

Such was the termination of the Jewish state and polity ; whoever can read the account, especially as given by Josephus, without perceiving what clear views of it our Lord and his Apostles had, and by what clear predictions they warned their obdurate countrymen, has little exercised his mind in contemplating the history of providence, while those who have been accustomed to read the Gospels with attention, will discover many references to these events; many deprecations of these calamities, which may at once encourage their faith in, and their reverence for that sacred volume which contains them.

ORIENTAL CUSTOMS.

No. 2.

"Abel brought of the Firstlings of his Flock."—GENESIS c. 4. v. 4.

THE universality of sacrificial rites will naturally produce an inquiry into the source from which such a custom, so inexplicable upon any principles of mere natural reason, could have been derived. And here we are involuntarily led to the first institution of this ordinance, which is so particularly recorded in Scripture. When it pleased God to reveal his gracious purpose of redeeming lost mankind by the blood of the Messiah, it would doubtless be highly expedient to institute some visible sign, some external representation, by which, the mysterious sacrifice of Mount Calvary might be prophetically exhibited to all the posterity of Adam. With this view, a pure and immaculate victim, the firstling of the flock, was carefully selected; and after its blood had been shed, was solemnly appointed to blaze upon the Altar of Jehovah. When the first typical sacrifice was offered up, fire miraculously descended from heaven, and consumed it; and when this primitive ordinance was renewed under the Levitical Priesthood, two circumstances are particularly worthy of observation; "that the victim should be a firstling—and that the oblation should be made by the instrumentality of fire."—It is remarkable, that both these primitive customs have been faithfully preserved in the Heathen world. The Canaanites caused their first-born to pass through the fire, with a view of appeasing the anger of their false Deities, and one of the kings of Moab