

the policy he would establish. In a word, there is hardly any old law-giver on record, but what thus pretended to revelation and the divine assistance.

The second step the legislators took to propagate and establish religion, was to make the general doctrine of a *providence*, with which they prefaced and introduced their laws, the great sanction of their institutions. Thus Zaleucus begins his preface: "Every inhabitant, whether in town or country, should first of all be persuaded of the being and existence of the gods; which belief he will readily be induced to entertain when he contemplates the heavens, regards the world and observes the dispositions, order and harmony of the universe, which can neither be the work of blind chance nor of man. These gods are to be worshipped as the cause of all the real good we enjoy. Every one, therefore, should so purify and possess his mind, as to have it clear of all kinds of evil, being persuaded that God is not honoured by a wicked person, nor acceptably served, like miserable man, with sumptuous ceremonies, or taken with costly sacrifices, but with *virtue only* and a *constant disposition to good and just actions.*"

The next step the legislator took was to support and affirm the general doctrine of a *providence*, which he had delivered in his laws, by a very circumstantial and popular method of inculcating the belief of a future state of reward and punishment.

This was the institution of the *mysteries*, the *most sacred part of pagan religion*, and artfully framed to strike deeply and forcibly into the minds and imagination of the people.

Each of the pagan gods had, besides the *public* and *open*, a *secret worship* paid unto him, to which none were admitted but those who had been selected by preparatory ceremonies, called *initiation*. This sacred worship was termed the *mysteries*. The pagans seemed to think initiation as necessary as the Christians do baptism. Everything in these rites was mysteriously conducted and under the most *solemn obligation of secrecy*, for which there are two reasons:—

First. Nothing excites our curiosity like that which retires from our observation, and seems to forbid our search. Of this opinion you will find the learned Synesius when he says: "The people will despise what is easy and intelligible, and, therefore, they must always be provided with something wonderful and mysterious in religion, to hit their taste and stimulate their curiosity." And again, "the ignorance of the mysteries preserve their veneration; for which reason they are intrusted to the cover of the night." On these principles the mysteries were framed. They were kept secret to excite curiosity; they were celebrated in the night, to impress veneration and religious horror, and they were performed with variety of shows and representations, (of which more hereafter,) to fix and perpetuate those impressions. Hith-