horrid to the imagination, than to ſuppoſe a father leading the deareſt of all his ſons to ſuch an infernal ſhrine? or a mother the moſt engaging and affec­tionate of her daughters, juſt riſing to maturity, to be ſlaughtered at the altar of Aſhtaroth or Baal? Juſtin deſcribes this unnatural cuſtom very pathetically: *Guippe homines, ut victimas, immolabant: et impuberes (que aetas hοſtium miſericordiam provocat) aris admovebant; pacem ſanguine eorum expoſcentes, pro quorum vita Dii rogari maxime ſοleηt.* Such was their blind zeal, that this was continually practiſed; and ſo much of natural affection ſtill left unextinguiſhed, as to render the ſcene ten times more ſhocking from the tenderneſs which they ſeemed to expreſs. They embraced their children with great fondneſs, and encouraged them in the gentleſt terms, that they might not be ap­palled at the fight of the helliſh proceſs; begging of them to ſubmit with cheerfulneſs to this fearful opera­tion. If there was any appearance of a tear riſing, or a cry unawares eſcaping, the mother ſmothered it with her kiſſes, that there might not be any ſhow of backwardneſs or conſtraint, but the whole be a free­will offering. Theſe cruel endearments over, they ſtabbed them to the heart, or otherwiſe opened the ſluices of life; and with the blood warm, as it ran, beſmeared the altar and the grim viſage of the idol. Theſe were the cuſtoms which the Iſraelites learned of the people of Canaan, and for which they are upbraided by the Pſalmiſt: “They did not deſtroy the nations, concern­ing whom the Lord commanded them; but were ming­led among the heathen, and learned their works: yea, they ſacrificed their ſons and their daughters unto de­vils, and ſhed innocent blood, even the blood of their ſons and of their daughters, whom they ſacriſiced unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a-whoring with their own inventions. ”

Theſe cruel rites, practiſed in ſo many nations, made Plutarch debate with himſelf, “Whether it would not have been better for the Galatae, or for the Scythians, to have had no tradition or conception of any ſuperior beings, than to have formed to themſelves notions of gods who delighted in the blood of men; of gods, who eſteemed human victims the moſt acceptable and perfect ſacrifice? Would it not (ſays he) have been more eligible for the Carthaginians to have had the atheiſt Critias, or Diagoras, their lawgiver, at the com­mencement of their polity, and to have been taught, that there was neither god nor demon, than to have ſa­crificed, in the manner they were wont, to the god which they adored? Wherein they acted, not as the perſon did whom Empedocles deſcribes in ſome poe­try, where he expoſes this unnatural cuſtom. The fire there with many idle vows offers up unwittingly his ſon for a ſacrifice; but the youth was ſo changed in feature and figure, that his father did not know him. Theſe people uſed, knowingly and wilfully, to go through this bloody work, and daughter their own offspring. Even they who were childleſa would not be exempted from this curſed tribute; but purchaſed children, at a price, of the poorer fort, and put them to death with as little remorſe as one would kill a lamb or a chicken. The mother, who ſacrificed her child, flood by, without any ſeeming ſenſe of what ſhe was lofing, and without uttering a groan. If a ſigh did

by chance eſcape, ſhe left all the honour which ſhe propoſed to herſelf in the offering, and the child was notwithſtanding ſlain. All the time of this ceremony, while the children were murdering, there was a noiſe of clarions and tabors founding before the idol, that the cries and ſhrieks of the victims might not be heard. “Fell me now (ſays Plutarch) if the monſters of old, the Typhons, and the giants, were to expel the gods, and to rule the world in their ſtead; could they re­quire a ſervice more horrid than theſe infernal rites and ſacrifices? ”

SACRILEGE, sacrilegium, the crime of pro­faning ſacred things, or things devoted to God; or of alienating to laymen, or common purpoſes, what was given to religious perſons and pious uſes.

SACRISTAN, a church-officer, otherwiſe called Sexton.

SACRISTY, in church-hiſtory, an apartment in a church where the ſacred utenſils were kept, being the fame with our Vestry.

SADDLE, is a feat upon a horſe’s back, contrived for the conveniency of the rider.

A hunting-ſaddle is compoſed of two bows, two bands, fore-bolſters, pannels, and ſaddle-ſtraps; and the great ſaddle has, beſides theſe parts, corks, hind-bolſters, and a trouffequin.

The pommel is common to both.

SADDUCEES, were a famous ſect among the an­cient Jews, and conſiſted of perſons of great quality and opulence. Reſpecting their origin there are vari­ous accounts and various opinions. Epiphanius, and after him many other writers, contend, that they took their riſe from Doſitheus a ſectary of Samaria, and their name from the Hebrew word צדמ *juſt* or *justice*,from the great juſtice and equity which they ſhowed in all their actions; a derivation which neither ſuits the word *Sadducee* nor the general character of the ſect. They are thought by ſome too to have been Samaritans; but this is by no means probable, as they always at­tended the worſhip and ſacrifices at Jeruſalem and never at Gerizzim.

In the Jewiſh Talmud we are told that the Sadducees derived their name from *Sadoc,* and that the ſect aroſe about 260 years before Chriſt, in the time of An­tigonus of Socho, preſident of the Sanhedrim at Jeru­ſalem, and teacher of the law in the principal divinity ſchool of that city. He had often in his lectures, it ſeems, taught his ſcholars, that they ought not to ſerve God as ſlaves do their mailers, from the hopes of a re­ward, but merely out of filial love for his own ſake; from which Sadoc and Baithus inferred that there were no rewards at all after this life. They therefore ſeparated from their mailer, and taught that there was no reſurrection nor future ſtate. This new doctrine quick­ly ſpread, and gave riſe to the ſect of Sadducees, which in many reſpects reſembled the Epicureans.

Dr Prideaux thinks, that the Sadducees were at firſt no more than what the Caraites are now; that is, they would not receive the traditions of the elders, but ſtuck to the written word only; and the Phariſees being great pro­moters of thoſe traditions, hence theſe two ſects became directly oppoſite to each other. See *Prideaux's Conn.* part. ii. b. 2 and 3. and ſee alſo Pharisees and Caraites.

Afterwards the Sadducees imbibed other doctrines,