

more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. \* This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations." The intention of these words, we think, cannot be mistaken. It is evidently to secure the direction of divine worship to its proper object, and to put an end to idolatrous practices. In verses 8 and 9, the same directions and penalties are laid down with reference to burnt offerings or sacrifices. And then (v. 10) evidently and unquestionably, in the same connexion, follows the prohibition and penalty against eating blood; *all blood* is the expression used by the text, because, as Rashi aptly remarks, "the principle being laid down in verse 11, that it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the life (*nefesh*.) and as the Israelites might conclude that reference here was only made to the blood of animals consecrated for sacrifice, therefore the text explicitly states *all blood*." Next follows as we conceive another reason why blood should not be eaten, viz.; "for the life of the flesh is in the blood," V. 11. And I have given it you upon the altar to make atonement for your life, (*nefesh*.) for the blood maketh an atonement for the life, (*nefesh*.) † V. 12. Therefore have I said unto the children of Israel, no soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you ‡ eat blood, &c. In verse 13, the blood of beasts or fowl that may be eaten, is directed to be *poured on the ground* and to be *covered with dust*, another preventative of idolatrous practices. In verse 16, we are again told that blood is the life of the flesh, the blood of it is for the "*nefesh*" or life thereof, and that hence is the prohibition. Further support to the opinion of Maimonides may be deduced from the 19 chap. of Leviticus, 26th verse, "Ye shall not eat anything with the blood, neither shall ye use enchantments nor observe times." The connexion of the one prohibition with the latter having reference to idolatrous practices, we take to

\* Aben Ezra well remarks, that all who seek and serve the devil-gods or idols may most fitly be said to be faithless to the true God to whom they are betrothed by covenant. Can any one suppose, he asks, that there can exist any other cause of good or evil, but the Holy One, blessed be He!

† On this passage Rashi remarks, "For all healthfulness of life depends on the blood, therefore, saith God, I have appointed that ye pour the blood on my altar, since by bringing me the life-blood of beasts, you show you have considered your own life has been forfeited by you, and you bring one life, which I have already permitted you to take, in place of another." We do not use the exact words of Rashi, but endeavour briefly to give his meaning.

‡ Since we find here the prohibition is extended to proselytes also, we may perhaps see an additional reason in favour of the opinion of Maimonides. The proselytes were forbidden it, as they were idolatry, since their example might prove contagious. Hence, as Aben Ezra remarks, the command to cover the blood in v. 13, also applies to them.