtow* appeared at Korstchik and Zulkiew, in two parts. In the first part, he gives to his followers a general absolution for the sins which they have committed, and shall commit, on condition that they educate their sons Talmudists. He asserted, that his soul, being transported in an extacy to heaven, the archangel Michael, the protector of the Jews, declared to him, that on this condition every sinner should not only obtain remission, but even a reward for his crimes. In the second part, he invites his adherents to pray to Abraham, the father of the Jews, who has conducted so many of his unhappy race to the true belief, and who has preserved it in the souls of many disposed to quit it. He condemns all connection between their children and those who do not belong to the Hebrew nation, especially his sect.

The second posthumous work of Balschem, under the title *Likute Amomir*, has been printed at Lemburg, and in the two other cities before mentioned. He teaches, that in order to be united to the divinity it is necessary to commit sin upon sin; and that the more horrible they are, the more agreeable are they to him. For God being the first in the scale of



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tations have failed, and while we render justice to the talents and integrity of the authors, we regret that most of them, having their residence out of the country ravaged by the sect, attain their knowledge only from the relation of others.

When I, says Loebel, was rabbin at Moholyw, I had an opportunity to look about me and observe the progress of this sect, which obliged me to make exertions to preserve the community committed to my care from these pernicious sentiments. The Chasidim, having circumvented by their art, and entrapped in their errors, my only brother, an intelligent, and in other respects a good young man, I wrote many letters to him to open his eyes, by the contrast between his actual immorality, and the estimable conduct he had before maintained. I wrote also to the principal director of this sect, the famous rabbin Solomon Witeyst, and proved to him his errors by invincible arguments, with a menace of combating him publicly, if I could not recover my brother. My letters were unsuccessful, as was also a journey I made with the same views. But my journey having procured me an opportunity of disputing with the director, as I thought our conference would be interesting to many people, I printed it in Hebrew at Warsaw, under the title of Bituach. Emboldened by the success of this pamphlet, I published, in the same city, my work Kiwroth Hataywa, which is a severe, but impartial criticism upon the writings of the Chasidim. It obtained the flattering approbation of the wise Talmudists, whether national or foreigners. I am now about to give a succinct account of my conference with the rabbin

Solomon Witeyst, who being very urgent to see me, began the debate by addressing me in this despotic manner.

Solomon Witeyst. Who has ordered you to attack us? Are you more wise than many others, who have failed in the enterprize? If you have any thing to object to us, at least it was not necessary to divulge it to discredit our nation, already too much humbled.

Israel Loebel. It is necessary to correct our erring brethren. I might turn the question against you, for you know it is not permitted to any individual, ecclesiastical or civil, to found or patronize a new sect. It is said in holy writ, the laws are binding upon your descendants. Jeremiah says, Has any man ever changed his God and his faith? Why from the commencement of your sect have you affected a clandestine progress? If you only aspire to the title of separatists, live as a considerable part of our nation, who, though they do not strictly follow the Talmud, at least do not hate those who reject their opinions; but you abhor all who are not of your sect. As to what you say respecting the contempt which oppresses our nation, let us discuss this article. The Christians no longer revenge the death of Jesus Christ upon the descendants of the Jews. They do not believe that the Jews should be obliged to detest all who are not of their religion. They do not believe that our religion is contrary to morality and the state. Let us hope that from henceforth they will respect all the rites of humanity.

They reproach the Jews with their dishonesty,

But many of the Christians will not see that this accusation is only a pretence invented by hatred against our nation. They have left us no other profession than traffic, in which deception is more easily remarked than in any other calling. They have extremely restricted the faculty of commerce granted to the Jews, and they are loaded with taxes. But it is known that very honest merchants are found among them; and that there are some very dishonest Christian merchants. The Christians do not hate the Jews as such; and, in exposing your maxims as contrary to religion and the state, I have done no injury to our nation. I think we ought to free ourselves from contempt by revealing the crimes of our co-religionists.

Solomon Witeyst. All that you allege is without foundation; it is an attempt to oppress our sect. But you will fall into the pit which you have dug for us.

Israel Loebel. I abhor the maxims of your sect; for all your books contain invitations to libertinism. In that which is entitled, *Kesser Schemtow*, do we not read, that “sins committed upon certain conditions will be rewarded.” The nocturnal revels are, according to your system, the means of salvation. You intimidate the simple by false prophecies; you forbid the sick to consult a physician; and, levying a contribution on credulity and misfortune, you take money from the unhappy, and persuade them you can avert from them the wrath of heaven. By your dishonesty and rapine you have made thousands of men to perish; you have caused divorces, and given trouble to society, &c. &c.



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I had passed, who pointed me out to the rabbins of Lemberg as an enemy to the Chasidim. They repeated their accusations against me, and robbed me of my certificate of approbation, which the governor of the city caused to be restored to me; I returned to Cracow, where they showed me a decree from the chancery of Gallicia, sitting at Vienna, which commanded the seizure of my books, until a new order, considering that some members of the sect of pious Jews, (*die fromen juden*) had made remonstrances against them.

I perceived then the necessity of a journey to Vienna; and, in Jan. 1799, I presented my petition to the emperor, with a copy of my pamphlets, and supplicated him to order them to be translated by the rabbies of Moravia and Hungary. The consequence of my request was, that the Chasidim were prohibited from assembling in public, under severe penalties, in Austrian and Russian Poland.

Many chiefs of this sect emigrated into other parts. They established themselves in another part of Poland, especially at Grodzisk, at Bielsk, and at Strikow.

The learned author of the work,* from which the above account is translated, observes, "Thus ends the narrative of Israel Loebel. He promises the public further details of what he can collect concerning the Chasidim, who are a most abominable sect, if all the facts which have been mentioned against them are true. Many of them have, however, been contradicted by a Polish Jew, well informed and disinterested respecting the subject in

* *Gregoire's Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii. p. 348.

question. For example, he denies that the Chasidim are forbidden when sick to consult physicians, and medicine. He even cites one of the richest partizans of this sect, who had recourse to all the succours of art to heal his daughter, and expended more than five thousand ducats. Some of the crimes imputed to the Chasidim are so enormous, that they surpass credibility ; and how can we judge a cause of this kind upon the exclusive evidence of one advocate ?”*

In 1756, a small society of Jews in Podolia, being disgusted with the Talmud, made a profession of faith almost Christian, which is as follows : “ We believe all that God has taught and ordained in the Old Testament. The grace of God is indispensable in order to understand the sacred writings. The Talmud ought to be rejected, because it contains blasphemies against God. God is the Creator of all that exists ; God is one in essence, and triple in person. It is possible that God became incarnate, and submitted to human infirmities, in order to expiate human sins. According to the prophecies, it is certain that Jerusalem will never be rebuilt. The Messiah promised in the scriptures is no longer to come. God himself will abolish the malediction pronounced on our ancestors and their posterity, and he is the true incarnate Messiah.†

These Anti-Talmudists held assemblies at Lan-koron in Podolia, for the purpose of reading the Bible, and performing other religious exercises. They were accused by the Talmudists of giving

* Gregoire's *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii. p. 348.

† Gregoire's *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii.

themselves up to dissipation, and being associated with the sect of Zabathai Tzevi,* under the direction of a Jew from the frontiers of Turkey. The accused proved that these imputations were false; and as they were incessantly insulted by the more numerous Talmudists, who caused them to be excommunicated and proscribed, they demanded an official safeguard from the bishop of Caminiek; when they were declared innocent, their enemies were condemned to pay them a fine, and also to give one hundred and fifty-two Hungarian crowns of gold towards repairing the towers of the cathedral of Caminiek. The bishop declared himself the protector of the Anti-Talmudists, and exhorted the two parties to live in peace, and to search truth in the holy scriptures. Some time after, the Anti-Talmudists wrote to Augustus III. king of Poland, and to the primate, who answered them affectionately, and to the archbishop of Lemburg, declaring to him that they recognized Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and desired baptism.†

Towards the conclusion of the last century, there were at Prague Jews who were, or who were said to be, disciples of Zabathai Tzevi. The rabbi excommunicated them *even from the other world*, and interdicted them from entering the synagogue, from whence they were driven with great fury. The magistrate, obliged to interpose his authority, caused several of the principal persecutors to be imprisoned, and condemned them to bread and

* That the followers of this impostor have continued till the present time has been mentioned in chapter 22nd.

† Gregoire's *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*, tom. ii. p. 312.



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CHAPTER XXXIX.

Of the dissimulation of many Jews who have professed the Christian religion.—An account of several distinguished converts.—Account of a Society formed in London for the express purpose of converting the Jews.—Of their success.—A large extract from a speech made by Dr. Buchanan at the first anniversary meeting of the London Society.

NOTWITHSTANDING the long protracted calamities the Jews have suffered since their dispersion, the most violent persecutions have never prevailed upon the general mass of this people to abjure their religion. David Levi, speaking of those among his brethren, who, in all ages have professed Christianity, observes, that “they have not acted voluntarily, but by compulsion, as in Spain and Portugal, or from interested motives, as there, and elsewhere; that notwithstanding they seemed to apostatize, and pretended to embrace Christianity, yet in their hearts they secretly adhered to the true faith and law of Moses; and such are at this day called among us, *the compelled*, because they act by compulsion; for, as soon as they can by any means escape from the popish countries, they instantly return to Judaism.” “I am free to assert,” says he, “that there is scarcely an instance of a Jew ever having embraced Christianity on the pure principles of religion, but merely from interested motives.”*

It is an acknowledged fact that there have been multitudes of dissembling Jews, particularly in Spain and Portugal. But still there has been,

* Levi's Dissertations, &c. vol. ii. p. 15.

doubtless, a number in every age, who have professed the Christian religion from a real conviction of its truth; some of whom have written and preached in defence of the faith they once denied. Several instances, apparently of this kind, have been mentioned in the preceding parts of this work, to which may be added a few others at a later period.*

About the year 1762, Solomon Duitch, a learned rabbi and teacher of several synagogues in Germany, renounced Judaism. During seven years his mind had been perplexed with doubts respecting religion; but, at length, the difficulties which had embarrassed him were removed, and he openly professed himself a disciple of Christ. After he was fully convinced of the truth and excellence of the Christian religion, he published a narrative of his conversion, and became a zealous preacher of the Gospel. He lived and died in Holland.†

In 1797, Juan Joseph Heydeck, a learned Jewish convert in Spain, published at Madrid, a work entitled, “A defence of the Christian Religion,” in four volumes quarto. He was chosen professor of oriental languages in that country.‡

Mr. Lapidoth, a wealthy and respectable Jew in Holland, in early life entertained doubts respecting the Jewish religion; and having secretly procured a New Testament, and continued his researches,

* In Chapman's Eusebius we have an account from Wolfius, J. Scaliger, Kidder, Bayle, &c. of twenty-nine Jews of talents and credit converted to Christianity by an accurate investigation of the prophecies. Some of these have been mentioned in chapter xxv. and other parts of this work.

† Christian Observer, 1809.

‡ Gregoire's Histoire, &c.

after various perplexities, he and his wife and adult children became firmly convinced of the truth of the Christian religion. In 1805, he and his family were publicly baptized.*

The Missionary Society in London were engaged, about the year 1800, in attempting the conversion of the Jews, but without any encouraging success. In 1809, however, a Society was formed for the exclusive object of converting the Jews, and called the "London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews." Lectures were accordingly preached in order to convince the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah; and Schools were opened to receive the children of such Jewish parents, as would allow them to be instructed in the principles of Christianity. Tracts were also printed containing evidences of the divine origin of the Gospel. This Society was at first composed of Christians of various denominations. At length, however, the pecuniary affairs of the Society became embarrassed, and other inconveniences were foreseen; it was therefore agreed, in the year 1815, that the affairs of the Society should be entrusted to a Committee of Members of the Established Church of England, and that it should be from that time forward a Society regularly conducted on the principles of that Church. It ought to be recorded in a history of the Jews, that to the munificence of a benevolent individual, is the Society indebted for relief from its pecuniary difficulties. The Right Rev. the Lords Bishops of St. David's and Gloucester, are Patrons of this Institution, and Sir

* Evangelical Magazine, 1806.



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almost instantaneously created in the public mind, are sure prognostics of its perpetuity. It is one of those institutions, which, like the Bible Society, needs only to be proposed, to recommend itself to the minds of men, by its perfect reasonableness and propriety ; and I may add, by the divine obligation it involves. I entertain a confident hope, that this Society, or some institution analogous to it, will be perpetual in the church of Christ ; and that it will endure, to use an oriental expression, as long as sun and moon endure ; or, at least, as long as there is a Jew in the world, who is not a Christian.

“ There is a measure I would propose to the consideration of your Society, which I think will contribute to its celebrity and success. I would suggest to you to open a correspondence with the Jews in the east.

“ Perhaps it may not be known to some, that, by the events of the late war in India, a colony of Jews have become subjects to Great Britain. This is the colony of the White and Black Jews of Cochin. The number is calculated to be about sixteen thousand. I am informed, that the number of Jews in the United Kingdom is not computed to be greater than fourteen thousand. So that our Jewish subjects in the east are yet more numerous than those in the west ; and they are equally entitled to the regard and attention of your Society.

“ I visited Cochin soon after the conquest of the province. The Jews received me hospitably, and permitted me to examine their libraries and their synagogues ; and they presented to me many valuable manuscripts, which are deposited in the library

of the university of Cambridge. One of these is a roll of the Pentateuch, on goats' skins dyed red; one of the most ancient perhaps which the east can produce. The White Jews live on the sea coast, and have commerce with foreign nations; the Black Jews live chiefly in the interior of the country. The Hindoos call them Israeli; they call themselves Beni-Israel, and not Jews; for their ancestors did not belong to Judah, but to the kingdom of Israel. They consider themselves to be descended from those tribes which were carried away at the first captivity. In some parts of the east, the Beni-Israel never heard of the second temple; they never heard of the Christian account of the coming of the Messiah. Some of them possess only the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and Book of Job; others have no portion of scripture left. But their countenance, and their observance of the sabbath, and of peculiar rites, demonstrate that they are Jews. The White Jews of Cochin despise the Black Jews, as being of an inferior cast, and do not approve of intermarriages with them, because they do not belong to the second temple. Both among White and Black Jews I found that there was a general impression that there would soon be a rumour of wars, and a commotion among the peoples on their account. The White Jews expect a second Cyrus from the West, who shall build their temple the third and last time.*

* Dr. Buchanan, in his *Researches in Asia*, observes, "I have had many interesting conferences with the Jews on the subject of their present state; and have been much struck with two circumstances; their constant reference to the desolation of Jerusalem, and their confident hope that it will be one day rebuilt. The desolation of the

“ You may address the Jews of Cochin with great advantage on the subject of the Christian religion ; for they have the evidence of the Syrian Christians before them. These ancient Christians live in the vicinity, and are your witnesses. At one place in the interior of the country, which I visited, there is a Jewish synagoguè and a Christian church in the same Hindoo village. They stand opposite to each other, as it were the law and the gospel ; bearing testimony to the truth, in the presence of the heathen world.

“ I was informed, that many years ago one of the Jews translated the New Testament into Hebrew for the purpose of confuting it, and of repelling the arguments of his neighbours, the Syrian Christians. The manuscript fell into my hands, and is now in the library of the university of Cambridge.

holy city is ever present to the minds of the Jews, when the subject is concerning themselves as a nation ; for though without a king, and without a country, they constantly speak of the unity of their nation. Distance of time and place seems to have no effect in obliterating the remembrance of the desolation. I often thought of the verse in the Psalms, “ If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.” They speak of Palestine as being close at hand, and easily accessible. It is become an ordinance of their rabbins in some places, that, when a man builds a new house, he shall leave a small part of it unfinished, as an emblem of ruin, and write on it these words, *Zecher Lachorchan*, i. e. in memory of desolation.

“ Their hopes of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, the third and last time, under the auspices of the Messiah, or of a second Cyrus, before his coming, are always expressed with great confidence. They have a general impression, that the period of their liberation from the heathen is not very remote ; and they consider the present commotions in the earth as gradually loosening their bonds. ‘ It is,’ say they, ‘ a sure sign of our approaching restoration, that in almost all countries there is a general relaxation of the persecutions against us.’ ”

—*Researches in Asia*, p. 226.



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every nation, previous to the general illumination. The conversion of Jacob Levi is recorded in the proceedings of the Society, in Bartlett's Buildings, London.

“ But there is another body of Jews, not a colony, but a kingdom of Jews, to which this Society may also address itself; and that is the ten tribes; for the ten tribes, so long lost, have, at length, been found. It has been sufficiently ascertained by the investigation of the learned in India, that the Affghan and Pyran nations consist of the descendants of the Jewish tribes of the first dispersion.

“ When I was in the south of India, I asked the Black Jews where their brethren, the great body of the ten tribes, were to be found? They answered promptly, that they were to be found in the north, in the regions adjacent to Chaldea, the very country whither they were first carried into captivity. On my return to Calcutta, I prosecuted the inquiry, under the advantages which my superintendance of the College of Fort William afforded me. Sir William Jones* had recorded it as his opinion, that the Affghans were Jews; and referred to various autho-

* This great man strongly recommended an inquiry into the language, literature, and history of the Affghans. “ We learn,” says he, “ from Esdras, that the ten tribes, after a wandering journey, came to a country called Arsareth, where we may suppose they settled. Now the best Persian historians affirm, that the Affghans are descended from the Jews; and they have among themselves traditions of the same import. It is even asserted, that their families are distinguished by the names of Jewish tribes, though since their conversion to Islamism they have studiously concealed their origin. The language they use has a manifest resemblance to the Chaldaic, and a considerable district under their dominions is called Hazareth, which might easily have been changed into Arsareth.”—*Asiatic Researches*, vol. ii. p. 76, and *Works of Sir William Jones*, vol. i. p. 336.

rities. A further investigation confirmed the judgment of this illustrious scholar. There were Affghan Jews in Calcutta at the time: one of my own servants was an Affghan. The Affghans are generally reputed by us to be Mahomedans. I asked my servant if he was a Mahomedan? "No," said he, "I am a Mahomedan Jew." I plainly discerned in his countenance the features of the London Jew. The general account of the Affghans is this; that their ancestors were Jews; that their common histories record the names of David, Saul, and other kings of Israel; that the Mahomedans came upon them with an invading army, and said unto them, We are Jews as well as you; we observe circumcision, and keep the sabbath; let us incorporate our nations, and be one people, and unite against the infidels,—that they made a show of yielding to Mahomedanism (as the Jews of Spain and Portugal pretended to yield to Christianity); but in process of time the ascendancy of the new religion corrupted their ancient institutions; their sacred books began to diminish in number; and it came to pass at last, that in many places they could be only recognized to be Jews by their countenance, by tradition, by peculiar rites, and the observance of the sabbath; which are the only marks which distinguish some of the Beni-Israel of the south of India. Let us therefore address the ten tribes, and receive them in the state in which, by the providence of God, they are to be found. Some of the Jews of London are as ignorant, and as little entitled to the name, as the Affghans of India.

“ But there is a third body of Jews to whom you

ought to write ; I mean the Samaritan Jews. They are not far from the shores of the Mediterranean, and are easily accessible. They possess only the Pentateuch. They are few in number, and will receive with much deference, any communication which you will be pleased to make to them, relating to their religion, and to the present state of the Jewish nation.

“ Let letters then be addressed to these three bodies of Israelites ; not in the name of Christians, but in the name of the converted Jews, who compose a part of this Society : but not in the rabbinical Hebrew, (for there are upwards of twenty dialects of rabbinical, or commercial Hebrew in the world) but in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, which all understand ; let them be informed of the great events that have taken place in the west, namely, that Jews have become Christians ; that the Christians are sending forth preachers to teach all nations ; that the Messiah is surely come ; and that the signs of the times encourage the belief, that Israel is about to be restored in a spiritual sense.”

The doctor expresses his surprise, that “ the Society have not as yet obtained a version of the New Testament in the Hebrew language for the use of the Jews. How strange,” says he, “ it appears, that, during a period of eighteen hundred years, the Christians should never have given the Jews the New Testament in their own language ! By a kind of infatuation, they have reprobated the unbelief of the Jews, and have never at the same time told them what they ought to believe.”*

* Since this important suggestion from Dr. Buchanan, a translation



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to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of St. David's, dated Moscow, February 1818, by the Rev. Lewis Way, of Stansted Park, Sussex," who, in company with the Rev. Nehemiah Solomon, a converted Jew, recently ordained to the ministry in the church of England, has travelled from Holland to Russia, and from thence to the Crimea, for the sole purpose of ascertaining the present state of the Jews, and of distributing the Hebrew Testament amongst them.

All the publications of the London Society are to be had at their house, No 10, Wardrobe Place, Doctors' Commons.

CHAPTER XL.

General character of the Jews, moral and literary.—Of the number of this people now existing.—Concluding Reflections.

THE Jews, notwithstanding the calamities they have so long endured, still look down upon all nations, and continue to claim the partial kindness and protection of heaven. The miracles, performed in favour of the first Hebrews, inspired their descendants with a contempt for those nations which the Deity never honoured in the same manner. They are more elated with the advantages granted to their ancestors, than humiliated by the calamities which they have endured since their dispersion.*

We may number among the most striking traits which designate the Jewish character, the wonderful uniformity of views that appear to have influenced the actions of this extraordinary people through the course of so many ages.† The Rabbins, which form the bulk of the nation in different countries, agree in their dogmas, rites, and religious habits; because no religion establishes such an uniformity in doctrine as the Mosaic, which, joined to the traditions of the doctors, regulates with the utmost minuteness every thing which respects life. These people, wherever dispersed, have carried with them their language and religion, and abandoned none of the customs but those which they could not preserve. Even climate has had scarcely any effect upon them,

* Basnage, p. 748. Gregoire on the Reformation of the Jews, p. 37.

† Essay on the Commercial Character of the Jews, p. 5.

because their manner of life counteracts and weakens its influence. Difference of periods and countries has, therefore, strengthened their character, instead of altering its original traits.*

The Jews, since their final expulsion from Palestine, have universally attached themselves to traffic for a subsistence. Being generally prohibited from acquiring and cultivating land, and interdicted from following trades and professions, the objects of their industry have been limited, and they compelled to confine themselves to commerce. The political state of the European powers in the middle ages furnished them with many, and even lawful means, of enriching themselves. Buying and selling were occupations confined exclusively to them; and they conducted the whole retail trade in Europe,* espe-

* The author of the Letters of certain Jews to Voltaire asserts, that "the Jews, being dispersed in different nations, have assumed their character. A Portuguese Jew of Bourdeaux," says he, "and a German Jew of Metz, appear both to be absolutely different."—But the learned author, from whose work on the Reformation of the Jews the above remarks are extracted, observes, "I allow this may be the case in some shades; the usual consequence of disparity of fortune, poverty and opulence, luxury and misery.—But by searching historical documents we shall find, that, unless in the above respects, the Jewish nation has ever been the most like itself at all times, both in belief and usages.

"These people, however," says our author, "have been modified by their dispersion; but this modification extends only to two objects, their obstinate attachment to their belief, which they abandoned with so much facility in ancient times, and that spirit of avarice which seems to be their ruling passion." Commerce has introduced a remarkable change in their morals. But even commerce, which tends to efface national characters, and to render them perfectly alike, has scarcely made any impression on those of the Hebrew people.—*Gregoire on the Reformation of the Jews*, p. 34—36.

* It has been adduced in proof of this assertion, that the Jews have only applied themselves to commerce since their dispersion; that



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Another late author remarks, that “the Jews on many accounts are entitled to a very high degree of esteem, from their general character and deportment. Their charities to the poor of their own communion are immense; and their peculiar isolated situation through the world, in the midst of strangers, has drawn the bonds of affection towards one another more close. Their care to adjust their differences in civil concerns amicably among themselves is edifying; and let it not be forgotten, that, if on any account they are justly censurable, our unworthy treatment of them may have forced them into the very acts which we condemn.”*

In the midst of their calamities and depression, the Jews have all along paid some attention to their language and religion; but dispersed as they are, and without a country of their own, they cannot be expected to have such national establishments as universities; yet in almost every considerable town on the continent, where they reside in any great numbers, schools† are formed under the auspices of their presiding or dominant rabbies, who confer titles on their scholars, or on others who deserve them. They appear to have two degrees, analogous

* Adam's Religious World Displayed, vol. i. p. 80.

† They formerly established the celebrated academies of Jafna, Tiberias, Jerusalem, Lydda, Cesarea, Sephora in Galilee, Pheruty, Bitterah near Shibour, Sora, Nahardea, Pundebita, Lunel, Alexandria; and at a later period those of Sapheta, Thessalonica, Prague, Fez, Cracow, Rome, Bologna, Vienna, and Augsburg. In the present century, since their condition is ameliorated, we find them establishing schools in Germany, and other places; and making great improvements in literature. The following are their most distinguished academies in the present day; viz. Salonichi, Fez, Padua, Amsterdam, Rome.

to, and most probably taken from the usages at universities ; the one rabbi, nearly equivalent to A. B. and the other Morenu Rab, answering to doctor. These appear to be of modern institution, and to have commenced about the year 1420 ; previous to which the latter term is not found ; and the distinction is supposed to have become necessary, in order to prevent the irregular conducting of marriages and divorces, which every one presumed to do, in consequence of the title of rabbi, although not sufficiently informed, or qualified for the office. The origin of these schools was evidently the sanhedrim in the temple ; by whose determination the laws were explained, and all the Mosaic institutions were reduced to minute and actual practice. The form, period, and manner of all ceremonies and observances were by them established, and handed down to successive sanhedrims, who, as intricate circumstances and questions arose, gradually enlarged the code, and provided for both extraordinary and ordinary situations.*

An ingenious author, who is said to be of Jewish origin,† has, however, observed, that “ the entire system of Hebrew education is inimical to the progress of the human mind. Dark and stationary in ignorance, or bewildered with intricate super-

* Adam's Religious World Displayed, vol. i. p. 57.

† M. Berr Isaac Berr, a celebrated literary Jew, in a letter addressed to his brethren, 1791, observes, “ we have been in a manner compelled to abandon the pursuit of all moral and physical sciences, of all sciences in short, which tend to the improvement of the mind, in order to devote ourselves entirely to commerce, to be enabled to gather as much money as would ensure protection, and satisfy the rapacity of our persecutors.—*Transactions of the Sanhedrim of Paris*, p. 14.

stitution, their modes of life are little favourable to forming a taste for the productions of nature and art; and the sole occupation permitted them, the art of acquiring wealth, extinguishes their bolder and prominent passions.* Men of learning among the Jews are obliged to encounter numerous obstacles; and their most malignant and powerful enemies are found among their domestic associates. If a literary Christian is matured at thirty, a literary Jew can scarcely be matured at forty. They have, therefore, addicted themselves to those studies which have little connexion with the manners of men. They have had severe metaphysicians, and industrious naturalists; and have excelled in the practice of medicine. But in polite letters they have had few literary characters of eminence. Sensible that they do not at present bear chains under tyrants, they feel grateful that they exist under men; but the energies of glory die in inertion, and honour is strangled by the silken cord of commerce."

The Hebrew nation are at present scattered over the face of the habitable globe. They are numerous in some parts of Asia, particularly the Turkish dominions. Various countries in Africa contain a large number, as Egypt and Ethiopia; and it is computed, that there are four hundred thousand in Morocco, Algiers, and Fez.† They are said to be more numerous in Poland than any part of Europe; and have been estimated at seven

* D'Israeli's *Vaurien*, or *Sketches of the Times*, vol. ii. p. 245—250.

* Boissi's *Dissertations Critiques*, &c.



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professed disciples of the benevolent Redeemer violating the fundamental precepts of the Gospel; assuming a shew of piety as a mask for avarice, and a pretence for pillaging an unhappy people. If from the west we turn to the east, we shudder over similar scenes of horror; wherever the Mahometan banner is erected, contempt and misery await the Jews. In short, their history exhibits all the wild fury of fanaticism; the stern cruelty of avarice; a succession of massacres; a repetition of plunders; shade without light; a dreary wilderness, unenlivened with one spot of verdure.*

Still, however, in traversing the desert, a wonderful object arrests our attention, and the feelings of indignation and compassion are suspended by astonishment while we contemplate the “bush burning with fire, and not consumed,”—a helpless race of men, whom all nations have endeavoured to exterminate, subsisting during ages of unrelenting persecution; and though dispersed in all nations, still in all countries preserving their own customs and religious rites; connected with each other by

* Such has been the state of the Jews for a series of ages. But in the last and present century their condition has been greatly ameliorated in various parts of Europe. “Christians,” says Dr. Buchanan, “in all countries begin to consider, that the *indignation against the holy people* is nearly accomplished. Many events declare it. The indignation of man is relaxing. The prophecies have been fulfilled regarding it. The great crime at Calvary has been punished by all nations: and we now hear the words of the prophet addressing us, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned,” Isaiah xl. i. This is the divine command. And behold, Christians begin now, for the first time, “to speak comfortably to Jerusalem.”—*Buchanan’s Researches in Asia*, p. 210.

a community of sentiments, of antipathies, and pursuits, yet separated by a wonderful destination from the general mass of mankind.

The preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, is an event unparalleled in the annals of history. To use the animated language of a modern writer* of their own nation, “Braving all kinds of torments, the pangs of death, the still more terrible pangs of life, we have withstood the impetuous torrent of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course, nations, religions, and countries. What is become of those celebrated empires whose very name still excites our admiration by the ideas of splendid greatness attached to them, and whose power embraced the whole surface of the known globe? They are only remembered as monuments of the vanity of human greatness. Rome and Greece are no more; their descendants, mixed with other nations, have lost even the traces of their origin; while a population of a few millions of men, so often subjugated, stands the test of thirty revolving centuries, and the fiery ordeal of fifteen centuries of persecution. We still preserve laws which were given to us in the first days of the world, in the infancy of nature. The last followers of a religion which had embraced the universe have disappeared these fifteen centuries, and our temples are still

* M. Michael Berr's "Appeal to the Justice of Kings and Nations," written and published at Strasburg in 1801, and cited in the Transactions of the Parisian Sanhedrim. This learned author is counsellor at law, member of several academies, and deputy for the department of la Seine. He still continues to exert all his talents in defence of the rights and interests of the Jews, whom he proved, in the above work, entitled to the benevolence of all sovereigns.

standing. We alone have been spared by the indiscriminating hand of time, like a column left standing amidst the wreck of worlds, and the ruins of nature. The history of this people connects present times with the first ages of the world; by the testimony it bears of the existence of those early periods. It begins at the cradle of mankind, and its remnants are likely to be preserved to the very day of universal destruction."

"The Jews," says a late Christian author, "are a living and continual miracle, continuing to subsist as a distinct and peculiar race for upwards of three thousand years, and even in the midst of other nations; flowing forward in a full and continued stream, like the waters of the Rhone, without mixing with the waves of the expansive lake through which the passage lies to the ocean of eternity."*

The preservation of this extraordinary people during their calamitous dispersion exhibits the faithfulness of the Deity in fulfilling his gracious promise, that, "when they are in the land of their enemies, he will not cast them away, nor destroy them utterly,"† and, "I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee, but will correct thee in measure,"‡ &c. The care of Divine Providence is wonderfully displayed in saving the outcasts of Israel from utter extermination, while groaning under the most furious intolerance.§

* Adam's Religious World Displayed, vol. i. p. 16.

† Leviticus xxxiii. 44.

‡ Jeremiah xxx. 11.

§ "We ought above all," says a Jewish writer, "to return our



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present century.* Many pious and learned men have supposed that they will not only be converted to the Christian religion, but restored to Palestine, and placed in a state more splendid and glorious than ever. In support of this opinion it is argued, that they never have received that abundance of temporal and spiritual blessings, which it was predicted they should enjoy after their return from captivity;—that the promises relate to the twelve tribes, as well as those of Judah and Benjamin;—that a double return is predicted by several prophets; and that those who lived after the Babylonian captivity have foretold their restoration in similar terms with those who preceded them. The concurring testimony which arises from the state of the Jews in the world, and the expectation they entertain of being restored to their own land, have also been adduced in support of this opinion.†

The prophecies, however, which are alleged in order to prove the return of the Hebrew nation to Palestine, can only be completely explained by the events which accomplish them. “Over the Jews as well as us revelation extends its majestic veil.”

* Dr. Hartley, Dr. Priestley, and others, have written in defence of the restoration of the Jews to their native country. At a later period Mr. Faber has published a work on this subject, in which he adduces various passages from the prophets, with a view to show, that after a period of the most terrible political convulsions which the world ever witnessed, the Jews will be restored to Palestine, partly in a converted, and partly in an unconverted state; that the ten tribes will be afterwards converted and restored, and with the tribe of Judah united under one head, the king Messiah, and reign with him a thousand years in high pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. Then modern Judaism and Popery, Paganism and Mahometanism, will be exchanged for the pure and undefiled religion of the Gospel.

† Hartley's Observations on Man, vol. iii. p. 373.

But while the operations of Divine Providence are rapidly unfolding the volume of predictions, the sacred page has already clearly opened a source of consolation to those who are anxiously waiting for the redemption of Israel. An inspired apostle has assured us, that the Jews, “the natural branches of the Olive Tree,”* though now broken off by unbelief, will “be grafted in again,” and participate with the Gentiles in the blessings resulting from faith in Jesus the Messiah. Persuaded then of this, on the ground of Divine Revelation, and commiserating a people who have been, during so many ages, exiles from their own land, and exposed, as this history has fully shewn, to numberless calamities attendant on banishment, the Christian reader cannot surely close this volume more suitably than with a resolution to pray frequently and fervently for their promised conversion, and with a generous desire to enrol his own name amongst those of the subscribers to the “London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews;”—a Society whose views are pure, disinterested, and extensive; and whose efforts, it seems highly probable, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, will in the present age honour, as the means of bringing descendants of those illustrious patriarchs, to the acknowledgment of the “truth as it is in Jesus,” and “the obedience of faith.”

* See Romans xi. 24.

APPENDIX.

THE ten tribes who were carried captive by the king of Assyria have been lost for more than two thousand years. Various conjectures have been formed, both by Jews and Christians, respecting the place of their residence;* some of which shall be briefly mentioned.

Menasses Ben Israel, in a work, styled, "The Hope of Israel," has attempted to prove, that the American natives were the descendants of the ten tribes. This opinion has been adopted by some Christian writers, particularly by James Adair, Esq. a trader with the Indians, and resident in the country for forty years. He was a most careful observer of their whole economy, both public and private, and had the best opportunity of knowing it, without much danger of deception. In a work, entitled, "The History of the American Indians," he concludes his observations on their origin and descent as follows: "From the most exact observations I could make in the long time I traded among the Indian Americans, I was forced to believe them lineally descended from the Israelites, either while they were a maritime power, or soon after the general captivity; the last, however, is the most probable. Had the nine tribes and a half of Israel, which were carried off by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and settled in Media, continued there long, it is very probable, by intermarrying with the natives, and from their natural fickleness and proneness to idolatry and the force of example, that they would have adopted and bowed before the gods of the,

* For far more satisfactory observations, than this Appendix furnishes, respecting the places of residence of the descendants of the ten tribes, see Dr. Buchanan's Christian Researches.



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nation were ordered to worship at Jerusalem, Jehovah, the true and living God, who, by the Indians, is styled Yohevah. The ancient heathens, it is well known, worshipped a plurality of gods, as various as the countries they inhabited ; and as numerous with some as the days of the year. But the Indian Americans pay their religious devoir to the “ great beneficent, supreme, holy spirit of fire,” who resides, (as they think) above the clouds, and on earth also with unpolluted people. He is with them the sole author of all animated and vegetable nature. They do not pay the least perceivable worship to any image, or to dead persons, neither to the celestial luminaries, nor evil spirits, nor any created being whatsoever.*

3d. Agreeably to the theocracy, or divine government of Israel, the Indians think the Deity to be the immediate head of their state. All the nations of Indians are exceedingly intoxicated with religious pride, and have an inexpressible contempt of the white people. They used to call us in their war orations, the accursed people. But they flatter themselves with the name of the beloved people, because their supposed ancestors, as they affirm, were under the immediate government of the Deity, who was present with them in a very peculiar manner, and directed them by prophets, while the rest of the world were aliens and outlaws to the covenant. When the old Archimagus, or any one of their Magi, is persuading the people at their religious solemnities to a strict observance of the old beloved, or divine speech, he always calls them the beloved or holy people, agreeably to the Hebrew epithet Ammi, (my people) during the theocracy of Israel. He urges them with great energy to imitate their virtuous ancestors, and flourishes upon their beloved land, which flowed with milk and honey. It is their opinion of the theocracy, or that God chose them out of all the rest of mankind, as his peculiar people, which alike animates

* Adair, p. 15.

both the White Jew, and the Red American with that steady hatred against all the world except themselves, and renders them hated or despised by all.

4th. The Indian language and dialects appear to have the very idiom and genius of the Hebrew. Their words and sentences are expressive, concise, emphatical, sonorous, and bold ; and often both in letters and signification are synonymous with the Hebrew language.*

5th. They count time after the manner of the Hebrews. They divide the year into spring, summer, autumn, or the falling of the leaf, and winter. They number their years from any of these four periods, for they have no name for a year ; and they subdivide these, and count the year by lunar months, like the Israelites, who reckoned by moons. The number and regular periods of the Indians' religious feasts is a good historical proof that they counted time by and observed a weekly sabbath long after their arrival on the American continent. They began their year at the first appearance of the first new moon of the vernal equinox, according to the ecclesiastical year of Moses.

6th. In conformity to and after the manner of the Jews, the Indian Americans have their prophets, high priests, and others of a religious order. As the Jews had a sanctum sanctorum, so have all the Indian nations. There they deposit their consecrated vessels, none of the laity daring to approach this sacred place ; the Indian tradition says, that their ancestors were possessed of an extraordinary divine spirit, by which they foretold things future, and controuled the common course of nature, and this they transmitted to their offspring, provided they obeyed the sacred laws annexed to it. Their pontifical office descends by inheritance to their children. Mr. Adair also traces a resemblance between the dress of the Indian Archimagus, when he officiates in making the supposed holy fire for the

* Mr. Adair has adduced a number of examples to shew the similarity of the Hebrew and Indian languages.

yearly atonement for sin, and that of the Jewish high priest.*

7th. The ceremonies of the Indians in their religious worship are more after the Mosaic Institution than of Pagan imitation, which could not be if the majority of the old nation were of heathenish descent. They are utter strangers to all the gestures practised by Pagans in their religious rites. According to Mr. Adair, the American Indians have, like the Hebrews, a sacred ark, in which are kept various holy vessels. "It is," says he, "worthy of notice that they never place the ark on the ground, nor sit on the bare earth while they are carrying it against the enemy. On hilly ground where stones are plenty they place it on them; but in level land upon short logs, always resting themselves on the same materials. They have also as strong a faith of the power and holiness of their ark, as ever the Israelites retained of theirs. The Indian ark is deemed so sacred and dangerous to touch, either by their own sanctified warriors or the spoiling enemy, that neither of them dare meddle with it on any account. It is not to be handled by any, except the chieftain and his waiter, under penalty of incurring great evil; nor would the most inveterate enemy dare to touch it. The leader virtually acts the part of a priest of war, pro tempore, in imitation of the Israelites fighting under the divine military banner.†

8th. The Israelites had cities of refuge for those who killed a person unawares. In like manner each of the Indian nations have either a house or town of refuge, which is a sure asylum to protect a manslayer or the unfortunate captive if they once enter into it. In every Indian nation there are several peaceable towns, called old beloved, ancient holy, and white towns, which appear to have been formerly towns of refuge.

9th. Mr. Adair proceeds to point out the resemblance between the festivals, fasts, and religious rites of the Hebrews, and those of the American Indians. He ob-

* Adair, p. 81.

† Adair, p. 162.



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