ently deſcribed by different authors, but by all agreed to be an extremely bold and active bird. It is a native of the northern regions of Europe; and a variety called by ſome writers the *ſpeckled partridge hawk* is found at Hudſon’s bay, North America.

SACRED, ſomething holy, or that is ſolemnly of­fered and conſecrated to God, with benedictions, unc­tions, &c.

Kings, prelates, and prieſts, are reckoned ſacred perſons; abbots are only blessed. — The deaconhood, ſub- deaconhood, and prieſthood, are all ſacred orders, and are ſaid to impreſs a ſacred indelible character. The cuſtom of conſecrating kings with holy oil is derived (ſays Gutlingius) from the Hebrews; among whom, he agrees with Grotius, it was never uſed but to kings who had not an evident right by ſucceſſion. He adds, that the Chriſtian emperors never uſed it before Juſtin the younger; from whom he takes it to have paſſed to the Goths, &c.

Sacred is alſo applied to things belonging to God and the church. Church-lands, ornaments, &c. are held ſacred. —The ſacred college is that of the cardi­nals.

*Sacred Majeſty,* is applied to the emperor and to the king of England; yet Loyſeau ſays it is blaſphemy. See Majesty. The ancients held a place ſtruck with thunder as ſacred. In the civil law, ſacred place chief­ly denotes that where a perſon deceased has been inter­red.

*Sacred Elixir.* See Elixir.

SACRIFICE, an offering made to God on an altar, by means of a regular miniſter, as an acknow­ledgment of his power, and a payment of homage. Sacrifices (though the term is ſometimes uſed to com­prehend all the offerings made to God, or in any way devoted to his ſervice and honour) differ from mere oblations in this, that in a ſacrifice there is a real deſtruction or change of the thing offered; where­as an oblation is only a ſimple offering or gift, with­out any ſuch change at all: thus, all forts of tythes, and firſt fruits, and whatever of mens worldly ſub- ſtance is conſecrated to God, for the ſupport of his worſhip and the maintenance of his miniſters, are of­ferings or oblations: and theſe, under the Jewiſh law, were either of living creatures or other things: but ſacrifices, in the more peculiar ſenſe of the term, were either wholly or in part conſumed by fire. They have by divines been divided into bloody and unbloody. Bloody ſacriſices were made of living creatures; un­bloody of the fruits of the earth. They have alſo been divided into *expiatory, impetrαtory,* and *euchariſtical.* The firſt kind were offered to obtain of God forgiveneſs of sins; the ſecond, to procure ſome favour; and the third, to expreſs thankfulneſs for favours already re­ceived. Under one or other of theſe heads may all ſacriſices be arranged; though we are told, that the Egyptians had 666 different kinds, a number ſurpaſſing all credibility.

Concerning the origin of ſacriſices very various opi­nions have been held. By many, the Phoenicians are ſuppoſed to have been the authors of them; though Porphyry attributes their invention to the Egyptians; and Ovid imagines, from the import of the name *victim* and *hoftia,* that no bloody ſacriſices were offered till wars prevailed in the world, and nations obtained victories

over their enemies. Theſe are mere hypotheſes, con­tradicted by the moſt authentic records of antiquity, and entitled to no regard.

By modern deiſts, ſacriſices are ſaid to have had their origin in ſuperſtition, which operates much in the ſame way in every country. It is therefore weak, according to thoſe men, to derive this practice from any parti­cular people; ſince the ſame mode of reaſoning would lead various nations, without any intercourſe with each other, to entertain the ſame opinions reſpecting the na­ture of their gods, and the proper means of appeaſing their anger. Men of groſs conceptions imagine their deities to be like themſelves, covetous and cruel. They are accuſtomed to appeaſe an injured neighbour by a compoſition in money; and they endeavour to compound in the ſame manner with their gods, by rich offerings to their temples and to their prieſts. The moſt valuable property of a ſimple people is their cattle. Theſe of­fered in ſacrifice are ſuppoſed to be fed upon by the di­vinity, and are actually fed upon by his prieſts. If a crime is committed which requires the puniſhment of death, it is accounted perfectly fair to appeaſe the deity by offering one life for another; becauſe, by ſavages, puniſhment is conſidered as a debt for which a man may compound in the beſt way that he can, and which one man may pay for another. Hence, it is ſaid, aroſe the abſurd notions of imputed guilt and vicarious atone­ment. Among the Egyptians, a white bull was choſen as an expiatory ſacrifice to their god Apis. After being killed at the altar, his head was cut off, and call into the river, with the following execration: “May all the evils impending over thoſe who perform this ſacriſice, or over the Egyptians in general, be averted on this head@@\*. ”

Had ſacrifice never prevailed in the world but among ſuch groſs idolaters as worſhipped departed heroes, who were ſuppoſed to retain in their ſtate of deification all the paſſions and appetites of their mortal ſtate, this ac­count of the origin of that mode of worſhip would have been to us perfectly ſatisfactory. We readily admit, that ſuch mean notions of their gods may have actually led far diſtant tribes, who could not derive any thing from each other through the channel of tradition, to imagine that beings of human paſſions and appetites might be appeaſed or bribed by coſtly offerings. But we know from the moſt incontrovertible authority, that ſacriſices of the three kinds that we have mentioned were in uſe among people who worſhipped the true God, and who muſt have had very correct notions of his attributes. Now we think it impoſſible that ſuch notions could have led any man to fancy that the taking away of the life of a harmleſs animal, or the burning of a cake or other fruits of the earth in the fire, would be acceptable to a Being ſelf-exiſtent, omnipotent, and omniſcient, who can neither be injured by the crimes of his creatures, nor receive any acceſſion of happineſs from a thouſand worlds.

Senſible of the force of ſuch reaſoning as this, ſome perſons of great name, who admit the authenticity of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian ſacriſices, and firmly rely on the atonement made by Chriſt, are yet unwilling (it is difficult to conceive for what reaſon) to allow that ſacrifices were originally inſtituted by God. Of this way of thinking were St Chryſoſtom, Spencer, Grotius, and Warburton, as were likewiſe the Jews Maimonides, R.

@@@\* [m] Herodotus, lib. 2.