

to the best judgment and wisdom they had. Hence the various nations, both before and after the flood, instituted governments according to human wisdom, some making choice of one form, and some of another; some giving the whole authority into the hands of a ruler, called a king, an emperor, or monarch; others reserving a portion of the power in the hands of various individuals, termed nobles or princes; others leaving the form of government more or less in the hands of the people at large, something resembling a republic. But all these various forms instituted by man were entirely different in one particular from that instituted of God.

The Lord claims it as a right, in consequence of his wisdom and superior power, and in consequence of his having created men, to govern them; and if so, he claims the right of originating their laws and of dictating the form of government by which they shall be ruled. This is his right; and every man, when he seriously reflects on this subject, will be willing to acknowledge that God surely has more wisdom, power, and knowledge, in relation to the kind of government which would be best adapted to the human family, than those finite beings whom he has created; and if he has this superior wisdom, power, authority, and knowledge, we ought to give to him that right.

But mankind would not permit him to exercise the right which so justly belongs to him. They usurped the authority and denied the right of the Almighty to govern them, and thus originated all the forms of human governments which have existed upon this globe for the last six thousand years. It is true the Lord had a hand in the establishment of some of the laws connected with the government of Israel; but even that people, in consequence of the hardness of

their hearts, rebelled against the righteous, just, and holy laws that God ordained for their good, and desired laws of a different nature, and a form of government more resembling the corrupt nations around them. They were a hard-hearted people, and delighted to walk in the traditions of the Egyptians, and to follow after the imaginations of their own hearts; and when the pure law of Jehovah came forth and was presented to that people, it was more than they were willing to endure; it was too pure for them: they wanted something more suited to their carnal natures. For instance, when a man married a wife, they wished to have the privilege of divorcing her for every trifling cause that might happen to take place. The Lord, seeing the hardness of their hearts, permitted Moses to give them, according to their wishes, an inferior law. But this additional law of carnal commandments formed no part of a pure theocratical code such as the Lord intended to establish among that people. Many other items of law were given to the children of Israel, according to the hardness of their hearts, that were permitted by the Lord through Moses. We cannot, therefore, suppose that all the Mosaic code was acceptable and pleasing to God. Some of it was given in wrath, that the wicked among them might stumble and fall, and not be permitted to enter into the fulness of his rest. But God originated the most of the Mosaic code, while Moses merely permitted the additional laws applicable to a rebellious, hardhearted people.

The Israelites continued to be governed, more or less, by some of those divine laws, until the coming of the Messiah; but they often transgressed them through the traditions of their Elders; they often departed from the living God, and lost the spirit of revelation and communion