

A SERMON.

ZECHARIAH XI. 7.

*And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock.
And I took unto me two staves : the one I called Beauty, and the
other I called Bands : and I fed the flock.*

THE consecration of a separate place to the everlasting worship of Almighty God, is founded on the simplest principles of natural religion, as well as on the customs of the Jewish and the Christian Church in Apostolic, Primitive, and subsequent times.

That the Divine Being is not comprehended within any one place we know : but we know also that man, his creature, is necessarily so limited ; and can form no ideas or associations of ideas, which are not connected with space, and limited by it. The consecration of a particular place is not therefore for the sake of Him who is worshipped, but for the sake of man, his worshipper : that man, while he worships, may be incited to a dutiful reverence, and that his wandering and unsettled affections, by being enshrined in a local habitation, may gain reality and force by the fixedness of their abode, and the ever-recurring memory of former holy emotions. The act which natural reason teaches has grown into a habit by universal custom : all mankind in all ages, and under all religions, whether true or false, having combined to sanction it. These common feelings of mankind have also received the sanction of Divine precept and example : Moses in the wilderness, David on the restoration of the ark to Mount Zion, and Solomon at the building of the temple, having solemnly dedicated special places and things to God by express Divine direction, and our Lord having himself observed the feast of the dedication on the anniversary of the building of the temple, having twice purged it from those who infested it with ungodly merchandizing, and