through faith. The light of natural reason, however, does not generate faith, but science ; and when it fails of that, its offspring is absurdity. “ Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” and comes not by reasoning, but by hearing. What things then were they of which Abel had heard, for which he hoped, and in the faith of which he offered sacrifice ? Undoubtedly it was a restoration to that immortality which was forfeited by the transgression of his parents. Of such redemption an ob­scure intimation had been given to Adam, in the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent ; and it was doubtless to impress upon his mind in more striking colours the manner in which this was to be done, that bloody sacrifices were first instituted. As long as the import of such rites was thus understood, they con­stituted a perfectly rational worship, as they showed the people that the wages of sin is death ; but when men sunk into idolatry, and lost all hopes of a resurrection from the dead, the slaughtering of animals to appease their deities was a practice grossly superstitious. It rested in itself with­out pointing to any further end, and the grovelling worship­pers believed that by their sacrifices they purchased the fa­vour of their deities. When once this notion was enter­tained, human sacrifices were soon introduced ; for it natu­rally occurred to those who offered them, that what they most valued themselves, would be most acceptable to their offended gods. By the Jewish law’, these abominable offer­ings were strictly forbidden, and the whole ritual of sacri­fice restored to its original purity, though not simplicity.

All Christian churches, the Socinian, if it can be called a church, not excepted, for a long period of time agreed in believing that the Jewish sacrifices served, amongst other uses, for types of the death of Christ, and the Christian wor­ship. In this belief all sober Christians agree still ; whilst many are of opinion that they were likewise federal rites, as they certainly were considered by the ancient Romans.@@1

Of the various kinds of Jewish sacrifices, and the sub­ordinate ends for which they were offered, a full account is given in the books of Moses. When an Israelite offered a loaf or a cake, the priest broke it in two parts, and, setting aside that half which he reserved for himself, broke the other into crumbs, poured oil, wine, incense, and salt upon it, and spread the whole upon the fire of the altar. If these offerings were accompanied with the sacrifice of an animal, they were thrown upon the victim to be consumed along with it. If the offerings were of the ears of new corn, they were parched at the fire, rubbed in the hand, and then of­fered to the priest in a vessel, over which he poured oil, incense, wine, and salt, and then burned it upon the altar, having first taken as much of it as of right belonged to him­self.

The principal sacrifices amongst the Hebrews consisted of bullocks, sheep, and goats ; but doves and turtles were ac­cepted from those who were not able to bring the other. These beasts were to be perfect, and without blemish. The rites of sacrificing were various, all of which are minutely described in the books of Moses.

The manner of sacrificing amongst the Greeks and Ro­mans was the following. In the choice of the victim, they took care that it was without blemish or imperfection ; its tail was not to be too small at the end, the tongue not black, nor the ears cleft ; and that the bull was one that had never been yoked. The victim being pitched upon, they gilt his forehead and horns, especially if a bull, heifer, or cow. The head they also adorned with a garland of flowers, a woollen infula or holy fillet, whence hung two rows of chaplets with twisted ribands ; and on the middle of the body a kind of stole, pretty large, hung down on each side. The lesser

victims were only adorned with garlands and bundles of flowers, together with white tufts or wreaths.

The victims thus prepared were brought before the altar, the lesser being driven to the place, and the greater led by an halter ; when, if they made any struggle, or refused to go, the resistance was taken for an ill omen, and the sacri­fice frequently set aside. The victim thus brought was carefully examined, to see that there was no defect in it ; then the priest, clad in his sacerdotal habit, and accompa­nied with the sacrificers and other attendants, and being washed and purified according to the ceremonies prescrib­ed, turned to the right hand, and went round the altar, sprinkling it with meal and holy water, and also besprink­ling those who were present. Then the crier proclaimed with a loud voice, Who is here ? To which the people re­plied, Many and good. The priest then having exhorted the people to join with him, by saying, Let us pray, con­fessed his own unworthiness, acknowledging that he had been guilty of different sins, for which he begged pardon of the gods, hoping that they would be pleased to grant his requests, accept the oblations offered them, and send them all health and happiness ; and to this general form he added petitions for such particular favours as were then desired. Prayers being ended, the priest took a cup of wine, and having tasted it himself, caused his attendants to do the like, and then poured forth the remainder between the horns of the victim. Then the priest or the crier, or sometimes the most honourable person in the company, killed the beast, by knocking it down, or cutting its throat. If the sacrifice was in honour of the celestial gods, the throat was turned upwards towards heaven ; but if they sacrificed to the he­roes or infernal gods, the victim was killed with its throat towards the ground. If by accident the beast escaped the stroke, leaped after it, or expired with pain and difficulty, it was thought to be unacceptable to the gods. The beast being killed, the priest inspected its entrails, and made pre­dictions from them. They then poured wine, together with frankincense, into the fire, to increase the flame, and laid the sacrifice upon the altar, which in the primitive times was burned whole to the gods, and thence called an holo­caust ; but in after times only part of the victim was con­sumed in the fire, and the remainder reserved for the sacri­ficers ; the thighs, and sometimes the entrails, being burned to their honour, the company feasted upon the rest. Du­ring the sacrifice, the priest, and the person who gave the sacrifice, jointly prayed, laying their hand upon the altar. Sometimes they played upon musical instruments in the time of the sacrifice, and on some occasions they danced round the altar, singing sacred hymns in honour of the god.

*Human Sacrifices,* an abominable practice, about the origin of which different opinions have been formed.

The true account seems to be that which we have given in the preceding article. When men had gone so far as to indulge the fancy of bribing their gods by sacrifice, it was natural for them to think of enhancing the value of so cheap an atonement by the cost and rarity of the offering ; and, oppressed with their malady, they never rested till they had got that which they conceived to be the most precious of all, a human sacrifice. “ It was customary,” says Sancho­niatbon, “ in ancient times, in great and public calamities, before things became incurable, for princes and magistrates to offer up in sacrifice to the avenging dæmons the dearest of their offspring.”@@2 Sanchoniatbon wrote of Phoenicia; but the practice prevailed in every nation under heaven of which we have received any ancient account. The Egyp­tians had it in the early part of their monarchy. The Cre­tans likewise had it, and retained it for a long time. The nations of Arabia did the same. The people of Dumah, in

*@@@1 Tit. Liv.* lib. xxi∙ cap. xlv.

@@@\* Eusebius, *Proep. Evαng.* fib. iv.