

vereign, and makes the proud Pharaoh and his courtiers own the supremacy of the God of Israel. The nation was brought out in a heavenly style with a strong and mighty arm. Pharaoh, his princes, and his mighty army, were drowned; and Israel about two millions strong, having six hundred thousand warriors, encamped on yonder side the Red Sea. But not a bow was bent, not a sword was drawn, on the part of the sons of Jacob. They stood still and saw the salvation of God.

But so soon as they were entirely out of the precincts of the Egyptians it became necessary to give them a national existence, or to constitute them into a kingdom. Hitherto they were an unorganized assembly, under the conduct of the ambassador of the Sovereign of the Universe—Moses was their leader. But so soon as they reached Horeb, the purposes of the Almighty were disclosed to them. They are informed of the grounds on which they are to stand, and the preliminaries of a new relation are proposed to them, accompanied with many ample and sublime signals of the presence of God. They see and hear what they never heard nor saw before. They are prepared to accept of whatever the Lord was pleased to appoint.

In taking them thus by the hand, and in signalizing this people, it became necessary for the ends proposed, that they should be placed in the most enviable circumstances. It was necessary that they should exhibit a picture of the greatest earthly happiness. The first thing necessary to this was a good constitution—this was therefore the first thing proposed. Although their King had a right to impose upon them as his creatures, such a one as he pleased, without asking their consent, or giving them a single vote in the whole transaction, he proposes to the whole people, *en masse*, by his own ambassador, whether or not they would adopt or accept such an instrument from him. The articles of negotiation entrusted to Moses, containing the original preliminaries, read thus:—The Lord said to Moses, “Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel? You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you as on eagles’ wings, and brought you to myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my institutions (or covenant) then you shall be a peculiar treasure to me, above all people; for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” Now, as Moses could not speak *viva voce* to the whole 600,000 militia, he called the seniors together, rehearsed the stipulations to them, and they to the people. Finally, *all the people answered and said*, “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.” And Moses returned the words of the people to the Lord.

*Constitutions* in old times were called *covenants*, because both parties, the governors and the governed, stipulated and agreed to the terms, and the whole transaction was confirmed over dead bodies. But an error obtained over all christendom from an inadvertence of the teachers of religion and morals, to a peculiarity in this transaction. The error is this, that the government and the people are two parties, and