

## II. THE ANCIENT HEBREW POLITY.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the oldest is sometimes the newest. The dew which rests upon the beginning of things, is never completely exhaled. The water is always pure and sweet at the fountain, however turbid the stream in its after course. As we follow the development of history, we discover sometimes with surprise that institutions and ordinances, which we had supposed the creations of modern necessity and invention, were implicitly contained in seeds planted from the beginning. Thus in the old, yea, in the oldest of the old, we find the newness of much that marks our most progressive and advanced civilization. An illustration of this is afforded in the subject of the present article—*the political significance of the ancient Hebrew Commonwealth, the part it was called to perform in the historic drama of those times.*

There can be no difference of opinion as to the mission of the Hebrew Church. When the original Patriarchal faith had been thoroughly perverted and corrupted—when idolatry had been compacted into a system, and spread over the earth—God called Abraham out of that very Chaldea where this idolatry originated, to be the founder of a distinct people who should become the depository and guardian of Divine truth. In the front of all the statutes and ordinances given for their guidance was this supreme proclamation, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord”. In the assertion of a pure Monotheism, and with a ritual of worship which under exquisite pictorial emblems represented how the transgressor might be restored to the favour and fellowship of Jehovah, the Hebrew Church stood forth in protest against every form of a universal idolatry. Her geographical position in the centre of the surrounding nations, has been remarked as one of the providential indications of her mission. A nation selected for a Priestly function is placed in the bosom of other nations,

that her stationary light may be diffused over the entire circle from centre to circumference. That her testimony may more completely penetrate every land, note the enforced Evangelism when, as a Protestant against all idolatry, she is borne a reluctant and captive witness into those very countries where idolatry held its court with the most imposing symbols under which its mysteries could be veiled. Nor should it be overlooked that, from the moment of the great Captivity to the final overthrow of the Hebrew State, the interval was a period of dispersion during which the entire nation was never gathered within its ancient borders. It will thus appear how effectively the Hebrew Church discharged the office to which she had been appointed as a witness for the one living and true God, against that idolatry which occurring after the Flood constituted the second great apostasy of the race.

Can we assign as distinct a function to the Hebrew State? Were important principles as clearly embodied in the *civil polity* as in the *symbols of worship*? My answer is, that the one was intended by Jehovah to be a protest against the universal perversion of government, as the other was against the universal corruption of religion. It is a large proposition, which we must endeavour to make good. In the fragment of history given of the ante-diluvian world, no trace of any form of government appears but that of the family : the expanding branches of which would naturally recognize a loose subjection to the Patriarch, whose extreme longevity enabled him to embrace a tribe under his authority. Under such conditions society could scarcely be considered organized. The obedience would be an obedience to custom, rather than to law ; whilst no central authority bound these separate fraternities together in a single Commonwealth. To the absence of all governmental restraints, doubtless, we must ascribe that degree of violence on the earth which could only be purged by the waters of the Deluge. In the death-penalty enjoined upon Noah, a little later, is detected the first germ of civil

government. It is a comprehensive principle, capable of expansion into the widest legislation ; for it devolves upon society the duty of protecting human life, and organized it for that purpose. The Ordinance “whosoever sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed,” is not the proclamation of private revenge, but the prohibition of it. It is the creation of the Magistrate armed with the sword of justice, which never smites but in the name of law. In this world principles are the seeds from which laws and institutions are produced ; but the development is often gradual and slow. From the days of Noah onward, the earth had first to be re-peopled : and the exercise of Patriarchal rule would naturally proceed under the same conditions as at the beginning. Society would move forward under ante-diluvian precedents, rather than under the organizing force of the new revelation. It was attended with like results : until, at the tower of Babel, we find the race embarked in a direct conspiracy to defeat the purpose of Jehovah. The issue was fairly joined upon the plain of Shinar: and if the Divine promise is to be kept, of which the Covenant rainbow was the sign, a bridle must be put upon the human will through the majesty of human law. By the simple expedient of breaking the unity of language, the race was divided into groups, who were forced to dwell apart, and to organize into governments for mutual protection and defence.

Alas! the gravitation to evil in man, perverted this idea of government from the moment it was seized. In the Divine purpose, it was an agency to secure the individual in the possession of his personal rights. When it was ordained “whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed,” the reason is assigned “for in the image of God made He man.” A sacredness is thus imparted to his person and life, which throws a Divine shield over him and all that appertains to him : and this lies at the root of the true conception of law or government. But throughout Asiatic history, the governments erected upon that monotonous Continent were not gov-

ernments of the people and for the people, but imperial creations for the glory of the despots who ruled them. Colossal empires lifted their brazen splendour before the world, each struggling for supremacy, and belching forth its armies for conquest or defeat, as so many desolating floods of lava from the mouth of a volcano. The modern idea of co-existing States with defined boundaries, between which diplomatic intercourse may be maintained, and strictly preserving the balance of power between them all, did not enter as an element in Asiatic statesmanship. The State was an engine either of triumph for the conqueror, or of luxury for the voluptuary—and always of oppression to the subject. The gorgeous Palaces and Temples, such splendid ruins as those of Babylon and Thebes, the massive Pyramids, could never have been achieved except through concentration of wealth and power in a single hand. In their melancholy silence they all testify to the abject wretchedness of suffering millions, upon which alone the monuments of despotism could possibly be reared.

Just here let the significant fact be considered that upon the threshold of this Asiatic history, with its constituent nations existing only in the germ and not yet crystalized into States, the Hebrew Commonwealth was planted in the bosom of them all, with the singular advantage of a revealed political Constitution. In this Constitution the central idea is that the Supreme Being is the Governor of nations, even as He is Lord of the conscience. This is a creative principle. It organizes the moral system of the Universe after the analogy of the material. It announces the great law of attraction which binds human governments to the throne of God, like that which binds these created orbs to their central sun. Subjection to law is found to be the essential condition of moral activity and freedom. Human legislation, postulated upon the Divine supremacy, is brought under the direction of the Divine wisdom and authority. The personal relations of the individual are mapped out as the sphere of obligation, in the one jurisdiction as in the other; and are protected in the one

by the guarantees which are furnished in the other. But we must not rush with premature haste into the heart of our subject. Let it be added here that the Hebrew Commonwealth with this Constitution was placed, as it were, in the cross-roads of ancient history—exactly in the path travelled by these old-world empires in their march to victory ; where, of necessity, it was drawn into the vortex of all the revolutions, and became entangled in the fortunes of every kingdom in its turn. Thus was the leaven of political truth brought in contact with the inert mass of Asiatic despotism; against which it could at least protest, if it could not regenerate. We do not wonder that the typical Hebrew is proud of his lineage and of its history. To no other race was such a destiny ever committed by immediate revelation from Heaven, to be through fifteen centuries the exponent and champion of both human and Divine rights. If splendid traditions and glorious memories can oblige to virtue and excellence, the Hebrew people ought to move upon the highest plane to which the ambition of man can aspire.

The thesis of this article requires us now to prove that THE HEBREW COMMONWEALTH ENSHRINED THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTY; WHICH MODERN NATIONS HAVE ONLY REPRODUCED, AND UNDER OTHER FORMS HAVE APPLIED. In this analysis, we acknowledge our indebtedness to the authorities who have written upon Biblical Archaeology, and especially to Dr. Wines' "Commentaries upon the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews", who has carefully compiled all the facts herein adduced.

1. Let it be noted, first of all, that it was the only government in those ancient times with a written Constitution. Through an entire year after the deliverance from Egypt, Israel was encamped at the foot of Sinai for the reception of the Law. Never was a Constitution prepared and ratified under circumstances of equal solemnity. In the solitude of the wilderness, amid the awful symbols of Jehovah's presence

upon the Mount which was consecrated as His earthly throne, Moses, their leader, went up into the cloud and talked face to face with the thunder. The entire code under which the people were to live, was there announced. Their religious ritual, their offerings and sacrifices, their Priesthood and the altars they should serve, their ceremonies of purification, their social customs, their sanitary laws and dietetic rules, their departments of government with the whole civil administration, their jurisprudence and courts of adjudication, their foreign policy and their domestic industries—every minute detail was authoritatively communicated, and reduced to record. “And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the Covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law and put it in the side of the ark of the Covenant, that it may be there for a witness against thee.” (Deut. 31:24-26.) We do not here speak of the People’s acceptance of this Constitution, which will be better exhibited in another connexion; but press the simple fact that Israel was from the beginning under a Constitutional government, in which the relations and duties of all parties under its protection were accurately defined. Such an instrument becomes not only a regulative code, but also a charter of rights. After centuries of conflict to obtain it, modern sagacity has discovered no greater safeguard of political and civil freedom.

2. The people themselves were the proprietors of the soil. It is one of the maxims of political science that property in the soil is the natural fountain of power. It would seem to be a necessary inference that they who own the products of the soil must be in possession of the wealth of a country, and must therefore control its destiny. Thus it has often happened in English history that the popular branch of the legislature has imposed a solid check upon the arbitrary power of the throne, by simply withholding supplies from its schemes of reckless ambition. Our own country furnishes a stronger il-

lustration still of the power of the masses, the pledge of whose patriotism is found at last in the interest engendered by their possession of the soil, as an immovable landed estate.

Not only is the division of the land into small freeholds a guarantee for the permanence of a government; but, wherever it obtains, it is the source of a recuperative energy, which is a constant astonishment to the reader of history. Let France, through the whole of her distinguished career, be taken for an example. Engaged through centuries in successive wars, often lying exhausted and panting under disaster and defeat, she has required only a brief breathing spell of peace to spring up in her original elasticity and strength. A conspicuous instance of this marvellous recuperation is furnished in her late conflict with Prussia. The heavy indemnity exacted by the conqueror, added to the cost of a war which laid her prostrate in the dust, was a burden that should have crushed her at once into a secondary European power. Our own grand country with its inexhaustible and diversified resources could not sooner than France have thrown off this incubus, nor risen more proudly to an erect posture. The banks from which she drew the loans to meet these obligations, were the stocking-feet in which her own freeholders had secreted the small profits of their industry. Myriads of rivulets poured their golden sands into the treasury of the State, which was quickly rehabilitated through the economy and patriotism of her people who could not afford to see their country perish, every rood of which was owned and cultivated by themselves.

This distribution of the soil obtained in none of the Asiatic Empires; where, on the contrary, it was divided between the King, the Priests, and the warriors. The tiresome monotony of Asiatic history teaches this warning to modern times, that it is always a fearful power which cuts off the bread even with the teeth between which it is chewed. In Palestine, all Communistic and Agrarian tendencies were averted by the equal distribution of the land between the Tribes; each family holding its portion in fee-simple, and rendered incapable of alien-

ation by the readjustment in the year of Jubilee. Political science, after the experience of thirty centuries, has suggested no improvement of this economy.

3. The suggestive principle of the Hebrew Polity, as opposed to the intense centralism of the Asiatic despotisms, was the local jurisdiction of the several Tribes and the consequent distribution of power. Even where chartered rights exist, there is a tendency in power to steal from the many to the few; until, at length, government becomes so compact that the individual is nothing but a spoke in the great wheel. The tribal distinction, therefore, with recognized self-government in the smaller bodies into which society is distributed, has been in all ages the asylum of popular freedom. It was the haughty independence of the Germanic tribes, which offered the most stubborn, resistance to the Roman arms sweeping on to universal supremacy. And when that bloated empire sank into decrepitude through its own debaucheries, it was the Northern tribes with their robust barbarism that burst through the empty crust—the rude material of that Congress of European States which at length emerged from the chaos.

It would require too much space to exhibit in detail the autonomy of the Hebrew Tribes, and the complete control of local interests in each. It is sufficient to mention the weakness of the general administration arising from the excess of this independence. It wrought such disasters during the period of the Judges, as almost to necessitate the Monarchy as the remedy for their divisions. It would be pleasant just here, to show the parallelism between the Hebrew Commonwealth and our own : which is so striking that in reciting the history of the one, we seem to be drawing the picture of the other. The twelve Tribes of Israel almost re-appear in the States of this Republic; and the weakness in the government from tribal independence was reproduced with us, compelling as in their case a closer Federal union. All this must, however, be premitted to make room for the statement that, in the

changes of time, so much has the danger shifted from disintegration to centralism, as to lodge the only hope of preserving our American system in the autonomy of the States, and in the maintenance of their right to local self-government. Can a stronger encomium be pronounced upon that feature of the Hebrew Constitution, which so early established a bulwark against Imperialism ?

4. Right over against this, with all the emphasis of contrast, is the unity of the nation : divided into Tribes, yet bound together in the Theocracy—many, but also one. We scarcely know how to bridle this topic within proportional limits. The pith of it may be put in half a dozen sentences. God, though unseen, was the acknowledged King. Whatever the outward form of the government—whether democratic, as till the close of Samuel's regency—or Monarchical, as under the kings—or Oligarchic, as after the Captivity—through all it was Theocratic. Did ever a nation possess such a bond of union before ? Did ever Majesty like this sit upon an earthly throne? Can we conceive extremes brought together, between which all friction shall be so completely removed ? How could such a King encroach upon the liberty of the subject? How could the subject find occasion to be jealous of the prerogatives of such a Monarch ?

This is not all. The Hebrew religion was thus bound up in the Hebrew nationality. The two were so welded into one by the pressure of fifteen centuries and under the discipline of an extraordinary providence, that eighteen centuries of dispersion have not separated the embrace. So thoroughly was the Theocratic principle wrought into the texture of Hebrew thought that, without a country and without a government, their religion alone makes them a nation still. The Hebrew State is gone ; but the nationality which should have perished with it, survives unbroken in the Hebrew Church. When was such a crystal as this ever produced in the historic outworking of any other political Constitution ?

5. We combine next two closely allied features of this an-

cient Commonwealth, the civil equality of the people with the universal supremacy of law. Perhaps the essential vice of Oriental society, after the practice of polygamy, was the prevalence of Caste, interposing walls of separation between classes, the intermingling of which was so necessary to the progress of the whole. Like the bandage which swathes a limb and shrinks it into deformity, it was a fruitful cause of that immobility so characteristic of Asiatic and Egyptian civilization. The only distinct class amongst the ancient Hebrews was the Levitical order, which, though hereditary, was not a social but an official distinction. Being set apart to a public function for the common good, it was not divisive but uniting in its influence—one of the ligatures by which society was bound together like the leaves of a book. The political mischief which might ensue from this isolation was forestalled by their distribution among the Tribes, their dis-possession of landed estate, the dependence of their revenues upon the offerings of the people, their exclusion from special privileges, and their equal subjection under the laws which were common to all.

This last reference brings up the coordinate principle of the supremacy of the law. There was no absolute power in Israel. If at any period of their history such power was assumed, it was in open defiance of the Constitution which covered kings, priests and people alike with its authority. *Lex scripta*, this alone was supreme; distinctly acknowledged as the charter of the people's rights in that famous aphorism of the threefold crown—the crown of royalty, the crown of the priesthood and the crown of the law—in the use of which the Hebrews were accustomed to boast the perfection of their system. Could the ideal republic of Plato, or the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, represent a better condition than that of a people equal in all their political franchises, and yielding obedience to a law which, while it restrains, at the same time protects with an equal authority?

6. The Hebrew government rested upon the consent of the

people, formally and constitutionally expressed. This is recognized in modern times as the corner-stone of civil liberty, which claims for the subject not only the right to determine the character and form of the government, but also a voice in shaping the legislation. The American Revolution, for example, which dissolved the bands of British allegiance, turned upon the principle that taxation without the right of representation was only the exaction of tribute. We find the same principle further back as the pivot upon which English history turns—from the wresting of Magna Charta by the Barons from the feeble John, to the issue of the long struggle between privilege and prerogative in the expulsion of the treacherous Stuarts from the throne.

If then this vital principle shall be found incorporated in the Hebrew polity, it will justify the assertion that it was designed by the Supreme Lawgiver to confront the old despotisms, as the working model of a free government. There is room for but a few specifications, and these in the briefest synopsis:

(a) The Constitution itself given by Jehovah was submitted, in all its details, to the ratification of the people; and He, by public acclamation, was accepted as their Sovereign. This was done in the first instance just before the death of Moses, as thus recorded in Deuteronomy: “These are the words of the Covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the Covenant which He made with them in Horeb. . . . Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, your Captains of your tribes, your Elders and your Officers, with all the men of Israel, . . . that thou shouldst enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, and into His oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.” (29:1, 10, 12.) Still later, just before the death of Joshua, this compact was publicly renewed, with even more explicit declaration of the popular will. The record will be found in the book of Joshua, 24th chapter: “And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other Gods ; . . . there-

fore will we also serve the Lord, for He is our God.” When Joshua represented the difficulties of this service, the response was, “Nay, but we will serve the Lord : and Joshua said unto the people, ye are witnesses unto yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord to serve Him : and they said, we are witnesses.”

(b) We find some of the Judges, as Jephtha, chosen by the people (Judges 11:5, 10, 11); although this extraordinary office especially reflected the Theocratic principle.

(c) The great change wrought in the administration of government by the institution of hereditary Monarchy, was effected by the demand of the people, and against the remonstrances of Samuel: “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us.” (1 Sam. 8:19.)

(d) Both Saul and David, after being designated by God and anointed by Samuel, did not assume the functions of royalty until they were confirmed by the popular choice. (1 Sam. 11:14, 15. 2 Sam. 2:4.)

(e) David was seven years king over Judah alone, before his authority was recognised by the other Tribes; who were nevertheless absolved from the charge of rebellion.

These instances are sufficient, without overloading the testimony, to show the extent to which the consent of the people entered as an element of freedom, both in the polity and practice of the ancient Hebrews, enshrining the principle in their code as in an ark of testimony, for the admiration and use of this modern age.

7. Not to fatigue the reader’s patience, let him consider but one additional fact in support of the present argument, viz: the checks and balances under which this carefully adjusted system was administered. This would lead us to view the government as an organism, and would involve a full exposition of the methods by which it works out its design. A skeleton outline will suffice to map the distribution of offices in the same.

There was the Chief-Magistrate, who was of course only a vice-regent under the unseen Sovereign. Moses, their first leader and mediator in the reception of the Law—and Joshua, their military Captain, under whom the conquest of Canaan was accomplished—both held an extraordinary commission which was transferred to no successor. After these, the Theocracy was administered by a direct Providence, through the natural Heads of Tribes, and the Privy-Council of the Seventy appointed by Moses, and when necessary by consultation of the Oracle by the High-Priest in the Tabernacle. In special emergencies God raised up the Judges, who ruled sometimes over a portion of the tribes, sometimes over all, as the case required. No exact parallel to this office can be found in other nations. The nearest is the Roman Dictatorship : with this difference, that the Hebrew Judge once appointed held office through life—but with no natural successor. This entire period was, however, transitional and disciplinary, to root in the Hebrew mind the Theocratic principle which lay at the base of the government. When a visible and permanent Monarchy was instituted, it was accomplished without bloodshed because Constitutionally provided and was effected through a Constitutional procedure. It is well said, that governments grow : that is, they take on their outward form through the development of the inward life: and it should be noted that the Hebrews found it necessary to unite the Tribes under a permanent Head, at the time the great Asiatic kingdoms of Syria, Assyria, Babylon, together with Egypt, were consolidating into the massive Empires they became. But throughout the succession of Hebrew kings, especially at the critical junctures of their history, new capitulations were made by which the Monarch was restrained—as was attempted, we remember, in the case of Rehoboam.

Another department in the State was the Judiciary, which was rendered complete by the appointment of Judges over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Thus was formed a scale of appellate Courts, so constructed as to make the ad-

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ministration of justice speedy and summary—which the impatient blood of Oriental nations always required. In accordance with Eastern custom and the primitive idea of the paternal character of kingly rule, there would seem to be the right of appeal to the throne, as in Solomon’s decision between the two mothers: or in cases of still greater difficulty, there was a reference to the Divine Majesty itself, as when the appeal of Zelophehad’s daughters settled the question of female succession to the father’s estate. (Num. 27:2 and 5.)

Next follows what may not inaptly be termed the Legislative branch of the government. It is true the legislation was already provided in the code given by Jehovah. But questions must arise in the application of these laws, calling for the deliberation and decision of the Hebrews themselves—as in the election or confirmation of their rulers, the forming of treaties with foreign powers, declaration and suspension of war, in staying the execution of a judicial sentence, even that of a king, as in the case of Jonathan (1 Sam. 14: 45). In these and other instances there would be, as has been well said, “a residue of authority which sufficiently guaranteed the national autonomy.” The grand device of modern times to secure safe legislation is by the concurrent majority of “two Chambers composed of different persons belonging to different classes” (as in the English Parliament); or “elected for different terms of service” (as in our American Legislatures). The necessary delay in securing this joint action imposes a salutary check upon hasty legislation; whilst the expression of the public mind is unquestionably more accurate and more permanent.

It would be remarkable if we should discover the germ of this proud invention, existing 3,000 years ago in the Hebrew Constitution. We do not undertake to say that the line can be drawn as broad and clear between the Hebrew Senate and the Hebrew Commons as it is drawn in modern free States: but that such a distinction obtains cannot, we think, be successfully denied. The old Patriarchal government naturally

vested in the chiefs of tribes and heads of clans, of which we have the traces during the abode in Egypt. The rapid marshalling of two and a half millions for a sudden march presupposed an existing and familiar organization. After this, we find the Seventy appointed by Moses, a species of Privy-Council for the Executive. In addition to these, the Princes of Tribes and Heads of Clans, together with the Judges and civil Magistrates, represented their countrymen in the national Convention, forming a sort of upper deliberative House. What is known as "the Congregation," on the other hand, was the body of the people—assembled perhaps in mass, during the encampment in the wilderness; or more probably there was, afterwards when settled in Canaan, a representative body chosen from all the families in the several Tribes. How numerous these were is seen from the two hundred and fifty Heads involved in the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16:2). The distinction between "the Congregation" and the smaller representative body is shown in Numbers 10:4 and 7: "If they blow but with one trumpet, then the Princes which are the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm." If this distinction really exists and was wrought into the practice of the Hebrews, it was certainly the most wonderful anticipation of the methods of modern Political Science to be found in that venerable Economy.

We come next to the Priestly and Levitical Order, considered of course not in their religious, but in their political, relations. One entire tribe was substituted for the first-born male of every family ; thus at the outset, making it a representative class, performing duties which were obligatory upon the whole people. It was protected from aspiring to Priestly domination by their dispersion among the Tribes, by the surrender of landed estate, by their dependence upon tithes and offerings for their support. They were the Literary Faculty, answering to the University Class of our times, as Mr, Cole-

ridge suggests—and supplying the Judges, Genealogists, Lawyers, Physicians, Teachers, &c, of their country. As leaders of thought, and resolving the questions of casuistry naturally arising from a complex ritual, their influence was vast, whilst it was equally conservative.

After these come the Prophets. They were occasional and extraordinary, raised up by Jehovah to explain the lessons of His Providence. They were by their office public Censors—commissioned to inveigh against all infractions of the Constitution and the law, and equally therefore the guardians of the people's rights. The Roman Tribunes and Censors fulfilled somewhat similar functions; except that they were wholly secular—often agitators who merely uttered the popular resentments, and were consequently one-sided and factious in their influence. The Hebrew Prophets, on the contrary, were commissioned by Jehovah, and uttered their denunciations from His point of view. They were of necessity broad-minded expounders of the law, were imbued with its spirit, and so were constituted the truest patriots of the nation.

The Oracle is the only feature of this ancient system remaining to be discussed. Of course, in a government of which the unseen Jehovah was the Supreme Head, some provision must be made for occasional appeal to Him and for the communication of His response. It was the office of the High-Priest to discharge this important function ; and to inquire by Urim and Thumtnim of the Lord in His Holy Place, where the Divine glory rested upon the Ark between the Cherubim. It is not necessary to go into the intricacies of this topic, so baffling to antiquarians. It played an important part in the early and forming period of Hebrew history: and there is not a recorded instance in which it was ever abused to tyrannical purposes.

In this rapid survey we have gathered the leading attributes of the Hebrew State : (1) a written Constitution, and a formal compact with the Sovereign ; (2) the distribution of power, in the self-government of the Tribes ; (3) the binding of these

in the unity of a Theocratic kingdom ; (4) the prevailing equality of fortune, in the possession of the soil by the people ; (5) the supremacy of the law ; (6) the resting of the government upon the free consent of the subject; (7) the limitations upon the power of the Executive; (8) the rapid administration of justice, through a scale of Courts exceedingly minute ; (9) legislation through responsible representatives; (10) provision for the instruction of the people, as to their religious and civil duties; (11) a final appeal to the Divine Majesty, with the privilege of a response. We do not say that the Hebrew race has always been faithful to these principles. Where is the single individual who comes up to his own ideal of excellence? How much more difficult to preserve a nation from those pernicious influences which are constantly sapping its virtue ? But here is the Hebrew Constitution to speak for itself, and to challenge any positive addition which the boastful Political Science of modern times has made to the principles which have just been enumerated. Shall we not adore the wisdom of Him who, at the period when human history was crystallizing into shape, drew before the nations this grand outline of what a free State ought to be : delivering His protest against despotism as the perversion of government, side by side with his protest against idolatry as the corruption of religion.

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