

**What's in a
Name?**

No. 1

**THE BOOK OF
NUMBERS
Chapter 33**

**by
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PREFACE

"We have now the record of Israel's journeyings through the wilderness just ended, and under the guardian care of Hira who, in spite of all their wilfulness and folly, had ever "led them by the right way". This record, kept by Moses according to the distinct command of Jehovah, is to us a solemn reminder of how our ways have been marked by Him, and are by us never to be forgotten. The two things are in closest connection and dependence on one another, our ways with Him, and His ways with us, although so different; and who can doubt that the chapter before us gives (or should give) us both of these together? We may say of this chapter, what has so often to be said of such lists as we have here, that while great pains have been taken - often vainly enough - to trace out such things as geographical position, even the meanings of the names have been examined with little care, and for the mass of expositions the very conception of any spiritual significance attaching to them seems not to have been in their minds. May the Lord wake up His people to the sad dishonour which we have thus done to God's Holy Word, and which is now bearing but its fruit in those attacks upon its inspiration, no way so effectively answered as by the demonstration of that higher meaning in it which has so much escaped us. Unspirituality is the natural ally of unbelief".

(Grant, "Numerical Bible", comments on Numbers 33).

This notation by Grant was one of the main reasons for our work, and, of course, a genuine desire to look into the meanings of the names. We have been repaid a thousandfold and have sampled anew the refreshing dew of Divine inspiration in their teaching. This work has only been attempted in a brief manner, and wholly on a suggestive basis. We have also indicated the source of various trails through Scripture, and it is our fervent hope that our readers will search them out with prayerful diligence that we all may be edified.

The Hymn Sheet "Camacha" herewith seemed to fit the sentiments of such a study very well, so we have included it with the permission of the publishers, Geo. Taylor, The Cross Printing Works, Stainland, Halifax, Yorks.

Coventry. August 1965

ARTHUR HALL

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BRIEF ERRATA

Disregard station numbering - See Station Index above

Page 5 The Red Sea "Israel were turned out" should read "Israel were turned about"

" 13, line 4 For "redundant" read "abundant"

" 6, " 16 For "physiology" read "psychology"

" 31, " 18 For "cube" read "mass" or "block"

" " " 27 For "Ezek. 38 : 39" read "Ezek. 38 and 39"

" 73, " 45 After 1 John 3 : 2-5 read the following: That Christ required saving from the nature of sin He bore is evident from Zech. 9 : 9 A.V. "saving himself", and again in Heb. 13 : 20, He was brought again from the dead "through the blood of the everlasting covenant". That blood was His own.

Page 79, line 12 Insert "reputedly" between "who" and "was".

" 87, line 25 "Bethlabara" should read "Bethabara".

THE EXODUS NUMBERS 33

Usually regarded as tedious, tiresome. Collection of names. Our view, one of the most interesting and profitable in Old Testament.

Numbers 33. 42 Stages or Stations, Israels wandering in wilderness, commencing Egypt, end attained - the Border of Canaan.

42 generations from Abraham - Christ. Suggestion. Typical calendar. (1) Ecclesial. (2) Personal. Commencing Passover - Baptism - Jordan in sight, awaiting judgement of Christ. We have these stages in our spiritual experiences. The beginning and ending of our pilgrimage now. Awaiting final sifting of our characters, as no doubt Israel waited until the last of the older generation should die and be buried on 'that side Jordan'. Only spiritual element survived that journey. Joshua and Caleb. Is it not truly significant:- New generation awaited the command to pass over Jordan.

Personal Application. By the time we have reached the end of our journeyings here we should be a new people in Christian experience (with the old leaven well and truly put aside).

So then you and I must have a personal beginning in Christ, as seen in the assembling of all Israel in Goshen in Egypt and Rameses in particular.

Exhortation. Trace out the meaning of some of the names of the stopping or tarrying places in the waste, howling wilderness through which Israel journeyed under the direct guidance of the Yahweh. They may well prove to be key phrases in our own spiritual experiences in Christ Jesus. Whatever we may expect to find is suggested in broad outline by the use of the number 42 in Scripture.

42 would indicate (A) As already observed. The whole period of spiritual training and trial through which God causes either (1) Nations (2) Ecclesias (3) Individuals to pass. Would seem to indicate viewing it from every angle, Heb. 12, that chastening - more grievous than joyous, but capable, if endured, of yielding that necessary fruit of righteousness. Apart from natural hazards which afflicted Israel, apostasy and rebellion added gravely to humiliation and affliction at that time.

Lord Jesus. No wonder Jesus revealed this would be the case to his followers in the Christian dispensation.

(Rev. 13.5 Wild beast - afflicted Ecclesia 42 months

(" 12 Time, times, half time = $3\frac{1}{2}$ years.

(Affliction - 42 months once again

(" 12.6 1,260 days - 42 months. Period of training for Ecclesia.

Precisely similar programme then for you and me in these days.

Back it goes to pre-Exodus days. Nimrod = 294 = 42 x 7. Noah's days then 42 = 6 x 7. 6 number man's opposition to God. 7 covenant number, etc. 666 we all know.

In 42 we have antagonism between Christ (7) and Anti-Christ (6) in this number, in scripture we see the working out of man's opposition to God. The every day phrase, sums of 'sixes and sevens.' Error in opposition and mixed up with truth. Brief summary of number 42 gives broad outline of this wilderness of nations through which Ecclesia of God must pass, of the terrible hazards that lie ahead. What are they today? Natural elements, as they who are as "brute beasts" of evolutionist persuasion whose spiritual insight is nil and upward progress limited in their animal instinct to the highest tree which a monkey can climb.

(B) The opposition and sometime fatal oppression of a worldly religious system full of the blood of the saints. Deceit, lying man exalting Papal Rome.

(C) Possibly most frightful of all. The degrading humiliation of our own sinfulness and waywardness which habitually takes us back again to the flesh pots of Egypt; were we left to our own resources we should all soon be buried in this waste howling wilderness of spiritual wickedness. But we are certain of help. Israel had their Yahweh Angel for their guide. We have The Yahweh Man, the Name of God, Jesus, to guide us. Emmanuel is an ever present blessing. God with us. Provided we keep our eyes on the Pillar of Cloud and fear and obey the Pillar of Flame as they did, both are resident today in our

Bible. Lamp to our feet. Light to our path, etc, and follow very close to the Yahweh Man. None can harm us, and maybe by and by a new people will be found in us by Jesus on the brink of Jordan. The river of judgement.

42 - One 7 short of true spiritual perfection, but working in hope, howbeit with fear.

Numbers 33.2 Lord's instruction to Moses. "Write out their goings out or Exodus Stations". Direct command of God. Very important, we usually skip them or blunder through them. Why utmost importance to God, why not us? Each name then will have its own significance.

Numbers 33.1/4 Striking prelude. Redemption of Israel - Passover. Death firstborn of Egypt.

Numbers 33.3 Ra-Meses or Temple of the sun. In Goshen "The drawing near" rallying place - rally point of departure. Place of their former servitude - Their slave labour had built Rameses the city dedicated to Ra, Son of the Sun God, used by the firstborn of Pharaoh. The scene of their former oppression, misery and humiliation had now become the place of triumph and honour. The 9th plague when Ra, the Sun god had been blotted out by Yahweh, pointed towards this moment of joy and happiness. Yahweh had wreaked His vengeance upon Ra. Pharaoh - Egypt (under this impetus Israel commenced their 'goings out'.) Ra-Meses then is very significant. Hb. Ra - Evil Meses or Masah - To melt or the washing away of evil.

To God's firstborn is A or the sun. Not of evil but of righteousness. Mal.4.2. His arising will melt away all bondage to sin and thralldom for us we hope in the very near future. It is only in Rameses that we can cast off our shackles and pull up our tent pegs. Only commencing point. The passover in Egypt. The Cross of Christ. The Wine we take faithfully represents the washing away of our sins thro the Blood of Jesus. Eph.5.28 Rev. 5. RV. Col.1.13/14. Rameses indicating then - only one marshalling power in Christ, only one cleansing station that is Christ. Maybe upon Ecclesial Roll, but, unless we have truly entered our journey at Rameses, the station of cleansing where 'Evil melts away' we have not begun our journey. Therefore Goshen, the place of drawing near has proved its point.

Numbers 33.5 Station No.2 Succoth (Tabernacles) where Israel first built tents. Temporary habitation. Very obvious lesson for us. Our journey from bondage to Kingdom - must be a pilgrimage. Having a set place to reach. Heb. 11. Abraham, City whose Builder and Maker is God. We can have no part in the civic life of the community in the place of our sojourning. Succoth then, rightly follows Raameses after washing away of sins in baptism. Separateness must follow seen in Passover and its additional feast of unleavened bread. 1 Cor.5.6. Separation then must follow. In Gen. - Revelation. Gen.1. God divided light from darkness. Rev.22.14/15. Division of those who enter gates of new Jerusalem and dogs without. Succoth points to this. Song. 4.12. Beautiful illustration Ex.12.37/38 Succoth first observed as Memorial. Lev. 23. 33/44 - How fitting feast closing the year (Tabernacles) should have its association with Succoth. Fitting conclusion to the way of sacrifice - separation - pilgrimage. Every time Jesus went to Mount of Olives Succoth would come to mind. Recall that Peter too on the mount at Transfiguration had thoughts that tended to Succoth. So in this station we have the whole gamut of the purpose of God realised. Passover - Tabernacles. Leafy boughs of the tents seem to have apparant insecurity. But the faithful have the Divine Protection of Psa.91 Chaldee Version. "Under the shadow of the clouds of the glory of the Almighty". The Shekinah itself.

Last thought on Succoth. Suffering also is associated with Succoth. The men of Succoth were taugt with thorns by Israel (Judges 8.16) How true this is of the Crown of Thorns. Behold the Man, Christ Jesus, who bore the crown placed upon Him by Eve downwards. In our pilgrimage we must bear His reproach.

Numbers 33.6 Etham = Perfection

Hazard No.1 - "Edge of Wilderness". 2,000,000 people, cattle, sheep etc. Question them. What would they eat? How would they be clothed? Would illness afflict them in the wilderness? Consideration in Mind. Was Egypt so bad at all? 1st. battle Israel had to overcome. Trial of trust which comes upon us at so many periods of life. Both naturally and spiritually.

At Etham it would appear Israel determined to trust God with a whole heart and to march forward with unimpaired confidence. Etham = wholeness or perfection. God kept that bargain as we know, but Israel failed miserably to keep their part.

1. Perfection to us = completeness of moral behaviour way beyond our grasp while flesh remains operative. . . Matt. 5:48, "As your Father which is in heaven is perfect"- Jesus. Hebrews 1:9. Examples of this perfection. As we said, way beyond our grasp in this life. Gal. 5:17. Wonderful link with edge of wilderness, with trial - failure (final success is yet to come, as per Rom. 8:22-23).

2. Perfection we may attain to now - Sincerity. Etham (Heb.), sincerity or integrity; Old Testament - similar in Old English. Root idea, Etham, used as holiness, wholeness; heal, health, hale. Gen. 20:5 1 Kings 9:4 Job 4:6 Psalm 7:8.

Unto this perfection Israel came at Etham - natural soundness of body and limb, of clothes and shoes, their welfare completely supplied by God. Not one feeble person among them. Etham - wholeness, healthiness, hale in this sense - was perfect in Israel. But how about sincerity, the other meaning of Etham? Joshua and Caleb, only two out of 600,000 men, were found with it. Sincerity is entirely a self-product. Antecedent characteristics may play a large part in our physiological make-up, but they cannot affect in the slightest degree our personal sincerity, which must be placed in God and our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 5:6 is quite clear on this point.

Etham, then, comes properly after Succoth. (1) Rameses - sins washed away. (2) Succoth - separated from the world to God. (3) Etham - walking after God with or in sincerity. This sincerity is never misplaced. Our wholehearted resolve and sincerity of purpose can be followed out in confidence.

Etham was distinguished by the appearance of that wonderful manifestation of the pillar of cloud and flame of fire. Our guidance through the wilderness is taken care of if we follow the signs in the Word of God, which is a light to our path and a lamp to our feet. The Yahweh Man, our Lord Jesus, will keep us, as the Yahweh Angel led Israel (Ex. 13:17-18. 16:10. 19:2). Let us reverently fear Him; for we remember, and let us always keep in mind, that His glorified eyes are as aflame of fire, and that our God is a consuming fire - Rev. 1:14 and Psalm 139, of course.

Numbers 33. Pihahiroth. Station No. 3.

Pihahiroth literally means Liberties, Escapes. From what?, may we ask. Israel by direct command of God was turned from the north-easterly course, the direct route to Canaan, to the southerly quarter (Ex. 14:1), behind the hills of Baal-zephon, leading to the upper arm of the Red Sea, which must be forded in due course. Pharaoh, now recovered from the terrible shock of the slaughter of the first-borns, pursued with all the might of Egyptian cavalry, 600 armed chariots. Exodus 14 reveals Israel as completely shut in, with escape cut off in all directions; to the east, by the sea; to the west and south by sheer forbidding mountains; while to the north they could see the sun glinting on the war chariots now bearing down upon them. What could they do? What did they do? They panicked - as we would do in similar circumstances; as Abraham did in Egypt?; as Peter did in the High Priest's courtyard - because we are all human. A similar strain was observed in Jesus in Gethsemane: "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this cup from me". A terrible strain, a human experience, but there was no panic with Jesus - "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done". Faith exemplified. Let us keep this in mind. Pihahiroth teaches, from what came to pass afterwards, that God's children are NEVER tried more than they can bear, but (and this is different in one sense from Jesus in Gethsemane) a way of escape is made possible. The life histories of David and Paul are constant testimonies to this fact. Jesus knew there was no legitimate way of escape from the cross. We have no such foreknowledge and so trust in the same God in faith as Jesus did. So our Etham sincerity will be tested and tried. The spiritual Pihahiroths will fiercely try us, sometimes gripping our hearts with terror. But faith in Christ will always bring us liberty and escape though we be sorely tried; and, if we reach the Kingdom of God, the new song which we shall sing, the song of Moses and of the Lamb, will remind us of those victories in Christ.

Israel had a seven fold deliverance at the Red Sea. Fear, Ex.4.13. Working. 14.14
Darkness. 14.20. Law. 14.29. Sin. 14.31. Death. 15.2. Judgment. 15.13.
Israelites were saved from these by baptism into Moses. 1 Corinth.10.

We are saved from these by baptism into Christ. Perilous days are approaching for
the world and the brotherhood; we do well to take earnest heed to this exhortation of
Pi-hahiroth.

With Red Sea crossed all returning to Egypt now not only improbable but impossible,
and after our baptism should be out of mind. After such a magnificent finale of Divine
Power and deliverance, further testing must inevitably follow. In order to see - Had
the lesson been learned? What were these lessons?

Summary : The liberty of the Christians is a glorious thing as we have seen, but it
involves certain dangers. Ex.14.11. Israel murmured against God and fell into pride.
Ex.14.

Thus, danger of our liberty running into licence.

Blessed thing that in Christ free from fear of men, conscience, judgment, but not free
from fear of God, beginning of Wisdom. Free from working for our salvation, but not
free from working out our salvation.

Free from darkness, but not from light; from law but not from grace; from sin but not
from service. We are free from death but are crucified to the world. And our grand
commission is not "Do and live" but "Live and do".

Had these lessons been learned? Marah, next station will reveal the answer.

Marah in the wilderness of Shur; both names reveal the gravity of Israel's natural
hazards at this time.

Shur - circling round about. Israel journeyed surveyed observed. Three days for
water, 2,000,000 folk besides animals, this is a terrific requirement. Story of an
unavailing search for water of life. Shur - Fortress, of being shut in, describes the
enmity, opposition everywhere they went against them. Ex.15 would show to us,
many centuries away from their times, the utter hopelessness of such a search for the
water of life amongst the wilderness of nations today, and their so called inspired book.
It could only be found at Marah. Just as we today are drawn to Christ by the Father.
Jno.3. So was Israel drawn or came upon Marah. But alas, Marah means bitterness,
and the waters were useless. Murmuring No.2 against Moses. Ex.15.23/24.

Great anticlimax. Majesty, power of God already forgotten after only 3 days.

Completely forgotten. How utterly human it all is. And the cloud and fire were still
leading them. When they eventually arrived at Marah the waters were alkaline, unfit
for use. Hopes were raised and dashed at the same moment. The water of life of
Christendom is brackish, bitter as gall, and salt water as found at Jericho in Elisha's
day, 1 Kgs.2, can only increase the thirst, never satisfy it. ANSWER: Ex.15
"The Lord shewed him a tree" which when he had cast in the waters, the waters were
made sweet. Elisha cast a new saucer full of salt into the spring at Jericho - and the
waters were healed. Yahweh Ropheka, 'I am the Lord that healeth thee' became
manifested.

Tree - Ex.15. Sept. - "Zulon". Cross for Jesus (1 Pet.2.24).

Saucer new - Body prepared by God, and willingly given by Jesus in sacrifice. Cross
of Christ was essentially the emblem of the utter obedience of the Son to the Father's
Will. Eminently portrayed beforehand during the temptation in the wilderness,
following on immediately after Christ's baptism. In such order did Israel proceed -
1. Baptism into Moses at the Red Sea. Then (2) Trial in the wilderness. That water
of life was made sweet through the obedience which really pointed to the Crucifixion
already looming in the mind of Christ at this time. Bitter indeed, as the bitter herbs
eaten previously with the Passover Lamb at Etham.

Only cross of Christ can neutralise bitterness and give pure waters of life for us at
Marah, and for the whole world at Jericho. Character of Christ under different aspects.
Since then our bitterness has been weighed against this tree of utter obedience and
devotion as it is found in Christ.

Yah Ropheka. Will heal if - these spiritual elements are reposed in us, albeit in a
very minute degree. The potential must be in us, for without potential all physical

and spiritual forces are inert and cannot react to stimuli. Marah teaches, then, bitterness in our lives, if dealt with in "ropheka" manner, can become sweet, and Marah or Bitterness will give place to Elim in God's mercy.

Elim = (1) "strength", (2) "God's strong ones or angels (Ex. 16:1) 12 fountains of water, 70 palm trees. The true oasis of life amidst the barren wilderness. All these happenings within one month of leaving Egypt - a thumb-nail sketch of succeeding events to follow them in 40 years' journeyings. The first object lesson for us to learn is that after baptism comes suffering, and out of suffering, if still faithful, a dispensation of strength, seeing that God does not allow us to stay at Marah overlong; although it is possible to stay at Marah permanently if we allow bitterness to eat into us. If, on the other hand, we follow Christ through obedience and use forgiveness, then the strength and joy of Elim can be ours. If so, we reach Elim and partake of this Strength of Ail. We too will become "ailim" or God's strengthened ones, as is to be seen in the 12 disciples or apostles who will judge Israel in the near future as "Elim". This time, unlike the disobedient "elim" in Psalm 82, they will be seen in righteousness or as the 70 palm trees - trees of life and righteousness along with the Gentile community in Christ of which we form part. We too then shall dwell spiritually by the waters of rest (Psalm 23) under the Good Shepherd's care. The bowers thereof will be green, and the rafters thereof of fir, and the banner over it of love (Song of Solomon). So then we must now be as fountains of waters to the ecclesias and palm trees for food to them also, according to Matthew 13:52 (12 apostles and 70 disciples were sent out by Jesus) - householders bringing forth treasures new and old for the household of God.

Here we find a perfect example, 7 for spiritual perfection: Rameses, Succoth, Etham, Pi-hahiroth, the Red Sea, Marah, Elim. Seven as we reckon according to the stoppages, but in reality only six stations, therefore imperfect and not the complete end of things, as we hope to show in our next.

After our introduction of lessons from Numbers 33 who can say that these stations are only legend or haphazard? Our investigation shows them to be absolutely true to place and teaching as we follow this journey to our true maturity in Christ in the mercy of God. May the true Elim become a spiritual resting place now.

THE RED SEA

Israel were turned out and returned to the Red Sea. Why? There is something pathetic about this record. Israel had pitched their tents at Elim hoping to dwell for some considerable time. 70 date palms, 12 cooling fountains of water. Natural reaction. To have our lines fallen out unto us in pleasant places. But not too long, or we shall forget what God has done for us and become puffed up with pride. So Israel were led back to the Red Sea, so that the sight of the waves might flash and instil into their memories what God had wrought for them. Most of us humans are bounded by vicissitudes, and if they are those of Israel at Elim, health, wealth, plenty of ease and comfort, and we tend to think them permanent, we may forget that our experiences are dispensational, in fact constant neither in happiness nor in sorrow; dispensational in the sense that time and change are used by the Father to forge by chastening a likeness in cameo to the Son Himself. Time and change are busy for ever. Summer and winter, heat and cold are necessary to this chastening. Now Israel must return from ease and plenty to that scene which must remain in memory throughout all succeeding generations till the return of Christ and for all time after that, in the Song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 5: 9-14). How often they are taken back by God through the prophets to this great deliverance! Seven places come immediately to mind: Psalm 136: 13-15, Num. 21:14, Deut. 11:4, Joshua 2: 10, Neh. 9.9, Psalm 106:9 Jer. 49.21.

What is the lesson to us? Memory plays a large part in salvation - if we take heed to it. The Red Sea recalls vividly to mind entanglement and destruction: (1) entanglement of the Egyptian forces (Ex. 14: 24-28), and (2) the absolute destruction of the whole host under the almighty power of God. We have no record of any exhortation to the people at this time. They were just led back to the Red Sea. There is an association of ideas here. The Red or Reed Sea had taken its name from the bulrushes which grew in it in profusion. Moses, who had been drawn out of the water, out of the bulrushes in infancy, had withdrawn himself from the entanglement of sin in Egypt in maturity (Heb. 11:24-27). He had been chosen by Yahweh to lead Israel as a nation out of the entangle-

ment of sin and bondage in the power and majesty of God. So they had to return to the scene of God's awful majesty and power as a reminder or memorial. Every Sunday we return in spirit to keep in memory these things to the scene of our deliverance, Christ our passover, Who was sacrificed for us. We celebrate His victory over him who had the power of death and held us in thralldom. Spiritual Pharaoh is sin in the flesh, the devil (Heb.2.14-16). Stephen took the Sanhedrin back to the Red Sea in his defence (Acts 7.36). In it we perceive Christ's blood, burial and resurrection. So powerful is the teaching of the association of ideas in Scripture. Similar methods were powerfully used by Jesus. In Matt.4.18-19 Peter is called to be a fisher of men. In Luke 22.55-62 is given his denial around the fire in the high priest's courtyard. In John 21.4-13 Jesus reconstructs elements of these incidents to recall Peter to a right state of mind. Jesus puts three questions. "Lovest thou Me?" etc. Peter faces up to each one. A three-fold assurance is necessary from him for his spiritual rehabilitation.

In Old Testament usage Joseph did the same with his brethren. That old scene at Dothan was re-enacted in all its essential features in Egypt and thus God mercifully brought about the repentance of Joseph's brethren. When modern physiology works on these lines, then it is true and very effective.

It is well that we ourselves return in memory to the night of our special deliverance at baptism and re-assess our present position in the light of the vows we made then. This is the teaching of the return to the Red Sea, to burn into our memories the great deliverance from our former entanglement with sin and to re-assess our position therefrom.

When we review this decision to return to the shores of the Red Sea and look at our map of the Sinai peninsula, we notice that the course of Israel had been south-westerly through the desert of Etham to Marah and Elim. The mountains seem to close up further progress in that direction, forcing Israel to turn aside and come close to the sea, whose shores, though distantly, they had been following. God, then, has used that spur of hills to accomplish His living purpose and design with Israel. We conclude then that God uses nature, society, material things, all things to bring us to remembrance of His mercies. That removal to another part of the country, though in good faith, just did not come off. That job which fell through had its part and was used by our Heavenly Father in His wisdom towards us. He is the potter, we the clay. May we be malleable in the Divine Hands.

Once again we find the return to the scene of God's revealed power a strengthening basis for what is immediately to follow. After their swerving to the Red Sea, Israel are found in the Wilderness of Sin (Num.33.11). Around the rocky promontory which brought them to the water's edge, the map shows they were able to leave the sea and pursue an inland journey. A defile in the mountains opens the way for them with many hazards and discomforts. A hard climb lies before them. They will be entangled in the mountains all the way until they get over to Hazeroth (Psa.105.39). But for the pillar of God's grace leading them, perhaps they would never have arrived at Hazeroth. Pasturage was very scanty, food hard to get, water scarce. There were bushes to trip their feet, rending briars to pierce and poison their flesh and any number of confusing valleys to make them lose their way, and also their temper. But it held lessons for them - and for us. "Sin" in Hebrew means a bramble or enmity, and judging from the experiences of Israel in this desert it was very appropriately named. It is sufficiently revealing to say that their experiences at this time are recorded in Ex.16. Spiritually then, this station signifies to us the state of discontent when enmity like a bramble lacerates our heart and induces us to murmur and rebel against the providence of God. It was common practice among the Hebrews to speak of rebellious people as briars and brambles (Ezek.2.6).

Rise of enmity against God (a) Immediate. A Wilderness of Sin revealed that they possessed carnal hearts, which are enmity against God (Rom.8.7), hearts back to the world (Jas.4.4). Elim, Red Sea, Succoth. Manifestations of God are awaiting, Ex.16, yet discontent and murmuring follow on.

Rise of enmity against God (b) Remote. Gen.3.1 etc. Man's final temptation was to discontent. Evil affections have always been like a bramble to set him in enmity against God. (Isa.27.4). Israel murmured 13 times in the wilderness : Ex.5.21, 14.10, 15.24, 16.2, 17.2, 32.1,

Num. 11:1, 4, 12:2, 14:2, 16:3, 20:2, 21:5. Later the Jews were no different (John 6:41-43). They murmured under precisely similar conditions when bread was promised. The root of discontent was worldliness. The people hungered for the flesh pots of Egypt. Can we not say that similar brambles and thorns are hampering the truth today? Christ's warning comes down to us over the centuries: "Remember Lot's wife". Compelled to live within this world, we must not be conformed to it, but transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:1). Some scholars' definition of "holy" is a New Testament Greek compound of two other words, literally "without the world". Would that we were all holy in this sense!

Christ is God's cure for man's enmity against God (Eph. 2:3) - available in type in the wilderness of Sin. Ex. 16:4. Manna given from heaven. John 6. Christ is the bread from heaven. Manna "What is it?" Deut. 8 John 6: If Israel had known, they would not have despised it for the quails. The True Manna was also despised by His generation. As He complained, they never knew Him.

Manna. "Numbered" or "Prepared". The idea is that the Father tenderly computed the needs of His children and lovingly prepared the right means to satisfy them. So with Christ, "the manna", "hidden in God". God has patiently supplied our needs. He feeds us with Christ. Every day supplies a daily portion (2 Kings 25:30) if we have a mind to receive it. In our deep humiliation we learn that "the very hairs of our head are all numbered". Psalm 78:25 - angels' food. John 6:35 - "he that cometh unto Me shall never hunger or thirst". Song 5:1 - Summary: "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved".

Comparison between Manna (Ex. 16:14) and Jesus.

Both were despised	(verse 14)
Both were rejected	" 15
Both were proclaimed	" 15
Both were then accepted	" 18
Both discovered - altogether lovely	" 31
Benefit of both may be handed down to others	" 32
Refreshment from both sufficient for the whole journey to Canaan	" 35

Important Note: Paul draws detailed lessons for us from the whole story of the wilderness of Sin (1 Cor. 10:3-11). Let the brambles of self-examination pierce every one of us that we may avoid the pitfalls ahead. The prisoner liberated from long service in jail plucks a rose, crushing it in his hand, and is convinced the pains in his palms are proof to him of the reality of his release. So may the prick of conscience of our deep affliction show that we are in truth sons and daughters of God and that we have been liberated from the bondage of sin by the sacrifice of the Lord and that we know and are known of God, having partaken in faith of the True Manna.

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" and what is the end of the Lord? Ex. 16:36 is very revealing. That tenth of an ephah represented the faithful remnant in Jesus who would survive the wilderness ordeal. Abraham offered tithes. Jacob. The Law. Isaiah 6:10. That tenth part of an ephah plainly says this to us and gives us the necessary urge to be included therein. So Yahweh provided for that generation manna to counteract and soothe the smarting cuts of the brambles of worldly enmity in the wilderness of Sin.

Num. 33:12. Dophkah So Israel journeyed on, no doubt pursuing their way along one of the wadis of the wilderness of Sin. They came to Dophkah (Wadi Magrana?) - a wide valley shut in by barren hills, highly coloured, most picturesque and beautiful, but for the most part void of vegetation. The record seems to imply that there was some softening of the desert barrenness here; "they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin". Thinking naturally. Most pasturage and water, although neither could have been very abundant. For the last few days Israel had been following the most difficult part of their journey. It was uphill all the way. They were suffering from heat and lack of water. It was t rying, but not impossible, for did not that Pillar of Cloud supply some cover from these awfully trying conditions?

There were intense conditions indeed in Shur - Btham, but their conditions were almost intolerable in the lonely fastnesses of the Wilderness of Sin.

But God was with them, and at Dophkah an altogether unexpected mercy awaited them. It brought relief to their minds and was to give inspiration for the journey ahead.

There was not an abundance of water from a rock, not even the finding of wells and palms, as at Elim. Some water supply was there because several hundred people were living permanently at Dophkah. God granted Israel a mercy even higher than the giving of water, by an appeal to their better natures on the part of God - a knocking at their hearts of a subtle and more blessed character.

"Dophkah" = "Knocking as at a door". The significance of this name is not far to seek. History and inscriptions have combined to prove that in this part of the mountains were extensive mines of copper and turquoise. For centuries these mines had been worked, the Egyptians sending thither their political prisoners. It was a place of penal servitude, the ancient counterpart of Siberia of Soviet fame today. Noblemen, slaves, innocent and guilty, men, women and children were all driven to underground tasks by the civil overseers. 750 soldiers guarded the entrances to the mines to make sure that none escaped. Death was the only release.

Among the slaves would be many relations and friends of the relieving Israelites of the hosts of the Lord who came marching to Dophkah. It is thought that Joshua was one who gained freedom here, and became the servant of Moses, perhaps first of all in gratitude.

(a) Joshua - no genealogy. Had his relatives perished in this terrible servitude ?

(b) There is apparently no mention of Joshua in history until after this time. Can the experiences of Joshua at Dophkah be illustrated by Isaiah 42:7, 61:2, etc. ?

What a glad surprise ! Not only to the released Hebrew slaves but also to the liberators. What scenes met them ! (Belsen, Auschwitz, etc.). What embraces, family reunions, tears ; re-enacting Joseph's reunion with his brethren - and that of Christ and Israel in the near future. That an actual release was accomplished is implied even by the inscriptions on the rocks around the place. Though the mines were unexhausted and have proved rich even to comparatively recent times, the inscriptions show that the work was suddenly stopped. The machinery was found in 1870, left by those who were brought out so suddenly. So God knocked on the hearts of His people in this way through the joy of acting as liberators at this time. We see in a vrry small manner how heaven rejoices when only one sinner is liberated and reclaimed from the slavery of sin (Luke 15. Parables of Jesus). The condition of the liberated slaves in that rather bewildered happiness can no doubt be compared with that peculiar wonderment felt by so many as the Word opened up to them Christ as Shepherd, Priest and King, who recall that the Truth did not come slowly to their senses, but as a blinding light : at one moment as these slaves, in bondage and darkness, the next in the blinding light of Christ and the Truth.

A most precious station, Dophkah, is it not ? Heb. "Dophkah". In Scripture knocking is used in two ways : i. e. man may knock, or God may knock. Song 5 : 3 is the only occurrence in the Old Testament, and very appropriate. "The voice of my beloved knocking". Control proves the knocking is not imperious, but rather tender pleading, is it not ? (as in Num. 33). Implicit in both cases, is it not ?

Three knocks and three answers in the Bible :

(1) Matt. 7 : 8 "To him that knocketh it shall be opened". John 6 : 37 "I will in no wise cast out". Even the abject poor will be supplied. Italian versions : "I will in no wise cast out of doors". The custom of a poor man asking for bread at a rich man's door. The bread is always given. Hebrews 5 : 7. Christ's example in all things. Dophkah : Christ's knock at our hearts. Result : -

(2a) The door is sometimes opened. At Dophkah Israel opened their hearts in patience at God's knocking by releasing those in more dire need than their own, and so they supped with Him of the manna God had prepared for them (John 15, 1 Cor. 15 : 34, Rev. 2 : 17). Christ Himself the manna.

(2b) Dophkah. Song 5. Christ knocks. He calls. He puts His hand in at the door, but withdraws, leaving the symbol of His love and suffering for her. Freely running myrrh - voluntary sacrifice. A call to affliction by Jesus. She hesitates momentarily, then hastens after Him and makes a most wondrous confession of His virtues, after personal affliction and humiliation by the watchmen (5:16).

(3) Dophkah. Man's untimely knock for mercy. The door never opened. Noah's ark? Matt. 7:21-23, 25:10-15, Heb. 3:18-19, Luke 8:24-28, Prov. 24:28.

(4) Dophkah. Judges 19:22, beating at the door for evil ends. May God safely deliver us from such a terrible heritage and bondage!

May we open our hearts to the knocking of Christ and so be invited to sup with Him at the end of the day, so near at hand, and in the ensuing release from bondage and sin find the true happiness of Dophkah.

NUMBERS 33:13. Alush

After this wonderful period of God's goodness, Israel took their journey still farther into the fastnesses of the mountains and encamped in Alush. One would think that time would have been taken for the released captives to rest and receive strength under the influences of hope and love as well as by means of proper food and fresh air. But the rest must be cut reasonably short. Long rest after triumph, though by the power of God and not of ourselves, would be apt to produce either arrogance or inertia amongst them. Israel were always very human in their reactions, and so are we.

Two things happened at Alush:

(a) There was the first glorious view of Sinai bursting upon the traveller on the way from Dophkah. Something to behold, we are told. As yet none had told the multitude that this was the place of Divine manifestation of the Name of Yahweh to Moses and the Mosaic Law for the people. The glory of this natural spectacle was a fitting counterpart to the spiritual revelation of the knock at their hearts at Dophkah and the upsurging of righteous deliverance (no doubt as they had felt) as they released the wretched prisoners. But, as always, a just balance must be reached, and so

(b) The wells at Alush they found had been choked at the spring; the water was brackish, polluted with stones and rubbish. Had the desert tribes, hearing of their advance, deliberately sabotaged this water of life? We might tend to think that Israel wandered alone in the desert. Not so; other wanderers, enemies, would be watching, as Rephidim illustrates, ready to pounce on the relatively unguarded rear of the column - Ishmael (the mingled people). Amalek and the like? Not mentioned in Exodus 17:1 but possibly implied. Here a natural illustration helps to point out a very important spiritual lesson, how the fountain of life can become fouled and useless at the source.

"Alush", a Hebrew word from which we get "leaven", represented the inward agitations which were still at work within the people, despite the great spiritual lessons taught them so recently. Some would speak of leaven as the principle of the Kingdom within us, agitating against our natural sinfulness. Personally, we are very dubious about this, as it would appear to be the opposite in all quotations. Growth, great expansion by inward agitation, is the basic principle. From what happened later at Sinai, the growth of fleshly lust and infidelity and forgetfulness, it would appear that the emphasis should be as by Paul in 1 Cor. 5:6-8. Just as natural wells of water can be choked with rubbish, dead animals, etc., and so become unusable; just as leaven in those days was a lump of sour dough left over from earlier baking; so malice and wickedness of the old life will choke and stultify the water of life. The lesson of Alush (Leaven) is: let not the passions of our former life reassert themselves so as to choke our new life in Christ. Alush, then, contains one of the most perfect parables of the whole journey (1 Cor. 10:11).

Rephidim Numbers 33:14 Simply states lack of water once again - the most noticeable and painful feature. Exodus 17 gives the graphic details. Verses 3 to 7 show water again the subject of Israel's chiding of Moses. How true the definitions of the word "Rephidim" are: Heb. = "weakening" and a second aspect = "the strengthening of the hands". Israel became weak, chiding Moses over the water; so the Rock in Horeb brought forth water. Exodus 17:7 really paints the picture for us. Massah and Meribah. Eloquent naming by Moses. "Massah" = "tempt, melt away", already seen in Ra-meses, giving us cause and effect. Jesus used this situation in Matt. 4:7, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God": Deut. 6:16, try Him, particularly from the point of unbelief. "Meribah" = "to chide". Another stage in the progress of discontent. Heb. = "to seize", especially by the hair (?). The person of Moses now is threatened. The word is applied by Peter to Christ in 1 Pet. 2:23, to revile - a strong expression implying insult. Here we have the outcome of the leavening of Alush, open violence and rebellion and the blasphemous conclusion, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" Water from the rock was the outcome. That was God's gracious answer to them.

Paul in 1 Cor. 10 leads to the antitype and the ever-ready answer close to our hearts and lips. "That rock was Christ" - who is Christ but Immanuel and who is Immanuel but "God with us"? The very striking lesson to us is that we should never question whether the Lord is amongst us at all in any circumstance. Because our God is not only omnipotent, but omniscient and omnipresent, not only all-powerful but ever-present and everywhere through His spirit (Psalm 139), Revelation 1 and the golden candlestick teaching that Christ is not only present but walking amidst the ecclesias, observing with eyes of glory and of flame the doings of each individual ecclesia and every heart. Let us never say, "Is the Lord amongst us", in unbelief and chiding, but rather say, "Immanuel", "God is with us", and reverently fear before Him in thankfulness for all His blessings to us.

Water shortage was again the cause. Apparently manna was always available. But had Israel to find a suitable site for collecting the daily manna?, as we today have to prepare our hearts to receive the bread of life? We wonder. All sorts of queries arise. Because, then, of this weakness (Rephidim), the people were brought low, very low, and then God helped them through the Rock, "which was Christ". As always they were made to recognise their littleness or nothingness. So Israel turned again to God to help. Exodus 17:5. Beautiful example of Rephidim (1) When we are weak, then are we strong. When our knees fail us, then our hands are strengthened in prayer.

(2) Rephidim, second meaning: "strengthened" (through nourishment?). Ex. 17:6. Water flowing from Horeb. The Rock = Jesus, 1 Cor. 10:4. God gives life in Him.

Neither the rock in Horeb nor Jesus gave outward evidence of the riches contained Both were smitten (Mark 15). (Isaiah 53:2).

Both yielded heavenly nourishment (John 4:13, 14:7, 7:39).

Both yielded permanent supply (Matt. 28:19-20).

Rephidim: third phase. Amalek. Battle joined with Israel by Amalek (Esau's grandson). Jacob and Esau again. Amalek can only suggest all that is opposed to spiritual life and understanding - deadly opposition, in fact. No compromise is possible. Deut. 25:17-18: Amalek cut off the stragglers, the hindmost. Sin (Amalek's spiritual counterpart) is most successful in its assaults on those who are farthest from God and the Tabernacle. Mark 14:54-68 - we wonder whether, if Peter had followed more closely and not "afar off", he would have been spared the humiliation of denying his Lord. We are not judging in any way, only enquiring. God gave victory to Israel and gives Christian victory over temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). Let us keep close to Christ. The devil can never again challenge Him, because Christ slew him (Heb. 2:14). Near to Him is safest, farther from Him lies danger. Let us heed the warning. Song 1:13 can be our example.

Amongst other jewels found here at Rephidim is the realisation that victory

for Israel was gained by or through two agencies :

(1) Prayer by Moses in the mount, and (2) Endeavour by Joshua in the plain. A lesson for us. Prayer and endeavour and the mercy of God will help us to conquer in most battles if Jesus is the object of our petitions (Luke 1:69-71). It is always in the obedience, prayer and endeavour of Jesus - "Yahweh Nissi", the Lord our banner - Who was lifted high in weakness as a sacrifice that, through His endurance and strength, the age-old conflict between Amalek and the Spirit (Rom. 7) will be finally resolved and the very memory of Amalek cut off for ever. Rev. 21:3-4. Isa. 63:1. "Through weakness" "strengthened hands" to life granted by the water of life from the riven rock which was Christ (1 Cor. 10).

"Niss" = "banner". This was the banner of Jesus, obedience, prayer, endurance. The Nissi formula must be ours. The Lord is our shield and confidence. This is our victory message and the lesson of Rephidim. Out of weakness comes strength as Israel approaches Sinai. Ex. 17:14, "Write it in the book" - definite article "the". This is the first mention in the Bible of the actual war of natural man (Amalek) against spiritual man (Israel), in combat ever since. Moses had already commenced the Pentateuch. To rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. Why Joshua? Task not completed in his times. Battle with Amalek still going on spiritually within everyone of us. What was rehearsed in Joshua's ears was visualised in the sight and eyes of the greater Joshua to come. Who "knew what was in man" and perceived the battle within him (Nathaniel in particular, John 1), Who himself had to fend off another of the serpent brood of Esau, Herod. Herod tried to cut off the weakest portion of Jacob's seed, in the massacre of children under two years old at Bethlehem when Christ was a baby, and again Herod was a party to the crucifixion when Christ was a man. He was foiled both times. But one meeting has still to take place for both Herods - before Christ as Judge and King, when they will have their terrible end in the fire of Gehenna, even everlasting destruction.

Our personal assurance of these things. Ex. 17:16, margin: "The hand upon the throne of the Lord". Not the hands of Moses lifted up in supplication; not the seat upon the hill; not the rod upheld by Moses; but that which was invisible, the throne in the heavens, the sceptre of power wielded by God; that hand that held a rod to bruise, to rule with unlimited power. Psalm 110 sees it in its true setting. Jesus Himself again. Psalms 45:6-7, 45:5, 2:9. All things given into His hands; Heb. 1:8, John 3:36, Psalms 89:14, 45:10, 44:2-6, 21:18. Therefore in Moses seated upon the mountain with the rod of power in his hands, uplifted (1) in oath, (2) in prayer, we have a vision of the glorious Son of Man with rod of dominion and power, the Right Hand on the Throne of the Father, into whose hands the Father hath committed all power and authority.

Such is a little of the teaching of the wondrous Rephidim station in the wilderness journey.

("Seated upon a stone" as yet unused for building altar for burnt offering. Prophet, priest and king all based upon sacrifice victim. The only way of victory. "Lifted up" (John 3:16).

Biographical Note. Hur of Judah, who along with Aaron of Levi, held up the arms of Moses during those fateful hours. No mighty exploits are ascribed to Hur in the pages of the Bible. Moses did assign to him the distinction of being a man upon whom Aaron could depend during Moses' ascent into the mount of Sinai (Ex. 24:14). But Hur's name will be honoured for all time because he helped to hold up the hands of Moses at Rephidim, thus bringing victory to Israel and defeat to Amalek.

Great example for those of us who are not called to spectacular deeds or heroism for God. As Moses, Joshua, and of course, our Lord Jesus were. But we can emulate Hur in holding up the feeble hands of each other in supplication to the Father against Amalek, either in ecclesia or more particularly self, so that through Jesus the final victory might be obtained.

Because the determination of annihilation of Amalek is a personal war through all the ages of time, yours and mine now, we can't do it alone. We must have help.

We have all laid help on One that is Mighty, we know, but the loving assistance of brethren and sisters is a comfort and strengthening power to each other in our strivings against sin. Though no mighty exploits are recorded of Hur, yet his great dependability and responsibility are emphasised both here and later when Moses went up Sinai. His immediate genealogy (of which we are sure, Ex. 31:1-3) and his ancestry (which is not quite proven but of great interest, in the belief of the Jews before the time of Jesus) are both of extreme interest to us in the meanings of personal names in Scripture.

Ancestry possible. No better commencement :
for any family tree.

JUDAH (certain) = PRAISE OF YAH

HUR = Splendid, Whiteness, Noble, Liberty;

the sense of which is seen in "Hurai", linen-worker,

weaver of fine linen, bleacher of fine linen, purifier, splendid. From this we gather that Hur was not only a righteous man but also one who worked for righteousness (linen-worker, Rev. 19:8); again one who worked at, devoted his labours to, righteousness; a weaver of fine linen; and, further, Hur was a person who strove after pure righteousness, a purifier, a bleacher, of fine linen. Therefore in many ways a splendid person, a very faithful follower after the ways of God. Such persons can help to hold up our hands in prayer, as Hur helped Moses. Hur was a fit person to help Aaron dispense justice among the people while Moses was away. Whence did he obtain these sterling qualities? He was the son of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh (1 Chron. 2:19, Joshua 14:6). Jephunneh = the Kenezite. We have in this name the idea of centralised strength, and in each of Jephunneh's succeeding generations we note that this is the leading strain: each has a centralising force:

Jephunneh. The centralising force of his strength. Num. 32:12.

He constantly beheld the witness of God which appeared about him and led him. A sterling faith in Yahweh.

Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. Centralising force of his strength.

A mature faith in following wholly after his God.

The true Gentile dog.

Hur, the son of Caleb. Centralising force of his strength.

A noble working after the splendid righteousness of faith; a weaver of righteousness and a seeker after the fully bleached white in its most brilliant sense. His working is seen in his ability to dispense righteous judgment, as Moses realised.

Uri, the son of Hur. Centralising force of his strength. "Light of

Yah", because enlightened of Yah. Therefore he was illumined of Yah. God's law in his forehead and intelligence.

Bezaleel, the son of Huri. Centralising force of his strength.

In the shadow of God. Likeness of God under the protection of God (From Gen. 1:26-27). Ex. 31:1-3 outlines his strength. Ex. 31:3-5 : in the intelligence of the Spirit, wisdom and practical ability to supervise the Tabernacle materials and construction.

What a perfection of spiritual strength, might, intention, wholly following the pattern set before. Begun by Jephunneh, followed closely by Caleb, the working in righteousness of Hur, and the illumination of Uri, all are brought to a wonderful spiritual conclusion in Bezaleel. He inherited them all, as Ex. 31:2-5 shows. They were used in the erection after manufacture of a Tabernacle or dwelling place for God. We are reminded of the spiritual might resident in the "Word made flesh", the true tabernacle where God dwelt in spiritual grace and truth, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bezaleel. Aid to centralising force of his strength. Ex. 31:6, "Behold" for emphasis. "And I" also emphasised. "Given with him", not "to him" in particular.

Aholiab = "causing to shine, the tabernacle of my father".

Ahisamach = "brother of support".

Dan = "judgement". Such a collection of spiritual though practical insight wrought the Tabernacle of God at Sinai. But think how this final section applied to the Son, the true tabernacle built by God. Ex. 31:6 - we noted the emphasis, "given with him" and not "to him". So the Father gave the Son the ability to make shine or glorify the tabernacle, Himself in whom the Name of the Father was glorified (John 12:28) through obedience. Wonderfully seen, as Jesus pointed out (John 4:24). The Father could only dwell "in spirit and in truth" and sought such to worship Him. So it was earlier revealed in John that spirit and grace were given without measure unto the Son. For this purpose, do we think? The double-edged sword of the Spirit, indeed? The Father was glorified at this time through the obedience of the Son. So the meaning of "Aholiab" is made clear, and in the process Jesus was given the priceless privilege and ability to glorify the temple of His body mystical, the true house of God for God's eternal dwelling.

Ahisamach then comes very obviously into view. This obedient Jesus can become a "brother of support" to His brethren; in fact, "one Mediator between God and man". The basis of these further truths is seen in the tribal name "Dan" = "judgement". Thus the sons of Dan were led to see the merits of Jesus personally. Jesus not only had the ability to glorify the house of God, as we have seen, but was absolutely determined to carry it out. Firstly, in Himself: His Father had again given Him the ability to have true judgment, to know instantly good and evil. Psalm 45, "loved righteousness and hated iniquity". Why possible to do this. Song 5. Personal angle how Christ Himself viewed it? True wisdom.

So we find perfect balance in the Son. Alone found in Him loving and hating to the uttermost. Divine word. Because in His life He always followed this course in practice. Then the name of Dan was glorified in Him, as seen in Dan = judgment exemplified. What a "brother of support" we have in Jesus! May we through His merits help to glorify the tabernacle of our Father! May our judgment merit His favour in the Day of Account.

This glorious teaching, then, is a sample of the quintessence of the Spirit, which can be found in depth after a little enquiry and application of these names to Jesus, and to the spiritual temple of His body, "the true tabernacle which God pitched and not man". "The centralising force of the Spirit" is manifest in the vivid use of the antitype which we have seen. The work of the Master Builder Christ and His personal use of that that went with it. The individual Christ's sacrificial mediatorial work - all brought out through Hur who held up the hands of Moses at Rephidim, all redound to the glory of God. Hur the son of Caleb, the son of Judah, "Praising the Lord" (Judah) indeed, unconsciously fitting the Pauline definition of the meaning of "Judah", announced in his own cryptic fashion in Rom. 2:28, a true Jew, whose praise (Judah) is of God, not of "men". How truly this principle has been outlined through the names. Vivid contrast: the Pharisees, who loved the praise of men, the antithesis of true Jews after the Spirit.

FURTHER ENQUIRY REVEALS:

1 Chron. 2:50 Firstborn of Hur. R.V. gives name of Hur's father as Caleb. A. Caleb the Gentile dog - of Ephratah. Fruitfulness and abundance, fulness, blessing. Ephraim firstborn of Joseph by Divine choice. Promises to Ephraim. Gen. 48:19-20, Isa. 27:6.

Shobal. Going away. Travelling. Gen. 36:6, Rom. 11:12.
Shobal - (1) Son of Seir. Travelled away from Land of Promise and became a rock-dweller. (2) Son of Caleb, father of Kirjath-Jearim.

Kirjath-Jearim, resting place of the Ark (Psalm 132).
The direct promises which affect you and me. Kirjath-Jearim (a) City of redundant growth (2) City of dense thickets (3) Thick forests.
Reveals the growth of the trees of righteousness of the Lord, sturdy, straight, in the way of the Lord, particularly as this blessing was found in the days of David and the

Ark of God while it rested 20 years until David had it brought into Zion. Kirjath-jearim can be thought of in terms of a nerve centre and plexus of nerves and thoughts. City of forest: nerves which travel to every part of the body. The aspirations of a high, rich, fruitful character. The Tabernacle dwelt here, so we think of the aspirations of the body of Christ mystical. The brain, the nerve centre of the body, is the glorified Christ Himself. May these thoughts come down to us from our Christ head and cause us to sprout up and grow in the service of our God.

Salma = Covering raiment, strength, peace, perfection. Father of Bethlehem. Bethlehem = house of living, house of bread. In Salma we have the clothing of the body mystical, raiment of strength, peace and perfection, and later, Boaz, of course (Ruth 2, etc.) Bethlehem - food of the mystical body, life and bread. (John 6).

Hareph = Reproach. Interruptions of early life. Final gathering of fruit.

Beth-gader = Inclosed; the house of the wall.

In this section, as Hareph implies, there are reproaches and continued interruptions in the mystical body's early life: when we are either young in the Truth or belong to a newly-established ecclesia in the Lord. Beth-gader graciously reveals what can follow if we remain faithful - as the Shulamite did to Jesus, a precisely similar meaning. Song. 4:12

Enclosure. 8:8-10. A wall. House upon the wall. Silver redemption.

The sons of Caleb and their descendants by their names have revealed to us the substance of our precious hope in Christ Jesus. Our inception into Christ; our oneness by the spiritual nervous system with the "centralising force", the Head of the Body; Christ in glory; the certainty of our growth if we really are in Him; our spiritual life and food; our raiment of strength, perfection and peace, which "waxeth not old", that raiment of righteousness. The warning to us in Hareph of reproach, interrupted spiritual life, particularly in early ecclesial life; but in Beth-gader our glorious future if we are faithful, as the bride indicates in Song 4:12, 8:8-10.

So our side glimpse into the spiritual riches of Bible names must end for the time being and we must return for our final thoughts to the place where we left Israel at Rephidim after the deliverance from Amalek. We arrive back just in time to witness a family reunion. Jethro has just arrived with the wife and children of Moses, who were apparently left in Midian by Moses and remained there until this time.

And a very interesting scene greets us. Ex. 17:13-17. The advice of Jethro about allocating minor matters of judgment to heads of the tribes, etc. Ex. 18:17 "The thing that thou doest is not good". Some might think this rather improper to question God's chosen leader - was not God with Moses? Did not the Yahweh Angel lead them? No, it was not presumptuous, but good common sense. Later, Moses says to Hobab his brother-in-law, "Be thou as eyes to us, to guide us", and yet the Pillar of Cloud and Flame of Fire were there as Moses knew. Divine guidance and common sense co-operate through the Bible narrative and Moses recognised Jethro's advice as from the Lord and forthwith put it into operation (Deut. 1).

Jethro. His abundance, superiority, excellence and pre-eminence. Groupings around his name are rather interesting. Came from Midian (= Judgment) and Horeb (Solitude). Reveals that state of mind that has arrived at a good balance, of the one who is supplied with a balanced judgement, is possessed of good common sense. We have noted how Moses appreciated his advice and recognised that Divine guidance must be married with common sense wisdom in our journey to the Kingdom. Practical applications of the Word today. Jethro made a valuable contribution to the cause of God.. It was obvious that Moses' responsibilities were too great. People become accustomed to leaning upon their leaders. They normally fail to realise that as the responsibilities increase the burdens become greater, the problems more complex, the task more difficult, the demands greater upon time, mental acumen and genius, and personal counsel and direction. Minor matters can be faithfully

dealt with by lesser dignitaries. No doubt we see the application to ourselves in this generation, and the very careful watch our female Jethroses have to place upon us lest we come to a premature death through overmuch work and worry. Personal feeling. Rather wear out than rust out. Also instinctive feeling. Counsel God gave to Jacob. Gen. 28:15, "I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest. I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of". However, counsel of Jethro delegating lesser responsibilities to other people was sound common sense.

Ex. 18:1-12. Victory No. 2 at Rephidim. Careful reading shows victory over Gentiles - "Nissi" banner of God. Christ lifted up. Compare wonderful picture in Song 3:9-10. Solomon's chariot pillars ("Nissi"), only other place in O.T. Christ's victory over Gentiles. Jethro's confession: "Yahweh greater than all gods". After Moses' detailed deliverance at the Red Sea, etc., Jethro's conversion was formal, to say the least (18:12). The elders of Israel, and Moses and Aaron, broke bread around the sacrifice of the burnt offering. Entry of the Gentile into Israel at this time. "Jew and Gentile" in One Fold.

Zipporah = Little Bird. Can fly high yet still come down to earth. A very desirable characteristic. Both, we have seen, were resident in her father, Jethro, very "down to earth" yet, when the occasion arose, flying high to acknowledge the Most High God, Yahweh. Zipporah inherited these tendencies, and the blending of her love with Moses, the man of God, brought forth a two-fold blessing, wherein Moses found he had been blessed through a stranger in the gift of a wife and son (Gershon), and in Eliezer God had been his helper. Such is the providence of God surrounding His children, and so the exile in Midian of Moses had brought forth fruit to Yahweh (all rallying to Rephidim) and to Yahweh-Nissi (= "the Lord thy banner"). Gentiles have now responded to the call and Sinai is before us on our journey. So it was upon this sorrowful yet happy note (a) of chastening rebuke for those who followed afar off, and (b) but of supreme confidence of victory in the altar and banner of Nissi, that Israel approached Sinai.

Num. 33:15. Encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, the mount of God. Here they were to stay for a whole year, where the Law was given to Moses, and because he tarried long in the mount, the people rebelled and lusted against God, paying dearly for their wickedness. Here too the Tabernacle was fashioned, assembled and erected, and the service of the Tabernacle commenced. From now on the people marched in holy array around the Ark of God = God is now in the midst of His people Israel, dwelling between the cherubim of glory.

Roughly, the people had marched for eight to ten weeks all told, and covered approximately 160 miles; 2,000,000 men, women and children, with cattle, herds, chattels, etc. It is abundantly clear as we observe their journeyings that God had kept them in restraint, in order to keep this nation of past slaves within bounds. Now they were out of Egyptian bondage. Perhaps as we view today the upheavals and tumults among the newly liberated African nations we get a rather weak parallel with Israel at this time, the difference being, of course, that Israel were openly led of God. However, we can view through the eyes of the Divine narrative the birth pangs of a newly independent people.

Ex. 19:1-3. In the third month of their pilgrimage, then, we find Israel led to this lonely desert spot, enclosed with high mountain peaks, 5,000 feet above sea level. God would have the people alone with Himself away from all that would remind them of Egyptian life. Because: (a) a people set apart (geographically) to Himself, (b) a people set apart through blood to Himself, (c) a people set apart through ensuing Law to Himself. Down to our day the memorials of this three-fold separation are remembered by their descendants, the Jews. A peculiar people, indeed, set apart by their laws and customs, an age-abiding testimony to the truth of a miraculous people of a miraculous book, and all stemming from a miraculous God.

So then in the third month, Israel lay waiting the terrifying experience of the voice of God, the terrible thunder and quaking, and the vivid lightning which revealed the awful holiness of the God they worshipped, Who had redeemed them from Egypt.

On the third day the Lord came down with myriads of angels = the Pillar of Cloud standing erect upon the top of Sinai (Deut. 33:2, Acts 7:53, Gal. 3:17, Heb. 2:2).

Moses goes up at the express command of God, and the magnificent series of events, which can never be exhausted by exposition in this life, begin, as we know. We are a people set apart unto God and in our separation to Him there is a stage in our personal journey to the Kingdom which must correspond to this experience before the fiery mount which could not be touched. The "moment of truth" confronted Israel at this time and nothing of ours can evade the same issue with us. The lesson of Sinai cannot be by-passed. Pi-hahiroth, Elim, Rephidim may be more to our taste, but we can never reach the Kingdom without facing up to Sinai = the moment of truth. We ought to pause in prayer, wonder, fear, before the rocky height of Sinai where God sits in awful majesty. The whole lesson came before Israel for twelve months, for Israel to learn, and the awful consequences are well known to us. Although our stay must be brief, there are three imperatives which must come before us before we travel on.

Three vital imperatives of Sinai.

(1) Our God is a God of justice. Absolute justice and not our particular idea of it. We can only hope that our feeble attempts are within the scope of it, although most entirely lost within it. God corrected Israel before the arrival at Sinai but He was far more severe after the giving of the Law. Before the Law and Sinai was the time, so to speak, of their ignorance up to a point and God winked at their disobedience (Acts 17:30). But now after the awful manifestation in fire and the Law, they had to learn that Yahweh was not only the God Who confounded and drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and destroyed Amalek, but was in fact a consuming fire (Heb. 12:19), a fire of holiness Who would indeed demand of them from now onwards that awful requirement, "Be ye holy as I am holy" (Lev. 11).

(2) Sinai is the place where we learn to understand sin. "By the law is the knowledge (hideousness) of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Literal meaning of Sinai is "Ten brambles". It is the same as Sin, with the "yod" added, meaning "Ten brambles". The rabbis used to explain this by showing how the Ten Commandments are thorns and brambles in the natural inclinations of men. Hence it happens that "by the commandment sin becomes exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13). Deut. 33:2 (margin). Before Sinai we see that God had the "fire of law" in His right hand, which can be enforced with utmost precision and severity if so desired. The result upon ourselves ought to be that we become not so apt to judge others (Matt. 7:1), or to judge according to the appearance (John 7:24) but to judge ourselves (1 Cor. 11:31-32).

(3) Then comes immediately into mind that the Christian needs inward purification. It was in a bramble bush in some part of this mountain that God was manifested in the form of fire. There are several ways of looking at this. The undevoured bush representing Israel all down the succeeding ages, suffering under the unremitting fires of persecution, yet not destroyed (Mal. 3:6). But let the rabbis' ideas suffice for our purpose. The bush, they thought, was a type of man's soul (Micah 7:4); the fire, God's purifying presence (Isa. 31:9, Deut. 33:6, 2 Cor. 6:16, Mark 9:9). We may add, the "presence" should read "the Word", "Is not My Word like a fire?" (Jer. 23:29). Jeremiah knew the fierceness of that fire within his bones as he strove to retain the message within himself (Jer. 23:29). I have felt the fierceness of the Word and battled against my sinfulness. No doubt so have you, brethren and sisters. May our end be similar to that of Jeremiah. O that we might be truly salted or purified with this Word of Divine fire! Then perhaps we shall not bow down to the golden calves of the earth as Israel did at this time (Ex. 32:4, 1 John 5:21). The Law could make nothing perfect. The fires of Sinai could not wholly destroy or wholly restrain sin. The Law is only the pedagogue or servant to lead the disciple to Christ. By the Law we are aroused to powerful inward sensations of guilt through the spirit word. Christ alone can save.

Such are a few of the lessons of the Ten Brambles.

Kibroth-hattaavah = "Graves of lust" (Num. 33:16 marg.), not very promising for the first stage after leaving Sinai. We need to turn back to Numbers 10 and 11 to get the story. Also mentioned in Deut. 9:22 (the Book of Exodus now left behind. The Book of Leviticus, like the latter half of the Book of Exodus, is occupied with that tremendous year at Sinai). The Book of Numbers tells what befell Israel after the Law and Sinai. It deals with warfare, but, as we know, it is not a record of the devotion of earnest nations, apart from the few (always the few).

Numbers 10:11. Deut. 1:6-7, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount; turn you and take your journey". 20th day, 2nd month, 2nd year. The Cloud was taken up as a signal to commence marching, Num. 10:11. Near the Wilderness of Sinai was the Wilderness of Paran, and into this they go. The people march in regular corps (Num. 10:14-28, 22:7-9, 24:3-4, etc.), that wonderful yet terrifying sight of the hosts of the Lord marching in orderly array as seen by Balaam. That vast encampment, computed to be at least 14 miles across, having the Tabernacle in the centre, with the Pillar of Cloud by day and the lurid glare of the Fiery Cloud by night, was sufficient to strike terror into the heart of any nation, as Rahab herself admitted (Joshua 2:9-11) and which was the basis of her request (2:12-14). Israel did not approach any nation by stealth or unobserved.

A rather beautiful picture is seen before the start from Sinai. Moses appeals to Hobab, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good" (Num. 10:29-31). "Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes". A lesson to us? How much good we get and how much good we can do by joining God's people on the march to Zion. Our own experiences in the Lord prove to us that this is so. When, at our baptism, we were born into the ranks of Israel, much good was done to us, and also as we were nourished as babes, and drank deeply of the milk of the Word. As the years passed and we matured from milk to the red meat of the Word, then we were expected to become eyes for our brethren and sisters in seeking out the way, through the guidance of the Word, helping to avoid pitfalls and to reveal through exposition of the Word the glory of the Yahweh Name. But Hobab would not go. How many today prefer the barren rocks of Midian to the milk and honey of the Promised Land!

"Hobab" means "beloved, cherished, comforted". We have already seen the good and comfort in Moses' words to Hobab. "Midian" means "judgment" as seen in understanding and discrimination. Hobab was descended from Raguel. "Raguel" means "friend of God", from the root "ra-ah", to feed or shepherd, to use as a friend (Isaiah 5:17, Psalm 23:1, Judges 14:20).

When we put these classifications into order, we see why Moses urgently desired this Hobab, son of Raguel, son of Midian, to be with him. Raguel - "friend of God" - highly desirable for all of us: one who will feed us, lead us, seek out a pasture for us (Psalm 23, Song 1, John 15), and will be a friend to us. Particularly will this friend of God be welcome when we see the Midian aspect: he will be understanding and discriminating (Psalm 45 and Song 5 once again). So, as Hobab was, he will be desired as a brother beloved. We shall hasten to do him good and we shall be comforted in him. Such is the fellowship that should exist between ourselves on the Zion pilgrimage. Let us desire and earnestly pursue spiritual Hobabs within our midst, always keeping in mind that he "that sticketh closer than a brother" is none other than Jesus our Lord, and without His understanding and discrimination we should be lost. He certainly will do us good; He cannot do otherwise. May we cherish Him and do Him good in obedience and faithfulness, and so have for ourselves the eyes of His glory to search out and seek and lead as a shepherd, our greater Raguel, our true Friend.

With the lessons of this family incident fresh in mind, let us follow Israel to Kibroth-hattaavah or Taberah first of all. Numbers 10:33. For three days the Ark of the Covenant went before the people, searching for a suitable resting-place for them. When the Ark set forward, the praise of Moses ascended: "Rise up, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered", and when it rested he said, "Return, O Lord, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel" (Num. 10:35-36 marg.). This, of course, is full of prophetic and typical meaning (Psa. 132:8 and Psa. 68, in particular verses 7 and 18).

"The enemies of the Lord are scattered by the Son. The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousands, even thousands of angels", etc. The words "Return, O Lord" resuppose or pre-announce the time of rest and peace we earnestly pray for, when the Lord will dwell amongst His people for ever (Rev. 7:15, 21:3). When we pray morning and night, these should always be our sentiments, as they were of Moses and faithful Israelites during the journey. "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as in heaven" are words that convey similar ideas.

Num. 10:33 "Three days' journey". How often does this period come before us!

Short list: Abraham saw the place of sacrifice on the third day (Gen. 22:4).

Moses asked Pharaoh for leave to make three days' journey into the wilderness that he might sacrifice unto the Lord (Ex. 5:3).

The people found water in three days (Ex. 15:22).

They are made ready to receive the Law. The third day (Ex. 19:18).

They now journey three days and find rest (Num. 10:33).

Forty years hence they will pass over Jordan "within three days" (Joshua 1:11).

On the third day Jonah rises from his grave in the sea, a type of Jesus in resurrection (Matt. 12:40).

After three days Jesus is found by His parents in the temple (Luke 2:46).

On the third day a marriage in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1).

On the third day Christ is perfected (Luke 13:22).

On the third day the Ark of the Covenant (true) will find His people rest for ever.

What a harvest of spiritual instruction we have here! Abraham, Moriah, place of sacrifice seen. Moses. Journey. 3rd day. Requests = "Without the gates", away from man, separated unto God, it means the Place of Rest - sustenance - water of life, where we receive the law written on fleshy tables of our heart, not on stone. The number after 40, 42, which anticipates for us the passing from death to spirit nature, a glorious resurrection, perfection, and most of all our eternal union with Christ and the Father, if we are found faithful in Him at that time. Let us always highly value the spiritual estimation of Bible numbers and obey their very plain teaching because they will lead us to the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Kibroth-hattaavah = Graves of Lust. Numbers 33:16. What are the spiritual lessons for us here? Now that we have faced up to our moment of truth - or have we? We learn the vanity and the stupidity of our human nature. After 12 months of Divine manifestation at Sinai: (1) in the goodness of God's appearance to Moses and the elders (Exodus 24), (2) in the fashioning of the Tabernacle with all the sundry laws and appurtenances thereof and the swift destruction of the idolators of the Golden Calf, and now (3) in being led in holy array into the wilderness of Paran - after only three days the people began to complain and to lust for flesh (Num. 11:3). The sorry story of the manna and the quails. Each was available to the community, but with a very different result to the partakers. Manna was available the whole journey until over Jordan (and, rather beautifully, until after they had sampled the old corn of the land - Joshua 5:10-11). The manna of the body of Jesus will be available until after the second circumcision or the final cleansing of the Body, when at the Judgment Seat the reproach of Egypt or bondage to sin is rolled away ("Gilgal" - Calvary) from off us. If we are wise like part of Israel, then in Num. 11 we shall continue to feed upon the spiritual life as it is found in Jesus (John 6). It will last all through our wilderness journey, lead us over Jordan (the river of Judgment), and sustain us until, in the mercy of God, immortality will be bestowed upon us. Then we shall cease to live as we do now by "the Word made flesh" wherein we have found Jesus and attempted to live by the Word as did He! Then those who are to see that blessed Day will be made like unto the Lord made Spirit, through Him the victory will have been won, the battle with Amalek, our own personal combat with sin, will be over. Henceforth, we hope to be energised by the Spirit, not of flesh and blood with all its evil bent to disobedience, doing despite to the grace of God, with all the weariness and toil of

Romans 7 ever before us. This was the trial and consummation before the manna selectors and obedient eaters of Numbers 11, principally down to our own personal application of feeding on the True Manna (John 6) - the long view, admittedly, of faith. And let it be said that there will be no short-sighted brethren and sisters, spiritual myoptics, who will enter the Kingdom. The plea of spiritual myopia will not be accepted by the Lord Jesus. Because, as Numbers 11 reveals, the long view of faith represented the people's appreciation and acceptance of the provision which would sustain them over Jordan itself. We have seen that Jordan represented the "plunger", river of judgment, death itself. Briefly that was the case.

But Numbers 11:4-6. The despisers of the manna. Note "mixed multitude", mingled people, of Ishmael and Esau descent, an element who had never left either Egypt or Paran in heart. They turned away the hearts of Israel from God's provision in the manna of life and sought the flesh of death. God's words are vivid in Numbers 11:18-20, the answer to Moses' plea (verse 13): "Ye shall eat flesh". "The Lord will give you flesh to eat and ye shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days, but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils". We remember this lesson vividly in an acquaintance of our youth, who at the tender age of ten years was caught by the father of his delight while smoking, when he offered him another, then another, this time against his protests, and another, even though by this time his countenance had assumed a dirty green colour. Finally his stomach rebelled against the repeated insistence of his father's advice. "Have another, son, you are doing fine". Revulsion and nausea overcame him and the contents of his stomach were brought up via nostrils and mouth. The Scriptural lesson was well and truly presented and our friend forsook his craving for the "weed" for a very long time to come. But the lesson of Numbers 11 is only very faintly portrayed here. Our friend was able to profit by the instruction of his father. Israel had no such chance (Numbers 11:31-35), the actual offenders, that is. The result: Kibroth-Hattaavah, the "graves of lust", and how was this brought about? The wrath of God was kindled against the people with a great plague. Giving us the second name given to this place of God's wrath - "Taberah" - note the fitting characteristics of this word = feeding, consuming, burning, kindling, inflaming. "A place of feeding", a "place of burning". The "mingled people" had inflamed Israel against Moses because they had insisted on flesh. They had in turn invited the kindling wrath of God, whilst they did overtime in gathering the flesh they desired (Numbers 11:32-33). Human nature. How true is this of us? Ten homers at least spread all around themselves in their lust and greediness. The people were consumed with a great plague as they were feeding themselves. "Taberah", then "the great burning", (1) as a necessary punishment for despising the Lord's provision of manna; (2) as a purifying agent in purging the people; (3) as a burying place for those who sinned. Travellers tell us that thousands of little humps in the barren ground tell the truth of these records, for those are "the graves of lusting". They also say that an air of evil seems to dominate these forsaken regions, even as with Babylon.

What a vivid contrast and exhortation for us today upon the relative values of the long view of faith and the short view of unbelief and lust! The supply of manna lasted over the Jordan into Canaan, for forty years, the whole of the pilgrimage. The gathering of the quails had a limit - one month in extremity, but two days only actually, ending in terrible death under God's wrath. Today the choice is similar for us. If we eat the heavenly manna by Christian principles and life, sowing to the Spirit - eternal life will be ours through the grace of God. But we are brought up short when we realise how Israel is punished for murmuring now that Sinai is passed (Num. 11:33). The Law is given and offences are sternly dealt with, far more strictly now than they were before (1 Cor. 10:6). Knowledge has brought forth responsibility. We pride ourselves on knowing the will of God. How then do we stand?

There is discontent in sin. How true of us. Israel had manna but wanted flesh. How often has the manna been neglected for other things? What place does the Word have in our lives? The daily readings alone are not sufficient. The concordance is not enough. The works on the Truth are insufficient. All outside aids cannot meet

the demands of the heavenly manna. Knowledge is, of course, most desirable; living what we have learned is indispensable. If this double virtue lies not within us, then although we may think to the contrary, we are in little better shape, if any, than the mixed multitude and their followers at Kibroth-Hattaavah. The true meaning of manna is lost to us, and like Israel of old, "manhu" or manna, which means, "what is it?", will ever remain a tragic mystery to us and we shall merit the rebuke of Moses at his coming with Jesus (Deut. 8:2-3). May in God's mercy this never be our lot!

There is a striking commentary on this by Paul in 1 Tim. 6:6-12, "Godliness with contentment is great gain".

But in contrast to the dark canvas we have seen at Kibroth, we have another side brought out in Num. 11:20-21.

The reaction of Moses against God's intention to provide a month's supply of flesh for Israel. Verses 24-30 are in parenthesis and show the effect this announcement by God had amongst the seventy elders of Israel. Num. 11:31 carries on the action of God from verse 23. Verse 26 very beautifully shows to us what should be the characteristic of all elders. Eldad = "the love of God", with the congenial ramifications, "whom God loveth", "stirred by God" and "nourished by God". Medad = "the justice of God", again with additional derivations, "highly esteemed, pleasant, delightful, divided, apportioned, measured". Now these two were of the seventy elders upon whom the Spirit of the Lord had fallen to assist Moses in his work of governing his people. While the others prophesied at the Tabernacle, these two worthies remained among the people at this time of extreme crisis, and no doubt their prophesying at this time was directed against the flesh and quail seeking. Here we have a wonderful portrayal of the ideal elder amongst us today: (1) Eldad, one who is proficient in the love of God, having been stirred up by God and nourished by God, and the overriding measure unseen and in reality unknown to them; loved of God, but observed by all around. (2) Medad portrays the principles of such an elder amongst us: according to his ability he will dispense the justice of God (Medad). It will be "rightly divided", correctly apportioned and carefully measured by him. And our appreciation of such a brother, what ought it to be? That such a brother should be highly esteemed by us in love for his works' sake, especially if he labours in the Word to us (1 Tim. 5:17). When we realise the content of this information, then we appreciate what Moses said to Joshua (Num. 11:28-29), "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and the Lord would put His Spirit upon them". We can say, Amen, to that. If this were so, the Truth would be a different witness, and, dispensationally, the Lord would have returned, as Joel prophesied, "I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2, Acts 2).

We called our lessons brief: once again they have developed with intensity. But amidst all the dark canvas of unbelief, selfishness and sin we have just observed, God's balance is among it all. Faithful elders who tried to stem the breach. May the value of this example enlighten our minds and delight our hearts, as we pass on to Hazeroth.

Numbers 33:17 Hazeroth

Numbers 11 tells us that Israel "abode" at Hazeroth. Num. 33:17 implies that they established one of their fixed and, in a limited sense of the word, "permanent" camps here. No doubt grass and water were in plenty and the people allowed a rest period, for refreshment, and also, as they looked back to Kibroth, an opportunity for introspection and re-dedication. A glance at the map will show that it is not a long journey from the last stopping place to Hazeroth. It was downhill from the high valleys of Sinai, considerably nearer to the Gulf of Akaba, and in every aspect a most delightful place to rest in after the heat and the rocky height of Sinai. It was an oasis in their hard journey. Amalek had been discomfited, and from the other tribes they were guarded on the one side by the mountains and on the other by the Gulf of Akaba.

With the Midianites, through whose country they were now marching, they were at peace, because of the marriage of Moses to the daughter of the priest of Midian, the wise and kindly Jethro.

How did Israel use this respite and refreshment from the Lord? How does human nature react to such favour? Encouraged to false pride by the security and plenty, the people began to think that they could do without God. Even Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses (Numbers 12:1) and the righteous judgment of God was again called forth. What then could "Hazereth" mean, do you think?

(a) feminine plural of Hazer = "villages, enclosures, encampments". We have seen that it possibly was one of the more or less permanent camps during the journey. So the normal word would prove just this, but it does not really help us, does it, with our exposition? What else can we find?

(b) The literal meaning of "Hazereth" is "a division", so great as to cause trembling. This is more to the point. (1) What was the division at Hazereth? (2) What caused it? (3) What caused God to come down and speak suddenly at this time? (4) What effect should it have upon ourselves?

At Hazereth we learn (a) how much evil the tongue can do; (b) the whole matter was a family dispute, and we all know how bitter such a thing can become (Num. 12:1-2).

Miriam and Aaron began to whisper derogatory things about Zipporah, the wife of Moses, who was an Ethiopian, in an attempt to make him lose face before Israel and so weaken his authority, and also to advance their own importance. Verse 2. A very subtle argument here, because God had indeed spoken through Aaron as spokesman for Moses in Egypt (Ex. 4:14-17, 7:1-2), and it was Aaron's rod that was cast down before Pharaoh with God's authority behind it. The spirit of the Lord had descended on Miriam at the Red Sea, where she led the praises of God at the overthrow of the Egyptian host (Ex. 15). So on the face of the argument it was true, and as such, in one sense, becomes a forceful lesson on "cause and effect", and the Divine chastening of Moses at this time. The cause (Ex. 4:14) we have just reviewed. The "anger of the Lord" was kindled against what would appear to be unbelief, or, perhaps, more kindly, the reluctance of Moses to serve the Lord. The effect was immediate. Ex. 4:15-16. "Aaron, thy brother, speaks well". So through the reluctance of Moses, Aaron was brought into the orbit of Divine revelation, but only because of Moses first of all. The long-term effect we have observed in the rebellion against Moses, first by Miriam, then by Aaron. Presumably Miriam was the leader of the two. Aaron, it would appear, although high priest of Israel, allowed himself to be led astray, as he had done before at Sinai in the Golden Calf incident (Ex. 32). But the first point at issue here is the fact that if Moses had heeded and accepted the Divine mission without quibbling, then the opposition of Aaron at this time might not have arisen. A truly wonderful illustration of the principle that the sin itself is forgiven, but the consequences remain for later chastening, and therefore, if we are wise, for our guidance; but we are not always wise, are we?

Why did Miriam do this against her brother? Was it jealousy, do you think? And the object of that jealousy, not particularly Moses, but Zipporah? Why? Would it be because until only just recently she, as the sister of God's leader - herself the leader of praise among the women of Israel - held a very high position in Israel; but with the arrival of Zipporah (and Zipporah was a Midianite?) Miriam would be forced to take a lower place? This to my mind would appear to be the case. Which also indicates another cause and effect, again with an immediate and a long-term effect. The cause: If Moses had not married outside of Israel then this accusation could not have been levelled against him. The effect, immediate: (a) failure to circumcise his son (Ex. 4:24-26); (b) reproach of the Lord because of this; (c) outburst of Zipporah concerning it. The effect, long-term, the reproach and rebellion of Miriam, finding this apparent weakness, as a method of weakening the power of Moses at this time (Num. 12:1-2), notwithstanding that Zipporah had entered the congregation of Israel, no doubt like her father and family at Rephidim. But again we wonder. With Judges in mind, had the words of Miriam at the least prophetic import at this time? Jonathan the son of Gershon

the son of Moses was priest to the tribe of Dan. Judges 18:30, the case of the suspended "nun" (Hebrew letter) which made "Moses" into "Manasseh". Jewish thought, well-known corruption of the text. The third generation brought it out. Of these thoughts we cannot be sure, of course, but we see a distinct probability by implication, and the lesson is crystal clear. If Moses had not given Aaron and Miriam reason to level these charges, much trouble would have been averted. God forgives our sins, at our request, of course, but the consequences remain for future guidance to us, if we are wise. The life of David alone is a good guide to us.

James rightly appreciates how great an evil the tongue can stir up, how jealousy within a family can develop into such strife, and all this in a place of God-given rest and refreshment. Hazereth. How perverse is our human nature, and our own particular types of it don't help ("all the world's queer except thee and me, and thee's a bit").

At Hazereth we have to learn that envy is the real gall in most of the bitterness of the tongue (Numbers 12:2, James 3:1-3). There is an example in Haman. All the possessions of Haman, all the faithful love of Zeresh, all the kindness of his friends, the multitude of his children, the glory of his riches, the promotions of the king, and the invitations of the queen - all were rendered worthless by envy. So long as he saw Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate (Esther 5:10-13). Envy is the No. 1 cause of division, either ecclesiastically or individually or amongst families, and wherever it rears its ugly head, "trembling"; in the form of fear, sorrow and uncertainty follow. Envy is one of the most hated sins in the sight of the Lord. It slew Jesus (Matt. 27:18). We must hate it like the very plague (Romans 1:29, 1 Corinthians 13:4). However, this division and trembling amongst Israel at Hazereth was used, as can be expected, to good effect by God, to show that, although Moses, Aaron and Miriam had been called to office by God, yet in importance there was a vast difference. Num. 12:1-3. Note the implication in verse 2. "And the Lord heard it". How often do we forget this when we are speaking derogatively of others? The Lord always hears. These are very straight lessons for us at Hazereth. Let us beware, and think more kindly of others.

Note the emphasised contrast between Moses (the meekest man in all the earth), who only looked for Israel's good, and Miriam and Aaron, who only thought of their own advancement. (Could it have been the meekness of Moses which made him so different in Ex. 4?) Numbers 12:6 gives God's announcement regarding prophets, of which we have three orders here. Moses typified Jesus as the one prophet exalted above all others and who would share the utmost intimacy with the Father: "with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (verse 8, Ex. 34, Luke 9). Already partly fulfilled on the mount. Later to see Jesus the "Yahweh man" on Hermon, the mount of transfiguration, when type and antitype happily meet face to face, and the subject the exodus of Jesus - which would not end at Mount Nebo as the exodus of Moses did, nor at Jordan as Israel's did, but in the inheritance of the possession of peace in Jerusalem, which, in that wondrous day, will not be rent by division and trembling as at Hazereth, nor by envy and self-assertion which precipitated it, nor by an evil tongue expressing it. The whole earth will have a pure tongue in that great day. Pray God that each one of us may attain to it. We cannot by-pass Hazereth any more than we could Sinai. May Jesus be our true Exodus, bring us to the inheritance of the possession of peace. In that day it will be an inheritance, a personal possession, as it is with Jesus now - not a seeking after, or a pilgrimage to, but in all things the peace of God which now passeth all understanding. Now known in part, but then perfectly understood, our own personal possession - God grant in His infinite mercy that our exodus shall find completion here.

So the distinction was made clear. (1) Moses stood supreme in God's council, separate from all other prophets. This Aaron, Miriam and all Israel must understand. Even as Jesus in antitype superseded all prophets, even Moses himself (Heb. 3:1-6). (2) Aaron as high priest prophesied in type and shadow through his great office and in pronouncement (John 11:47-53): Caiaphas proves this. (3) Miriam ("Bitterness"), true to her name, had to learn that the elder sister to Moses and leader of the women's praises

in Israel, and prophetess in this respect, must remember that as regards Moses her rank was inferior. As "angels" both Aaron and Miriam must learn to "keep their first estate" (Jude 6), and, along with all true servants of God, to wait the call from above, "Friend, come up higher," and not to seek their own glory. What stern, pathetic, beautiful lessons have held us at Hazeroth. Just a last one, again very personal - how much evil may one brother or sister do?

The whole company had to wait until Miriam was healed from her leprosy (Num.12:15) Is it possible today that similar things - evil gossip, dissimulation and the rest, commenced by one person amongst us, could retard the progress of the Truth in our area or our ecclesia? Is it possible, do you think? It must be a fearful thing to be the Achan of a camp. Wherever the question arises as to who is to betray the Lord in this fashion, or by coldness or sinfulness in other ways, ought not each one of us to take up the sorrowful question of the disciples, "Lord, is it I?" Timely self-examination may help us to avoid sins which much bitter repentance will not set right in this life. Notice Num.12:11 that doing foolishly is often quite as bad as that which we call flagrant sinning. We have noted how Moses prayed and the gracious wisdom and tenderness of the Divine reply. The relations between these three human beings, members of one family or household, are so clearly brought out in this chapter, and so visibly arranged by the Father over all, that they may well be a picture for careful study in modern homes, and, of course, modern ecclesias.

Num. 33:18. Rithmah. We now come to a number of stations which are catalogued in Num. 33, but are not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. Neither the Sinaitic survey nor any traveller has been able to identify them. Eziongaber has been located, as we know, in modern Israeli history and development (Num. 33-35), and Sinai maps, etc. But there are several stations recorded between Hazeroth and Eziongaber of which, presumably at the least, we have until quite recently known nothing - seventeen stations, quite interesting from the point of view of numerology.

Seventeen stands out prominently as a significant number, known as a prime or indivisible number, and, what is more remarkable, it is the seventh in the list of prime numbers. It partakes of and intensifies the significance of the number seven. It is a combination of seven (spiritual perfection) and ten (ordinal perfection) the perfection of spiritual order.

In Romans 8: 35-39, seventeen items are mentioned, the first seven along with the question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Who? and the last ten with the statement, "I am persuaded". Here we have set forth our heritage if we remain faithful, our spiritual and eternal perfection in Christ. In Hebrews 12: 18-24, where the Old dispensation and the New are contrasted, there are seventeen items, seven of the old and ten of the new. The old were spiritual but the new, the better covenant, are more so. $10 = 2 \times 5$, grace doubled. That grace began to be fully obvious on the seventeenth day, long foreshadowed by Noah's Ark resting on Ararat on the seventeenth day (Gen. 8:4), for our Lord rose from sleep on the seventeenth day and received the Divine glory. The Law (seven here in Heb. 23: 18-24) having received its fulfilment in Him in itself means seven. So then, on the seventeenth day the better covenant (ten here) was sanctified and made sure.

So Rithmah points to these seventeen mysterious stations which we are about to traverse. Two points of the utmost importance have already arisen. The comforting exhortation of our ultimate success to spiritual perfection if we remain faithful to our calling, and the treasures of spiritual perfection, these seventeen stations may contain through the implications found in their names. Let us press on.

The only apparent probability that we can suggest is that these stations lay in the Wilderness of Paran, into which the Israelites had to enter after the recovery of Miriam from her leprosy.

We have reasons for believing that Rithmah may have been the place from which the spies were sent to search out the land of Canaan (Num. 13:2), but we are not dogmatic about this. Paran "digging", region of searching, places of caverns. Is it possible that during the forty days of the search the Israelites may have journeyed to Rimmon-parez and some other stations? Num. 13:26 informs us that the spies brought back their report 'to Kadesh'. Could it be Kadesh-barnea in the neighbourhood possibly of Rithmah, or did the return take place to Rithmah, with Kadesh another name for the whole district of Paran in which Rithmah was situated? Christ alone will give to us certainty in these things in that glad super-Emmaus day. The reason for our thoughts is found in the word for Rithmah itself = "the place of bonds", which fittingly summarises Num. 13 and 14, the history of the ten evil reports and the two good and faithful reports (Caleb and Joshua). "The people that dwell in the land be strong, and the cities are walled and great; and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak there". We can almost hear them catch their breath with fright as they recount these particulars. And the faithful counter-attack from Joshua and Caleb, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. . . . neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and " - the all-important thing - "the Lord is with us". Rithmah tells us quite pithily what happened, who won, faith or unbelief.

Rithmah became the place of bonds, for the people fell into the awful bondage of unbelief. How potent are the words of Gal. 5:1 with Rithmah in mind concerning ourselves: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage". Israel returned, got entangled with a far more severe bondage than that of Egypt, a spiritual bondage which meant death for every one of the older generation, apart from Caleb and Joshua - death under the wrath of God in the waste howling desert. Let us not so use our freedom in Christ, but stand fast in the faith and power of God.

Rithmah has another meaning, equally expressive. Hebrew scholars say that Rithmah means "the place of junipers". The tongues of the ten spies brought an evil report, and hence were like the "coals of juniper" which burn fiercely (Psa. 120:4).

The lessons for us at Rithmah, then, are:

(1) The fear of man brings bondage. Israel failed because they had regard for the giants of Anak. We shall fail if we do not realise that God is greater than man. Pilate feared man (and so did Aaron and Saul before him). The Jews said to Pilate, "You are not Caesar's friend". That decided him to crucify the Lord of the whole earth. Thus he came into the bondage of sin.

(2) Faith in God brings success, as with Joshua and Caleb (the Gentile "dog", with second derivation, "a good heart"), both of whom wholly followed the Lord. Joshua (Hebrew) = Jesus (in the Greek), Who gives us great and renewed courage (Matt. 10:26, 28 Luke 8:50), and we have a "good heart" to encourage us (Caleb) (2 Cor. 7:1, Titus 2:13-14). These two fundamental elements will see us through many a temptation to fear (see John 15:5).

(3) Sin in general and in particular leads to bondage. The whole life of Israel illustrates this. Eleven times Moses speaks of Egypt as the house of bondage. The thought is carried bodily into the New Testament. He who serves sin becomes the slave of sin (John 8:34, Rom. 6:16, Titus 3:3), "serving divers lusts and pleasures", the slave and drudge of many masters. Peter quite bluntly terms it "servants of corruption" (2 Pet. 2:19). It is odd that man sells himself into bondage. Ahab did this (1 Kings 21:25), Israel did this (2 Kings 17:17, Isa. 50:1), and we may do it (Rom. 7:23). But, we have fled to Jesus for refuge, Who alone can make us free (John 8:36). He was anointed to give liberty to the captives (Isa. 61:1). As it was the custom in those days to burn out the eyes of some slaves and captives (hence Samson at Gaza), He will restore sight to those blinded by sin.

Rithmah, "the place of junipers". The fire of God's wrath descended upon Israel at this time, and the dread sentence, "Your carcasses shall fall in the

wilderness" (fulfilled Num. 26: 63-65). A very personal matter for all of the older generation. In the light of this latest development we must now accompany Israel in their penal wanderings for upwards of 38 years. How terrible! Canaan within sight, almost within grasp, yet all lost through unbelief. What a strong lesson for these days, when all sound doctrine seems to be called in question and the eddying winds of "doctrines of men" circle about us full of craft and deceit, which, if believed and followed, will lose the land and promises for us. We need the stout heart of Caleb and the set determination of Joshua, which together portrayed salvation in Christ. Who alone can open the prison, remove these bonds and revive our eyes to the spiritual vision of God's majesty and might. Shall we then turn with Israel and seek true wisdom in Christ, so as to avoid that penal wandering associated with Israel of old?

Psalm 90 treats of this period. Actually it comes into real focus here when the sentence of God in Num. 14 has come into effect (Psa. 90:1, 3, 7-10). The reason for these severe punishments upon them is in verses 12 - 17, "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." For Israel, then, it may be said that if these last sentiments were put into operation with all sincerity there was opportunity to return to God's favour and to the land when Messiah comes to Zion. All was not lost for ever, should they seek the Lord humbly whilst He could be found. He would graciously hear. They were able, as no other generation have been able, literally to count or number their days. In doing so, they could apply their hearts to wisdom and so await with Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Hur (who died in the wilderness along with them), the coming of the greater than either Moses or Aaron to raise them to the glory of the Lord. So spiritual Israel are exhorted to flee unbelief and walk in faith and so avoid much affliction. We are in many ways like natural Israel, doomed to die in a sense in the wilderness. May we apply our hearts to wisdom and be granted peace in Christ at His appearing and Kingdom.

A final but very important lesson before we pass on. The 38 years of penal wanderings could have been avoided if Israel had been faithful. The stations up to Rithmah were truly essential chastisement and direction from God's point of view. They covered two years only out of forty. The 38 were added because of Israel's own fault. How much chastisement comes from the Lord upon us? and how much do we bring upon ourselves in our foolishness, unbelief or stubbornness? How much penal wandering or chastisement have we endured that ought to have been avoided? The remaining stations represent the chastisement we bring upon ourselves. If we all learn this one supreme vital lesson, then our delving will not all have been in vain. From Rithmah, then, to Rimmon-parez. Num. 33. Num. 14: 39 - 45.

Did this name result from Israel's attitude after the solemn declaration that all the older generation should perish in the wilderness, save Joshua and Caleb? If so, we have another searching example of the illogicality of human nature and reasoning. Israel had believed the timid report of the ten spies and had refused to take the land under God's leadership. One would have thought that the terrible condemnation by God would have induced within them humility and remorse. But the reverse appears to have been the case. Num. 14: 39-40. Israel essay to take the land in their own strength, in presumption and stubbornness, against the Amalekites and the Canaanites. Rushing up the hill in a frenzied attack. But God was not with them. Moses had warned, "The Lord will not be with you", and consequently the Ark along with Moses had not departed out of the camp. If God does not build the house or lead in battle. . . . The outcome is a foregone conclusion: humiliation and crushing defeat. So Israel returned to the camp, smitten and disconsolate. We have the application loud and clear in the name of this camp, "Rimmon-parez", literally = "tribulation because of elevation". Israel were lifted up in pride and self-determination, but sank in awful despair (Proverbs 16:18 indeed). "Pride goeth before a fall". Bible teaching under this head is very searching. Prov. 8:13, 11:2, 13:10, 14:3, 21:24, 29:23.

Pride in man is one of the most distasteful things to God and we all possess it

in some measure. It is true to say that if any one characteristic is calculated to bring chastisement upon ourselves and that of our own making, pride must take the lead. Human nature will never learn. The grace of God does not knock twice at our door, as Esau learned regarding the promises (Heb. 12:16-17), and we refuse at our peril. What kind of logic and intelligence is this that will refuse the promised land under God's guidance and power, and then will partly repent and attempt the impossible without God? Inherit the promises by their own efforts? How futile and utterly stupid was Israel, and so are we basically, we fear, taking the law into our own hands, as though by our own initiative we can work out our own salvation. We must forsake completely this pride, which showed off before God, saying, "I will show you. Watch me".

Virtually this is what happened at Rimmon-parez. The lesson at Rephidim had been forgotten. Amalek, their old enemy, as at Rephidim, barred the way, now bolstered up by the Canaanites. To us today they mean our sinful flesh (Rom. 7) with all its lusts and scheming and trafficking (Canaan), and just as victory over Amalek could only be obtained by the intercession of Moses and the valour of Joshua, and as Moses refused this course to them at Rimmon-parez, so will Jesus refuse it to us if we become elevated in pride? What lessons await us at this station, then?

The distinction which is indicated in the word "Parez" is often shown in Scripture as a breach made in the walls of a city in the day of battle or in the bank of a river by a fierce current. Two well-known places bring this to mind: 1 Chron. 13:10-11, when Uzzah put his hand to the Ark and God smote him, the place was named "Perez-uzzah", the breach or destruction of Uzzah. The same word in Hebrew is used here as in Numbers 14, 1 Chron. 14:11-16, "Baal-perazim". So David said, "God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters" (margin, "a place of breaches"). Compare also Gen. 38:29, Judges 21:15, 2 Sam. 5:20, 1 Kings 11:27, Neh. 6:1, Isa. 30:13, Amos 4:3.

Lessons at Rimmon-parez (1) How suddenly our moods can change from discouragement to presumption, as we have seen from Israel's conduct. Two New Testament churches have the distinction of being noted for pride and presumption - Laodicea (Rev. 3 :17) and Corinth. It is worth noting that boasting and its derivatives occur twenty-nine times in 2 Corinthians and only twenty-six times in all the rest of Paul's epistles, according to the concordances. James 4:6 and 1 Pet. 5:6 show what James and Peter thought about it. Our special prayer for this station in our lives is, "Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins" (Psalm 19:13), a prayer that will never be outworn in our lifetime. (2) Without God's aid we should never attempt to fight sin, knowing that " God resisteth the proud" (or sets Himself in battle array against this type of character) "and giveth grace to the humble" and with this grace gives victory. (3) Nothing should be attempted without Moses and the Ark = in our case, the law of God and the Gospel. The remembrance of God's law and the restraint of the Gospel should go before or at least with us into all our pleasures and dangers. We must put on the whole armour of God (Eph. 6) and so be able to withstand all the wiles of the devil.

But a final word of comfort before we march on to Libnah, our next station. The first occurrence of Parez or Pharez is in Gen. 38:29 as the name of the first-born of Judah by Tamar, "the breaker-forth from the womb", and although the circumstances are rather unsavoury, to say the least, they point very clearly forward to wonderful happenings. Once again the names in this incident lead to the clues. Judah = "Praise of Yah", Paul's interpretation of a true Jew (Rom. 2:29, "who is one inwardly", circumcised in heart, whose praise is not of men., but of God.) From the first-born of Judah, born of the union (illicit though it was) with Tamar, whose name was Pharez, came the true Jew, Jesus Himself (Matt. 1, Luke 3). How fascinating the ways of God turn out to be. What have we? From Judah ("praise of Yah") and Tamar ("uprightness", according to Judah, statement in Gen. 38:26, "she is more righteous than I") sprang Pharez or Parez as in Num. 33, whose name is "the breaker-forth". He was the breaker-forth from the womb of Tamar, and we think of his greater Son,

Jesus, Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of uprightness, Mary, the handmaiden of the Lord. Jesus in the fullest sense circumcised His heart ("Thy Word have I hid within my heart". Psa. 40. The scalpel of Truth which cut away all fleshliness). Fulfilling that Word in Himself, His whole life was a praise to God: therefore it was returned to Him in the Father's own testimony, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". His praise was of God and not of men (Rom. 2:29). So then let us in true humility hide this Word in our hearts. It will cut away all the resident dross therein, cut down our pride and make us humble and submissive to the Father, and through Jesus our righteousness our God will be a breaker-forth into joy for us and not in wrath. Luke 15: 1-7, parable of the lost sheep.

Libnah Literally means "whiteness" or frankincense, a root from which we get "purity" and "prayer". Ex. 24:10, "clearness", from the root "lablan", to be white. Here we have the effect of the experiences which were endured from the previous three stations on the trek - Kibroth, Rithmah, Rimmon-parez - and the afflictions and tribulations brought on by themselves at these stations. Here are the effects of chastening: the purity which results from the exercise if rightly endured, and the attitude which is in keeping with purification and cannot be separated from it - prayer. And here in these four stations we believe we have the principle revealed quite clearly that, as in actual fact the sequence of the stations must not be interfered with, so Israel did proceed from each station in the order given in Num. 33. Neither can we in our Christian experience alter this order. Libnah ("purity", "prayer") can only follow after and is consequent upon chastening. Libnah can never precede, only follow after, the last three stations, particularly Rithmah ("bondage") and Rimmon-parez ("tribulation because of exaltation"). This is God's way.

We have seen that purity is associated with whiteness in Libnah, such as frankincense, which is a type of prayer. Think first of moral whiteness:

- Eccles. 9:8 "Let thy garments be white".
 Psalm 51:7 "Wash me.....whiter than snow".
 Dan. 11.35 "As white as snow".
 Dan. 12:10 "Purified and made white"
 Rev. 19: 8-14 "Fine linen, clean and white, for fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. "Clothed in fine linen, white and clean".

Libnah, then, is set for our encouragement and hope, that God's chastisements (Rimmon-parez), our "thorn in the flesh", if borne in faith, are for our profit. Eventually in His mercy we may become partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:10). We have seen that whiteness of garments is a type of character. Rev. 7:13-15 reveals that this character is born out of affliction. Jesus adds the conclusion in Rev. 3:4, "They shall walk with Me in white". In the orient the guests of the rich man all walk in the gardens with him dressed in white. In the Roman Empire in which John was residing at the time of the Revelation the white toga represented the right to assume full citizenship. From the Hebrew and the Christian view white means purity of character, and also eternal service as priests and kings in the Kingdom of God. May the station Libnah mean to us in the Kingdom, so near now, these three things: (1) To walk with Jesus as those two did on the way to Emmaus, but with the ever-open ears and eyes of immortality. (2) The right to-assume full citizenship in the New Jerusalem, Zion our mother (Psa. 87, Heb. 12-22, Gal, 4:26). (3) The perfection of eternal service towards God. Thank God that Libnah is found in our trek towards Jordan and we might partake of its blessings.

Libnah - Heb. root, "frankincense and prayer". Ex. 30:30, 34-35, the anointing of Aaron and his sons. - Frankincense in the perfume. Symbolised accepted prayer with God. (Psa. 5:8, 8:3-4, Song 3:16, Luke 1:10). What does God desire to see in this Libnah state as it affects His children? Isaiah 26:16 we believe to be a good pointer. "Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee. - They poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them". Here we have Rimmon-parez and Libnah beautifully drawn together, showing how the devout fly to prayer when tribulation has come upon them.

Frankincense is sweeter to the parent than the pleading breath of a child; so if we connect Lam. 3:55-57, "Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry", together we get the idea of a troubled child clambering up into his father's lap to whisper his grief and receiving comfort and understanding from him. How infinitely more understanding and kind is the Father of spirits? How precious then is Libnah to us.

But to what extent has this chastening to go to get its full result? One lesson from Christ, our file leader, must suffice. Psalm 109, which we can label for our purpose at the moment, the psalm of Judas because of Peter's quotation in Acts 1:20 of verse 8, "and his bishoprick let another take". This betrayal by the familiar friend must have troubled Jesus sorely and filled the cup of sorrows to overflowing, and what with his other enemies Jesus is portrayed in Psa. 109:4 as in dire trouble and in deep waters, "For my love they are my adversaries, but I.....(omitting the italics)prayer". Worn out! All resistance gone! All strength vanished! All our Lord could do was to pray; in fact, He was Himself a prayer, mute and silent in prostration before His Father, absolutely spent. This is how far chastening must go. Then, like Jesus, we shall receive the overflowing blessing of the Libnah station. But we must pass on, the cloud has lifted, the Tabernacle taken down, marching positions are being made. On to Jordan must be our cry.

No doubt we often muse over the sad condition of the older generation, whose particular ambitions in this life at the most could only rise to getting sufficient manna for the day, and to be comfortably clothed for that day. What the tomorrow could bring forth for them who could know? It has been well said "When there is no prospect of reaching anything except a grave before one, life is by no means rosy". And yet, the majority of people today seem to be living on a no higher plane than this. It is to be hoped that we are different, for/in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable. The long view of faith is indispensable to us, we must have "homesickness" for the "Land of Far Distances" (Isa. 33:17, M) although we have only viewed it afar off, so to speak. Surely the gloomy drifting about in the Kadesh regions of the wilderness of Parah brings before us in apt detail the sad type of that merely worldly life which terminates in the falling of the carcasses; natural man just waiting until corruption takes him.

But, as we have just seen in Rithmah, etc., although the older generation were doomed to die on this side Jordan, of necessity, it did not suggest that this was the end, if they "numbered their days, and applied their hearts to wisdom", that is; and, as in Gen. 3, when the sentence of death was pronounced on Adam and Eve, God immediately put in force measures to counteract that sentence finally. The giving of the Seed of the Woman, and sacrifice in particular. So God at Rissah, saw fit to work in a similar way; this is the next station in line. Here we find that God begins to deal in a very special manner with the inner life of Israel. As the outward things became hopeless, the inner hopefulness began to dawn and continued to increase. If Canaan was out of bounds at this time, and, as they knew later, out of bounds too, to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, their leaders, yet if they followed their example in wisdom then maybe that prophet's reward could be theirs as well (in the greater than Moses' land). The many deaths all around them provided the stark reminder that ere long theirs would follow, so God graciously helped them to prepare for that "Time of Refreshing", and gave them many comforting glimpses of Truth, and many sweet evidences of His unflinching love.

Even in this depressing wilderness of Paran, in the words of Paul himself: "As their outward man perished, their inward man was renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). Rissah and its meaning is a beautiful example of this truth.

The important journey from Libnah to Rissah is one of the most significant, not only to Israel, but also to ourselves. What does it mean, then? Rissah - literally - "The droppings of dew". The word (as the concordance shows) is constantly used to denote refreshment through the descent of God's grace. We remember

that Libnah means or signifies "purity" or "prayer", and in doing this, clearly see the meaning of this journey. It shows how close spiritual refreshment is to a thorough purification of the heart through prayer. If we faithfully lift up our hearts in true devotion in the "desert of this world", the dews of God's grace will swiftly descend on us.

What then is the teaching of Rissah? All the following have their ideas from the same root as Rissah:-

(1) That this spiritual refreshment comes because of our union with Christ in His chastenings. Heb. 12: 2-5. Song: 5-2. Drops of the night, or the dew which gathered on Christ's head in Gethsemane when the chastening was upon Him sore, in Gethsemane, the garden of the olive press. How significant that Christ should invite and call us to share this time of 'heavy pressing'. We are, however, not quick, usually to rise to such spiritual heights, which have in their undertaking physical pain, discomfort and apparent disgrace as He underwent at that time, and the context of Song 5:10 reveals our reluctance; it does refer to us personally. Rev. 3 is quite pointed. This type of spiritual refreshment is not at all to our liking nor what we might have expected. But it does reveal the wonderful fact that amid all the chastisements that come upon us on account of our waywardness God is working and inviting us to forsake these ways and come back to the fold, sharing the chastisement of the son in whom He delighteth (Heb. 12: 5-11, Prov. 3:11). Not only so, but Jesus Himself comes seeking us in this Scripture, seeking you and me to share with Him His night of sorrow, affliction and desertion, and although it will undoubtedly prove painful, and most certainly uncomfortable, yet assuredly this is spiritual refreshment. Paul and Silas thought so in that dark filthy Philippian jail. Though their backs stung, ached and smarted after the flogging, their spirits were refreshed and they lifted up their praise to God in psalms. (Acts 16).

So Song 5:2 really commences our Rissah station for us. The dropping of dew in the night first with Jesus - our heads wet with His sorrow and anguish - "suffering with Christ", then the appearing in glory with Him (Rom. 8), as with Job. 29:19, "the dew lay all night on our branch", and the glory was with us, or will be with us, "in the morning", that "morning without clouds" when the "sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings or beams" - the glorious refraction "as dew upon herbs". (Isa. 26:19): "Thy dew is as the dew of herbs". The wilderness of Paran all gone, the desert will blossom as the rose. That dread fear, "When is it my time?", for ever swept away. The Reaper to stalk us no more. "For His heavens shall drop down dew". His speech shall distil as the dew". God will grant on that blessed day the dew of immortality, immortal youth. Then we shall be glad we have followed Christ, without the camp.

How often have we found that a blessed Rissah is just beyond a painful Libnah, as with Jesus after the temptation or trial - the ministering angels come (Matt. 4:11). After prayer comes the sense of peace to endure. It has been well said that before our supplication our soul may be as barren as the land of Israel before Elijah prayed, but the heavens are sure to open and the fruit is sure to appear (Jas. 5: 17-18). The great example is Jesus Himself. On no less than fifteen occasions do we find Jesus praying at important times (no doubt He prayed concerning all events in His life):

- 1 At His baptism (Luke 3: 21-22)
- 2 After healing the sick (Mark 1:35)
- 3 When His fame had spread and multitudes flocked to hear (Luke 5:16)
- 4 When enemies sought to destroy Him and before appointing His disciples (Luke 6: 2-12)
- 5 When He fed the five thousand (Mark 8:6)
- 6 When He told the disciples He must be rejected and slain (Luke 9-18)
- 7 At the Transfiguration (Luke 9:28)
- 8 At the grave of Lazarus (John 11:41)
- 9 When He taught the disciples how to pray (Luke 11:1)

- 10 When His soul was troubled (John 12:27)
- 11 When about to leave His disciples in a world of tribulation (John 17)
- 12 In Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36)
- 13 At the Last Supper (Mark 14:21-23)
- 14 For His murderers (Luke 23:24)
- 15 When He resigned Himself unto the Father (Luke 23:46)

The apostles and the early church had the same experience (Acts 4:31). If only such things were possible to us. But first of all the will to do these things must be in us as a body. The day is coming when the spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh (Acts 2, Joel 2). What a happy day that will be if we are granted to experience it. Finally at Rissah. Note John 16: 24, how Jesus would lead us in this wilderness teaching by beautifully outlining the journey from Libnah to Rissah. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name. Ask (Libnah), and ye shall receive, that your joy (Rissah) may be full". The longing of the plant in the arid desert of Paran is answered by the descending dew filling the chalice of the lily with sparkling moisture. So the prayer of the weary heart is answered by the descending joy that fills to overflowing. This, or rather the effect of it, is further envisaged in Psalm 135: the precious ointment running down from the head of Aaron (the Greater than Aaron), even to the skirts, the hem, where the pomegranates of the multitudinous seed were situated. So, as we have seen, the grace of God is poured out without measure upon the Son and runs down to His children or members of His body. Psalm 133.3, "As the dew of Hermon descending upon Zion" - spiritually the Hermonic dew is that which is caught up from the Mediterranean, the sea of Gentiles, and drawn up to Hermon's height, and then diffused downwards as a heavy mist of blessing. Like Peter, James and John, we too are called up the mount to be transfigured with Jesus (Rom. 12:1-3, 2. Cor. 3, 2. Cor. 4), and with Jesus are to descend as dew in immortal youth to bring the blessing to Zion. Jesus the true Ark will have then returned, and the Levitical blessing, unpronounced for centuries, since that fateful day when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Solomon's Temple, will be pronounced by the Greater Aaron and His Brethren: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace." May the joy of Rissah remain with us to support and cheer when the going is rough, in similar fashion as in Psalm 133:3. May we do our best to distil to others the precious dew of the Word in word and deed and so fulfil our calling.

Num. 33:22, "And they journeyed from Rissah and pitched in Kehelathah"

We have just observed the effect of God's blessing and the deep spiritual lessons involved in the dew of Rissah. What, then, does spiritual experience as such urge individuals to do? Psalm 133 has actually answered our query. The globules of dew are gathered together as a fine mist or rain in praise to God and in blessing others. So then the Divine refreshment and sweet communion with God at Rissah led them on to a desire to "assemble themselves" frequently and earnestly for worship.

Khelathah is a name derived, we are told, from the Hebrew root for "an earnest and devout assemblage for worship". Cause and effect in the most spiritual sense. Having tasted of the goodness of God, Israel craved to have communion with Him. There is a similar condition in 1 Thess. 1:9-10, where the ecclesia, having learned of the "true and living God", turned towards Him, willing to commune with, serve and worship this God Who had called them. Another undesigned coincidence, teaching that these experiences of Israel in the desert are designed for our instruction, that we "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures" might have "the Hope".

Passages in Scripture in which the Hebrew root from which "Khelathah" comes is used in the sense given in our interpretation:

- 1 Lev. 4:21 - translated "congregation".
- 2 Josh. 18:1 - the children of Israel assemble together at Shiloh
- 3 Psalm 22:22 - "In the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee".
- 4 " 22:25 - "My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation".
- 5 " 40:9 - " I have preached righteousness in the great congregation".

The last three specimens are related to the assembly of the First-Born to which we belong, brethren and sisters, and it may please God that we actually witness this great event in the Kingdom, when the Son shall lead the praise of the Father in the great congregation, and when the Son shall speak to us of the glory of the Father. The lesson is, then, that we do not neglect to assemble ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the Day approaching. Remember the example of Thomas, who once neglected and the visitation of Christ that he missed. Let, then, our gatherings together be an earnest of that "great congregation" in the Kingdom.

But we are informed that the form of the Hebrew word "Kehelathah" has what is called a double augmentation, to be detected by Hebrew scholars at once. The rule in grammar is, "The increasing of the word is a sign of the significance increased". As we have just indicated, particularly as it relates to the Kingdom, the station imports the "frequent and earnest assembly" of the people to wait on God. It was not a mere formal gathering. The droppings of the dew of grace had produced a softening and sanctifying effect. What a wonderful picture that desert gathering must have made at Kehelathah! One to two millions in assembly, a solid cube of folk fourteen miles square, rendering praises and a joyful noise to the Lord, all with vehement desire in their hearts to praise and commune with God - how wonderful! we repeat. But how much more glorious is the contemplation of a similar event concerning Israel at the return of Christ, an event which we may be able to witness.

Once again, even in our own days, we see Israel lifted up with pride, still not acknowledging Christ as Messiah, taking the Land, as they believe, in their own strength. Another Rimmon-parez is approaching; tribulation such as never was is coming upon them, and it is because of elevation, or their pride. This time, however, the Lord Himself will intervene (Ezek. 38. 39), as we well know, and Jerusalem will be saved. Christ will reveal Himself and Israel, mourning, will seek their God (Libnah - prayer) and they in turn will become the (white) battle horse of the Lord (Zech. 12, Rev. 19) - Libnah, second derivation, indeed. Then shall "the Word of the Lord distil as dew" among them, His "heavens shall drop down dew" for them, "like rain upon the mown grass". Yes, in their everyday thoughts. "Every man shall sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and none shall make him afraid", and this reversal of conditions for Israel means that once again they are "Ammi" - "My people" - "and I will be Yahweh their God".

This in brief is the Israeli Rissah of the future. What will be their reaction to this "dew of grace"? Psalm 118, close of the Hallel sung by Jesus before His Gethsemane and Golgotha. Yes, He would not die - be given over to death - but would live (verse 17) and declare the praise of the Lord in the great congregation and Israel's response (indeed part of the joy which enabled Jesus to endure the cross of shame). Psalm 118. 22-26 - full acknowledgment of the Lord's Christ at last, "Hosanna! Save now!" having its glad fulfilment, and repentant, chastened people rejoicing in the grace of Yahweh, exultant in praise, crowd the Temple. Verse 26, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord", and the answer: "We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord". Psalm 133, which we have expounded, has shown how this will take place, and again the consummation of this sequence, verses 27-29, singing "God is the Lord, Who hath showed us (or, literally, "shined on us, bringing forth") light" - the Epiphany, in fact. How and in whom? Titus 2. 11-14, "The grace of God hath shined out, or appeared, in bringing salvation to all men". This, Israel, once blinded, now see. God indeed shines into their hearts; now they realise, and the cry is, "Save us now" (Hosanna, Psalm 118. 25), "we beseech Thee". They come in prayer and supplication (Titus 2. 13). The epiphany or "outshining" of God is seen in Jesus' great God, the Saviour of Israel and of the whole world (Isa. 9. 6).

It would appear that Paul has this "outshining" of God in focus in 2 Cor. 2. Israel in the flesh could not stand this overwhelming weight of glory centred in Jesus, and not until the moment of which we have been treating could this be possible. After the fountain is opened in Jerusalem for the cleansing of the Jewish remnant (Zech. 13. 1), there is a very different picture for Israel after the spirit (2 Cor. 3. 18, 4. 18).

2 Cor.4.5-7, "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". Such must be our individual response to the "outshining" of God's light and the in-shining in our hearts of the moral glory of the Father, discernible in the Son. Realising with Paul that this truth is held by us in earthen vessels, and that the light can only shine to others when the earthy casket (as with Gideon's men in Judges 7) is broken up by ourselves, we shall undoubtedly suffer pain, grief and frustration; but 2 Cor.4.16-18 will give us true perspective.

Returning to Israel (repentant and joyful at this epiphany of their great God), what is their response to this grace from on high? Psalm 118.27-28, "Bind the sacrifice with cords even unto the horns of the altar". Two comments are necessary:

(1) "The binding of the sacrifice with cords". What cords? Hosea 11.4 explains - "cords of love". This was how the Father had dedicated His offering. The Father bound the Son with cords of love, even as Isaac had been bound by Abraham on Moriah (Gen.22) in type. Only a shadow, this, in execution; the knife had been stayed, the life spared. But with the Son that life had been wholly poured out unto death. Now Israel as a nation will realise the implication of Psalm 118, Hallel indeed, sung at every festival but most particularly at Passover.

(2) Psalm 118.27. Reaction of Israel at this time. The congregation of Israel - "let us away to the horns of the altar". We have the delightful picture of a restored and grateful people, hastening to bring their offerings of praise to their God. The Hebrew is very expressive here, the people crowding even to the horns of the altar itself. This is their national reaction to the epiphany or shining out of God upon them. Their open confession follows at once (verse 28), "Thou art my God and I will praise Thee. I will exalt Thee". Add to this verse 27, "God is the Lord", and we are taken back to the personal and prophetic testimony of Thomas in John 20.28, no longer uncertain and doubting, when he said to Jesus, "My Lord and My God", after being shewn the imprints of the nails in Jesus's hands. Psalm 118.27 (R.V.), "The Lord is God", compare Zech. 13.9. Type and antitype are married in joy when our station Kehelathah finds fulfilment in natural Israel, Christ's brethren after the flesh. But who amongst us can truly anticipate, speaking of that double augmentation and the increasing significance of this assembly? Psalm 22 points to it, whetting our appetite. Verses 22 and 25. Both refer to spiritual Israel as Paul indicates in Heb.2.12. Both take place in the "great congregation", and what a congregation! - the redeemed in Christ; Adam, Eve, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Shem, Isaac, Sarah, Leah, Rachel, Rahab, Samson, David, Elijah, Elisha, all the prophets. The Twelve, Paul, Timothy and the rest; and all worthy brethren and sisters. All equipped after the power of an endless life; all praise and shall hear Jesus leading the praises to the Father (Heb.2.12, Psa.22.22). Surely this is the perfection of praise and worship in the greater Kehelathah congregation. But more is to follow. Psalm 22.25, "From Thee springs my praise in the great congregation". The Son's acknowledgment that from the Father came all praise:

- 1 The well from which Christ and His brethren praised the Father was situated in the Divine grace itself.
- 2 The praise of Israel natural at this time.
- 3 The praise of His brethren concerning Himself.
- 4 The praise by God Himself at this time all come within the vast limits of the love of the Father.

Such then is the future Kehelathah which awaits the faithful. May we find that happiness and joy falling to our lot at the end of the days!

Final thoughts on Kehelathah. There must be an obvious reference to ecclesial assembly life now as it affects either (1) the whole body of Christ in our days, or (2) individual ecclesias as we know them. To the happiness and strength of fellowship which is experienced when the double augmentation is put into practice, it can be experienced within the various ecclesias we visit during the course of our ministrations in the Word; not Temperance Hall numbers of necessity but where two or three, sometimes six, are gathered in His Name (Matt.18.20, Heb.3.13, 10.24-25). Happiness and joy in the Lord are very infectious and create that true double augmentation fellowship within us.

Final and present-day lesson of Kehelathah: a twelve-fold suggestion for a model ecclesia based, not upon the New Testament in particular, but upon Nehemiah 8, another remarkable structure, quite concise in itself, and without its efficiency both in the spiritual and the practical sense (if the two can be divided) would be considerably impaired. Most of us agree that a revival in the sense of returning to the old ideals of our faith is necessary, and many attempts have been made to "get up" various projects towards this end. But it is true to say that it is impossible to "get up" a revival. However, it is possible to "get one down" by prayer and right conduct - if the Lord will, of course (Psa. 85.6, Hab. 3.3). Could Nehemiah be so bold as to suggest a revived ecclesia for our day? Here are twelve outlines:

- (1) Neh. 8.1 - The first essential, "as one man", and no indication of the "One Man" is required - "the Christ Man" (1 Cor. 12) and that for all the family, as Neh. 8.2 points out ("And all that could hear with understanding" - Jer. 50.4-5, Acts 2.1).
- (2) Neh. 8.3 - Real interest in God's word. Nothing can revive without the Word, in fact none can live before God without the Word. We are of no use to God if we neglect or despise this Word. For three solid hours Ezra read from the Law to the people (Neh. 8.3, 8). No mean performance, to read distinctly, giving the sense, from the unpointed Hebrew. Modern professors state that a very cognisant Hebraist would hardly dare to read two or three verses, the task is so difficult. So to read for three hours! Think of the terrific concentration. A second consideration is the effect upon the congregation, three solid hours of listening to the reading and exposition of the Word. What an indictment it brings against our days, when Bible readings, expositions, papers at the Bible Class, exhortations and lectures are tending to become shorter and shorter, and one is constantly met with "twenty minutes must not be exceeded", and when one's ability on the platform tends to be judged by two criteria (a) amusement of the meeting, and (b) the shortest address possible. The merest attention to "duty", and on many occasions one appearance before the Lord on Sunday, constant complaints that we haven't the time to prepare a Bible Class address. Having smoothed over our conscience we fly back to our constant pursuits, those we make time for, in whatsoever form that relaxation may take: television, wireless, gardening, gossiping, photography and the rest. What an indictment against our days this chapter of Nehemiah brings.
If we hope to revive our meetings in these days, attention to the Word and good exposition of that Word are vitally necessary. Jesus said, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me!" (Psalm 139.17). How precious are they to us?

- (3) Neh. 8.4 - Support for those who minister to us again is a "must". We must be as hands to them, helps at all times; and when criticism must be used let it not be senseless and bitter, but helpful and constructive. We remember Rephidim (Ex. 17.8-12) and the lesson we learned there. The upkeep and revival of our ecclesias are a personal responsibility, yours and mine. Let us see to it that we support those who minister amongst us as Neh. 8.4 indicates.

The names of the men who supported Ezra at his readings are indicative of the help our ecclesias ought to receive from us and the result, if we could follow out the teaching of these names. Briefly, Ezra = "help", objectively and subjectively; help which he is prepared to give, but in measure reliant upon the help Ezra himself received from others. Mattithiah = "gift of Yah", "gracious gift of Yah", a very worthwhile prospect of any who serve Christ to be His gift in help for the ecclesias. Shema = "hearing", hearkening, obeying". A good listener is a wonderful gift of help. Most of us strive to be talkers - such were the Ammonites in the days of the Exodus, obdurate foes of Israel. May we at all times covet to be Shemas, good listeners. To help our ministers we are not called upon in these days to listen for three hours or through all-night sessions. We wonder how long Eutychus lasted out, listening to the inspired apostle (Acts 20.9). Ananiah falls beautifully into place = "covered

or protected by Yah". We think of the whole armour of God, detailed for us by Paul our brother (Ephes. 6) - faith, hope, charity indeed. If this armour is our covering, we shall be of precious value in our help. Urijah should particularly apply to us = "the Lord is light". Jesus is the light of the world. We are sealed in our foreheads with the knowledge of God. This knowledge of the High God, the Holy One of Israel, comes not of our native intelligence, but our light is the Lord. If we can but manifest this great Name in the ecclesia, then our help will be beyond compare. Hilkiah represents the view-point of our standing in the Lord. How should our help be given? Hilkiah = "portion of Yah", specially set apart to Yah. Not to be judged from "Oxfam" angle or that of any other charity which may invade our letter-box on the principle of doing good to all men generally (usually forgetting the proviso, "especially unto them who are of the household of faith", Gal. 6:10). Paul and the apostles did not advocate world-wide measures of assistance, but to the poor at Jerusalem, etc. Our help, then, will be specially directed at the Truth first, and, if any remains, then outside; not mingling with the religions of this world, but being straightly separated to Yah as the future bride of Christ in all holiness (see Song 4, etc. for implication). Maaseiah = "the work of God", the fruits of Yah's labour in us. We shall be of great help in our ecclesia, in fact an earnest of the "travail of His soul". If the conditions outlined in the names of these six right-hand helpers of Ezra can be found in us, then we shall be happy indeed.

On the left hand of Ezra were six helpers. Pedaiah = "ransomed of the Lord" or "the redemption of the Lord". As we are fully aware that we have been bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus, so we too have to buy back or redeem our time and spend it to the best possible use in the Truth. The knowledge of such a help would always spur us on to greater service. Mishael = "who is like unto God" to show from the likeness of God what God is. Our constant aim in life. What a stupendous task! For a perfect performance, 1 John 3:2, of course. In this life, a devout attention to Scripture, to "see the Lord", which Philip ultimately found in Jesus (John 14:5-11). So by our efforts to reproduce the character of Christ we can show what God is. We ourselves will require maximum help to do this. If we all tried at all times to show in the ecclesia what God is, what a difference there would be! No empty seats, no falling asleep or indifference. Business meeting jungle a thing of the past. The sting of the asp-like tongue for ever silent. A terrible thought strikes us as we now speak: How much do I show what God is? Is Mishael found in me? Do I help the ecclesias in this way? Malchiah = "the judgement of Yah". Setting out the principle of judgement, which should dominate our thoughts. The spirit of "agape", which always seeks the good of others. The counsel of Yah in 1 Cor. 13 in all its beauty, because such judgement was first committed to the Son, who was appointed by Yah to manifest His character to men. This help is "the greatest thing in the world", as Drummond realised years ago, and daily its significance grows as understanding dawns upon us. Hashum emphasises the necessity of having a fertile mind in the ecclesias, ability to utilise all things to the ecclesia's good. Another derivation means "having many servants", many helps, as we have already advanced. A spiritual mind is distinguished, fertile, active, sharply alert about the ecclesia, either in the Word or in practical affairs. This is indeed a help from the Lord. Hashbadana = "thoughtful judgement, intelligent judgement, wise judgement" - sums up the helps on Ezra's left hand so far. How precious this type of person is in the ecclesia - a "must" among helps. Zechariah = "the Lord is remembered". A Zechariah is a person of great price in any ecclesia, with him the Lord is remembered; he always puts forward the Lord's viewpoint, a very essential characteristic; and because he does this, he is "whom the Lord remembers or calls to mind". We think of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, in this connection, and if we take the trouble to go carefully down the narrative in Luke 1:5-17, we see how this principle is borne out. Meshullam = "Devoted, allied, associated in the friendship of God, pacified, peaceful, perfected". This seems to gather together all that has been advanced concerning Ezra's helps. If all these associated helps could be produced by us in the ecclesias, then, as far as we are concerned, the Kingdom would be very near. It appears to be impossible in our present condition, but with God all things are possible, and no doubt the weak element is our failure to want as much and to try as hard. May the Lord bless us in our endeavours. Jesus is our greater Eleazar in the matter - "the Lord is our helper" - and may the Lord bless our ecclesias

towards this end.

We have tarried too long at Kehelathah and must briefly outline the remaining points in the model ecclesia for our day according to the conceptions of Ezra or Nehemiah.

(4) Neh.8.5 - Reverence. "All the people stood up". We have always thought that reverence does not appear to be one of our strong points. Perhaps it has something to do with the traditional family nature of our ecclesial structure. This is good in itself - "all children of God" - but we must remember with Israel that "our God is a consuming fire" and we must afford Him due reverence. He is indeed the Father of spirits (Heb. 12.28).

(5) Neh.8.6 - Prayer and humiliation. Prayer we have already reviewed and seen its place in individual life. Any ecclesia without a prayer-life is dead. Before God we are but dust and ashes, and we must esteem each other better than ourselves. Old Testament ideas: Isa.62.6, Zech.4.6, 2, Isa.32.6-7.

(6) Neh.8.7 - Lay activity or an ecclesial ministry in the Word. To be a living ecclesia we must all combine our efforts in living and preaching this Word, more particularly in deed and example: perhaps it will have repercussions in our world as it did with the Thessalonians in theirs.

(7) Neh.8.8 - Devout attention to the Word. In our teaching: (a) Sunday School, (b) Bible Class, (c) Exhortation and Lecture, (d) Youth Circles, (e) private study, so that we all may benefit (compare 1 Tim.4.15-16, 2 Tim.3).

(8) Neh.8.9 - A deep conviction of sinfulness. "There, but for the grace of God, go I". Our true nature (Rom.7 etc.) should be our constant study. The publican's approach to prayer was commended above that of the Pharisee (Luke 18.9-14). "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing. Who shall save me from this body of death?"

(9) Neh.8.10 - Christian liberality always follows such convictions (Acts 4.37; compare 5.14, Mal.3.10).

(10) Neh.8.12 - "Presence of joy". That inner fervour amongst the ecclesias is another blessing which follows on a revival that "comes down" from God (Isa.25.6, Psalm 51.12-13, Psalm 100.2).

(11) Neh.8.14 - Dedication of self. Back we are taken to Succoth experience, the life of separation, which can weld the other elements together, unless we have the personal determination to separate and devote ourselves entirely to the Lord in these things.

(12) Neh.8.15 - Transmission of the tidings. To others, this kind of experience cannot be contained within one community or one individual. Again the experience of the first century Christians (1 Thess.1 etc.) - their joy spread through the Roman habitable. How true this is. Someone has said that the whole work of Christianity lies in these four words: Admit, Submit, Commit, Transmit. Indeed, to admit the Truth, to submit to the Truth, to commit oneself entirely to the Truth, and to transmit the Truth, would be ideal for Christian character and life, and would supply a wonderful slogan for any ecclesia.

Remembering at all times that worship means worthship, it is ascribing the worthship to God. Its value, therefore, lies in personal approach to God, personal quietness, personal praise and thought of Him. This seems to be the temper of Kehelathah and worship under the direction of Nehemiah. May this be the endeavour of all our ecclesias and this vital tarrying place in Paran be ever present in our thoughts and aspirations in the Truth. Such glory awaits the great congregation when the Father and the Son combine in mutual praise.

Numbers 33.23 Mount Shapher Many lessons of spiritual worth were found at Kehelathah, our last station which had to do with the worship of God and ecclesial deportment in particular. Personal experience will tell us that when both are engaged in by any ecclesia in true Christian spirit then undoubted benefit will accrue to each member. Lofty conceptions of the goodness and greatness of our God, and a quickened appreciation of our Lord Jesus

as the "fairest among ten thousand" grip us tightly as the result of such exercises. So then, we journey onwards towards Jordan, and upwards from Kehelathah, and find the wondrous results of our combined spiritual exercises issuing in Mount Shapher, the next station in our trek.

Shapher means, first of all, "beauty or comeliness" - a pointer back to that comeliness of heart and life that sincere worship alone can give. (a) Shapher or Beauty is discerned first of all in the character of the Divine Name, Yahweh, which we bear. (b) Comeliness is a lovely, expressive word of the attraction of this Memorial Name, which irresistibly draws us to the Father. "Come-hither-ness" is the most expressive sense of the term spiritually discerned. (c) The manner of this attraction is through the Son. "No man cometh to Me, except the Father draw him" first. It is in the lifting up on the tree (John 12.32-33). How was this accomplished? Song 1.3-4. The savour of the Name poured forth, and seen in John 17.6-8, 19-26. Here we see Jesus displaying before His chosen the comeliness of the Yahweh Name, a living reproduction of the words of Song 1.3-4, which attracted both the bride and the daughters of Jerusalem to Himself. Its highest point was seen in the "lifting up" in sacrifice in the Divine love so clearly manifested (John 3.16). Shapher then, reveals to us the beauty and the comeliness of the Name we bear. Not so much in the manipulation of human affairs according to extensive prophecies: Not so much in Divine judgment about to be wreaked in the most certain future (which represents the usual exposition of this Memorial Name amongst us), but rather in the quintessence of spiritual values as found within the family of God. Human affairs, even with Israel, will all cease, 1 Cor. 13 is quite emphatic about this. But the "agape" of love found within this Memorial Name will always remain within the same circle of the Divine family. The worship of God found in sincere ecclesial life should help to promote this atmosphere among us.

The Psalmist prays: "The beauty of our God be upon us". (1) The comeliness of the Yahweh Name to which Shapher alludes. It follows, does it not, that if we belong to the Father's household, this must be the case. So the responsibility rushes upon our conscience with devastating force. (2) Can the comeliness of this Name be discerned in me? and, apart from being lost in the immensity of this Name, can I be discerned within the scope of this truly awful, yet glorious Name of God? This is a climax we cannot avoid as we come to Shapher, one which brings humiliation and yet wonder to us. A very intense personal question. We can have little to boast about this personally should it be our happy lot to be found within the vast scope of this Memorial Name. Ezek. 16.14 is quite emphatic: Israel was renowned for her "beauty", but it was perfect only because the comeliness of the Lord God was upon her. May the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, according as we hope in Him. Mount Shapher, indeed, may we be able to ascend to the heights of this station. How precious, then, should we reckon our communion together around the Table and the Word? - those hours spent in sanctuary and worship. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" refers not only to protection against unruly elements of soul and environment, but to the beauty of character which such a garment can impart to the wearer.

Further teaching of this station. Note the gladsome fervour which presumably energised Israel at this place as found in the teaching of the Hebrew root from which "Shapher" comes. Gen. 49.21, "Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly ("shapher") words". Words cannot be restrained to tell of the goodly savour of this Divine Name and the goodness of God to His people. The depth of wisdom stemming from this one thought alone could occupy volumes of exposition. Matt. 4.15: Jesus dwelt in Naphtali and Zebulun. Most of His work was done in Naphtali in Galilee of the Gentiles. Mount Shapher of the "goodly words" in Gentile territory pointed unerringly forward then to the goodly words of Him Who preached the gospel of peace. Naphtali = "Wrestling". Fraught with many wrestlings and oppositions, both in Himself and with the Jews, the experience of Christ (in Gethsemane, at Lazarus' tomb, with the Pharisees, etc.) had for compensation and to His delight the mutual "intertwinings" (another meaning of "Naphtali") of Yah. The purpose was being worked out within the Son; therefore the "wrestlings" were really of Yah. So to all spiritual Naphtali, who speak the goodly words of the Gospel in the wilderness of the Gentiles, there are bound to be many wrestlings, much opposition with self and society; yet, if it is done in sincerity, we shall find "intertwinings of Yah" according to His purpose, and to our everlasting benefit both ecclesially and individually.

Nahum 1.15 comes vividly to mind at this juncture with stirring advice: "Keep thy feasts, O Judah" (whose praise is of God, not of men, Rom.2.29); "perform thy vows". Recalling the mind back to Kehelathah, the vows taken at the feasts of solemn assemblies were not to be a passing experience to be left behind, but rather to be kept in mind, recalling whose they were and to whom they had sworn obedience. Preaching is born out of worship (worthship), in contrast to worthlessness of the man who should be found no more in Israel (see latter half of verse 15 of Nahum 1). Compare Isa.52.7 ("the feet of him") with Romans 10.15 ("the feet of them") - "them" includes all who have followed after, finally ushering in Isa.40.3, 5, 9: "O Zion that bringest good tidings behold your God" - the glorious result. In 2 Thess.3 Paul's practical teaching is, "No work, no eating". This applies both physically and spiritually. No showing forth goodly words in this life, no goodly nature to glorify these words in the future life.

Psalm 22. The superscription is "The hind of the morning" and in the psalm the hind is hunted to death by the bulls of Bashan. The connection, we know, is with the "hind" the Son, Who was lifted up not on a wondrous cross but on a cross of shame, yet Who was afterwards as the "hind of the mountains of Bether" (Song 2.7, 17). "Bether" = "separation" or "division", as specifically to be observed in sacrificial application. Compare "Bether" with Gen.15.10-17 and Jer.34.18-19, "cut and eat", "come together". Also associated with Mount Bithron. Note further extension in "Bethabara", the "house of passage" through the Jordan (the river of judgment) into the Land of Israel, where we hope this pilgrimage will surely lead us. Here we find the effect of the "goodly words" of Mount Shapher. The Gospel message which supported the Son's faith, Psalm 118. Though lifted up to a shameful death between the evenings, the Lamb slain is found as He sang before He went to Gethsemane, "I shall not die, but live" (Psa.118.17). According, then, to the heading of Psalm 22 (the psalm of sobs - Kay), "the hind of the morning", Jesus is found "leaping on the hills" as a hind the third morning. The words came loud and clear to John years afterwards when "the bulls of Bashan compassed him about" on Patmos, "Behold, I am He that liveth, and was dead, and am alive again for evermore, amen, and have the keys of hell and death" (Rev.1.18).

These are goodly words spoken on the mountains, and they who "seek" may only find them in Bether, the mount of separation, of sacrificial division. Who, then, dare say we must not keep our separation, or that it is in any way artificial? The gulf which should separate us is of such vast dimensions that it is impassable except for those who have been drawn upwards by the Father to Christ (Isa.2, Micah 4, Psalm 133, Luke - Transfiguration), or, by another figure, for those who are like Rebekah (Gen.24). "Rebekah" = "to bind again", to reunite that which has been separated. Gen.15.10-17 revealed that it is only through sacrifice that this can be accomplished. Gen.24.22 (R.V.) - one of the ornaments placed on Rebekah by Eliezer (compare Ex.28.26), demonstrating that God had ear-marked or nose-marked, so to speak, Rebekah to have part in the plan of redemption, ultimate salvation for herself. See Gen.24.53. When her consent had been given, silver of redemption is given her as showing the way to it.

Bethabara, ford of Jordan or house of passage, where presumably Israel passed over Jordan, points to the fact that besides belief and practice baptism is equally essential. Such is the general teaching of Shapher in its "goodly" aspect. Psalm 16, verse 6, "the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage", could well have been Israel's cry at this station, pleasant in every aspect. "I thought it a seemly and good thing to show the signs and wonders that the High God hath wrought towards me" (Dan.4.2) records our thoughts upon these things.

In Ex.19.16 the same Hebrew word "shaphar" is applied to the pleasant or clear sound of the trumpet, the ancient "shaphar" or ram's horn, which called Israel to assembly.

(1) In this passage we are given some idea as to the effect of Divinity upon human nature.

(2) We again call to mind that the God with Whom we have to do is a consuming fire, and we give Him due reverence and thanks at the same time. Heb.12.16-29 shows our position in Christ, that, while we are not called to a mount that might not be touched, yet we are not, like Esau, to underestimate or despise our spiritual birthright but serve

God with reference and godly fear. See notes on 1 Thess. 1.8 ("Epistles to the Thessalonians" by Arthur Hall) for the application of the trumpet sound in our days.

(3) Comeliness of character comes through exaltation of thought and worship. Matt. 17.1-4, Christ's face when transfigured on Mount Hermon before Peter, James and John. Ex. 24.1-11, the elders of Israel on Mount Sinai. The Christ again in vision. These mounts, along with Mount Shapher, were true sources of exaltation to those who took part in them, and yet Ex. 24.9 particularly mentions Nadab and Abihu present, who were later slain by God for profaning the altar fire and incense offering. Let us be on our guard at all times of exaltation securely in memory, that we sin not so grievously.

(4) Comeliness of character results from aloneness with God. In many ways it is when we are "alone with God" that He reveals His treasures to us as it were on the mountain tops with Jesus, Moses, Elijah and the three on Hermon. Paul journeyed to Arabia to be alone for three years with God or Christ as it may be. In silence, in abstraction from the world, in stillness of mind and calmness of soul, under these conditions it would seem we come nearest to the Divine mind. Note in Ex. 25.40 and Heb. 8.5 the instruction to Moses to "Look that thou make them (all things pertaining to the Tabernacle) after the pattern which was showed thee in the mount". It was when Moses was alone with God on the mountain top that the plan or structure was shown to him. In many ways our lives in Christ run parallel to this. It is when we are alone with God on our spiritual Shaphers that the plan of our life is unfolded to us. It is well, then, that we frequently close the doors of our closet about us and find our aloneness with God. Yet we are never strictly alone with God. There is always another very interested Person present; in fact without Him there can be no approach. He is the Way (John 14.6). Only through Him do we have the power to ascend the Hill of the Lord to reach our Shaphers, or in Him the ability to truly segregate ourselves from the affairs of this world which insidiously creep in upon our pilgrimage and give to it the wandering tendency we have already studied.

It is when we have closed the doors about us at eventide that a knock will come (Rev. 3.20), but if we are cumbered about with much serving or cluttered up with worldly ambition we shall never hear it, and the Knocker will depart, as Song 5.2 depicts, and a priceless interlude with the Father and the Son will have been lost, for John 14.23 is in obvious context here as well: "We will come unto him (personally and individually) and make our abode with him". Rev. 3.20 - as Barclay rightly says, "The meal taken with us would be supper", not breakfast ("akratisma"), which was no more than a piece of dried bread dipped in wine. Nor was it the "ariston", the midday meal, a picnic snack eaten outside, as we would eat today in the colonnade or park, a meal eaten in passing; but the "deipnon", the evening meal, the main meal of the day. People lingered over it and talked of the day's events and so on; a time for unlimited fellowship as it were. This is the meal that Christ and the Father would share with us, if we enter our closets and open the door of our hearts to them. Could we but talk over our affairs of the day with such wonderful company! Or should we be ashamed to do this? Would these affairs stand up to Divine scrutiny? It is a privilege beyond compare, a Mount Shapher spiritual project indeed, beyond compare in this life.

These are the highlights of our experience in Christ; when we hear the little small voice, the voice of gentle stillness of 1 Kings 19.9-12, at its best a personal manifestation of the Name to us. It is at these times that we are gripped with the hush of Divine quietude and Psalm 23 finds its satisfying media to us.

O that we could abide at Mount Shapher all the days of our probation! But who can live all their lives in the "Delectable Mountains" when the Valley of the Shadows awaits us? Both are of vital importance to us. May we safely put our trust in the rod of correction for guidance. The shaphar sounds the advance in the mountain stillness; Jordan is for us still an arduous trek. Mount Shapher must ever remain as a memory of our personal aloneness with God, so that, whenever we are beset with the clamourings and wantonness of the flesh, this "still voice" will bid us enter into our closets away from the feverish hurry of life around us, and be still with God, our very own Mount Shapher.

(5) Obedience is elementary in comeliness of character. Psalm 33.1, "Praise is comely for the upright". Again a due-design of Kehelathah and Shapher, the stations of worship and, subjectively, worthship, on our part to the Shapher station of beauty and comeliness. Devout praise furthers comeliness in character, because it is born out of humility and obedience (Psalm 147.1). Note Shapher in regard to Jesus (Isa.53.2), but in Jewish eyes precisely the opposite of the Divine appreciation. "He hath no form, nor comeliness". Divine comeliness, however, is hidden from natural man (Ezek.16.14, 17.10). The comeliness of the Lord God is radiant and infinite and will be imparted to the faithful and obedient of all ages and all nationalities. Isaiah 4.2 gives us this cheering thought: "In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit (of the Spirit) on the earth shall be excellent and comely". The intrinsic meaning is beautiful to contemplate, that, in all the escaped or saved of Israel, shall fruitage of love, joy and peace be splendidly apparent, all comely, blessed things. Here again S.W.A. has suitably directed our closing thoughts on Shapher in the mountains and unfolded thoughts which should possess us in all stages of our journey. Summary: (1) "Whatsoever things are true" (Phil.4.8). (2) "Let us adorn the doctrine" (Titus 2.10). (3) "May the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us" (Psalm 90.17).

Numbers 33.24 Haradah So, then, down we go to Haradah. Why do we say this? This is the lesson we learned from the Hebrew "haradah" = "great fear" and "trembling". From the mountain heights of comeliness and praise of aloneness with God we plunge down headlong into this sad plight. Only the length of one verse precipitated Israel into such a melancholy state. How great this agitation was is seen from the Hebrew root from which "haradah" comes: (a) Gen.27.33 - the fear of Isaac (margin) when he realised how near he had come to blessing the wrong son. (b) Ex.19.16 - Israel's terrible fear before the smoking Sinai. (c) 1 Sam.13.9 - the awful fear and trembling of Israel as they retreated for dread of the Philistines. Note the names here, across the Jordan: Jordan (river of judgment), Gad (troops of them), Gilead (place of testimony), Gilgal (rolling away). Saul the king ("asked for") awaiting Samuel ("lent to the Lord"), Saul failed the test and trust. Saul offered his own sacrifice (his own way which led to disobedience, dishonour and death) in Gilgal of all places. God will have obedience. Our word "Calvary" is derived from this. God's will alone must be done, as seen in the place of supreme obedience, and, in view of this stern uncompromising lesson, we do well to tremble and greatly fear lest we follow Saul's error and earn God's wrath. (d) 1 Sam.14.15 - equally well must we learn this opposite lesson shown in Jonathan and his faithful armour-bearer. Jonathan the fearless, who took on alone (yet not alone); for this verse records the trembling panic which passed through the Philistine host, because there was amongst them dread and trembling, a "trembling of God". The imagination could run riot as we think of this incident, the wholesale knocking of knees, trembling of loins, a veritable nutcracker in magnitude. Such is the trembling of God caused amongst the heathen, aided by a stout heart of courage, steadfast determination and assurance of faith in pursuance of His will. (e) Ezek.26.16 - "trembling". Fears of heathen princes at the evidence of God's judgment upon Tyre. Has this to come upon Britain as the latter-day Tyre? If so, may it please the Father that we escape it. (f) Isa.10.29 - terror at Ramah, when the judgments of God are in the offing.

As we analyse the cumulative effect of this teaching regarding Haradah and try to assess the physiological elements recorded here, we are aghast at the gulf which so widely separates Shapher and Haradah, and yet how infinitely small is the time lag between them.

One small verse. How long the interval was in time, we can never tell, but in our own experience, only moments need elapse sometimes before the change becomes operative. Such is the lot of human nature. Note even the vast change in the experience of Jesus, as recorded in two verses: - Matt.3.17, 4.1 (ignore the chapter ending). In Matt.3.17, the bliss of Divine Sonship is acknowledged from Heaven by the Father. In 4.1 He is led of the same Spirit which descended upon Him in 3.16 into the agony of the temptation in the wilderness. Think too of the experiences of Elijah, after the exaltation as TRUE Prophet of God on Carmel. Strong in faith, superb in might, slaying the priests of Baal (1 Kings 19.1-18), and fleeing from the dread presence of a wicked woman, Jezebel - fleeing for his life. How queer then his later cry, "O Lord, take away my life, for I am

not better than my fathers". Was he afraid that Jezebel might take his life first? A paradox indeed.

How true to human experience is the sometimes rapid alternation between joy and fear, as we have just seen. Sometimes they come together as at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2.8-10 and context). This, of course, is a very different type of fear; we pray that, at the second coming of Christ, we may experience this kind of fear.

But fear has been the lot of humans since Adam's day, when after sinning, along with Eve, he feared "greatly". Amidst even the most sublime circumstances fear is found, in one form or another :

- (1) Luke 2.8-10 The shepherds feared, as we have seen.
- (2) Isaiah 6.1 The prophet himself, when he is confronted in vision by the glorified Lord Jesus (Jno.12.14-35).
- (3) Ezekiel Glory of God and the cherubim (Ezek.1, 10 etc.)
- (4) Daniel The glorified Son of Man (Dan.8 etc.)
- (5) Peter, James, John - Transfiguration sequence on Hermon (Luke 9.23-24).

No experience could have been more sublime, apart from Paul's own in 2 Cor.12.1-11. (1) He was taken out of his times. (2) Through all time, when (3) God will be All in All. (4) Beyond the Kingdom age (2 Cor.12.4). It was not lawful, R.V. not possible, to communicate to them what he had seen and experienced, because what had been revealed to him was only natural - compatible, rather - with Divine Nature and perfection. The Lord Jesus through this dispensation thought to strengthen His great servant, so Paul was given a glorious Shapher, and at the same time Haradah, the 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Cor. 12.7), to bring pain, nausea, frustration, fear and trembling. "Lest", Paul says, "Lest I should be exalted above measure". This verse in many ways is the explanation of the mountain top - or, should we say "little hill" - interludes, and the rapid alternative, the valley of the shadow of fear and trembling.

So we can dismiss this short but eventful journey as the gravity of the spirit to maintain within us "the Spirit Level", or, as we may say, "the True Level of the Spirit".

Briefly, there are three kinds of fear for our own immediate purpose :

(1) 2 Kings 7.6-7 Fear of conviction, as when Syrian raiders panicked and fled, when "they heard a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even a great host", Bishop Hall comments.

(2) Judges 7.3 Fear of doubt. In the time of Gideon at the Well of Harod="En Harod" today, i.e. "the well of trembling". How apt is the name! Judges 7.3, "Let him that is fearful depart". 22,000 men took his advice. Cowardice in one sense, common sense in another, bravery in a third sense. Brave men, indeed, who can follow so unpopular a course. We remember the experiences of the Brotherhood during war time. "Moreh" in Judges 7 has been construed as "rebellion" and comes from a root meaning, amongst other things, "teacher, illustration", and we do have in Judges 7 a remarkably clear demonstration of the conditions prevailing and which came about because the teaching of the law of God had been rebelled against or put on one side, Lev.26.36 is the relevant passage of confirmation, the result of departing from God. So the words found in Haradah express quite clearly this event of the future. "When every man did what was right in his own eyes".

Read Geo. Adam Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land" to see the aptness of being aware of the scrutiny of Philistine patrols on this wall, and of the alertness of the 300 who finally were chosen. At least two kinds of alertness and fear must occupy us all the days of our life in Christ: (a) a constant fear in the sense of reverence and nearness of the Divine Presence, as we have already pointed out; (b) a constant awareness and fear of the enemy, a fear meaning to be aware of, as these men of Gideon demonstrated. We must never lower our sights from the enemy, nor put away our weapons to slake our thirst. Blind courage is no use to us, as Song 3.8 illustrates: (a) We must be able to defend our Lord with swords girded ready. Why? (b) For fear of the night (the Gentile night). We have to be fully aware of the deadly enemy, Sin. (c) The truth of the Word. (d) The upholding of the Faith. (e) The well-being of others in the Lord. (f) Our own personal standing in Christ. Let us strive, then, to

develop fully the mental and spiritual awareness as we daily face the Philistines, whose members are gathering around more than ever as the Day of the Lord approaches.

In many ways we occupy the place of the four lepers in 2 Kings 7.3-7. They were beset by death everywhere. (1) Death behind them in the city which they had left. (2) Death within them - in two forms, leprosy and hunger. (3) Death before them in the shape of the besieging army. We were all citizens of the city of death and have come forth a little way. Yet at many times in our lives we may find it but a little way out from the city of destruction, and may fall on the hard ground of unbelief, by looking back, as did Lot's wife. So we are altogether lost, naturally. Death behind us, before us, all around us, within us. How lost we were, and sometimes are now! - particularly if we sit down under it. But if, with the lepers, we say, "Why sit we here until we die?" and go forward as they did, we shall peradventure find that God has taken away the death that is before us (that is, eternally, of course). They obeyed the impulse to go forward. They found life or sustenance for the present. The four lepers = all the world surrounded by death, within, without and all around. "Here we have no continuing city", we are pilgrims, our lot is "outside the camp" (Heb. 13). We follow "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14.6) and, by so doing, we shall "eat and be satisfied", God willing, in the Kingdom with Christ (Rev. 3.20, Song 5.1).

Yes, Haradah also has its word of great comfort. Isa. 66.2, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and contrite and trembleth at My word". Heb. 5.5-8 informs us that it was Jesus who was "heard in that he feared". Isa. 66.2 "poor", Sept. equivalent, "absolutely destitute". Cp. poor beggar widow (Mark 12.41-44), Jesus Himself (2 Cor. 8.9). The widow poor financially, like her Master, but rich in spirit, as He. Generally poor in one's own estimation; an abject beggar in this sense. Why? Contrite. "Contrite" from "sapphir" or "sapphire", "to cut". The Word has cut into that man's heart and is cutting away the dross; consequently that man's sins hurt - a good description of contrition - he has realised his true position in the sight of God and therefore has a true regard and veneration for God's Word: the Word has entered into his belly and is effecting its cleansing work. Such an attitude ever becomes children of the Most High. Our greatest example is always the Son Himself. Psalm 40.6-10, "Thy law have I hid within my heart". When the cutting edge of the Word is working within us, then we feel the weakest, but under these conditions we are really the strongest, for God is working His will in us. If we fail to feel the sharp edge of God's scalpel within us, we are like the leper, dead while we live. We need to tremble greatly before the sharpness of the Word because God has "magnified it above His Name" (Psa. 138.2).

(3) Fear of conscientious service. Not to be confused with fear of doubt. Many times we must have said with Paul in 1 Cor. 2.3, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling". This is an honourable fear which conscientious service in the Lord brings to us all, but it must not be confused in any way with doubt. Compare 2 Cor. 7.15, and the glorious result of the trembling in the service of the Lord, insuring greater efficiency in preaching (2 Cor. 5.11, 2 Cor. 1.3-7). For further study there are twelve Old Testament passages where God declares that none shall make the truly Godly afraid: Lev. 26.6, Deut. 28.26, Job 11.19, Isa. 17.2, Jer. 7.33, Jer. 30.10, 46.27, Ezek. 34.28, 39.26, Micah 4.4, Nahum 2.11, Zeph. 3.13. In every instance the word is the root from which "Haradah" is derived.

A final word on the phase of fear we call Worry, which usually is divided between three factors, (1) partial faith, (2) idleness in the Lord's business, (3) our own nature. Look again at God's Word and blush with me as we note how many of the great men of Scripture worried over ills that never came. Gen. 32.13-23. Jacob cast into despondency, thinking, no doubt, of his own previous misdeeds and that Esau was coming against him in wrath. Later on he thought, Joseph "without doubt rent in pieces". Both fears were without foundation. In 1 Kings 19.1-10 we see Elijah worried because he thinks he is the only Godly man left upon the earth. God showed him that his distress was foolish; there were 7,000 in Israel alone who were faithful. David worried; Hezekiah, Jeremiah, the Disciples worried; so did Paul - so do we all. No doubt half the things we distress ourselves about never materialise, and maybe, if we are faithful, God will turn the other half to our eternal well-being. "Be ye not suspended between earth and heaven", said Jesus in a paraphrase of Luke 12.29-32, the operative word being, of course, "earth" - we cannot have our feet in both places. "Be not anxious overmuch", we exhort each other; because

Most of the things we worry about are in the hands of Christ as our Adonai (Lord), and our part is to be faithful servants. 1 John 4:18 says, "Perfect love casteth out fear", and although true perfection lies beyond our grasp in this life, yet it is not beyond our ken, and a hastening towards it is necessary. If we can be blameless now, maybe with Godly fear, we may hope for boldness in the day of judgment. Then shall we hear those blessed words of Rev. 1:17, "Fear not".

Numbers 33:25. Makeloth

What do we expect to issue out of the "Haradah situation" of trembling, fear, worry? Perhaps this following station will help us. "Makeloth," possibly means "religious assemblies". This conveys little to us on the surface, until we discover by way of other Scripture what apparently happened here. The ancient expositors and older generation of scholars think that Numbers 16 was enacted here. If that is so, we have a picture of (a) dissension, (b) rival assemblies, (3) contentions in the congregation, and (4) final disaster. What a terrible scene lies before us if this is true! There is no concrete way of proving this, for as in all this study, the application can only be suggestive or tentatively dogmatic; yet the elements of truth as seen here are revealed in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and this exposition expresses our personal conviction, as in all these studies. Way back three stations we saw the people in assembled worship at Kehelathah, a word which comes from the same root as this name Makeloth. But there is a vital difference. Kehelathah is singular; Makeloth is plural. The former presented all Israel in one assembly in harmonious worship. Here at Makeloth the unity has been broken and now there are more than one. The happenings which caused this rift are found in Numbers 16, and the other history of the journey appears to prove this, so we conclude the case proven. How different from the ideal picture of worship in Acts 2:1, "with one accord" and "in one place". We look around and witness the sorry state of ecclesial unity today - gone, if it ever existed. Kehelathah gone, and the state of Makeloth, plural, very evident. Some have left the fellowship to follow what they consider "the old paths", others are endeavouring to widen the scope of the One Way; others consider themselves to be "His Master's Household", "Inner Household", "Remnant" and the like. What do we see? Many units in isolation instead of many in one - "Berean", "Dawn", etc. Inter-ecclesial fellowship salvation? Not ecclesial, nor family, but individual we preach from our platforms, and as we view the situation around us individual it would appear, but what a tragedy! and yet how can it be otherwise until the Lord comes? In many cases we wholeheartedly concur doctrinally, but differ constitutionally. Apart from this - and we wonder - how much prejudice, personalities and so forth have helped to widen the gulf? Lethargy must take its place in the list also. Possibly in one way or another we all are guilty in this situation. What can we do to help at the least in our own ecclesia?

Let us take our Bibles first and see what frame of mind we should be in when approaching the Father in worship. Reverence or Godly fear is the first requisite. Hab. 2:20, "When the Lord is in His holy temple", then we must approach in the correct manner: "Let all the earth keep silence before Him", and that means us individually. Today the better behaved among us usually wait for the voluntary or ministering brethren to ascend the platform before our silence is acquired, others are not so bothered! The nearness of the presence of both Father and Son should have a very salutary effect upon us and give to us that hush and awe of expectancy that overlook Israel when the Lord was about to speak. Ecclesiastes says, "God is in heaven and thou on earth; therefore let thy words be few" (Ecc. 5:2). Probably you have thought it many times. When we come to meet before God we should keep silence before Him. The psalmist's sentiments should always be with us (Psa. 5:7), "In Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple". Jesus our Lord has, however, settled the matter for us, that is if His authority for us has not been undermined by modern thinking. See John 4:20-24, "they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". In the Greek, worship means to kiss the hand. It is a strong oriental expression containing the essence of reverence. It is to throw a kiss towards God. May this remain our constant attitude.

Our attitude towards each other. The words of Jesus sting our minds, "As we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12) and "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). The cold and implacable, unforgiving heart can neither receive any benefit nor bestow any,

particularly before the throne of grace. Psalm 133 can only be brought about by forgiving first of all as we hope to be forgiven. Ecclesial meetings today should be a type of future gatherings in the Kingdom. They are based on heavenly service before the Father, where only love can prevail. So it is incumbent on us to show love now. Phil. 3:20 says "our conversation (or citizenship) is in heaven" or "we are a commonwealth or colony of heaven" - what we do here should be a sample of life in the Kingdom of God. Matt. 8:11, sitting down in the Kingdom of God. "Many shall come and sit down". Goodly fellowship indeed. Five characteristics are observable here: (1) Holy fellowship. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob among the holy men of old (2 Pet. 1:21). It is our hope to be "blameless in holiness" at His coming (1 Thess. 3:13). (2) Multitudinous fellowship. Emphasised by the "many" (Rev. 7:9, Rev. 1:15). (3) Diversified fellowship, for which our thanks is owing to God. They shall come and sit down from Africa, Asia, England, U.S.A., from all countries, each different from the other. All shall be perfected (Luke 13:29). (4) Familiar fellowship. Each shall be known by name. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob; the identities of each one will be clear, of this there can be no doubt (1 Cor. 13:12, Matt. 8:11-12). (5) Unbroken fellowship. "Sit down". The meal we have seen to be Supper, the leisure meal; unhurried, familiar talk around convivial subjects. For those who reach that supreme goal, with Jordan crossed, the supper will indeed be glorified from every angle, the topics no doubt being the praise, glory and service of the Kingdom. In retrospect, too, we may review our past problems in Scripture and life in the light of the perfect knowledge of immortality. Will it be possible to feel foolish then? If so, possibly our hearts will burn within us, or rather glow in the warmth of the perfection of our God, His Word, His purpose, His Son, our Nature. We must be familiar with the Word now if we wish to find it in immortal familiarity in eternal fellowship. How wonderful it will be when we are no longer compelled by time to leave certain expositions in the Word to another day. "Tempus fugit" has always been a personal enemy; then there will be all eternity to enjoy the perfection of things Divine. (1) Word, (2) Purpose, (3) Divine Nature: these things are all held out to us in Matthew 8:11-12.

The five-fold fellowship - holy, multitudinous, diversified, familiar, unbroken - is to be forged in the fires of human experiment now, in our ecclesias, if we would belong to the ecclesia of the future age. They are the five essentials of unification, first of our own ecclesia, then of the ecclesias. Humility is essential, towards ourselves and towards others. Pride is like idolatry in worship (1 Sam. 15:23). The only wise thing Ahab is reported to have said was "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off" (1 Kings 20:11). Christ's first beatitude teaches humility (Matt. 5:3). Just before His death the teaching is similar (Matt. 23:2-12, John 13:4-17). Peter vividly remembered John 13 as 1 Pet. 4:1-6 reveals. Paul brought out a wonderful expression of humility in Jacob, "who bowed his head upon his staff in worship" (Heb. 11:21), as by patriarchal law Jacob was the most honourable and the greatest person present at that time. This reverential humility could only be directed at God.

Now finally to apply our findings to the suggestion that Makeloth was the site of the awful rebellion against God by Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the "Princes". This is the first indictment - they were leaders who should have been examples (1 Pet. 4:2-3, - which in itself savours of Numbers 16. All the elements are found here in cameo).

Study first of all, as always, the context - Numbers 16. For brevity's sake we mention three main points, matching our previous thoughts:

- (1) They sinned against God by denying to Him the reverence due to Him in worship. Num. 16:1-7.
- (2) They sinned against Moses and all Israel by an uncharitable spirit, and
- (3) Against God and themselves by pride and haughtiness.

So they broke the true laws of worship which we have outlined, and the terrible punishment which followed became their lot. Not only so, their deeds have been perpetuated down the ages as the darkest infamy and blasphemy (Jude 11).

Note the singular coincidence revealed in the meaning of their names :

- (a) Korah, lit. Ice or baldness - a figure of the hard spirit of unbelief which tends to harden the human heart, deny reverence to God and despoil the life of spiritual adornment.
- (b) Dathan - Narrow law or narrowness. The false spirit of uncharity, which seems to imitate but in reality opposes the law of the Spirit found in Christ Jesus, which sets us free from the law of sin and death.
- (c) Abiram - Father of evil or pride. The self-will that is so offensive in God's sight, exalting itself against Divine ways, and thus swallowing up humility in the process.

So the very names of the leaders of the fearful rebellion of Num. 16 contain hints which today divide fellowships, cleave ecclesias and bring untold miseries among us. Let us mark them, avoid them, try to remedy them, and pray for the day when the fivefold fellowship we have outlined will be revealed in glory. Such is the melancholy, pathetic, yet (to the eyes of faith) comforting story of Makeloth. For out of the assembly, the sons of Korah died not, and many wonderful servants of succeeding generations lived to serve God with willing hearts and contrite minds. Psalm 84 expresses the spirit of their service, particularly verse 10.

No doubt Israel were glad when the command to break camp and go forward came at Makeloth, and come it did, for Num. 33:26 reads, "They removed from Makeloth and encamped at Tahath".

What effect would come naturally in the experience of life, after the events at Makeloth, after seeing God's open judgments wreaked upon rebels? Num. 16:4 - "The people murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord" (Num. 16:30-37). The houses of the men that provoked the Lord had been swept away, and the two hundred men who offered strange incense. It was only by the prompt action of Eleazar removing the offending fire from out of the censers that Israel was spared. The people who murmured against Moses were in heart with Korah and the Princes, as Lot and his wife were in Sodom (Gen. 19). So God gave them their wish, and a further 14,700 followers of the rebellion died in the plague (God grants us our real heartfelt wishes either way).

What should we expect then from the remaining Israelites? Contrition, humility, fear? Probably there is no lesson that we have need to learn so frequently as humility. Israel, as we have seen throughout the journey, was taught it at every step, because it is foreign to our natural habits, entirely opposite in fact. Nor is it a thing we learn overnight with a lasting effect for all time. Rather is it a disposition of mind only brought about through constant correction and guidance under the rod of God.

After so sharp a lesson of the results of pride, contrition then is inevitable. What does Tahath mean? Just this - contrition, breaking - a fitting sequence to Makeloth. We can picture Israel making this traverse through a dreary, dry and thirsty wilderness, barren and arid. This would be bad enough, but with hearts sore, and consciences deeply troubled with their own sins, particularly those who had themselves been on the brink of being led away by the rebel cause. How many would understand the prompt action by Aaron, when he took a censer and ran down quickly amongst them, to make an atonement, and how it pointed forward unerringly to the Coming One, and His work in sacrifice and mediatorship? Let us hope not a few.

Tahath, then, means 'contrition'. Perhaps four thoughts regarding Biblical teaching may help us relate it to ourselves in rightly dividing this word:

- (1) Contrition's relation to sin, but with a proviso. Whilst contrition when genuine is an admirable trait, we should not wait until dire judgment has overtaken us, or others, before we manifest it, because we have seen how strongly God hates sin. We are not advancing that repentance issues from, but rather that an element of faith should find its place in, contrition. It has been said that "our fear of self should be linked with holy confidence in God".

The Divine goodness should lead us to repentance as it led the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1.9) and thousands of others to favour with the Most High. How many, do we think, have assumed contrition and accepted the Truth because of fear? How many may have been dragooned into the Truth through fear of the coming Judgment? Contrition, not contrived, but blended with faith in God, must be part of our spiritual character. The Old Testament uses two very strong words to express "contrition". One means "to be smitten". Isa. 66.2. We have already used this verse in regard to "trembling". "Poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word". Here the word for "smitten" is rendered "contrite". This heart had been smitten; consequently this man's sins hurt. He was therefore alive to God. When sins cease to hurt and smart, we are lost; spiritual leprosy will have done its dastard work; as Paul puts it, "dead in sins", "past feeling". The second word used for "contrite" means "to be bruised". Psalm 34.18. "The Lord saveth such as be of a contrite spirit". Isa. 57.15. "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones". Psalm 51.17. "A broken and contrite heart, O Lord, Thou wilt not despise". The Hebrew word here for "broken" is a very beautiful one. It is the root of our word "shivered" - broken to atoms, in modern parlance. Man can split the atom and do wonderful things today, but when thinking of the hardened heart of unbelief we see he is as far away as ever. The majesty of the power of God is resident in His Word and revealed to us by Paul in "Ephesians". This is the power that raised Jesus from the dead. Compare four Greek words for complete expression of power and might: Eph. 1.18-20, "dunamis" (dynamite), "exceeding greatness of His power - - "energia" (energy), "working of His mighty power" - - "kratos" (might), "He wrought in Christ" - - "ischus" (strength), "set Him at His own right hand". Here we have envisaged, so far as human reasoning and language can go, all the expression of powered might at God's command. It certainly brings contrition to us when we realise that all this concentration of devastating might is necessary to "shiver" one's own hardened heart. Such persuasive force is found in the "Word of His might", which, as Jeremiah found (Jer. 23.29), is "like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces, and which, as Isaiah declares (55.11) "shall not return unto God void" or empty, but always accomplishes that to which it is sent". So in vivid language we have the impression of Psalm 51.17 - the impact of the Word has "shivered" the heart to atoms, leaving it "bruised", as we saw in Haradah. Such a heart would be completely emptied of itself, because so broken that it could contain nothing. And the supreme object of that psalm is none other than Jesus Himself. Yes, remember that for our sakes our iniquities were laid upon Him. But He is the file leader (Heb. 12) and we follow with heart "shivered" by the Word of God.

- (2) Contrition in relation to humility. The thoughts differ only slightly, although we are apt to think of contrition and humility in two very different senses. We speak of contrition as a Christian virtue and loosely use the word "humility" as representing the necessary feeling of an aroused impenitent person, and quite easily fall into error because of this contrast. Is not contrition simply that humility which results from a strong sense of sin? If so, then it is as much a Christian grace as a necessity for the impenitent. Taking our Bible again for a lead, we find that contrition and humility are constant and interchangeable. Here is a series of passages for further study where the two ideas are linked together. Deut. 8.2, 21.14, 22.24-29, Psalm 35.13, Dan. 5.22, Luke 14.11, 2 Cor. 12.21, 2 Kings 22.19, 2 Chron. 8.14, Ex. 5.13, Jer. 13.18, Lev. 26.41, Col. 3.12, 1 Pet. 5.6. The passage in John 13.1-10 is a reminder that we require a daily washing away of evil - taking us back to Rameses ("washing away of evil"). All boasting on our part should be excluded. Further, 1 John 1.7 - literally, "if we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing us constantly from sin". When this knowledge truly penetrates

into our consciousness, that the constant watchfulness and ministration of Christ is necessary, then a feeling of sadness, of contrition, fills our thoughts and we realise our frailty. Then this knowledge mingles with our praise and thanksgiving when we acknowledge the application of the blood of Christ. Let us with 1 Pet. 5:5 "tie on humility as a garment" as Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the feet of His disciples, and, as He did, "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He might exalt us in due season" (verse 6).

- (3) The relation of contrition to the Divine mercy. This should by no means be forgotten. We may note Ezekiel's teaching under this heading, three passages which teach that Israel should be led to contrition through the mercy of God: Ezekiel 6:10, 20:42-43, and 36:29-31. It has been said that the mercies of God at Jerusalem shall do what all the judgements at Babylon could not accomplish. Our Bible shows that this has always been the case in principle. The same writer said: "Study the lives of the patriarchs and see how they loathed sin because they loved God's smile". We could go through the whole list, but give only a brief selection: Moses, in the whole of Deuteronomy; Job 40:4, 13:6, etc: David in the psalms which bear his name: see also 2 Sam. 12:3; Mark's Gospel (revealing the directive of Peter, who describes his own faults vividly); and Paul, who was ever a pioneer in contrition. His own faults are very sharply drawn in Romans 7, which is a superb citation of the constant battle waging within himself. Victory was never altogether his, and sometimes, to his chagrin, complete defeat was. In Acts 22:3-20 we have his own vivid description of the fanatical zeal for the Law which possessed him before his conversion, which brought upon him lifelong contrition, although he knew he was guilty of no one's blood. Many other examples will be known to the reader: David's love melted Saul's heart; Christ's reproachful look brought Peter's flood of tears; and so on. To continue this line of study is a very heart-searching exercise. It is never, as some put it, "cold exposition". Proper exposition or exegesis is never cold, and, if undertaken in the consciousness of the Divine warmth and love, it will ever do for us in measure what Christ did on the Emmaus walk, when He made the hearts of the favoured two glow within them. Exposition is only cold when a cold heart speaks out of a cold nature, a heart not "shivered" by God's grace. All exposition of Scripture, no matter where it is undertaken, should have a practical, personal and spiritual basis; again we emphasise, no matter where it is undertaken. What more barren ground could we possibly have found than in Numbers 33? Yet how full of Divine grace and love it has proved to be! What spiritual lessons have confronted us! -- so far almost every department of spiritual truth has enthralled us. All exposition, we believe, should bear on this axis. The Word is warmth, it is life, it has reference not to the dead but to the living; so said Jesus to His critics. Let us follow His directive and see live, warm, practical, spiritual exposition. As we react to this Word, so the Word will apply to us. If we find this Word dead, cold, etc., our exposition will be chilled. It is because we are so by nature.

A final thought on Tahath ("Contrition"). We are told that Homer used the Greek word for "mourning" as the passionate cry of the parent birds when robbed of their young. In Ezekiel 7:16 mourning for iniquity is compared to the plaintive and melancholy notes of the doves of the valley. In Zech. 12:10 we read, "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for his first-born". Notice how the scale of mourning has mounted; no longer that of birds but the grief of broken-hearted parents. When it really comes home to us that OUR sins were just as much responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus as were those of the Jews, then contrition, humiliation, will never be far from us. We have the expert counsel of Jesus in Matt. 11:29 plus personal application and fellowship when He says, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall

find rest unto your souls". May this station of Tahath ever lead us to such convictions, to be contrite and humble before God.

Tarah Numbers. 33. Among the many blessings that we have in the Lord is the assurance that "He knoweth our frame" and that none of us is tried above the limit of endurance. A way out will be found to ease the strain. Sometimes it is far different from the one we would have chosen, but the ways of the Lord are infinitely higher than our finite gropings. "Not my will, but Thine, be done" is the attitude of the family of God.

Israel had left the last two stations under considerable stress. The rebellion of Korah had left them absolutely "shivered", so to speak, and Tahath had reflected the contrition which had been their lot ever since. "So they removed from Tahath and pitched at Tarah", Num. 33:27. What has Tarah to teach us? In the earlier stages when their journey could have been delineated as a pilgrimage, before their terrible wandering in the wilderness of Paran had come as a punishment for unbelief at Hazereth - in these early days God had granted them respite and refreshment from the severity of their thirst at Elim of the seventy palm trees and twelve fountains of water (Num. 33:9). In our opening words on Tarah we conveyed the hint that maybe the Infinite God would grant them respite from their hardships at Tarah. Was this the case? But of Tarah we have no description save what the name itself conveys; that is (among other things) "breathing and "respite". Tarah proved to be a second Elim to Israel, the stress temporarily was eased and their agitations soothed.

"Tarah" = "Breathing", a respite indeed from the terrible heat and dryness of the desert. This is the very essence of refreshment in a parched wilderness. Was this "breathing" only physical? We are often grateful for what is known as a "breathing space", when one can recuperate from an awkward position. We shall see that this was the case at Tarah in a very particular aspect. At Tahath we saw Israel deeply humbling themselves before God. Again in one short verse we see a merciful transition from contrition to respite. How wonderful: the Divine mercy never sulks, never hides unnecessarily; once the lesson is learned and heeded, the smile of the Father returns to comfort His children. Paul has it in 2. Cor. 7:10 that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of". They had cast themselves down in repentance and now God had lifted them up. Not one Israelite repented of the step that led him to Tarah! How about the sons of Korah, who died not in the rebellion? What was their particular feeling at this time? It is not a common experience to lose parents and relatives and thousands of our compatriots due to the sedition of one's parents. It again appears obvious that these sons of Korah had no part or lot with their father in the rebellion, otherwise they, too, would have perished. But now they are marked men among the congregation of Israel, at least in their own hearts and consciences, for their father had been instrumental in causing the death of all those people. Would it not be possible for this respite and breathing space to have been granted primarily for the sons of Korah, to heal their sore hearts and minds? We would like to think that this was so. We notice that Tarah and Terah are the same words in Hebrew. Terah, as we know, was the father of Abraham and the link between the two names gives us another vital viewpoint of Tarah. Gen. 12 records the calling out of Abram by God, but it is in Gen. 11:31 that we find what really took place concerning his exodus from Ur of the Chaldees. Gen. 12:1 is what God had said, Gen. 11:31 is what actually happened at that time. Three things were commanded by God in Gen. 12:1 - (1) Abram should leave his own country, (2) Separate himself from his kindred, (3) Go forth unto the land which God had promised to show him. No. 1 Abram obeyed, Nos. 2 and 3 he failed to obey. Instead of leaving his kindred behind, Abram had with him Terah and Lot, his nephew. It would appear that the impetus at this time was actually in Terah, not Abram. "Terah (like "Tarah") means "delay" and thus it proved. They travelled to Haran and Abram stayed there until Terah died, resulting in a "delay" of at least five years in carrying out God's call. Incidentally, the very name of Haran reveals the experience. It means "parched" or "dry", from the Hebrew root "to be dry, to kindle, to burn". Psa. 69:4, Prov. 26:21, Job. 30:20. Haran was close to the desert, without water and scorched by the sun. This kind of tarrying and delay cannot conform to a respite; all the elements point to a withdrawal of the water of life and the disfavour of God in the searching rays of the sun (Lam. 4:8 and context). This kind of tarrying we must try to avoid at all costs.

The Bride of the Song had undergone this harrowing experience, as she says in Song 1:6. Note the elements in this verse, particularly re natural relationships and the tie that must be broken. So in the case of Abram and Terah, and of Abram and Lot, before acceptable service could be maintained.

Finally, in our Tarah station teaching we find that along with the "breathing" is an idea of "smelling" and, more generally, the perception of spiritual things through the senses. We think of Isa. 11:1-5 once again (and the teaching of an earlier station) concerning which it is said of Jesus, "the spirit of the Lord shall make him of quick understanding (margin, "scent") in the fear of the Lord". The word "scent" is the translation of a Hebrew word derived from "tarah" and sets forth the quick spiritual perception with which Christ was endowed. He knew what was in man. He did not "Judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears". Think, too, of the psalmist's description of Him, "All Thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia" Ps. 45:8). His very cheeks are said to be banks of flowers (Song 5:13). This is a deep blessing which is to be found for all pilgrims at Tarah. Quick scent of the fear of the Lord, of the joy of the Lord - this station was brimful of it. Note Isaiah's usage of these places to bring forth the refreshment of Divine truth (Isa. 35:6-7). The "parched ground" of verse 7 is, literally, the "serab"; i.e. the "mirage of the desert". The rather quaint meaning is, "this unsubstantial semblance of water shall become a real pool". How this could apply to the sons of Korah, contrition and sorrow turned to permanent peace and refreshment?

Is it not a significant fact that Christ's first miracle was turning water into wine? Water was a type of sorrow - in tears it was shed, in penitence it was poured out before the Lord. Wine has always been a type of joy. Psa. 104:15, Song 1:2, Isa. 25:6, Zech. 10:7. Did this station so exercise the sons of Korah that henceforth their service was to be exemplary before God, as their future history revealed? and as Psalm 84:10, etc. sang (compare the superscription of this psalm), "A psalm for the sons of Korah".

Let us view Tarah in the light of Heb. 5-15 and strive to graduate in the "strong meat" of the Word and be found in "full age" mature in mind, having our "senses exercised to discern between good and evil", deeply breathing in this Word of the spirit. It is no mirage, this journey; both actually and spiritually it is no pipe dream, but absolute truth and fact. Shall we not, then, "come aside and rest awhile"? May it ever be at Tarah, and not at Haran, and may our future attitude and service before God emulate the sons of Korah, who died not.

Numbers. 33:28. Mithcah

Time to march again. The advance has been sounded. What lies ahead for Israel, what sorrows and joys? How often these are our thoughts as we awake to a new day, or commence a journey, or when we are about to be married, and always when we are baptised into Jesus! Not that our faith is impaired in any way, but just that we are curious, excited and a little afraid that our own efforts may be inadequate. What lay ahead for Israel at Mithcah, the next station? The name itself gives us a gracious answer. Mithcah means "sweetness". Early in this journey Israel had been led to Marah (Bitterness). Now they are led to Mithcah, which is Sweetness. There was a long weary journey between the two stations, but incidentally between the two words in Ex. 15:25 the interval is very narrow. The word from which "Mithcah" is taken occurs in this verse, where it is said that a tree was cast into the waters of Marah (Bitterness) and they became sweet (Mithcah). Such is the beauty of God's Word. Mithcah is the antidote to Marah, both literally and figuratively. What a glorious transition, so quick in action at Marah literally, and as far as the Divine mind goes such is the immediate effect. But many weary miles sometimes are trekked full of experiences both in the "height" and in the "depth", before the sweetness of Mithcah is appreciated by us in its fulness. In fact, the varied teaching of the stations we have traversed is necessary to our appreciation. Our lives must be sweetened by sacrifice or else they will run sour. Only the living sacrificial way of Christ can do this, when we carry our cross daily as He did.

As we have seen, Mithcah is the antidote to Marah, both literally and figuratively. They who stand on the sea of glass in Revelation 15:2 remember no more the great

tribulation out of which they have come. Israel and the Christian are freed from the terrors of "Haradah" and the contrition of Tahath. The bitterness of Marah will no more discomfort them when they come to the sweetness of Mithcah. How many times on our own particular journey have we been led to large places (Psa.31.8) of "praise" and "breathing" and to stations of sweetness where the desert is forgotten. Our God is a God of compassion and mercy.

It has been thought possible that the incidents recorded in Numbers 17 occurred at this station. If so, then a double significance and beauty will be given to the secret locked within the name. Num.17.5 - God is anxious to remove the murmurings of Israel entirely. He will give to them another sign calculated to do just this, and show to the people once again whom He had chosen from Israel to approach unto Him as High Priest of the people. We remember the narrative. The rod of each tribe was placed before the Ark of the Testimony and God made His choice in the fact that the almond rod of Aaron budded and brought forth blossom and yielded almonds (Num.17.8). Picture the miracle - life came out of death; beauty out of black and commonplace sap entered into sapless fibre; sweetness came forth. The whole conception of resurrection glory. If we unite this thought alongside Mithcah, making Marah sweet, and that by the death of Christ, the work of redemption is clearly before us here. No wonder this place was called "Mithcah", "sweetness". No wonder this rod was kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Heb.9.4) as a testimony against any further murmurings. No wonder it became a symbol of strength and miraculous blessing (Psa.110.2, Ezek.19.12-14).

Mithcah is used in Scripture in many ways: (a) applied to natural bodies that are sweet to the taste, as figs (Judges 9.11), (b) physical enjoyments, as the sleep of a labouring man (Ecc.5.12), (c) in a bad sense - "the pleasures of secret sin" (Prov. 9.17), (d) covers also high and noble enjoyments which we may covet. Study carefully the following in which the root word occurs: Judges 14.18, Neh.8.10, Rom.16.24, Eccles.9.2, Song 2.3, Isa.5.20, Job 21.33.

There are seven particular things which strike us as we think of the sweetness of Mithcah, (1) Counsel. True counsel is sweet either from man or from God. Psalm 55.4. "We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company". Prov.16.21, "The wise in heart shall be called prudent and the sweetness of the lips increaseth leaning". Where the counsel of God is sought by those who seek to enter into His house, and our particular friend is blessed in wisdom and judgment, how happy we are, always remembering the Best Friend of all, "who sticketh closer than a brother", Jesus our Lord.

(2) Meditation. "My meditation of Him shall be sweet" (Psalm 104.34) was the psalmist's cry. We suppose to a pure and godly mind there can be no solitude from this angle. God is always present; we can always surround ourselves with this spiritual "sweetness". The experience of Prov.3.13-24 is born out of meditation. The godly man shall never walk alone because the law of his God shall keep his way in safety (23), even in sleep (24) when he is most isolated his sleep shall be sweet.

(3) The Word. Psalm 119.103. The psalmist understood what sweetness is and does not hesitate to say, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste. Yea, sweeter than the honeycomb ." "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips, I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food", Job declared (Job 23.12).

The sweetness is truly discerned in John 6.35, etc. "Jesus said unto him, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" - and we are back again at Mithcah in Ex.15. Is this Word more to us than our necessary food? or does the seeking for the food of natural existence occupy all our thoughts?

(4) Judgments. "Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb", says David, "are the judgments of the Lord" (Psa.19.10). Jesus brought this scripture to its focal point when He said in Gethsemane, "Not my will but Thine be done" (Luke 22.42) - truly the judgments of God are sweet to the one who can say that. This must be our approach if we are children of God.

(5) Believing. "Peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13). It is when we have accepted the foregoing points that we are brought to this conclusion. A trust in each other, based on the Word, centred in Jesus and sent from the Father. May we partake of the sweetness of childlike trust in God that makes everything else seem trivial.

(6) Communion. Luke 24:32. "Did not our heart burn within us while He opened to us the Scriptures?", said the two disciples at Emmaus. "Burn" means to boil, to be boiling hot. Rev. 3:15, "I would thou wert hot" - Another translation says, "their hearts glowed" - obtainable only on one prescription. The sweetness of counsel enjoyed in the company of Jesus around the Scriptures of Truth. This is the finest tonic obtainable for the present malady of lukewarmness. Let our journey through this wilderness be sweetened by the same medicine of the Spirit. There is no lack of supply.

(7) The love of God. Truly this is sweet (Jer. 31:3). The Word to Israel was: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee". God's word to us: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Compare Song 1:1-4. "O taste and see that the Lord is good". Cheer our journey by opening our hearts to the love of God as seen in Mithcah, because we have there the sweetness of the Word. So from the respite and "breathing" of Tarah and the sweetness of Mithcah we take our leave with reluctance. What awaits us now?

Numbers 33:29. Hashmonah

We are now coming to Mount Hor. We note in Numbers 18 and 19 that Aaron, the high priest, becomes the central figure, taking precedence even over Moses in the picture. Num. 20:22-29. On this mountain Aaron must die; so it would appear that Aaron must figure largely in the narrative. Numbers 18 has to do with the charge of the Levites, their portions, and so on. The law for the maintenance of the priest is to be declared and so God speaks directly to Aaron. Hitherto He had spoken mostly through Moses, but Aaron was now coming into close and intimate relation with the Lord. All his envy of Moses had been put away. No doubt the deaths of Nadab and Abihu were still with him personally, if not ceremonially, which was forbidden. God had vindicated him in the rod that had budded. He was being prepared for Mount Hor and for handing over the responsibility to his son Eleazar, just as Moses was later prepared for Joshua to take over from him at Mount Nebo. The end of the journey was near for both now; their great burdens were to be given to others. No doubt each had advanced in maturity. Both hearts would desperately long to go over Jordan, but the idea was simply not possible from a physical standpoint either. They had to die in the wilderness for their misdemeanour at Meribah. This was also typical: the Law could make nothing perfect. Joshua alone along with Eleazar could take the people over Jordan. The Law could point the way, but it was only a shadow of good things to come, as we know. After all, the Law condemned Jesus. So Aaron takes his final briefing, that he might withal prepare for the priesthood after his death, so that the warfare of the priesthood might continue. A great lesson for all servants of the Lord in high places - that they find and brief younger servants who can carry on after their own demise. This exhortation is not always heeded. It is remarkable that while Jesus was, as it were, receiving His last briefing before Gehenna, when He was sorrowful unto death, that there was a commotion amongst His disciples, "who should be greatest in the coming Kingdom", and the hasty numbering amongst them at this time would seem to be between Peter and John. How significant then is Hasmonah, which means, literally, "a hasty numbering". It also carries with it the meaning of being opulent, fat, rich. The station would be very impressive to Israel at this time.

This "haste" was apparently not caused by fear of nearness of the enemy, but of "presumption", which could account for the opulence and riches. Scholars tell us that the word contains the idea of chaffing talk, of loud boasting, of pleasurable bantering which a company of soldiers might engage in before battle in which success was assured. It was the boasting of "him who girds on his armour", the sarcastic challenge of self-sufficiency (1 Sam. 17) which Goliath hurled at David. Once again the heart of Israel was made proud by the refreshment of the last two stations. They revolted against God and took a census of the forces at their command - with a view to fighting their own way

into Canaan? How often does privilege lead to presumption. People who are privileged with help in ecclesial and private life abuse it and presume upon those who give. It is an everyday evil that besets us and ought to be firmly discouraged. Relief funds are more than a ready prey for such methods, and we do well to heed the apostolic warning issued by Paul in 1 Tim. 5 and 2 Thess. 3.10-13 (see Hall notes on Epistles to the Thessalonians).

How vividly have we seen all along the unevenness of Israel's life, now up, now down, in constant change! But how do we fare? Are our feelings any more firm, our sentiments any more steady? Our course any more constant?

Marah leads to Elim. Mithcah has led to Hasmonah. Three lessons clearly emerge: (1) By all means avoid presumption. (2) Let not despair drive us to it. (3) Let not privilege lead us to it, as it did to Israel at Hasmonah. We remember that David numbered the people presumptuously and God destroyed 70,000 of the people to humble him (2 Sam. 24): albeit they had not the half-shekel of redemption. Gideon, as we have seen, might have boasted in the number of his army, and God taught him that 300 willing and active ones alone were to be chosen (Judges 7.6). All this pointed back to Hasmonah, where Israel sinned by numbering the people. Let us constantly return in memory to the same spot.

Concerning presumption, study the following: Psa. 75.5, Isa. 3.16, Prov. 17.19, Job 38.12, Hos. 5.6, 2 Pet. 2.18, Jude 19, Ezek. 16.

Another lesson is to avoid hasty estimates. Carefully note what Paul has to say on this subject in 2 Thess. 3. The same principle should be applied in all matters of estimate, whether the pleasures and promises of the world, or, by contrast, the joy of the Lord and promise of the Kingdom. Of persons, seek to know them thoroughly before passing an estimate upon their characters. Paul was very emphatic over this. See 2 Thess. 3.14 - "note" here means to watch carefully over a period, not make a snap judgment. Much careful estimation is necessary in the Truth in these days and in every department, doctrine, deportment, practice. We are in the third generation - always dangerous in ecclesial history; the tendency is always to fall away. True godly estimation of these things must be ours in these days of danger for the Truth of God. Still another lesson is the folly of hasty estimation of the day of Christ's return. "No man knoweth the day or the hour", said Jesus, and well it is that we do not; we should all tend to delay our real efforts in the Lord until the latest possible moment. Paul again revealed the natural tendency among us regarding this point (1 Thess. 4.5). The signs are clear that we are in the times of the imminent return of the Lord. Much unnecessary wrangling has taken place about the exact day. A fair estimation of it as far as we are concerned is that we are only two seconds away from it - one second to die, and (as there is no time-lag in death - in fact, Adam is only one second away from the Return), one second for the Return. By all means let us study all Scripture and each subject as it comes, but let us keep all in balance. Dates are very important obviously in Scripture, but not for our hasty estimation, which may lead to presumption. If we live this moment and all our time as if Christ's return were upon us, then we can leave the "times and seasons" in the Father's hand (Acts 1.7). He is the wonderful "Numberer" (Dan. 8.12). Let us leave the matter with Him. We are commanded to watch. This implies that as far as we are concerned the time of the Lord's return is uncertain. We do not know the day nor the hour. The Song of Solomon would appear to indicate the time of the year, perhaps (2.7-16, and the state of Israeli affairs, but who may presume with impunity?).

Hashmonah would teach us of the maturity of our life in Christ as it draws near to its close in this "day of small things" and rebuke in us hasty presumption in all things. Paul again helps, "Let your moderation be known unto all men" - Why? - "The Lord is at hand". At hand to watch our actions, and at hand in His coming. Two seconds to zero for all of us.

Numbers 33.30 Moseroth

So from the station of presumption through privilege Israel took their way and encamped at Moseroth. Light and shade, depth and height, affliction and joy, have been our lot during the journey so far. So the Christian life is an alternation between
shade

and light, and so forth. Affliction has largely followed among the stations where Israel tarried. Three things should be noted to view these happenings in their correct focus: (1) There was not one station more than was needed. (2) There was not one without a cause in their conduct. (3) There was not one which was not matched by a station where God showed His face in mercy and favour to His wandering children. It has been truly said that in these circumstances the shadows but proved the strength of the light. The chastisement became an evidence of the Fatherly love. In Moseroth, our present station, we have all these elements portrayed in the word and its roots.

Moseroth = "bonds", "chastisements" or "instructions". Again this follow-up of Moseroth after the lessons of Hashmonah is very instructive. Israel had been punished for their sin of hasty numbering. Why? Because they were to be instructed in the "chastening of the Lord". For further enlightenment see Psa 94:12, "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord", and Prov. 29:15, "The rod and reproof give wisdom". "Chastenest" and "reproof" are from the same Hebrew root as "Moseroth". We have no hint as to what disobedience brought this further chastening. Two things are plain, however. It was their own doing, and it was equally expressive of the Father's love. It is truly instructive that the word "Moseroth" means either "chastening" or "instructions", for the Divine connection imparts true knowledge to those who are exercised thereby (Heb. 12: 5-11); yes, knowledge of God, of the Divine Law, of sin and its punishment.

To get an insight into the idea contained in the root word from which Moseroth comes, look carefully into the following passages, in all of which it occurs:

(1) Translated "bonds" or "bond". Job 12:18. "He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle". Psalm 116:16, "I am Thy servant and the son of Thy handmaid" or bondmaid". "Thou hast loosed my bonds". Jer. 5:5, 2:2, 30:8, Ezek. 20:37, Nahum 1:13. Note that "Asriel" is from the same connection, which means "a joining of God", "God has bound together", "vow of God". We note how the truth of this word Asriel and the teaching of the root words are "bound together". "Bound together" are chastening and knowledge, instruction and experience. The wisdom of God has "bound them together" in mercy and love that we might be exercised thereby.

(2) Translated "chasten" or "chastisement". "The chastisement of the Lord" (Deut. 11:2). "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord" (Job 5:17). "The chastisement of my reproach", Job. 20:3, 34:21, Prov. 3:11 (contrast with Heb. 12:5-6 and note the Pauline change in tenses, "the Son in whom the Father delighteth"), Prov. 13:24, Isa. 26:16, 53:5, Jer. 30:14.

(3) Translated "instruction". "He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction" (Job 33:16). "Seeing thou hatest instruction and castest My words behind thee" (Psa. 50:17). Jer. 17:23, 32:33, 35:13, Ezek. 5:15, Zeph. 3:7. Beside these, the word is used in Proverbs 24 times and translated "instruction". The New Testament has a word "paiduo" (Greek) used in Heb. 12:5-6 and frequently containing the same ideas of chastisement and instruction, as in 1 Cor. 11:32, "But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord" - note the reason "that we should not be condemned with the world".

The two ideas of Asriel, "chastisement" and blessing "bound together" in the Lord: 2 Cor. 6:9, 2 Tim. 3:16, Rev. 3:9, Heb. 12:1-11. We find all the aspects, ten in all, which treat this subject of Moseroth and the reason for it. "Paiduo" is the word in question, meaning "child" or "boy", showing that, if chastisement and instruction are implied as being necessary in the right development of every child so are they needed in the education of the child of God. Such is the teaching of the Moseroth station, upon which we may ask to what extremes must this go. Perhaps our next station will answer.

Number 33:31 Bene-jaakan. We are not left in any doubt at all, for this name signifies, "the children of great tribulation", from the Hebrew word meaning "to press or to squeeze, as a cart is pressed that is heavy laden". Amos 2:3, "as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves". Psalm 55:3, "because of the oppression of the wicked".

this name has again revealed the thoughts of Israel. They called themselves 'the children of great pressure' or 'tribulation' in the midst of the chastisement of the Lord. Jesus Himself sees the analogy in His own afflictions, Luke 12.50, "but I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straightened ('pressed' or 'afflicted') till it be accomplished". The same idea and the same Greek word are found in Acts 18.5, where Paul is "pressed in the spirit" wishing to testify to Christ. Again in 2 Corinth. 6.12 the Corinthians are said to be 'straightened' or 'pressed' in their kind affections for him. Another Old Testament usage of this same Hebrew word is 'straitened' (Job 18.7, Prov. 4.12, Ezek. 13.6, Micah 2.7). We notice that in Deut. 10.6 this station is called Beeroth Bene-jaakan, which means "the wells of the children of the wrestler" (another translation of "Jaakan"). When we realise that Jaakan was descended from Seir the Horite (1 Chron. 1.38-42) and that Hor's descent is traced back to Esau (Gen. 36), then we can be in no doubt of the great pressure and tribulation envisaged at the Bene-jaakan station, the wrestling of Esau and Jacob - not at Jabbok (Gen. 32), for that was with an angel, although Jacob thought it was with his brother. No, the whole wrestling of these brethren is in focus, all down the ages. The profane against the true belief is a great tribulation all round. Seir is one of the words for 'devil', 'hairy' (as Esau), 'goat', 'satyr', all going back to that mighty hunter and apostate, Nimrod (Gen. 10.9). So God indicated in the locale that surrounded these wells that presumption and profaneness as seen in Esau, slandering as in Seir, and apostasy, unbelief and arrogance as seen in Nimrod, had brought about this great pressure and tribulation, and the fact that Israel had to dwell here and to drink of the wells must have afflicted and pressed them sorely. This is what happens today if we allow these principles to direct our ways. In the margin of 1 Chron. 1 we detect that Jaakan is only another name for Achan, the man who troubled Israel by his disobedience at Jericho. Yes, we too are distracted by the goodly Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold; whis is another way to attract to ourselves yet more severe 'pressings'. We too have to erect our tent at Beeroth Bene-jaakan and drink of the wells of affliction, and, as "Hor" means "cave-dweller", we have to dwell in the cave of humiliation. Again we have outlined in graphic detail both the cruel pressings and tribulations which await us if we follow out this course in our lives, and the way in which they are borne home to us.

A final lesson from this depressing station is to be gathered ere we leave, and that is that it is necessary for God to add one station of affliction to another in order to drive the lesson home and to bring us to a proper humility. Moseroth proved insufficient for Israel, and it is often insufficient for us; we must be led to deeper sorrows and more telling chastening. "It never rains but it pours", we lament. Paul speaks of "sorrows upon sorrows" but thanks God. He also speaks of abundant grace. When afflictions are deepening and when they are the afflictions of the Gospel, and not due to our own foolishness, let us remember that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth", and when under the most severe tests, let us remember that the fire is sent not in cursing but in blessing, as in the promise of Isaiah 48.10 (margin), "behold, I have refined thee, but not for silver: I have chosen thee in the fire of affliction". Although the common idea of pressure or crushing runs through all the world's thought of affliction, yet the word "tribulation" in fact contains the simile of threshing asunder by the strokes of the flail the grains of wheat and separating them from the chaff. So under the rod of tribulation the wholesome graces of character are brought to the light and the refuse is left to be scattered to the winds. We remember the wine of life at the Breaking of Bread, but this implies the crushing of many ripened grapes and the outflowing of the mingled richness, as it was found in Jesus. All of these things should be constant reminders of the pressing sorrows through which God at Bene-jaakan led His people to the "peaceable fruit of righteousness".

Numbers 33:32. Hor-hagidgad. Israel would be glad to hear the command to advance and be happy to rid themselves of an evil place and its associations. Whither now? would be in their minds as they marched. Hor-hagidgad was the answer. What awaited them there? and what lessons does it hold for us who follow hard on their heels in spirit, we who have been tremendously impressed by the existing close analogy between their experience and our own? Moses was on comparatively new ground in these valleys that lay around Mount Hor. They apparently made a deep impression upon him. Aaron had run his course; the demise of Miriam, his sister, was near; and ere long Nebo would witness his own decease. The mountains of Midian were well known to him; forty years he had spent in their confines. The territory would be familiar to him around Dophkah. Had Moses in his early years visited this penal camp, we wonder? Alush and Rephidim had been his own ground. But just imagine eighty years spent in the desert, forty as a fugitive from Pharaoh's wrath and forty leading this stiff-necked people whom he loved; and all but two of this forty were spent under the wrath of the Lord (Psa. 90:9). If this was so, then Moses was forty years old when he fled into Midian, because he was 120 years old when he died (Deut. 34:7). 3 x 40 in numerology reveals to us a complete probation. (1) Moses had a generation of experience in authority and leadership in Pharaoh's household; (2) a generation in discipline and exile in the land of Midian away from his own; (3) a generation of national leadership in which the fruits of the two previous generations would be of undoubted benefit: and, amidst all the pathos of his death on "this side of Jordan", Deut. 34:7 gives us a very emphatic picture of the result of this probation physically - "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated". Moses had won through his probation; nothing was impaired, it had done its complete work in him. So it is our hope that, when our probation is finished, that three-fold 40 may indicate our spiritual condition in Christ; and that when Station No. 42 is attained, indicating that our training is ended, we may be a renewed generation awaiting the signal to cross over Jordan.

However this may be, we are still at Hor-hagidgad. Can we see in Deut. 9:24-29, 10:1-7 what Moses felt and suffered during this period of the journey? (1) Hashmonah and the hasty numbering of the people (Deut. 9:24). (2) What Moses did at Mosereth? (Deut. 9:25). (3) Description of how God had led them into deeper affliction and tribulation at Bene-jaakan (Deut. 10:6). (4) How they came to Gudgodah, which is another form of Hor-hagidgad (Deut. 10:7, Num. 33:32). What then does Hor-hagidgad mean? For two stations we have had the subject of Divine chastisement before us. Here the iron really enters into their souls, and Israel are made to suffer still more severe afflictions, for Hor-hagidgad means, "a narrow passage of great affliction" - naturally, some narrow defile similar to the one in which the approach to Petra is made, a place where disaster seems to loom up. The Syriac form of the word means, "the eye of a needle" and immediately the reason becomes clear. Keeping the words of Jesus in mind in Matt. 19:24, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God", we grasp the idea that the "eye of the needle" had been well-known to Israel. They had had their experience at Hor-hagidgad, as they passed through the narrow defile at the mercy of Edom and Seir, and no doubt then, as with all the Exodus, that passage for the nation would have been impossible save for the grace of God which made it possible. Forced to their knees like the unclean camel, they were allowed to crawl through the narrow passage, suffering great affliction. How stubborn human flesh is. It appears to be like the ass: "the more we bray it, the more stubborn it gets". God saw best to afflict Israel here so that they might have more and more a desire to enter in through the "strait gate" and tread the "narrow way". As years roll by and as our thoughts mature in Christ, more readily are we convinced that entrance either to the rich or poor is impossible save for the grace of God and that the camel's way alone is our way. Money, as the disciples knew, could buy most things and give entrance, otherwise barred, to the most inaccessible places, but it could never redeem a man's soul or buy entrance

into the Kingdom of God. Psalm 49 is a wonderful commentary on this theme and Matt. 19.24.

The Hebrew word from which the name of this station is taken once again is very expressive. As we have seen, the idea is that of darkness, narrowness, dismalness of a rocky defile in the mountains. The gorge of the Aare in Switzerland is the best illustration we know, usually associated with gloom, the sun's rays hardly ever penetrating its depths. The valley of the shadow, indeed. We feel the gloom and the depression of such a place. Rendered "hole" in 1 Sam. 14.11 and in other passages "cave". We think of David and other worthies of old who had to seek this seclusion to escape the wrath of the children of the devil (Heb. 11.37-38). In 2 Kings 12.9 the translation of this word is interesting; the "little hole" that Jehoiadah bored in the lid of the chest. The thought is that of narrowness, oppression and 'straitening'. The chastening at this time was not joyous but grievous and we can picture Israel shut in some dark gloomy mountain fastness while the outward picture was painfully realised in the affliction and despair of their souls. Again the lesson which has been painfully brought home time after time is, we repeat, that one stroke of the rod is not always sufficient to humble us; even two strokes may not suffice, and God needs to add Hor-hagidgad to Bene-jaakan. Hard names they are to us and hard lessons they contained for Israel and pass on to us. It is not in our nature to desire to "agonise to enter in at the strait gate", so God finds it necessary to afflict us time and time again. The Hebrew rendering of Prov. 3.11, viz. Heb. 12.5, we have already mentioned, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction". Here are two extremes into which a Christian might fall, as it has been said. We may either despise or despond, be impatient or stolid; both of these we are to avoid. Nor are we to oscillate to and fro as a pendulum under the trials sent upon us. For this is the meaning of 1 Thess. 3.3, "that no man should be moved by these afflictions". God would have us to take a calm trusting course towards Canaan. An even course in the midst of sunshine or storm is the ideal for a ship or plane. Possibly it should be our aim in Christ. But at what a cost to our peace of mind? What growth of inward mortification, what habitual self-denial, what constant renunciation on our part does it imply?

No doubt this third application of punishment meted out to Israel at this time would grieve them sorely. They had sinned in distrusting God and therefore they were to die in this waste howling wilderness. All behind them their travels were marked by the graves of lust and disobedience. The dark and clammy defiles of Hor-hagidgad would plague the elderly amongst them and no doubt many fresh graves and hastily-hewn sepulchres would be a reminder to them of what lay ahead before Jordan. Only two of the older generation, Joshua and Caleb, were to survive. Perhaps Psalms 90 and 91 found their inspiration here. There are so many places in the Exodus which apply, but conditions at Hor-hagidgad seem fitting: "Thou turnest man unto destruction". Death was the only thing for them in the future through disobedience. "All our days are spent in Thy wrath", etc. No doubt when every punishment came upon them this psalm of Moses would occur to them and, as we said under an earlier station, their cry would be: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. In wrath God remembers mercy". How much better is our prospect in affliction. We have the comfort of the promise of Jesus and the Father: "I will never leave you or forsake you". Accordingly the exhortation is, "Let not your heart be troubled".

Numbers 33.33 Jotbathah "How long, O Lord?" must have been the despairing cry of Israel during the afflictions of the last three stations. When would this nightmare of affliction and torment come to an end? When would God smile once again on His Israel? Both Deut. 10.7 and Num. 33.33 link together to provide the assuring answer. Leaving the rocky defiles, they journey to Jotbathah. Moses delightfully calls the region "a land of rivers of waters" and he calls the name of the place where they pitched their camp, Jotbath - the same name, actually. It was a beautiful and refreshing place, to be compared with Elim, and like Elim,

had followed hard on after punishment to a rebellious nation. Psalm 23 all over again or rather in prospect. The lesson is that when we humble ourselves and turn to the Lord He will lead us into refreshing places. We find that "Jotbathah" means literally "goodness". The gloom had lifted, the pressure eased; the smile of Divine goodness shone upon them. Perhaps between the last two stations we can appreciate Romans 6:6, "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection". At Horhagidgad we die unto self and unto the world, but when we are brought unto Jotbathah, then we "taste and see that the Lord is good" and we find ourselves at the station where "there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God" (Psa. 46:4) in principle. It has been well said that "goodness, like wisdom and justice and truth, is an inherent attribute of God". These attributes are necessary to Him, so to speak, and not at all dependent upon an act of His will. They are like the light and warmth of the sun. As long as the sun exists it must give light and warmth. But grace and mercy are dependent upon an act of God's will. He wishes to be gracious. He chooses to be merciful. By an exercise of His will He applies His goodness to a particular heart at a particular time. If the heart is guilty we call this application "grace". If the heart is miserable, we call it "mercy". The "G"s go together - grace and guilt - and the "M"s go together - mercy and misery. Goodness being an inherent essential trait of God, it is no wonder that our ancestors should choose this for the very name of Deity. Compare Paul using the intensive word "riches" when speaking of Divine goodness in Romans 2:4 "the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering". Wyclif translates this "richnesses", so strong and full is the plural in the Greek (see Eph. 1:7, 2:4, 3:8 Rom. 9:23, Phil. 4:9). Could it be possible that at Jotbathah Moses first sang the wonderful psalm found in Deut. 10:12-22? How appropriate is the opening stanza, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord require of thee", etc. Throughout the psalm the subject is the goodness of God.

Seven points found here must close our thoughts on Jotbathah. (1) God is good (verse 12). Fundamentally ideal, for Moses was quite familiar with it. He had experienced the "goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush" (Deut. 33:16, Rom. 12:2). (2) God deviseth good things. "To keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good" (verse 13). Ezra's favourite statement was "the good hand of our God" (Ezra 8:18, 22). (3) God shows His goodness by delighting in His people: "only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them", etc. Paul makes much of the "pleasure" of the Divine goodness (Eph. 1:5), even speaking of the "good pleasure of His goodness", a remarkable filling up of sweet thoughts (2 Thess. 1:11). As a good parent delights in benefitting others, so God delights in blessing His children. (4) God's goodness implies greatness and judgement. "For the Lord your God is a God of gods, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward; He doth execute the judgement of the fatherless and widow", etc. (Deut. 10:17-18). Compare Nahum 1:6-7. We note that the first temptation was to cast a doubt upon the goodness of the Lord (Gen. 3:1). (5) God's goodness demands brotherly love. "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (verse 19). It is an impossibility to enjoy the goodness of the Father and Son and of the Truth without reflecting it upon other lives (1 John 4:20). If we do not, then the goodness of God has never penetrated our heart, and, as Jesus said about the Jews. "Ye know not the Father, else would ye love me" (John 8:55, 42, etc). (6) God's goodness requires obedience. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God: Him shalt thou serve and to Him shalt thou cleave and swear by His Name" (verse 20). It has been said that "as naturally as the flower lifts up its head in the sunlight, so does the Christian heart respond in gratitude to God's kind dealings". See the praise of His "good promise" in 1 Kings 8:56. See how even repentance is based on God's goodness (Rom. 2:4). (7) God's goodness necessitates praise. "He is thy praise and He is thy God, that hath done for thee great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen" (verse 21). The psalmist's deep and most worshipful theme, running

through all his hymns of praise, is the Divine goodness. See Psa. 25:8, 34:8, 73:1, 85:6, 106:1, 107:1, 108:1, and many other passages.

Such are a few of the outlines on the goodness of God in Deut. 10:12-22 in the hymn of Moses in this section, and brought forth possibly, we thought, by the goodness of God revealed to Israel at Jotbathah ("Goodness"). This station is an ever-present with us, brethren and sisters. The good hand of the Lord is always apparent even in chastisement, and, were David's awful choice forced upon us, we would say with him, "I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for great are His mercies, but let me not fall into the hand of man" (1 Chron. 21:13). "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever; and may we say with Israel at Jotbathah, at least in spirit, "it is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept Thy word. Thou art good and doest good: teach me Thy statutes" (Psalm 119:67-68).

Num. 33:34. Ebronah. Station No. 31.

In the Jotbathah station Israel, as it were, found the goodness of God in the rivers and streams of that region - a figure of those spiritual refreshments to come, when the disciples were invited by Jesus to "come aside and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31), and, of course, of those spiritual retreats of our own personal experience when the goodness of God is revealed to us in a similar fashion. In the words of the greater Solomon, speaking of the Bride (of ourselves, we hope), He speaks of her as a garden irrigated by the living waters of the Word (Song 4:15) and for the particular purpose of processing spiritual refreshment for the delight of our Lord (verse 16).

It is significant, however, that in the mystery of the Divine plan the same clouds that precipitate the "dew of Hermon" and the "streams from Lebanon" can be the cause of disaster and destruction, as in the Flood of Noah (Gen. 6 - 8, etc.), and of modern application as in the Adige valley of Italy and the French Riviera in recent years; in Indiana, U.S.A., and the Rhine Valley floods of June 1965, etc. In a spiritual sense we find this latter aspect revealed in the Ebronah station to which we now come. We have no idea of the distance traversed in miles, but when computed in experience it must have been a weary and significant descent.

Ebronah has at least two meanings. One is "Passage", as of the sea, from the root "abar" or "eber", "he who passed over". Some scholars think that this station was at a ford where Israel "passed through" the Gulf of Akaba. We are now approaching Ezion-gaber, which as we know was a seaport on this gulf near its head. Consequently we could construe, if this were the case, at least three thoughts:

(1) The scene may have aroused vivid memories of the destruction of Pharaoh and his host almost forty years before and so brought Israel to a state of penitence and self-affliction as they looked back upon the years of wandering and their stiff-neckedness.

(2) The passage may have been very dangerous in itself and the people may have had to traverse without the benefit of a Divine miracle as at the Red Sea and so become fraught with peril and terror.

All these thoughts are based on the scholars' findings being reliable from the etymology of the word Ebronah, or Abironah as Smith gives it in his Dictionary. Bagster's Proper Names harks on the same lines. These points may be true or not, but their general tenor points in the right direction, spiritually speaking.

(3) In their experience, as in our own, there had come an apparently rapid "passing over" or "transition" (Vulgate) from the light and favour of Jotbathah to the gloom and sorrow of Ebronah, very true in Christian life as we all know. Jotbathah gave relief and encouragement to Israel, welcome respite from their hardships, but in Ebronah we see the Divine Balancer at work; as we stressed earlier, lessons of humility must be constantly renewed.

Why, then, our "Ebronahs == Transitions" ? Ever to cultivate humility in us. From which three points emerge: (1) we have just emphasised, the cultivation of humility, (2) to search out and destroy self-hood, which unfortunately appears to thrive when we find ourselves in "Pleasant = Jotbathah" places, (3) to teach us the value of true poverty of spirit in prosperity (Matt. 5:3).

Why do we stress this change of conditions from the pleasant places of Jotbathah? and in particular the gloomy aspect of Ebronah apart from the teaching of scholars under this name? The thoughts are found once again connected with the root word from which "Ebronah" comes. Reference can be made to the "Englishman's Hebrew Concordance" for verification. Among the many passages where the word occurs the following may be referred to, all containing the idea of Wrath (this is one of the reasons we are stressing the rather gloomy aspect): Gen. 49:7 Job 21:30 Psa. 90:9 Isa. 10:6 Jer. 7:9 Lam. 2:2 Hos. 5:10. 34 times the word is used in the Old Testament with this meaning, hence our deduction of wrath in the Ebronah name, which can be seen as the cause, and the consequential effect is not far to seek. The Scriptures show that to be under God's wrath is to be under a "cloud", and the Hebrew root again is often used in the sense of a cloud!

Compare a very pathetic example in Lam. 2:1, where the weeping prophet, feeling that the people were deprived of God's favouring smile, exclaims, "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not His footstool in the day of His anger!" Lam. 2:10 will give to us the result: under these distressing circumstances the daughter of Zion is described as humbling herself in penitence and hanging down her head in true shame. Compare 1 Kings 18:44-48, where the same Hebrew word is used to describe the cloud which Elijah's servant beheld from Carmel rising out of the sea, and by which the heavens were overspread with darkness and tumultuous rain. For the figurative sense see Dr. Thomas on "The Day of Rain" in "Eureka" re the judgements of God upon the nations.

A rather fascinating study could be developed on the cloud sequences in Scripture: briefly-(a) Ex. 14:19-21, the contrast between the position of Israel and Pharaoh's host at the Red Sea. Light shone on Israel because God's blessing and protection were with them, evidenced by the Pillar of Cloud that divided the two camps. But, Ex. 14:20, cloud and darkness descended upon the Egyptians because God's wrath was about to burst forth upon them; which is a true summary of the teaching as it affects Ebronah. Light = God's blessing; clouds and darkness = God's disfavour. So then Paul's definition is superb, Rom. 13:12, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light", as Israel had done at the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:2), when they were "baptised into Moses" in the separating cloud. They had been prisoners in the Egyptian darkness, the redeeming blood of the lamb slain had released them from it at the hand of the Lord; now they had died to darkness and Egyptian night and were united in Light, in similar fashion as we have been, only we more so in Christ, because that sequence at the Red Sea was only a figure of what was to come (1 Thess. 5:3). Paul continues, "Ye are children of light and the children of the day. We are not of the night and darkness". Paul lays the foundation (basic, that is) of the "armour of light" in 1 Thess. 5:7-8 and in verse 9 continues, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ". It is of peculiar interest, then, that man, Adam, was created after God had separated light from darkness. So Paul hints, man originally enjoyed God's smile and favour and was not therein appointed to wrath, or should he not then have been created in darkness? Rather is it that because man has sought out many inventions and departed from the living God that wrath has descended from time to time upon him. From these which seem to the writer to be vivid illustrations we see that the "testimony is right and true altogether". The "goodness and the severity of God", always in this order, is splendidly apparent - light and darkness - because the very nature of the Godhead demands that He should cause His sun to shine on the righteous and the wicked: as we have stressed, it is man who has departed from the God of all creation. So long as Israel and ourselves walk in light (1 John 1:5-7) and trust the spiritual armour of God's finding (Eph. 6:10-19), then all will be well; but if, like king Saul of Israel, we have no confidence, neither in God nor ourselves nor our armour (1 Sam. 17), we shall stumble on in darkness and under the wrath of God (compare Cain in 1 John 3:12, etc.). Ebronah will be very evident to us and the "cloud of loud crying" will humble us and put us to shame. The incident at the Red Sea, then, has high-lighted one facet of cloud sequences in the Bible.

(b) The Day of Yahweh is also described as "a day of clouds, thick clouds and darkness". Think of Joel 2:1-2 and Zeph. 2:15-16 in particular. That terrible day is now close at hand. May we find "light at eventide", brethren and sisters!

(c) Our third and last thought about clouds must centre around the most dreadful deed of history, the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. In view of what we have already advanced, note the pregnant words of Matthew 27:44, "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour". Over all the land. No division between light and darkness, no difference between Israel and Gentiles - all men from Adam downwards have contributed to the death of Jesus. Who, then, can lift his head above his brother and say, Which of you accuses me of sin? This is the blackest darkness of all. Yet, through the death of Jesus and our belief and baptism into Him, we have become "light in the Lord". Is it not significant, then, that we are called to shine as stars or luminaries in the world by Paul in Philippians 2:15, only to be observed at night because, just as in the natural world the sun shines by day and so obliterates the more feeble starry light, so Jesus, the "light of the world", will shine in the Kingdom along with His lesser luminaries. Today is Gentile night and the sun is absent, so the moon and stars take over to "lighten the night" so that it is not gross darkness, which at one time in Egypt did actually happen, naturally or supernaturally, should we say, for the thick darkness of God's wrath covered even the starlight, or so it would suggest to me. No light whatsoever, Ex. 11:21-23, "thick darkness", they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place. Total eclipse, indeed. Ever remember Judas, John 13:30. He left Jesus and light: "he then having received the sop went immediately out - and it was night".

Other aspects such as clouds of incense, believers, etc., must be left for your own studies. So then whatever happened at Ebronah brought about God's wrath once again upon Israel to induce penitence, shame and humility, so that it became to Israel the station marked out as "the cloud of loud crying".

Perhaps three final points can complete our illustrations on this station:

(1) The example of our Lord. Think of Hebrews 5:7, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that He feared". We have forcibly expressed in the "prayers, supplications, strong crying and tears" of our Lord Jesus Gethsemane, of course, but the passage also describes His habitual burden during all the days in the flesh. In Himself sinless, Christ bore in Himself the burden of humanity. Paul's definition of a High Priest from our present angle is one who has a fellow-feeling with man; one who has sympathy with men because of their weakness and sin, one who can "bear gently with the ignorant and erring, feeling he himself also is compassed with infirmity". The word for "bear gently" is very interesting and suggestive. Griffith Thomas says that it means "one who can have a moderated feeling", neither too lenient nor too severe, because he knows what weakness is. Gethsemane marked the climax of this experience, "prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death". Note that the phrase literally is, to "save him out of death", which shows that Jesus did not pray to be saved from dying, but "saved out of death" through resurrection; hence Psalm 118:16-25, etc., which He sang immediately before going to Gethsemane. The use and result of these experiences was human discipline (Heb. 5:8), "Though He was a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered". We can recall to mind Jesus retiring to the top of dark mountains and spending whole nights in prayer (Luke 6:12), the example for us to follow, and to encourage us to pray and not to faint (Luke 18:1). And the final cup on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" - besides other considerations - but the "finishing" of (again in this sense) the misery of His whole life for our sakes, speaking of the Christ Body in particular: "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted; but He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:4-6, etc.). Jesus had to experience Ebronah all right, but not for Himself as sinner; He was sinless as we have already advanced: He went through His ordeal because He was man and to get a fellow-sympathy with His children.

What a Saviour we have in our Lord Jesus! But sympathy works two ways: to make an effective partnership, to effect a cure in many physical ailments and also physiological derangements, this bond of sympathy is vitally essential between both parties; in fact, personal experience has taught us that a masseur or manipulator who has experienced little or no pain is by no means as effective as the one who has known the weariness and frustration of pain. The answer is quite simple: to find pain in another, you must have experienced it in yourself first of all. In the spiritual sense it is rather different, though

based on the same principles. Our Lord, as we have seen, has all the qualifications of the Great Healer, experienced in pain and misery and at times dejection: we are the sick ones. But the sympathy is not automatic, as in one sense the body reacted to the animal magnetism and physiological advance, as in normal practice. Our spiritual reaction can only be voluntary in returning sympathy to make a true link of faith between ourselves and our Great Healer, and as faith is found only in the active voice in Scripture, if we desire true spiritual health, then we have to do something about it; we have to make the necessary effort to complete the spiritual circuit between ourselves and Jesus. Faith, as we know, was necessary to make the link during Christ's ministry when physical healing took place (which is a wonderful study in itself) either in the patient, or, in the case of the death of the person, such as Jairus' daughter, in the father, etc. So, then, in matters of spiritual health, active sympathy is very necessary. Once again it is Paul who makes the vital link, Col. 1:24; "who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind (or lacking) of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church", etc. "That which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" will never be made up until Isa. 53 comes to pass: and "the travail of His soul shall be satisfied". Here is the link for all succeeding generations in Christ and the opportunity for us all to obtain a like sympathy with His sufferings and in the work of redemption. Let us, then, find strength and comfort through this bond of love and sympathy in true fellowship with the Father, Son and each other. Remember Paul's teaching again in 1 Cor. 12:12-27 under this heading, wherein he marks out the love and sympathy which should exist between Christ the Head and the other members of the body. So we shall find humility and be truly ashamed before our God in the spiritual Ebronahs which overtake us from time to time.

(2) The sore stress of affliction which does come upon us. We have seen how God allows these strains and stresses to come upon us, that through their pressures and many sorrows we shall eventually lift up our voices as the people did at Ebronah and cry mightily to Him for support and deliverance. Think of David (Psa. 69:2) and Jesus, of course, "I sink into deep waters, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me". Also Heman the Ezrahite (Psa. 88:13), "But unto Thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent Thee". So, throughout time all God's people have fared similarly. For a real test of sympathy with Christ read through Psalm 22 very carefully and mark how many things mentioned in it have been true in your life already - and solemnly count how many are to follow. It will prove a very stern test, and so it leads us to our final point:

(3) Fear of entering into the cloud. All God's children as of old are baptised "into the cloud" - in some cloud, either of believers or otherwise. But there are some who "fear as they enter into the cloud" (Luke 9:34), and who amongst us would not have feared with the three on the mount of transfiguration in the face of such glory? There are those whom we have in mind at the moment who are naturally distressed by doubts and tempted to hesitate by reason of their timid nature, and yet who wholeheartedly believe the Truth - many of us who are known to Paul as "faint-souled" (1 Thess. 5:14), unfortunately translated in the Authorised Version as "feeble-minded". We believe God is very tender towards such, who are "little ones" indeed - in these days when the darkness over all the land tends to encroach upon the Brotherhood, when science, so called, and fables are lifting their ugly heads again, and most folk, not just the feeble-souled, are feeling the evil of doubt. We counsel them to put on the armour of God before-mentioned and stand fast to the things we have believed and have been baptised into, having no fear. The Testimony of God will stand and doubt and fear will pass, as Israel duly passed from this Ebronah station so many years ago. A comforting thought is that the mere arising of a doubt in our mind is not sin. It is only when we harbour that doubt and fondle it and follow it, that it becomes sin to us. Cherished difficulties are real difficulties - we call them "chips on the shoulder" today - and they are most difficult to remove. If, through a timid nature or a natural disposition to question all matters, we are approached in temptation by evil reports by "wolves in sheep's clothing" we are not therefore to despair. This is our Ebronah. Let the "cloud of our loud crying" ascend to our Father if we really want to believe and stay fast to the "things once delivered". He will help us to believe. Think of the despondency of the father of that demoniac epileptic child who cried in real despair to Jesus, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief". If we can truly say that, we never need despair (Mark 9:24).

Numbers 33:35 informs us that Ezion-gaber is the next encamping place of Israel in their journeys.

We are back on familiar ground again, situated, as our maps show, at the head of the Gulf of Akaba and identified some years ago by the Sinai Exploration Expedition. The concordance will reveal that it is mentioned several times in Scripture. It seems to have been the centre of many important transactions. (1) 1 Kings 9:26 A haven for ships on the upper arm of the Red Sea known as the Gulf of Akaba. (2) 2 Sam. 8:14 In the country of Edom, which land was afterward subdued by David. (3) 1 Kings 9:26-28 From this port Solomon's navy fetched gold from Ophir. (4) 1 Kings 10:22 It was to this port that the navy returned once in three years with stores of precious metal.

"Ezion-gaber" means, literally, "the strength or backbone of a man". The Arabs call it the gold port and the topographical reason for such a name would appear to be realised in the jagged rocks which run out from the shore into the sea, a sort of Giant's Causeway such as we have in Galway, Ireland; so we have the "spina magna vire" in the definitions provided by the lexicons. It is mentioned in Deut. 2:8 in connection with Elath, today a modern port in this gulf. We see the connection both naturally and spiritually in the meaning of Elath = Terebinths, a grove of strong trees, and aggregation of strength. So Israel were again delivered from wrath, doubt, despair and humiliation to a large place of strength. A little delving into the root word connected with Ezion-gaber will reveal the literal meaning is "The counsel of strength". Compare the same word in 2 Sam. 22:33, "God is my strength and power, and He maketh my way perfect". Also Isa. 9:6. El Gaber or Gibbor is referred to Jesus as the Mighty God and Counsellor as well. Isa. 63:1 says that He is "mighty to save" and Titus 2:4 covers it as well, "to save from all iniquity".

The comforting thoughts from Ezion-gaber remind us that

- (1) we have a God perfect in strength and power and able to make our way perfect, coming to us through the strong counsel of Christ our Lord, mighty in counsel and strength to save us from all evil.
- (2) That we have a great need to come frequently to our spiritual Ezion-gaber to receive this very necessary strength and counsel, so that we might be made "perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).
- (3) Here we may find "the counsel of truth" by which we are to be sanctified (John 17:17).
- (4) In the strength of Christ we may be encouraged to overcome sin, and resist the assaults of the devil, and conquer through patience and the blood of the Lamb, for we have the ever-effective consolation of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness".

The counsel of God has no doubt proved to us on many occasions a benefit and a blessing. It is a very great privilege to have the opportunity to receive such, and must be sought humbly and reverently and with a willingness to carry out this counsel. How true it is of human nature to go to almost any length to obtain the best counsel and afterwards turn it down flat: most people who have given advice either professionally or privately have come across this kind of experience - "Sorry I didn't carry out your advice", from the few who have the decency to reply; usually they don't. It is, of course, the old story of the mind being set before we ask: in many ways we may come to no harm, actually our former course proving to be the best. But we must never commit the grave error of approaching the Divine counsel in this way. We must be like Rebekah, Rachel and the Woman of Samaria and approach the well of life with empty pitchers, not half-full of our own ideas, but truly emptied of self, eager and willing to receive the counsel of might which will lead us in the right way:

- (1) We must believe and understand (Psa. 33:11) and abide by it whatever happens.

"The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations". Could we but adhere to this statement in all our thinking the present crisis approaching the Brotherhood would never arise. However, we believe it truly. How, then, do we go about seeking this counsel?

- (2) The example of Paul is never out of date - "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). This is the spirit in which to ask for guidance. Judges 18:5 - "And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous". Judges 20:18 and 1 Sam. 15:37 and sundry others are in context here. In Luke 7:30 the attitude of the Pharisees and lawyers is not to be followed; but the lesson arising out of this verse should always be borne in mind as a direct possibility and followed just the same - that at times God's counsel is directed against ourselves, because we are in the wrong: the advice must be heeded the more urgently because of this and the appropriate action taken to rectify the matter.

(3) That we can at all times approach the Lord God of Israel, "Who slumbers not nor sleeps", through our High Priest, Who likewise is on constant watch for our petitions. This is a priceless privilege belonging only to the children of God. Let us make the utmost use of it.

(4) The manner in which Christian counsel should be and is given, as from Christ first of all and from us on a smaller and less adequate scale, can be observed in looking up the following passages: Isa. 50:4 Matt. 11:29 Mark 4:33-34 John 16:12 Mark 2:13, 3:31-35 John 3:1, 4:5, etc. You will find an unwearied love received all who would converse with Jesus, inspiring perfect confidence, knowing that even today He heareth us, "whatsoever we ask"

Another confidence Ezion-gaber gives to us is that we saw strength linked to counsel. No doubt one of the bitterest reflections of philosophers who sincerely desired the moral advancement of their fellows has been that they can tell men what to do, but could not give them the power to do it. Rome was full of wise maxims when Paul wrote his Roman letter, but the thing Paul gloried in most was that he had a Gospel which was not only "good counsel" but available strength, that "it is the power ('dunamis') of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Epicurean and Stoic could write down a list of virtues to be copied, but they could not supply the motive and impetus to enable men to be virtuous. Here is where Jesus transcends all philosophers. "All His commands are enablings", it has been quaintly put by an unknown writer.

Ezion is linked to Gaber (or Geber). We can be 'strong in the Lord and in the power of His might', Paul wrote in Eph. 6:10, and the basis of his claim is found in Eph. 1:19-20, where four words expressing the whole Greek idea of might and power are used: Kratos = might; Ischus = strength; Dunamis (English 'dynamite') = power; Energia ('energy' in English) = working. Such is the wonder and strength and power and energy around us when we put our trust in God, Who is perfect in strength. Paul has just revealed how complete this manifestation of irresistible might is, used in raising Jesus from the dead, Who is Himself the residence of this perfection of power now, for "all power (authority) in heaven and earth" is now given to Him (Matt. 28:18). Need we fear what man can do to us? or should we be afraid that their counsel in these days will alter the Purpose of God one iota? No scientist of any generation from the first to the twentieth century can destroy the true testimony of the Living Word, either profane scientists or the ones within our midst. The counsel of the Lord will stand!

Finally, a word of warning from our Ezion-gaber station. We have not had revealed to us the detailed counsel of God to Israel at this time, but from Deut. 2:8-9 it does seem probable that one lesson given to them was, "Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle"; meaning, it would seem, at least two things: (1) to refrain themselves from meddling in Moabish affairs, and (2) the stern lesson not to go out in their own strength. They were to wait upon God's order to march against the enemy.

At all times we need to learn the lesson of patient waiting. In our zeal we may outrun our God. Think how many did this, commencing with Eve, who began it all. Abraham and Sarah and Ishmael. Jacob and the promises. And many more, true to human nature, which usually is most impatient. The true way of waiting is seen in Joseph, David, Moses, Elisha, all in their own way typical of the Lord Jesus. Along with Him, they were content to wait until God called them higher, and such must be our way. In His own good time He will "call us up higher". So in faith we await that glad day. Today we wait upon Him and the word of His command.

If the counsel of Jesus is followed it becomes to us the means of life and peace. If it is not followed it is a rock of destruction to us. Again amid the natural surroundings as Israel stood on the shore of the sea and saw the waves breaking over the "giant's backbone" (Ezion-gaber), they must have realised the lurking danger at the harbour mouth. However, they could not have known that centuries later the ships of Jehoshaphat would be "broken" on these very rocks (1 Kings 22:48). But the danger signals were self-evident in the flying spray. The big lesson taught us centuries after both events is that Ezion-Gaber teaches that going in the same boat with evil men is bad and dangerous business and can only have one end finally (2 Chron. 20:36).

O that the lessons of Ezion-gaber may remain with us, and that we take warning in view of the counsel given us, that God's ways may become the strong backbone of our standing in Christ Jesus. If we take these counsels as our own and work them out as directed in our lives, they will be to us "a savour unto life", but, if rejected, they may become "a savour of death unto death." May we truly say, "God is my strength and power: and He maketh my

way perfect" (2 Sam. 22:23)!

Numbers 33:36 Kadesh.

The counsel has been given, might and strength have been exhibited at Ezion-gaber, and warnings given again. Israel must pull up their tent pegs and await the trumpet to advance. As they did, actually and historically, so must we advance towards Jordan and the final judgement of our ways. Will it be a crossing over Jordan (= the river of judgement) to Gilgal (= where our uncleanness shall be cut off and rolled away) or will our carcasses lie this side Jordan with the older generation of Israel? We have seen that full strength has been supplied to us, and the main difficulty appears to be within ourselves - whether or not the counsel of God will stand and obedience be given to it in the few short journeys that remain to us now. We have arrived at Kadesh, Station No. 33; after this only the fateful nine remain. How shall we fare?

What happened at Kadesh? In our earlier comments we have said that it would appear that "Kadesh" represents a region rather than a station; a whole locality or a canton or county in the upper desert. Numbers 33:36 to our mind indicates this, "And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the Wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh". To some spot in this general region the Israelites formerly came, and it was there that the timorous report of the spies was returned to the people, with disastrous results - possibly Rithmah, as we have earlier suggested. Since then they have been wandering, marching hither and thither in perplexity and distress, their carcasses falling by the wayside. Now they return to the region and establish a camp, possibly at the point indicated on the map as Kadesh-Barnea. Perhaps, because a number of important events took place here, it might be more convenient to divide our study into two parts. As usual, we find the lessons physical and spiritual.

"Wilderness of Zin" or alternative spelling "Tzin".

"Zin" = a sharp dart; pointed piercing thorn: a buckler or shield: a low palm tree, and so forth: preservation. The name may have arisen from the profusion of sharp thorns that grew in that place, or the name could have arisen from the refreshing waters God caused to flow for the people. Scholars have their own points of view upon the etymological questions and relations. We need not delay with the physical features; the spiritual lessons are self-evident and important.

(1) Num. 20, which is parallel to Num. 33:36, records the death of Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron: "And Miriam died there and was buried there". Miriam was a prophetess and leader of the women in Israel (Micah 6:4), yet how simple is the announcement of her death. Have you noticed that this is the same of the death and burial of all God's saints in Scripture? It would appear that in God's eyes the life is everything and the death nothing; as we sing, "Life is the time to serve the Lord". Hezekiah wailed on his sick-bed, "The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee" (Isa. 38:18-19). Yes, God is the God of the living, even the faithful dead are alive to Him, for their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and after the sleep of death will be raised to life at the coming of Jesus. So, in keeping with this, we find a great many verses are concerned with Miriam's life; but a single line describes her death. 13 chapters and 7 verses are given to Abraham's life, but his death is recorded in a single verse. Joseph's experiences and exploits are the theme of 14 chapters, but the death of Egypt's Prime Minister is described in 3 lines. David appears in nearly every chapter of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel and part of 1 Chronicles, yet this great man, the beloved of Yah, is removed from Holy Writ in this statement, "So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David". Paul's conversion and ministry concern the whole of the Acts from the ninth chapter onwards, yet the death of the great apostle to the Gentiles is not considered of enough importance even to record. Yes, our God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. While we have breath may we always be "alive to Him" (Luke 20:38).

(2) Again we note scarcity of water afflicts the people, and from Num. 20:2-4 it appears to be very general, involving the cattle as well; therefore Moses heard the complaint (verse 5), "Wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." The translations of the Vulgate and Chaldee versions, where this expression "evil place" is rendered "this worst place". In Israel's opinion this was the worst place they had yet encountered.

(3) This station is not only pinpointed as the place of water from the rock (Num. 20:8-11), and also notorious for the consequent banning of Moses and Aaron from entering into the Promised Land, a decision which has evoked sorrow and sympathy for Moses and Aaron, and

Moses in particular, in every age of the Truth: "Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them". After forty years of trouble and turmoil with this stiff-necked people the privilege of leading them over Jordan to the promised rest is lost!

First of all, we are fully aware of the fact that Moses could never have led Israel over Jordan, the "river of judgement", the "plunger" which emptied into the Dead Sea. "The Law could make nothing perfect" (Hebrews), it was only a shadow of good things to come. It was a tutor slave to guide us to Christ, Who is the end of the law to all who believe. The law as seen in Moses could only point forwards at this time to Christ Who would fulfil it. Aaron could not have led the Levites over Jordan either, as we shall see a little further on. Aaron must give way to Eleazar. The typical picture is quite clear about this in the duties which are given to him, and the way in which the "uniform" of Aaron was transferred to him. But these details are for another day, God willing. Joshua, a figure of Jesus, and Eleazar the high priest could alone lead Israel into Canaan. We have stressed that this must have been a very sharp "thorn" to the two men who had led the people for so long; truly it was "wilderness of Zin" to them. Let us beware lest we fall after the same example of unbelief.

(3) Of further instruction is the fact that Moses smote the Rock besides saying, "Must we bring forth water for you", etc. The sequence is found in Num. 20:7-10. The command was to "speak unto the rock", not to smite it. We remember a rock had been smitten at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1-7) to bring the river of water for the people. Christ was that rock in both cases (in a figure, of course). 1 Cor. 10:4. We have all drunk of that "living water" of the Lamb (John 4:10-15), just as all Israel drank of the water from the riven rock at Rephidim. Water again is to be miraculously provided from The Rock. This water at Kadesh (= Sanctification) means in type the water of cleansing. In the future Ezekiel's Temple (Ezek. 47) it will go out and cleanse and sanctify finally all nations (Zech. 13:1). To obtain the water of sanctification - see John 2:6 and the six waterpots of stone which were used for the purification of the Jews. We note that Jesus turned the water into wine, into the wine of the new covenant; and when we connect this with the Old Testament incidents we see how wrong it was for Moses and Aaron to smite the rock twice.

Ex. 17:1-7 spoke of the smiting of Jesus - death in sacrifice with the resultant pouring forth of the water of life as seen in John 4:10-15. Now Hebrews is quite explicit. The sacrifice of Christ was once for all time and for all purposes in salvation (Heb. 10:10, 9:26, etc.), so that to smite that rock when not so commanded by God would be to presume that the sacrifice of Christ was not so effective, and, in this sense, "trample underfoot the blood of Christ" (Heb. 6:5-6). Christ voluntarily died once for the sins of His people. To smite Him again and of one's own will would be, as Heb. 6:5-6 has advanced, "to crucify Him again to their own selves". What a terrible thing it was, and how easily we can do it to ourselves! We see how serious this action was, and the very drastic measure taken to fit the crime. How carefully and jealously God watches over the typological teaching in regard to THE SON! Moses and Aaron died because they had broken the type sequence and given it by their action a wrong significance. They had broken the type. Let us beware.

The bringing forth of water at Kadesh should have taught the fact that not only do we require the water of life brought through the smiting of Jesus but also the water of separation, as revealed at Cana in Galilee, which followed as a direct result of Christ's death (as in Ex. 12; 15-25 the unleavened bread followed passover). To obtain this far-reaching spiritual gift, we ask in prayer in the figurative sense of the censer of ignited incense, and not force it with the sword of sacrifice. But the result of obtaining such a cleansing agent will mean sacrifice, as Jesus revealed when turning the water into wine, and that wine was the new wine of the New Covenant, and will be returned to God as a drink offering, a life willingly poured out for God in service to others, as did our Lord Jesus, "who bore our sins upon the tree in His own body for our sakes" (1 Pet. 2:24). Mark 8:34-36, "Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me". This is what we personally believe is bound up in this incident at Kadesh in Zin. Great servants though Moses and Aaron were, they could never have led Israel through Jordan into Canaan. Joshua and Eleazar alone could undertake it - typically, Jesus as Saviour-King and Priest in Himself.

(4) The people gathered together against Moses and Aaron on account of their thirst! The Desert of Zin may be appropriately called the "wilderness of thorns" because they were wounded through with the thorns of discontent. They became barbs of destruction in the hearts of Moses and Aaron at this time, for Moses complained in Deut. 4:21, "The Lord

was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go into that good land", etc. Psalm 106:32 says "They angered Him (God) also at the Waters of Meribah ("Strife"), so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes. Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips". Surely a great lesson to us to guard against provocation of this kind, which may lead others to a sin such as this. Also a biting lesson on the lack of appreciation on their behalf of their leaders, who had served them long and well for forty years. Paul again has something to say on this situation: we ought to "provoke one another to love and good works", not to sin and blasphemy in the unadvised words and action wrung from Moses through their own doing. Paul also says we ought to honour those who labour among us, "especially those who labour in the Word". We have all felt, and probably delivered, the sharp barbs and carping words of criticism; let their provocation be turned outward from us in love and good deeds and so build up and not destroy the church of God. However, we have seen once again, even after the majesty of power seen at Ezion-gaber, unbelief and discontent in the ranks of Israel. Their obedience was weakened; they grieved the spirit of God; but let us not fall into the error of thinking that God should not have punished Moses because of the attitude and provocative influence of the people. Both were equally in the wrong - the people in rebelling once again and Moses in acting as he did, for after all, when everything is said and done, "one is master of his own soul". A similar incident is observed when David numbered the people (2 Sam. 24:1). The Lord will do right in all the earth.

We notice, returning to Numbers 20:14-21, that because of this rebellious state of affairs, God gave Israel over to their enemies with added humiliation. Edom raised an insolent cry against them and God refused to interfere. In disgrace, Israel were compelled to 'turn away' from the borders of Edom. Think, too, of the humiliation and disgrace of Samson, who, through losing his Nazariteship, was weakened by unbelieving Delilah, his eyes put out, and himself humiliated by the ones whom he had beforetime caused to live in terror of him. But think also of the Lord remembering Samson's despairing cry, "O Lord God remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." The Lord answered his request. What a lesson in loyalty! The Lord is always faithful. He cannot deny Himself. The lesson of Divine loyalty is repeated in Numbers 20 at Kadesh, although He rebuked Moses, the water came forth! God did not let Moses down. How often when loyalty to Christ has been threatened have we "let the side down"? In the great testing that lies ahead, may we stand fast by the Colours of Christ and the Truth! May all our statements be said in a spirit of love and truth, and, maybe, when Edom stands as Satan in the way, we may not have to retreat in disgrace and humiliation.

There is, however, a brighter side to this Zin. "Zin" or "Tzin" also signifies "cold" or "coolness", and once again we have a beautiful lesson before us. The hot sun of the desert was sending its piercing rays from above, and the darts of discontent were piercing the hearts of the people; yet God sent them coolness and refreshment in the waters that flowed from the rock. Reflect again upon the wonderful mercy of our God. The word from which "Zin" comes is used in Prov. 25:13, "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him, for he refresheth the soul of his masters". Physically these waters from the rock at Kadesh were icy cold in contrast to the dry, burning desert, and the people would have appreciated, at least physically, the sentiments of Prov. 25:13 which we have just quoted. Speaking spiritually, is the counsel of the Lord from our Lord Jesus just as refreshing to our souls? and are we as grateful as for the "cold of snow in the time of harvest"?

Broadly speaking, counsel can be stated within three aspects for our purpose at Kadesh (as we shall see shortly "Kadesh" means "The Sanctuary" or "Sanctification"). This counsel is given to us in separation - to which we were called at Goshen and in which we should have walked during the many, sometimes weary, miles of our pilgrimage. May it never be called a wandering - for this was first assigned to Cain, who "was of that evil one". Numbers 14 repeated that assignment to the rebels. Judas wandered away in darkness (John 13). Until recently Israel has wandered among all nations; the homeland has been partially realised, but Jerusalem is still a far cry from "the possession of the inheritance of peace", as we know. This is all included in "wandering", and, for the many, the end lies in a shallow grave or under a heap of stones in the arid wilderness (Num. 14:27-33, etc.) and indicated in Kibroth-hataavah ("graves of lust"). This is all wandering, or, as Paul puts it, being "tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the

sleight of men" (Eph. 4:14). Our journey should be a pilgrimage with a set objective, a city whose foundation and builder is God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 11:10).

To return to our theme. Within the separation of Kadesh which is given us in Christ, the counsel from the rock, Christ, is available for us should we desire it, and the counsel is found only in the true Kadesh and not in the counsel of man's city. We suggest it can reach us in, broadly speaking, three ways (that is, of course, should we be receptive to this heavenly voice as was Paul - Acts 22:7-21, etc.):

(1) The counsel may be for us, indicating that our position, or the position or standing we may be seeking, is favourable to the Divine will

(2) The counsel could be negative, in which sense God would do nothing, neither help nor hinder; in which case we should be left to our own resources, and, let it be said, there could be only one end to that. Man's way unaided can only lead to death.

(3) The counsel of God could be shown to be against us, showing that we are definitely in the wrong in the particular path we are treading.

Should any of the above answers be received, could we describe the counsel to be refreshing as "the cold of snow in the time of harvest"? The second item can be ruled out. Principally the teaching is, "Ask and ye shall receive" (Matt. 7:7). But could we say the counsel which Moses and Aaron received this time was as "the cold of snow in the time of harvest"? In one sense, yes, quite definitely, we believe, because the waters did flow to refresh the people. That must have refreshed their hearts, as far as it went. Personally, the pathetic sadness which overcomes the best of us after we have sinned must have grieved them sore; they would not cross Jordan this time, but die outside and be buried in the wilderness. However, we know that each in the Kingdom will receive a prophet's reward - Moses, yes, he is certain; Aaron? we could hardly think it otherwise. "The Lord of all the earth will do right". God grant that we may meet them in that glad day. For our carcasses, too, must lie buried on this side Jordan if Christ still remains away.

The experiences of Moses and Aaron illustrate full well how we should react to similar counsel, and the last aspect of the life of Moses bears out the fact that though he himself, like Jesus later, should suffer "through or because of the people", yet he faithfully followed out God's command in preparing Joshua to lead over Jordan. In other words, because God's purpose carries on, we, though we have done our part faithfully in the main, may be laid aside and denied what we in this life esteemed most, and it may fall to our lot to prepare another to stand in our shoes, and we do this cheerfully and well, no doubt as Moses did in the short interval between his mistake and his death, when he kept asking God to allow him to enter the land (Deut. 3:21-29) - "Let it suffice thee; speak to Me no more of the matter". Our prayers, too, will ascend to the Father for it to be different, yet in our own hearts we know the die is set, and pray as did Jesus in Gethsemane: Please, Lord, save us out of death, and in Thy great goodness allow us to meet Moses, Joshua, Caleb and Aaron on that side over Jordan, and through Gilgal, with Egypt finally rooted out and our uncleanness finally "rolled away" in Jerusalem, "the inheritance of peace". Such, then, for the outworking of the counsel of God - cold, hot or otherwise, may it always be used to His honour and glory!

Our third and last meaning of "Zin", as given above, is "Shield". From a natural viewpoint we can see the figure quite plainly. As the refreshing waters would protect, or be a defence from, the fiery darts of the scorching heat of the sun at Kadesh, so the shield of faith quenches the fiery darts of the devil for us. Bromley and the older generation of Bible students think that this very unusual figure of speech in Eph. 6:16 is drawn from the conjunction of ideas or hints found in this incident at Kadesh in Zin. We find the Hebrew word "tzinnah" or "shield" took its name from "tzanan" = "to cool". Paul therefore refers to the inflaming of the blood and passions by the fiery darts of sin. The "tzinnah" received the darts in natural combat and "cooled" them or negated them. So in Eph. 6:16 the "shield of faith", the great shield (Greek "thureos", Latin "scutum") by which the Roman soldier could protect his whole body, affords all-round protection. See A. T. Robertson's "Word Pictures" on this heading. We have to take up this shield of faith and use it for our protection, otherwise it will be as useless as Saul's armour in 1 Sam. 17. In Roman times, as later with the American Red Indians, it was the practice to set alight the darts, so that it was necessary to "quench" them. Paul says the shield of faith will safely do this for us in a spiritual sense, through the exercise of faith. Once again, as always, "faith" is in the active voice. It is a terrible lesson to note that in our days of modern warfare the fiery darts have given way to incendiaries, flame throwers, rockets, atomic warheads and nuclear fission, in that order. Can we still rely

on the shield of faith? When we face up to these questions of the last days, we do well to remember Elisha's advice to the young man at Dothan, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:16). The forces are arrayed all around us; naturally and spiritually the increase, and will do as The Day approaches. Shall we alter our tactics or shift our defences? The prayer which ascended at Dothan can apply to us, "Lord God, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see". If this can happen to us and we see the unseen, as the young man did at that time, then with the eye of faith we shall see beyond the present distress, absorb within the shield of faith the atomic warheads of our death, and with the long view of faith see the time when the Lord Christ shall become the King of kings and Lord of lords, and the cooling streams of Kadesh will indeed be to us as the cold of snow at the time of harvest.

Passing on to our second consideration of Kadesh in Zin, we turn to the word "Kadesh" itself.

Kadesh = "sanctification", "holiness". God had in view the sanctification of His Israel through all the desert journeys. We have observed some of the teaching of Scripture under this heading. More is indicated in the way Kadesh received its name: "This is the water of Meribah (or "strife", margin), because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and He was sanctified ("kadesh") in them" (Num. 20:13). Yahweh being sanctified in His people seems to mean that He showed Himself as the Holy God, indicating His attributes and justifying all His course with them by giving the miraculous outpouring of water.

Just halt a moment and think of God's attributes which are vindicated in these scenes: (1) Power. In the working of so great a miracle. (2) Mercy. His mercy in pardoning their murmurings and subduing their inclinations to rebellion. (3) Goodness and Bounty. In affording so much water when the drought was so great and necessities so pressing. (4) Truth. In preserving them alive, notwithstanding their sins and complaints, in order that the Promise concerning their entry into Canaan might be kept. (5) Justice and Severity. Shown towards Moses and Aaron in that they should not lead over Jordan into Canaan. These and other attributes of Yahweh's Name are centred in Kadesh. Trace out the other elements and see that "The Lord is good" and "His mercy endureth for ever".

The identity between the Wilderness of Zin and Kadesh. - The one locality is merged into the other. Doubtless it would seem that Kadesh was a section of the larger Wilderness of Zin and it is not surprising, then, that spiritually the place of thorns and trials should be identified with the work of sanctification. We follow our Lord and Paul to help fill up the afflictions of Christ's body. Jesus was made perfect through suffering: can we, then, hope to get by without being "taught with thorns"? The Kadesh sanctification is only to be found in the desert of thorns. Consider the apparent usage in 2 Corinthians 12:7 by Paul, where unmistakably we find Paul's own "thorn in the flesh" being described as leading him to sanctification - and is not God's grace sufficient for us in these things, said Jesus to Paul. "My strength is made perfect in weakness". Let us take Paul's place, then; let us "take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. For when we are weak, then are we strong - in the Lord".

Finally, under this heading two further points will come under consideration:

(1) A comparison with Rephidim, where we found Israel's experience was something similar to that at Kadesh. (2) A brief study of the elements of the word "Kadesh".

(1) It would appear from a comparison between the two Meribahs that, as before, lack of water brought on the contention (Num. 20:2), "there was no water for the assembly". It was a testing time, for in great part ^{what} they said was true. "It was no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink" (Num. 20:5). Neither the forty years behind them wherein they had "lacked nothing" (Deut. 2:7), nor the prospect of the Land before them with all its wealth and fatness, sufficed to give them confidence at a time when Yahweh suffered them to be tempted, or, rather, tested. As at the earlier stage at Rephidim, God's past provision and the promise of His continued guidance are discarded by the assembly of Israel. So forty years had passed, the older generation had well-nigh littered the wilderness with their carcasses, and the lesson remained unlearned. We wonder, had some of the younger generation become tainted with the unbelief of their elders? There is really a three-fold parallel, should we care to follow it through. (a) Israel, approximately forty years before were about to receive the Law and the priesthood, and so shortly afterwards could have entered the Land. They failed through unbelief (Heb. 4), foreshadowed at Meribah and other places. (b) At Kadesh, Meribah is re-enacted - strife about water, unbelief manifested. Shortly afterwards the Law is to be repeated (as declared by Moses in Deuteronomy) and

again the priesthood is prominent. A change is imminent, for Aaron is about to die and Eleazar to receive the garments (Num. 20:23-29), and afterwards they do enter the Land, with all the older generation perished on "this side Jordan". (c) The third application is to be observed amongst us, as the Kingdom draws near and Jordan is only just out of sight. We find Meribah (Contention) amongst us; again, the third time, the subject is Water - but not the water of this life, which is in context at the present time, but rather the water of life, the Word itself. Unless we are careful our Meribah can lead to unbelief in our midst. The older generation amongst us should give a clear and decisive lead regarding our fundamental beliefs and the Body must stand firm, or else the adversaries will ravage the flock, such as Amalek at Rephidim, and it is noticeable, as we have advanced earlier, that the attack was made on the hinder or feeble part of the people, women and children, and such is the attack today. The result can only be resolved in the events that followed Meribah at Kadesh of Zin: Edom refused to allow Israel to cross his borders, although it was the recognised king's highway (Num. 20:14-21). So then in today's language our testimony against the worldly Edom will neither be recognised nor heeded, for the Lord will not go up with us. Soon the Law and priesthood will be united in our Lord for ever, and may we in the mercy of God pass over Jordan into the Kingdom - that is, unless an evil heart of unbelief befall us. Never let it be said that our unbelief has rubbed off upon the younger generation. The lessons of both Meribahs remain with us.

Yet a vitally important message still is found at Kadesh in these stirring happenings. It is important to see that God's object in testing Israel at this time was not to expose their unbelief (though it did that incidentally), but to bring out for them and for us in a striking way the value of the priesthood which He had set up on their behalf. That priesthood spoke of grace being in supremacy. We are all familiar with the association of the throne of grace and the great High Priest in Hebrews 4:14-16. Priesthood in this aspect supposes infirmities in those on whose behalf it is exercised. Our creature weaknesses make us shrink from suffering, and if suffering is involved in God's way with us we are very liable to get discouraged and to cast away our confidence. But there is One before God on our behalf at every moment when faith is tried and when the circumstances seem to be the reverse of favourable.

We would have thought that the very sight of "the staff" ought to have reassured every fainting heart in Israel. How could it be supposed that Yahweh would let them die of hunger or thirst in an "evil place" if He had chosen to have a priest before Him on their behalf who was characterised, typically, by resurrection power? It was unthinkable. The very rod chosen by Yahweh Himself, which had budded and borne fruit! The very fact that there was a priest among them with this very extraordinary token should have been assurance to the people that Yahweh's grace still held good, and that He was bent on carrying out His purpose, notwithstanding what might come out in them. But who among us thinks of these things in the moment of testing? Again the lesson remains to us: if we are unfaithful, He abides faithful, for He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). So Yahweh spoke to Moses, "Take the staff" (Num. 20:7-8) before all the assembly. All were to witness the miracle and the means by which it was done. We have mentioned in brief some of the details connected with this. Seek them out in full for your profit and pleasure. Characteristically Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces at the people's unbelief (verse 6) and it is noticeable that the Glory appears. But not for destruction this time, but rather, as we have said, to advance the grace of God revealed in the staff and priesthood. Both are magnified before the people, and Rock, Staff, Moses, Aaron make up a composite picture of the various activities of our Lord Jesus Christ in His redemptive work (Heb. 2:9-18). These thoughts should enrich us and comfort our minds, that we might put full faith in our High Priest, revealed by Paul in the wonders of God's grace in Ephesians: "the glory of His grace", "the riches of His grace", "ye are saved by grace", "the surpassing riches of His grace". Let us, then, speak to the Rock, sure in the strength of the Staff, and drink deeply of the waters of Truth from the riven side, absolutely certain in the fulfilment of God's plan.

(2) Final thoughts - about the elements in the name "Kadesh", which means "set apart", "a sanctuary". Furst, the eminent Hebraist, says "kadhash" signifies "to be fresh, pure, bright, holy; to be consecrated, sanctified, set apart to a sacred use". "Kedesh" the noun means "sanctuary, seat of worship". The Oxford Gesenius says the verb furnishes the original idea of separation, withdrawal, sacredness, holiness, while the noun means 'sanctuary'. We are reminded that Kedesh of Naphtali over Jordan

became one of the six cities of refuge (Josh. 20:7-9). So we are taught in view of this later expansion of the word that (1) God alone is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble, and (2) this refuge is found in Christ our Lord, to whom we have fled for refuge (Heb. 6:18-20); (3) also the fact of Ex. 25:8, "Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them", and (4) the manner of approach required of us: "Ye shall reverence My sanctuary". The Tabernacle and the Temple were set apart for Divine service and worship, and indeed for prayer and the study of the Divine Word. How foreign, then, is unbelief and contention to Kedesh, whether in Zin or Naphtali and how equally foreign it should be to us in these last days. The power, the teaching, the separateness of Kedesh still remain: let us realise and accept this great salvation and remain steadfast in our faith, for "the truth will out" and abide, and all false ideas will eventually be beaten to pieces on the "anvil of God's Word".

The teaching of the noun is clear and unmistakable, "the place where God dwells among His people". Today that sanctuary is found in Jesus, of course (Col. 2:9, John 1:14 R.V.), and it is through our abiding in Him (John 15:4) and He in us that God dwells with us and in us and is our sanctuary, and in whom we have grace, blessing and peace.

What lessons have we in the verb, as it affects ourselves? That of separation to our God, and voluntary withdrawal of our hopes and ambitions from the world. The keeping of our vows and the Truth as essentially sacred, and walking in holiness. We have stressed that this Kadesh can only be found in the Wilderness of Thorns. Kedesh in Naphtali stresses the fact that an "agony of wrestling" surrounds the environs of the refuge city there. So the wondrous story is projected forth in sure prophecy to Luke 9:23-25, "denying" and "losing" in this life, and the constant strife between spirit and flesh (Rom. 7) are but the cruel thorns of Kadesh in Zin; and the wrestling, even though it be sanctified, is Kedesh in Naphtali in figure - if undertaken in true Christian discipline it will certainly find life and that eternal.

So we must pass on. The end is in sight, in many ways. Eight stations alone remain to traverse out of the forty-two undertaken. Miriam has died here at Kadesh; Aaron must ascend Mount Hor and so pass away; Moses has not long to remain; the the remaining older generation have very little time to "apply their hearts unto wisdom" - the end is in sight quite definitely. If only we knew what time we had left! Would this be our attitude? So, then, Kadesh has been experienced and represents a great advance on Etham, forty years earlier. The Etham = Perfection stage meant consecration, an entire devotedness to the Lord = true sincerity. The holiness represented in Kadesh implies a progression in subjective sanctification. Thinking of the connection between these far-separated stations, can we not once again discern the teaching of Paul in 1 Thess. 3:13, "To the end that our hearts may be found unblamable in holiness". Blamelessness (Etham) must be found in us, that at the last we may be faultless (Kadesh). This latter teaching, almost at the end of the journey, indicates a long step towards the end, but actually only as we are truly in Jesus, Who 'is unto us Sanctification" (1 Cor. 1:30).

Numbers 33:37 Mount Hor. Station No. 35.

"Mount Hor in the edge of the land of Edom". One lesson impresses itself upon us with great force at this station. The death of the leaders testify to the fact that "though the workers may fall, the work goes on". Let this be one of the lessons as we follow Israel slowly winding up from the low valleys to the heights of Mount Nod. No one is indispensable; there is always someone to fill the breach, and although it is quite natural to be saddened in heart at the loss of a faithful brother or sister in the Lord, it is also a forthright reminder for us, particularly as we grow older in the Truth and, possibly, have retained responsible positions in the ecclesia and brotherhood - perhaps longer than we should, as we are not indispensable. There is a tendency for us to think that we are indispensable. The Scriptures point out that this is not so, and we are wise if we keep this in mind: no doubt we should escape many sorrows if we did keep it in mind. Remember Mount Hor!

It is noticeable as we approach Mount Hor that wider views come before us; even to the people there came wider prospects of Moab and Edom. However, first of all, the meaning of the name, "Hor". Again, on the surface, not very helpful - "Hor" or "Har" simply means "a mountain", which is self-evident. It is when we look into

the elements of the name that we get the expansion of thought and idea that we seek. Strong's Concordance (ref. 2023, etc.) helps wonderfully in this connection. We find the word is connected with "Harel" and means "the mount of God", which increases the interest appreciably, and, figuratively, "the altar of burnt offering". "Harag" = "to put to death". "Haryi" = "woman with child", "pregnant". "Harhor" = "mental conception or thought". Shall we expand these root meanings a little? The main object is for our readers to trace them out for themselves. There is nothing like first-time discoveries in Scripture: they are jewels that never fade or lose lustre.

Mount Hor, the place where Aaron had to die, was indeed Aaron's mount. "Aaron" means "very high" and, incidentally, is similar to Hor or Har in Hebrew, meaning "mountain". The record (Num. 20:23-9) says that here Aaron, along with Eleazar his son, and Moses his brother, ascended Hor, and after Aaron had been divested of his high priest's garments, he died in the 123rd year of his age and the 40th from Israel's coming out of Egypt. Here is where "harag" or "hereg" = "to be slain" comes in, because Aaron died as did Moses later at the direct command of God. Neither was in ill health; in fact Deut. 34:7 goes to good length to help us understand differently: (1) they died in the first place because they had been in "unbelief", and (2) typically, neither Moses nor Aaron was suitable to lead Israel over Jordan. "Harel" is also connected with "Hor", meaning the "mount of God", and used figuratively as the altar of burnt offering. So Aaron, high priest of Israel, died before God and on this mount Hor. There was also another death on Hor at this time, a figurative death as viewed in the altar of burnt offering, and a further dedication in Eleazar, upon whom the robes of Aaron descended. "Eleazar" = "whom God helps". To be a Levite, a son of Aaron, and to be placed in charge of the sanctuary arrangements was one thing, but to become God's high priest was another, of higher responsibility and greater honour. So death to self and future devotion to God and His people are fittingly figured here under the ideas contained in the altar of burnt offering on God's mount in what we may term, for want of a better name, the further dedication of Eleazar. That Eleazar would have the help and interest of God is evident in his name. A fitting close to the pilgrimage of Aaron, the death of Israel's High Priest, witnessed only by Moses and Eleazar. How apt it all is, because the Lawgiver and Priest are now founded in one man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and it was by death - His own - that He took the old away. The Truth is indeed stranger than fiction. However, to continue: Num. 20:27, they went up Mount Hor in the sight of all the people, and (verse 29) "when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel". Just as the staff of the priesthood - Aaron's in particular - had been magnified at Kadesh before all the people, so now the action proving that God had dealt with Aaron as He had said at Kadesh is to be publicly witnessed. The God of Israel will give honour to whom honour is due, and severity when it becomes necessary. God will not be mocked. He is, after all, a 'consuming fire'; yet at all times very merciful. Aaron, before he dies, is allowed to see the priesthood pass on to Eleazar his son, one whom Aaron knew to be faithful in all his house, and so in his last moments Aaron would be comforted over Nadab and Abihu, who had failed so many years ago (Lev. 10:1-7). Yes, our God is the God of mercy and grace.

"Harhor" was another word from the same root, according to Strong. This word has to do with "mental conception or thought", so the various principles we have advanced should find a true conception within our thoughts when we study Mount Hor and its associations: (1) How jealously God regards the types in Scripture. (2) How careful we should be lest the "idle word" should cost us entry into the Kingdom. (3) How that no one of us is indispensable in God's purpose. (4) How we ought to groom others for the positions we hold in ecclesias, because sooner or later, we must vacate them. (5) How we must realise that God is a God of goodness and severity, but also essentially of mercy and truth.

There was another root idea connected with "Hor" and that was "hriy" = "woman with child" or a pregnant woman. This particular idea is pregnant with thought, particularly with Numbers 21 and Revelation 12 in view. We note that as soon as Eleazar was invested with priestly robes, a certain king, Arad by name, a Canaanite, came out against Israel, and in the ensuing battle some of the Israelites were taken prisoners (Num. 21:1). Now according to Harsha "Arad" had for one of its meanings "a dragon". Strong and Bagster, etc., give "wild ass". Perhaps students would care to work out the connection from the various lexicons and concordances. Think of the

exciting possibilities when compared with Rev. 12:4, the woman clothed, ready to be delivered, and the dragon ready to consume her man child as soon as it was born. Here we see the enmity between Hariy and Arad. Again let our students work out the relevant details and send them in to the writer, who will do his best to edit them! Could this sequence in Rev. 12 be a Divine commentary upon this scene upon Mount Hor?

Note in Num. 21:1-3 the play upon "destroy" or "devote" (Heb. charam). Because this people fought against the people of God they were afterwards devoted to destruction, and also their city; hence it was called "Hormah", and - further interesting information - the Greek gives "Anathema". So Paul would instruct very sternly regarding those who are enemies of the Lord: let them all be anathema (1 Cor. 16:22) = utterly destroyed. Not a phrase for modern ideas surrounding religion in general; but, whether we can stomach it or not, this is the end of all who oppose Christ! So, with these queries now in your court, dear reader, we must journey on and leave Mount Hor, mount of God, and take our way to Zalmonah. What will this station bring forth?

Just a final after-thought re the antagonism of Arad. He was a Canaanite, a trafficker, concerning which, Zechariah points out (Zech. 14:21), none will be able to enter into the House of the Lord of Hosts in the coming Kingdom. This destruction, entire devotion, then, at Hormah is a prophecy of that Day. It is noticeable that Zechariah says, "the house of the Lord of Hosts" = The Lord of the Armies (the Canaanite went against the hosts of Israel). The same Lord of the Armies will guard against any pollution in a spiritual sense of the House of God in the future. Jesus cleared the Canaanites or Traffickers out of the Temple at the commencement and at the close of His ministry. He will do it the third time in the Kingdom, so making spiritual perfection in the exclusion (John 2:13-17, Matt. 21:12-13, Zech. 14:21). The Priests were the traffickers in Jesus' day. Josephus tells us that the booths which Jesus overturned were the booths of Annas, the ex-high priest. Micah tells us all about this in graphic detail (for another time?). The lesson comes down to us, who sometimes tend to make merchandise in and of the house of God. If we make traffic of the Truth, then we shall come under the fearful Anathema -- at "Maranatha" (= "The Lord comes")!

Rather fascinating, is it not, that when Eleazar had been vested with the robes of the high priest he should have been antagonised by Arad the Canaanite. Particularly when we think how Eli's sons and the Samuel's sons and later the high priests in the time of Jesus made traffic in God's house (1 Sam. 2:13-17, 8:1-3). Was it a besetting sin of the priesthood? Were they by the nature of their office laid open to such temptation? Remember Malachi's stern words in Mal. 3, etc. Shall we not pay heed to the Lord? How can we prevent these things happening to us?

Israel conquered finally by making a vow and through prayer to God. So we may conquer in the Name of the Lord, Who at the moment still awaits the promised Melchizedekian manifestation, a Priest-King on a Throne of Righteousness and Peace at Jerusalem, at that time "a possession of the inheritance of peace", as the name means. Right now He is the Greater Eleazar (and what a wonderful study in comparative typology for anyone who will get down to it) = "The Lord our Strength". No doubt Paul had this incident in mind when he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me", in other words, through the Greater Eleazar (Phil. 4:13). What a serious thought for us!

Compare at your leisure: The palm branches (Rev. 7:9); the thrones (Matt. 19:28, Rev. 20:4); the riding in triumph, scattering incense and gifts (2 Cor. 2:14; Joshua 10:24; Mal. 4:3; Micah 7:10; Zech. 10:5; Psa. 47:3; Rom. 8:37; etc.).

Shall we not, then, with all this tremendous power behind us utterly destroy ("Hormah") the Canaanites within ourselves?

Numbers 33:41 Zalmonah. Station No. 36.

Num. 21:4-5 describes the journeying from Mount Hor down into the valleys again, "by the way of the Red Sea", to compass the land of Edom, and, once again, the old story, "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." This time it was open unbelief. They spake against God and Moses and the complaint is levelled at both God and Moses: "Why have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in this wilderness?" Water and bread once again were in short supply. The final blasphemy, "Our soul loatheth this light bread" - or, this bread that is "kelokel" (Heb. to be very light), lightly esteemed, despicable bread. And this was the Manna itself ("angels' food", Psa. 78:23-25). So the fiery serpents were sent by the Lord with their deadly bite among the people.

The parallel chapter, Num. 33:41, informs us that the name of the next station from Mount Hor was Zalmonah, and from a close comparison of both records this must have been the very place under consideration. Has the name any significance for us? We find that it most certainly has.

"Zalmonah" means "An Image" or "The Place of an Image". The root from which the word comes is "tzelem" and it is used in Daniel 2:31 of the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his sleep, and in Dan. 3:1 it is applied to the image which the same king created in the plain of Dura. Which is remarkably accurate, to say the least.

The Image speaks of the Brazen Serpent which was lifted up, and the people, if they looked upon it in repentant faith and humility, were healed of that deadly sting of the serpent. The details of this incident are well-known to our readers - if not, now is the time to get "genned up" (Num. 21:6-9). These are a few of the points at issue here, besides, course, the mass of material found in Dr. Thomas' works and other writings on the Truth, such as can be consulted for further study apart from what we advance.

In the Hebrew these serpents are called "seraphim", which literally means "burners", no doubt having reference to (1) the fiery pain of their bite; (2) possibly to the feverish temptations that had so quickly entered into the hearts of the people, and (3) the fiery wrath of the Lord against them at that time. There are other considerations, of course, such as their relationship with the cherubim, of particular interest with regard to Isa. 6 and Isaiah's vision. McLeod writes, "This name 'seraphim', which occurs in Isaiah, meaning 'to burn or shine', is the term by which Moses denotes both the fiery serpents which bit the people and the brazen serpent which was appointed to heal them". This, however, is too obvious to satisfy Gesenius, the highest authority in Hebrew literature, who makes "seraphim" to be derived from an Arabic word meaning "great magnates". McLeod goes on, "But in what sense were the vile reptiles which bit the people for their sins entitled to this honourable designation?" They were, however, of a bright and fiery colour, and the brazen serpent (Num. 21:9, Heb. "nachash", a shining thing of brass, such as Deut. 8:15, 2 Kings 18:4) made in imitation of them, being raised upon a pole, was readily beheld by all the people in every part of the camp. In the daytime it glittered in the sun's rays, and was made luminous at night beneath the glow of the fiery pillar. The cherubim in the Temple, being overlaid with pure gold, were, when seen in vision by Isaiah, irradiated by the light of the glory of the Lord. They are thence called "seraphim", shining ones; and, by Paul, "the cherubim of glory". Thus the Son of God, the Saviour and light of the world, Who was prefigured by the brazen serpent, as made "sin for us", is now made manifest to all; not by human wisdom and the ostentatious and often useless erudition of the learned, but by the bright effulgence of the glory of the Father. When we follow the actions of the seraphim in Isaiah 6, verses 2-3 and 6-7 at this time, in the face of this Divine glory and irradiation, we learn that the splendour of the cherubim and the bright burning of the seraphim are both obviously connected, clearly showing that the glory of the church is not from herself, or from the world, but that, being near to God, she thence derives her loveliness and beauty. The nearer she is to Him, the brighter will she shine in the light of His salvation.

Here we are also taught that when the glory of God shines upon the church, she has the clearest perception and the deepest sense of her unworthiness; for when the seraphim were adorned with radiance and beauty by the glory of the Lord, His people saw themselves as mean and unworthy in the presence of His glory. The dimness of created excellence contrasted with the majesty of the Lord and they deeply humbled themselves in His sight.

Such a consideration of cherubim and seraphim should always be prefaced with the knowledge that, literally, "cherub" means (che) "like a" and (rub) "multitude" or "rab" (similar implication), having to do with the promises to Abraham of a multitudinous seed, and particularly, as that word implies, of a multitude complete (Rev. 7:9-17). We can possibly see the importance of Isa. 6:6-7 in relation to the seraphim cleansing the lips of the prophet with the fire from the brazen altar. Do this in connection with James 5:8-20. Trace it out and compare. Look up Ezekiel 28 in the light of the first part of this quotation from McLeod, particularly as the cherubim are seen in the light of Hebrew thought as being perfect in knowledge. This chapter fairly scintillates with interest. Such ideas as this should be developed when we think of the seraphim.

Returning to Zalmonah, four headings effectively sum up our thoughts here :

(1) The giving of the name. This we have brought out and have seen how appropriate the name is, "the place of the image". We have noted the image was the brazen serpent of Numbers 21 and John 3:14. This incident attracted the notice of Jesus and the whole scene must have been continually before His mind in the days of His flesh when talking to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up". We wonder what the thoughts of Nicodemus were at this time, when Jesus continued, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life". How appropriate, then, was the name "Zalmonah", given at this station of the coming out of Egypt. Both to the situation that developed there, and also to us in these last days, may we ever look in truth towards John 3:14-15.

(2) The character of the scourge. We saw these were the seraphim or burners, and we have briefly summarised the teaching surrounding them.

(3) The deliverance provided. We have mentioned the brazen serpent, the image in Zalmonah station, and have seen that possibly it was introduced to show the likeness and harmony between the cause and the cure. (a) Note there was nothing in this image itself to effect a cure: in fact, Grotius and the older generation of Bible students say that, on the contrary, brass would make it worse naturally. (b) We are taught by experience that God selects and sanctifies the most unusual means for the working of benefits. For instance, in 2 Kings 2:21 God uses salt, which of itself would cause barrenness of soil, to make fruitful field. "Like cures like" - sound homeopathic principle here. The greatest cure of all is, of course, death being removed by death (Heb. 2:14-18), which is the point at issue here at Zalmonah.

(4) The conditions attached to the cure. The conditions are really one at Zalmonah: a simple look in faith and repentance. It is interesting to note that a similar condition as seen in Thomas was commended by Jesus (John 20:24-31), with the additional statement, "Blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed" - not the ten disciples, for they had already seen and believed (John 20:19-22). Peter remembered this vivid saying to Thomas, and he wrote to Christians who like ourselves had no opportunity to see the Lord, and used the expression, "whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8). The lesson comes down the centuries to us. We have not seen. Do we believe? Can we claim the blessing, "the joy unspeakable and full of glory". Zech. 12:10 leads us to believe that the repentant attitude and faithful exclamation, "My Lord and my God", by Thomas is an earnest of the Israeli national repentance at the Advent, so near at hand. In Zech. 13:9, speaking of the "refined third", God says, "They shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God".

The method and practice of looking upward in faith has come down to us in these days. Hebrews 11 reveals that the "long view of faith" has been the rule since Eden, and will be until Eden is restored.

Finally on Zalmonah we have the following points:

(1) The image had only the form of a reptile: there was no actual poison in it. So Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), though there was no sin in Him personally. He bore our nature, sin's flesh derived from Mary, so being in the likeness, but having no sin could never have the definition "sinful", or, as the word means, flesh full of sin (1 John 3:2-5).

(2) The lowliness of Christ is shown in the choice of brass, a baser metal than either silver or gold, and so more fitly representative of Him Who was born in our flesh and took upon Himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7-8).

(3) The great reproach which fell upon Christ is shown in the image, for He was called as bad as a serpent, and it was charged against Him that He was linked with that old serpent (who is causing much needless controversy today; usually designated as working for truth, but it would appear to be more devilish in character). However, Jesus was linked with the devil in His working of miracles (Matt. 12:24). All this fulfils Psa. 22:6, "a reproach of men and despised of the people".

(4) The wisdom of Christ is shown in this serpent. See His own words, "Be as wise as serpents", to the disciples (Matt. 10:16, Isa. 52:13, Col. 2:15).

(5) The strength of Christ is shown in the brass of which the image was composed (see Job 40:18). The strength of Christ in reality was His love, in which He loved the Father and His children to the "uttermost" (Heb. 7:5, Song 8:6-7). "Uttermost" is a word of the Divine. Christ alone (as the Father gave him power) could love and save to this extent. We are only the product of the day of small things, and can neither love nor hate

to the uttermost. Such, then, is the strength of Christ in this Brazen Serpent, seen in dim outline and symbol. Psa. 45:7 gives another graphic picture of the inner strength of the character of our Lord: impeccable discernment between good and evil which no other man possessed, and, of course, perfect in each case. His love for righteousness and hate for wickedness, complete with the reward from the Father. But in order to make this condition possible for Jesus we must add Song 5:16, where it is stated that the "palate" (R.V.), "mouth" (A.V.), "is most sweet" - naturally, the tasting organ of the body, revealing the most delicate sensitivity of the spiritual palate with which Jesus was blessed. For Jesus to be in a position to remain sinless, it would appear that this spiritual detection would be most vital. Many times we have sinned before we are aware of the action. With this innate perfection of spiritual detection would be granted the capacity to assess each action and incident truly (Song 5:16). In Psa. 45:7 we had revealed His prompt action - action to the uttermost in each condition. In this particular aspect the writer believes that the expression "the man made strong" finds its fulfilment. Absolute discernment of either righteousness or sin immediately in every given situation. And because He devoted Himself every time "to the uttermost" on behalf of the Truth, then perhaps we may perceive a little how the Lord Jesus could absorb within Himself the full effects of God's wrath against sin and at the same time remain sinless. The typical aspect is revealed in the brass or copper of the brazen serpent. The brazen altar, which was subjected to continual fire from day to day, and year to year, under the Mosaic economy (Ex. 27:1-9, 38-46). Possibly the shittim wood "inner core" of the brazen altar, which would appear to have been carbonised by the continual heat to which it was subjected, may well indicate the agonising of our Lord in the heavy task and weight of sin He had to bear. Again, the high melting point of copper would bear out this idea of the inner strength of our Lord. It is also very remarkable that in Psalm 45:2 the Hebrew for "poured" is "Yatsaq" or "Hutsaq", which is the word used of molten metal or refined brass or copper in 1 Kings 7:13, 23, 33, etc. Indeed, as we have said, the "man made strong" for God. Students may like to search out the connections. (See the present writer's "Exposition of Psalm 45" and "The Temple of Solomon" - yet to be published - for further details).

In passing, please note the place where the metal was processed, 1 Kings 7:46. All pillars, lavers, etc., vessels for use in the Temple were of bright or scoured or burnished brass. (a) In the plain of Jordan - river of judgement, or the plunger. (b) Clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan. (c) Succoth = "to tabernacle", booths. Zarthan = "to pierce", "to cool". Zarthan = Zarethan (Joshua 3:16), where Israel crossed the Jordan under Joshua. The moulding of the man made strong, then, is typically stated as taking place in the plain of the River of Judgement, Jordan ("River of Death"). Many, as we have observed, were unable to cross over "the Plunger", and died this side Jordan. We are pointed, however, in the other direction this time, of course. Jordan, over which Joshua led the people "dry-shod". Jesus tabernacled (Succoth) in the clay ground (human nature) as we have seen, and in order to be made perfect suffering of necessity had to come upon Him. So He was "pierced" through (Zarthan) with many sorrows, and, as it was between these two points, Succoth and Zarthan, where the "cooling" took place, so Jesus became established, the flowing grace symbolised in the brass became solid and unyielding to the stress of evil, and so Jesus overcame. Compare the two pillars of Solomon's Temple, Boaz ("Strength") and Jachin ("He shall establish"). Jesus alone could stand the weight of God's anger and displeasure against sin. So the Greater Joshua will lead His remnant over Jordan dry-shod in the great day.

Because of this strength of character possessed by Christ, God could pour grace forth on to His lips and palate, as molten brass or copper is poured forth with all its further implications; having complete appreciation of what was required of Him, Jesus instantly obeyed (Isa. 11:1-5). Shall we not, then, wonder at the innate strength of Christ's character revealed in type in the Brazen Serpent?

Our last lesson, the last because of space, concerning Zalmonah ('the place of the image'), comes down to us from the reign of Hezekiah and his reaction to this brazen serpent. The narrative is found in 2 Kings 18:4, "he brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense unto it. And he called it Nehushtan ("a piece of brass"). Here we find Hezekiah the radical at work. Compare Isaiah 14:29, fiery flying serpents and judgements upon Judah for idolatry.

There is a love for antiquity which is in many respects a noble and elevating feeling. As Mackintosh Mackay says, "If there be a fresh beauty about things new and young, there is a tender, pathetic interest about things that are old and crumbling to decay". No doubt this feeling is in many ways good for us, for the present is the great thing for us: it is with that we have primarily to do. We often go back in memory to the past, and our Bible brings those worthies of old back to us who are as fresh today and as real as they ever were. In fact, all our studies so far have been in what we may term the very real today's past. We learn our lessons from past lives, and so our estimates of modern life are truer, our sympathies are deepened and our horizons widened. Humility is always there for us to learn, as we view their problems and frequent failings. We also learn courage from their victories: in spite of all they lived their lives bravely and well - let us do the same!

But this love of antiquity, like every other true feeling, is apt to be abused. For example, it is an abuse of it to perpetuate an injustice simply because it is old and because it had the approval of bygone generations. The thing doubtless had much to justify it in the past. Everything had a reason for its existence once. But that is gone now and with it the thing itself must go. We believe the love of antiquity becomes not only a danger but a deadly evil when the past is looked to, not only as the chief inspiration, but as the only inspiration for the duties - whether of writing or of deportment - of the Truth. Sometimes it becomes an immediate necessity for a true man to cut it away from him altogether, to destroy "the idol of antiquity". We are not thinking of the "set pattern of doctrine once delivered" (Rom. 6:17 R.V.). That must at all times be inviolate, upheld in the faith we had when baptized into these beliefs. The mad ravings of "science so called" must be met with stern resistance. These are the true views of our belief; they will ever remain as the Truth - to men and women of Truth. They cannot be dismissed, as some would have it, as an "idol of antiquity".

Hezekiah was a true radical. He saw that something must be done to remove this idol, worshipped for itself all these long years: "for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it". These things can happen to us, and the outcome of those days when our movement started in the nineteenth century can become in this way an idol. Men, through the turbulent times of the Judges, the more glorious periods of David and Solomon, and in the disruption of the kingdom, had seen in this brazen serpent an object of superstitious veneration. They looked upon it as having strange powers lurking within; nay, as a kind of god. It was an awful degradation. The thing that had once brought life to the dying was now bringing death to the living! What had once pointed to God had now reduced Him to a piece of old brass! In many ways all movements, social, political or religious, seem to have this kind of experience. Think of Cromwell at the seat of Parliament venerated down the ages as the model way of governing the people. Having turned out the House because they were about to pass a measure detrimental to the best interests of the nation, Cromwell, the chamber empty, stood scanning the empty seats. At last one thing caught his eye. It was the ancient gold mace - the symbol of a government that had failed to do its duty. "What", he said, taking it up in his hands, "what shall we do with this bauble?"; and then he quickly added, "Take it away". - He called it "Nehushtan"! We believe that this incident truly represents Hezekiah's action in 2 Kings 18:4.

Yet let us not be mistaken. There is a false as well as a true radicalism. There is an iconoclasm which delights in knocking things down simply because they are old - which is inspired by the love of novelty and novelty alone. That was not the spirit of Hezekiah. That was not the spirit of Cromwell. That must not be our spirit today. The brazen serpent was taken out of dispensation and time, and consequently wrong ideas were formed about it, and wrong motives and importance attached to it. One hundred years and more have passed since the inception of the Christadelphian Body. There has been a vast change in world conditions, social, economic and religious, since the days of our earlier brethren. Their loyalty and zeal for the fundamental beliefs must still guide us. Their Bible reading and study are outstanding examples. Their writings should be read for instruction in Biblical interpretation and exposition. This is well, and to be desired 100 years ahead. But it should end here, and as such should not be the end of all things for us. If so, we take them from their dispensation and they become liable to receive a veneration above what the brethren themselves ever intended. While we gratefully accept the advice of yesterday, it must be put to use and geared to the terms of today and further exploration. We have bro. H. Whittaker's able volume, "Exploring the Bible", on our desk at the present moment. This we believe is the true spirit we must adopt so that our preparation may help the younger generation of tomorrow to prepare for what might

assail them should the Lord still remain away.

The incident with "Nehushtan" has plainly indicated that the purpose of God never stands still, and happy is he who has true discernment of the times. Remember the chiding remarks of Jesus to His generation, "Ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matt. 16:39). Shall we not, then, keep our dispensational aspects in the correct order, using practically the advice from yesterday and gearing it for today? Avidly read and prepare, in the further knowledge which by God's grace has come to hand during the interval of time, and place all in faith in the context of tomorrow. Then "Nehushtan", a piece of brass, can never find lodgement in us.

No doubt the lessons of Zalmonah will remain long with us, but the trumpet is heard and the advance has sounded, so we must take up our spiritual tent-pegs and follow our Master, keeping our eyes upon the "Son of man who was lifted up", with absolute conviction in His promise that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"-- such is the heritage of all who are true pilgrims.

Numbers 33. Punon. Station No. 37.

The very good map of the Exodus in Thompson's Chain Reference Bible before me shows that Israel was now skirting the Mount Seir range of commanding peaks in the land of Edom. This range runs almost due north from the head of the Gulf of Akaba. Punon, we see, is marked halfway between Zalmonah and Oboth. We are informed that this station has been identified by Eusebius and Jerome and by modern travellers. It is also mentioned in secular history. It will be seen that Punon is but a short distance from Zalmonah and some of the old scholars think that Moses obtained metal out of which the Brazen Serpent was constructed from the Punon copper mines. Whether this is so or not we have no direct evidence, but the metal had to be got from somewhere, and it would appear rather unlikely that Israel carried stock-piles of metals with them. However we may view this suggestion, note that we are only tentatively dogmatic about it. At all events, Punon was an area celebrated for the copper content found there and was known for its copper mines in particular. Is it without significance, do we think, that one of them was situated at Phaeno, identified by scholars with this station, Punon, at which we have now arrived. The older generation of Bible scholars tended to the view that the incident of the Brazen Serpent included this station as well as the last.

The people moved on from Zalmonah, many still suffering the effects of the fiery serpents(?). It was necessary, they thought, for Moses to erect the healing image at Punon also, in order that those not previously cured might enjoy its miraculous benefits. Again, whether or not we are prepared to accept this, the Brazen Serpent was not left at Zalmonah (as we saw from 2 Kings 18), but went with them on their journey, so at least the possibility is there. The probability is greatly enhanced, we believe, in the meaning of the name itself, and in the events which we may fairly think transpired there. We find that at least two meanings have been attached to the word "Punon", depending on the Hebrew root from which it is taken. The evidence appears to be equally divided, and, as both are very apt and appear to follow in direct sequence, we may draw our lessons from them both.

The first meaning is "great doubting; amazement, or distraction of mind". Turn to Psa. 88:15, "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted". The word here translated "distracted" is that from which "Punon" comes. We are to convey to our minds an impression of the great trembling and despair into which Israel had been thrown due to the bites of the serpents; also the fact which has come before us on many occasions during our spiritual trek, that sins pursue us from one point to another. We are not through with sorrow and temptation when we have left Zalmonah: they pursue us to Punon. This interpretation also reveals the relentless vigour with which sin attacks us, particularly when we, like Israel, are near the end of our journey. When Canaan is in sight, sore trial is apt to assail us, possibly more so than at any other time. Gideon's band, though faint, was compelled to pursue "even to Jordan", and so must we. After all, our pilgrimage is, or should be, a progression in spiritual experiences: such is the case as we view the lives of the worthies of God - as they gained experience, so their trials and testings increased. See Abraham in particular and note the period in his life when he was asked to offer up Isaac, remembering that this was a real life experience, and not just a rhetorical exercise on behalf of Moses. Yes, the sifting process is apt to become more involved and increasingly severe as we

progress in sanctification (Luke 22:31-32. Verse 32 gives us good reason for it : that after we are sorely tried, we may strengthen our brethren). Another thought in Psalm 88:7 reads, "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves". Psalm 88 is usually designated to the later history of Judah, after Josiah's death. We have noted that it is strikingly akin to Hezekiah's lament in Isaiah 38. The point at issue is that the sentiments employed are those of either the aged, or those like Hezekiah about to be cut off like a weaver's warp, or those of a nation about to have their national life cut off and to be removed into captivity. We find Peter comes very near the thoughts of this station when he says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial", or, as the Greek has it, "Be not surprised concerning the burning within you" (1 Pet. 4:12). This is a very true description of what our hearts feel when at our spiritual Punons. Sin produces within us inward burnings and doubts, and fear of death, with consternation. Paul knew Punon, for he says, "We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life". How many of our readers have felt this extremity of affliction in body and soul? It is not joyous: this we know from our personal experience, but it is well for us if we are able to recognise the design of Providence in it. Paul did: "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God Who raiseth the dead" (2 Cor. 1:8-9). How true this last phrase is, and is very apt, of course, towards the Punon sequences in our lives. With Punon, Heman the psalmist, King Hezekiah, Peter, Paul and ourselves, the crisis as far as we know has been reached; death stares us in the face, and who except Jesus could outstare death? and how could Jesus have done this except by the "glory of the Father Who raised Hira from the dead?" (Rom. 1:4). We can but trust in God, Who raiseth the dead! This attitude was found in Jacob at Peniel (Gen. 33). Work it out for yourselves.

Harsha says, "There is something peculiarly touching about the doubts which arise in the minds of the aged. The questionings of the young result from inexperience, intellectual pride, desire for the things of the world, and many other unworthy causes; but the doubts of the old come from the weakness of the flesh, the worn-out heart, the weary brain, and the exhausted sympathies of those who have about completed the service which Christ has demanded of them". This makes the Punon state so pathetic and Eccles. 12:1-7 so much to the point here: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them".

Youth is not only a time of inexperience and intellectual pride, but also of exuberant zeal, and it is also the time for laying foundations that will support us when evil gathers around us. "Little children", was John's advice, "keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). Lay foundations on the Rock which will stand wind and tempest (Matt. 7:24-27) and Punon too in the end time of our journey. Sin, as typified in Amalek, will always attack the weakest link, sometimes our weariness and concentration, as it did with Aaron and Miriam, now gone, and Moses ere long to follow. The end time in which we live is living up to Punon standards and conditions in our ecclesias, leading to "amazement and distraction of mind", in particular for the older and more feeble among us, as many have testified to the writer. We would say, "Beware", to the troublers, and remind them of the words of Jesus regarding the "little ones" - whosoever maketh one of them to stumble, etc. (Matthew 18:6). How stupid it does appear to be, with the Land almost in sight and most of us near the end of our personal Exodus, that there are those amongst us who would cause havoc in the flock through spiritual "amazement and distraction of mind". But the end shall be peace! And ---

The second meaning and phase of Punon will reveal the way, because the meaning is "The face of the Son", "the looking on or beholding of the Son". It is, as we have said, Zalmonah almost repeated. There we saw "like cured like", serpent v. serpent, etc. Here at Punon we behold the insular effect produced in oneself by the bite; and the objective result it must find in us - else we perish - even the beholding of the Son.

It is very clear, then, what led the older generation of scholars to connect Zalmonah with Punon, both physically, in that they were twin stations, so to speak, and that copper was obtained from Punon for the serpent - or this is the way the present writer views it. The case appears to be substantially correct, according to my way of thinking.

Have we ever considered what the Face of the Son implies in Scripture? Could we suggest a short list of study based around it, and what the basic thought around it all is?

So to view in truth, actually and spiritually, is the greatest honour to come our way. It is our deepest wish that the Lord would overlook our "gluttony" and grant us both, as it falls out in 1 John 3:2, etc. Now the series of suggested studies on the theme, The Face of the Son:

- (1) The Revealing Face: "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).
- (2) The Attractive Face: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty" (Isa. 33:17).
- (3) The Resolute Face: "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).
- (4) The Stern Face: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (Psa. 34:16).
- (5) The Transfigured Face: "His face did shine as the sun" (Matt. 17:2). 1 Pet. 3:12).
- (6) The Dishonoured Face: "The did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him" (Isa. 50:6).
- (7) The Submissive Face: "He went a little farther,
and fell on His face" (Matt. 26:39).
Matt. 26:67).
- (8) The Scarred Face: "His visage was so marred more than any man" (Isa. 52:14).
- (9) The Judicial Face: "Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne" (Rev. 6:16).
- (10) The Glorified Face: "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face"
(Rev. 22:3-4).

This wonderful list was compiled in the first place by John Macbeath and a jewel of rare lustre and beauty it is. Work them out in your Bible Classes for a feast of fat things. You can find others, too, by careful search. They will be well worth while, you may be sure.

How beautifully does this second derivation of "Punon" foreshadow "the lifting up of the Son of man upon the cross, that the whole world may look to Him and live". How often do we turn in weariness and sorrow and in distraction towards that face, which, like the face of David, is "goodly to look to". Because He overcame, so we may overcome: that is His promise to us (John 16:33). Once again we are struck with the significance of Punon. It is very striking indeed, since it is to Jesus we look when despairing of any other assistance. Did Jesus have this in mind when He referred to the uplifted serpent as a type of Himself? The comparison is, if we may say, "Divinely apt", because no doubt it was intended to be so. As the devil, or sin in the flesh, has the power to fill us with the burning bitterness and distraction of Punon (No. 1), so Jesus its counterpart (Punon No. 2) has the ability to cool and exert healing power to us. The venom of the serpent is counteracted within by the look of faith to the uplifted serpent without, and we have the glorious promise that after Gilgal is past on yonder side Jordan, and the uncleanness of the flesh is finally "rolled away", as Paul again puts it, Christ will transform our vile body, according to the workingwhereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3:21, Greek). Christ's Name alone can bring salvation (Acts 4:12). Paul is persuaded, therefore, and is willing to endure so much that the power of Christ may rest upon him (2 Cor. 12:9).

Looking unto Jesus has been a well-spring of exhortation in our body for decades, and should also be our attitude. We who believe are the true "anthropoi" ("up lookers"). It has been well put again by scholars that every relation which Christ sustains to us contains a suggestion of our duty to be "up looking" to Him ---

(1) Is He our Guide? Then we fix our eyes upon Him, that we stray not from the way, for the quicksands of doubt are lurking to suck us down.

(2) Is He our Master? We fix our eyes and attention upon His face so as not to lose a single word.

(3) Is He our King? His counters always face the throne. We may never show our backs to the King.

(4) Is He our Shepherd? The sheep hear His voice and look up in meekness to be blessed by His smile. Trace the many other features occupied by such a consideration.

We shall, then, not fear the desert, for we may look up in faith and surrendered will to Jesus our Guide, our Master, our King and our Shepherd. The object of leading Israel through the desert was to "humble them, and prove them, and to do them good at their latter end" (Deut. 9:16, with which agrees Psa. 37:37, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace"). How true these sentiments are! God is leading us to that glad Day, but before the day of liberation comes, we must pass through Zalmonah and Punon. May we ever keep our sights on the Face of the Son, and all will be well.

Numbers 33. Oboth. Station No. 38.

The inspiration and the uplift of the Face of the Son at Punon may well prove very

necessary both to Israel and to ourselves, as we find ourselves marching to the upper extremity of the Seir range of mountains, and arrive at Oboth, our next station. The map reveals that its situation lies at the point where the road bends down from the high levels into the fertile plain towards Bozrah and the land of Moab. Unknown to us, Balaam, with his enchantments and sorceries, awaits us, to curse, for greed of gain, at Balak's request.

What happened at Oboth we have no means of knowing, but the signification of "Oboth" itself seems to imply a work of preparation to resist the evil that was to come via Balak and Balaam. "Oboth" means "free or familiar spirits". See Lev. 19:31, "Regard not them that have "familiar spirits" (that is, "Oboth"), neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God" (S.W.A. Lev. 20:6,27 1 Sam. 28: 3, 7-8). The latter passage features the Witch of Endor, who was possessed by a familiar or evil spirit. Other passages for your investigation in which the word occurs are: Deut. 18:11, 2 Kings 21:6 23:24 1 Chron. 10:13 2 Chron. 33:6 Isa. 8:19 19:3 29:4. If you follow these passages through very carefully, you will find how important the word is in the ethics of Scripture, and how distasteful it is in God's sight, i.e. Spiritualism, etc. It is not in our itinerary to discourse at length on this subject. For those interested, Fausset's Bible Cyclopaedia and Girdlestone's "Old Testament Synonyms" have splendid articles on the art of divination, sorcery, etc., that can be read with much benefit.

We are concerned with the question, In what way did this Oboth station warn Israel against the future danger and degradation of Moab and Balaam? (Num. 27) - particularly in view of Num. 23:23, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel". This information was as yet unknown to Israel, and, as we know, apart from God revealing His secrets to His prophets there could be no enchantment or divination for or on behalf of Israel. The future was sealed apart from this gracious concession from Yahweh our God. Did Israel actually seek to the familiar spirits (Heb. "ob") at this time?

The urge to look into the future could, no doubt, be traced to the conquest of Eve for the knowledge of God. History is full from that time of human curiosity to trace either one's own future fortune or that of nations, etc. It is interesting to note in this consideration the fact that Oboth has the meaning of "waterskins, leather bottles, hollow skins", and that the Septuagint gives "ventriloquists", used as an appellative. It is also translated "pythones", "oracular serpents", "familiar spirits". Compare Acts 16:16, the girl possessed with "a spirit of Python", taking us back to the old serpent of Genesis 3, who was more subtle than any of the beasts. Our word is the plural of "obh", meaning also, besides the other definition, "a soothsayer, an invoker of the dead, one possessed with the devil" (Job 32:19, 1 Sam. 28:3, 7-9, Lev. 20:27), connected obviously with the Delphi oracle. But more particularly are we concerned with Hastings' Dictionary's information, which may help us with our problem at this time. With regard to the "familiar" definition, we are there informed that "familiar" has in this phrase the sense of the Latin "familiaris" = "belonging to one's family", ready to serve one as a "famulus" or servant. It would mean, then, that Israel were warned at Oboth not to seek to their "familiar spirits" belonging to their own households, or they would be punished by God for so doing.

We have mentioned the fact earlier that it would appear that the golden calves which were moulded at Sinai represented Joseph, whom the Egyptians worshipped under the sign of a bull calf with a stack of corn above its head (found in the hieroglyphics in Egypt). Confirmation of Joseph's being associated with a bull calf is in Deut. 33:17, "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, or young bull, etc." If this suggestion is right, then it would imply that they not only worshipped Joseph as "the god which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt" but had also resorted to his spirit in the familiar sense to see into the future. This insurrection had been sharply rebuked at Sinai. Was Oboth a second occurrence of this punishment, or just a reminder at this place of their former folly and a severe warning not to repeat it? We can only say, Maybe so. But you will agree all the elements of circumstantial evidence are here?

The idea of the "obh" meaning a "bottle" is very instructive (Job 32:19). The spirit was supposed to answer out of a bottle, an empty gourd or a wineskin, etc., perhaps with a hollow sound caused by the wind or breath, so that the process called "obh" must have depended on producing some peculiar sound which might represent the voice of the dead. See Isa. 8:19 on this point. Times change little in the art of Mumbo Jumbo,

do they? The paraphernalia of this black art goes right back to Eden. Let us in these "enlightened" days beware, and forsake the daily zodiac chart in our morning papers; walking round ladders; being half scared to death on seeing one crow alone; and let us not further waste spilt salt by casting some over our shoulder; and so forth. We can take comfort in the knowledge of Numbers 23:23 once again: "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel". The future is secure in the hands of Christ our Keeper. We are assured that God is working together for good with those who are the called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28 Goodspeed).

Finally, a beautiful contrast may be noted between the familiar spirit of fraud and deceit, which can only bring to us strife and dismay, and the "familiar friend" in whose society there is peace (Psa. 41:9 marg.). Neither of Ahithophel nor of Judas are we speaking this time, who proved broken reeds and brought treachery, but of Jesus, Who is indeed a true Familiar Friend on the basis of "shalom" (peace) here; we shall not fear, then, what familiar spirits or Balaam can do to us as we approach the plains of Jordan in the near future.

Israel journeyed on from Oboth, no doubt chastened and forewarned of the dangers ahead, and in Num. 33:44 we are informed that they "pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab". This gives us its location on our map: it is just south of Bozrah. Possibly Israel stayed here some little while, as by the location runs the Wady Zared = "The valley or turn of the willows". In this pleasant place Israel relaxed. What, then, are its lessons for us?

Numbers 33:44. Ije-Abarim. Station No. 38.

Ije-abarim = "Ruinous heaps of Abarim", or, taking Bromley and others of the older generation of scholars, "The heap of fords" or "Confusion of fords".

Again what transpired at this station is not fully known, but, judging from Bromley's meaning of the name, we conclude that the deep work at Oboth found here its natural result. Could it be possible - it is more than probable - that at this point more or less confusion occurred in crossing the Zared mentioned above, or in deciding which would be the best way to be pursued on their journey, and discussions arose among the people because some of them had been led to fanaticism by the sorcerers at Oboth. These conjectures may or may not be true, but there appears to be little doubt as to the spiritual lessons that we may learn here. Spiritually, we may take the station to indicate that confusion of mind and uncertainty of judgement in the pilgrims towards Jordan occurred when temporarily they did not see clearly their way.

It may be for wise purposes that the way is not always clear, or that a cloud may be allowed to intervene, or that fresh and great trials and temptations are permitted. Sometimes we find ourselves in the position of a traveller in the desert when he comes to a confused variety of ways or paths crossing one another and knows not which to take, or to a river that has many fords, some safe, but most of them dangerous, and, to make matters worse, such guides as offer themselves contradicting one another. Jacob was in such a strait (Gen. 32) when he heard that Esau was coming against him with 400 men. Israel was in similar case at the Red Sea. Paul was in such a strait when he was being taught not to trust in himself but in God, Who raiseth the dead (2 Cor. 1:9). Have we not reached Ije-abarim today, when so many theories have been put forth, each purporting to be the Truth in itself on a certain point? Have we not reached a confusion of ways? We may well ask, What shall I do?; which is right? What shall we do about it - we are not left in doubt! ---

(1) That we prayerfully and reverently plead the promise of John 6:45, "that we may be all taught of God". (2) That we shall cleave to the fundamental beliefs we are baptized into, and exercise truly Christian love to all concerned. And (3) that we shall cleave to Christ crucified as the true and only way that leads to life (Luke 9:23, John 14:6).

Even though we may not know which way to turn in the confusion of many counsels about minor matters, if we hold to this threefold confession we cannot miss the right way, and, no doubt, when viewing it in the long run, we shall see that this period of trial, very sore sometimes, may have been the very process necessary to lead us into further knowledge and Divine illumination. One way is certain amongst them all - "the pure in heart shall see God" and at length be freed from Ije-abarim.

Briefly, shall we mention three points which help to confuse us all at these times? -

(1) Doubting. "Wherefore didst thou doubt?", Jesus said in Matt. 14:31, and we have

expressed here the precise idea of Ije-abarim. We wonder what our reactions would have been if faced with the same choice as Peter; most of us would never have even tried to walk on the water. However, Peter took the right decision when he cried, Lord, save me." We see the force of the Greek word for "doubt". It is a figurative word, taken from the hesitation and confusion of a person standing at a point where two roads or fords met. What a vivid picture of the real essence of doubt! Compare Matt. 28:17, "But some doubted" - some stood in uncertainty, as does an undecided pilgrim at the cross roads. Jesus says that this uncertainty amongst us should be gone; there is no need for it. Jesus is our guide and provider and defender if we remain faithful and be obedient. Think about His counsel in Luke 12:29, "Neither be ye of doubtful mind" (Live not in careful suspense", as in the marginal reference). The figure in the Greek word here is of some unstable thing, as a drift or tumble weed, a piece of paper floating in the air, or as a ship tossed about in a storm, now rising, now falling, to the tumbling of the waves. A. T. Robertson in "Word Pictures of the New Testament" reveals the word as the Greek "meteorizesthe", an old verb from "meteoros" = "in mid air; high (our meteor); to lift up on high; then to lift oneself up with hopes (false sometimes); to be buoyed up, to be tossed like a ship at sea; to be anxious and in doubt". A very colourful picture has emerged, and a very definite one, to the writer's way of thinking; it means today to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Eph. 4:14). Our path is to strive towards the perfection of Eph. 4:13, "the stature and fulness of Christ", both ecclesially and individually. This is the path to take and put away doubt. The set form of doctrine indicated in Eph. 4: 1-12 should be kept sacrosanct, then the right path will not only be seen but will also be clearly determined. Finally, under this heading consider three passages: Acts 10:20, Rom. 4:20, Jas. 1:6. The same Greek word is translated by three different English words, "doubting", "staggering", "wavering". The issue is quite clear. Such "doubtful" characteristics should be avoided in Christ.

(2) Double-mindedness. 1 Kings 18:21. "How long halt ye between two opinions (or two thoughts)?", Elijah's challenge to Israel on Carmel. Could not this be levelled at our generation in the Truth? Dr. Adam Clark says the idea is taken from a bird hopping from one twig to another and not knowing on which to settle. Scott regarded the figure as taken from the unequal walk of a lame person. Vividly we have portrayed in either case the double-mindedness of the Ije-abarim station. What is the cause of double-mindedness? (1) Possibly through lack of evidence either one way or the other. (2) Not being fully persuaded in one's mind as to the relative values of each case. (3) Through a lazy attitude, not really caring about the subject or outcome in particular. "Sitting on the fence". (4) That it is policy to wait until we can see clearly where the die is cast, so that we come in on the winning side. (5) Because of popularity, not wishing to offend our friends or supporters on either side - commonly known as the "dear old pals brigade". These are only a few reasons why it is so easy for us to fall into the sin of doubtfulness. It has been well said, "The one trusting thought of the one law is the only safe guide". Proverbs 28:18 advances this warning. "He that is perverse in his ways" - in two ways - "shall fall at once." There is no certainty to the man who stands in confusion before two ways and tries to walk in both. The statement of Jesus is absolute. "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24), which is associated with the "single eye" of Matt. 6:22. Compare also Paul's treatment of singleness of heart in Acts 2:46, Eph. 6:5, Col. 3:22 - if twinned to a "single eye" we shall only follow one road (what Harrington Lees was pleased to term "the King's Highway", the Christ way). Paul again urges the Corinthians to "attend unto the Lord without distraction", without being drawn in different ways. Literally, both English and Greek words mean this. It is also the Ije-abarim state of mind, which we are to avoid or escape from in Christ. This is double-mindedness (Jas. 1:8 and 4:8). Just as schizophrenia is to be deplored in mental health, so doubtfulness is to be avoided in spiritual health.

(3) Double-heartedness. Probably the real difficulty behind it all. Cp. Psa. 12:2 - "With a double heart do they speak", literally "an heart and an heart" (12:4), shows their attitude towards God: uplifted in pride, they shall indeed be cut off (12:3). We have a lovely contrast in 1 Chron. 12:33, where the men of Zebulun could keep or fall into rank without a double heart, asserting the unwavering fidelity and resolute courage of these warriors of Zebulun in contrast with Psa. 12:3 just quoted, "who had a speech of smooth things, with heart and heart they speak" - they think one thing and say another. Note also in 1 Chron. 12:38 a further complimentary mention of these faithful warriors of

David, "they came with a perfect heart to Hebron", and that Israel were of one heart to make David king of all Israel. The psalmist of Israel described the right sort of people in Psalm 102:7, when he said the "heart of the godly man is fixed". David himself said of himself, "My heart is fixed, O God; my heart is fixed" (Psalm 57:7). A heart single and set in the ways of God, so it was all his days, but even David wandered out of the way of understanding in the matter of Bathsheba; so with all our strivings, sometimes we act with a double heart, as David did on this occasion. If we follow the life of David after this one decline, and repent truly as he did, then all will be well; the Lord will be merciful to forgive us. However, think of Hosea's portrait of Israel in defection; "Their heart is divided", he declares (Hos. 10:12). This is a terrible state to be in; as Hosea again puts it, "a cake unturned" (Hos. 7:8), half baked, half dough; black on the outside and all "gooey" within. It is like a "speckled bird", unfit for sacrifice (Jer. 12:9); indeed, like a city or house or kingdom divided against itself (Matt. 12:25). There can only be one end to such a state.

Jesus said, "The house or kingdom that is divided against itself" should fall. Pray the Lord it may never be our lot. Rather do we desire the sentiments of Ephes. 1:18 (R.V.) to be described of us - "having the eyes of our heart enlightened". This is the main thing. If we desire the light it will be given. It has been well said, if we follow on to know God and the right road that leads on to God, Ije-abarim will no longer be a place of perplexity to us.

Numbers 33:45. Dibon-gad. Station No. 39.

Ije-abarim with its warnings and lessons must be left behind and we take our place in the caravan. Again from our map it would appear to be quite a journey. Israel are journeying straight northwards along the foothills of Moab. We are told that they would pass through peaceful valleys, wide pastures and fertile fields. What a delightful picture it must have made to the desert travellers! It is evident from Num. 21:12-20, etc., that they had to pass through several interesting places before reaching Dibon-gad, our next recorded camping place in Num. 33; but for wise reasons - Divine choice - they are not mentioned in our list. We have observed that Moses by the special command of God wrote down 42 important stations of the Christian journey from baptism and all that that means to the true Canaan, the Kingdom of God - or, to be correct, the assembly for judicial appraisal prior to the entry. Hence such stopping places as do not have part in this inspired parable are excluded from this particular enumeration. They have a temptation in themselves for the present writer to leave the trek, because we are strongly inclined to their application - particularly one at Beer (Num. 21:16-18), because it is prefaced by the saying of God to Moses, "That is the well (Beer) whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, 'Gather the people together and I will give them water' ". So Yahweh provided water for the people for the third time. Num. 21:17 is noticeable in that Israel sang at the well, "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it". This time it is a faithful Israel who sing in faith at God's command concerning the well, and it is fascinating to see that the well had to be digged and opened by the efforts of the princes and nobles of Israel (Num. 21:18). Here is another very far-reaching lesson for our own days, as we, like them, have now entered the final stage of our journey. God will give His people abundant water at this stage. Therefore, the water of life is there for our taking. Consequently, Song 4:15-16 is in focus again as it refers to us; so that we ourselves in the abundance of these refreshing waters may water other gardens from our abundance (compare Ruth 2:18). The water has always been there for the devout seeker, just as the manna continued to fall for those who would take the trouble to collect it and process it as directed. On this occasion the well had to be dug by the staves, the rods of office, of the princes and nobles of Israel. This is a noble work indeed - for the various magazines and publications that make their way through the letter-box, for the arranging committees and Bible Class planners and for all concerned who do a noble's work in digging for that well of water which springs up into eternal life (John 10:14). The controlling staves of authority had to do this. This is a very exacting task and a heavy responsibility - one which cannot be avoided - and it is a fact the the responsibility rests fairly and squarely upon the shoulders of these princes and nobles of the true Israel.

I am afraid I have succumbed very easily to this side-track. Let us return to our normal journey. But I hope you will agree that the digression was worthwhile. If only the teaching could go home to those concerned, the writer would be a far happier man than he is at the present time of writing.

Dibon-gad lies awaiting us, in the centre of rich and fertile and green pasture. We shall have to exercise a strict hand with our cattle and flock; already they have scented the luscious grazing ahead and are urging forward, eager to reach it. We pray that this instinct might be borne home in the spiritual sense upon our hearts as the old corn of the land - eternal life - draws near, so that we all might eagerly urge ourselves towards it.

This Dibon-gad has very interesting historical connections. Num. 21:30 informs us that it was seized by the tribe of Gad after the overthrow of the kings Sihon and Og. Originally called Dibon and captured and rebuilt by the children of Gad, it received the compound name Dibon-gad. The tribes of Reuben and Gad were so impressed that they asked Moses and Eleazar the high priest that this fertile pasturage might be given them for their inheritance. Having agreed to the conditions of Moses, that "they would go up before the people" and capture the country, meanwhile defending Israel as a vanguard, they had their request granted. The conditions included the passage over Jordan, again in the vanguard, helping their fellow tribes to be settled in their habitations, and then they might return to their inheritances on that side Jordan and live at peace. See the narrative in Num. 32 for full details. Again we have a very suggestive outline of the true spiritual life of conquest. It has been well said that "they who take the lead, bear the brunt of the battle, and are eager to yield themselves up in true charity and self-sacrifice, receive the inheritance of peace and satisfaction. This is the lesson".

Dibon is mentioned in a number of places in Scripture as a "citadel", a "high place of Moab" (Josh. 13:9, Isa. 15:2, Jer. 48:18, 22, 24). It would appear that a veritable battle royal must have happened here when Reuben and Gad invested it. The splendid purpose which was in the hearts of the assailants to prove worthy leaders of the Lord's host was matched by the equally powerful love of the Moabites for their families and their city. The victory fell to Gad, revealing the warlike prowess of those warriors and the Divine help freely accorded them.

The meaning of "Dibon" has again caused a division of thought. Some take it to mean "sufficient knowledge" or "sufficient understanding". Others think that Dimon (the waters of Dimon, Isa. 15:9) is the same place, with the meaning of "pining; wasting away; consumed; channel eroded by water". We need not be disheartened; because both definitions very aptly fit our teaching at Dibon-gad.

Turning back to Num. 33:45, we note that the name of the previous station, Ije-abarim had been changed to Iim: "They departed from Iim and pitched in Dibon-gad". The literal meaning of "Iim" is "doubts, confusions or fluctuations of thought"; so, in connection with our first definition of Dibon as meaning sufficient knowledge or sufficient understanding, we have a parable in cameo of the journey of a true pilgrim from the place of doubts to a position of sufficient knowledge and understanding. This is where our little diversion fits in so splendidly. They had drunk of the well of life at Beer! As we briefly analyse this understanding, we shall note that it all stems from this source:

(1) In what does this sufficient understanding consist? - which will lead us from doubt to understanding. (a) "Whose we are and Whom we serve" is pre-eminent on the list. We serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is on their behalf that we apply the force of arms. (b) To balance this primary essential it is of equal importance that we have a complete understanding of self. This makes sober and sombre reading, in the writer's experience. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked". We are, however, very privileged to study ourselves under so candid a light, because the search-light of Divine truth, searches even the deepest recesses of our hearts and unfolds all its deceptions and dangers. Not until we have the Divine-human relationship rightly balanced do we ever leave Iim spiritually. (c) The acknowledgment of sin, its workings and its destruction, are such a seed of doubt until we find them expounded and dealt with in the Scriptures. Isa. 53, John 3, Rom. 6 and 7 effectively dispel our doubts on this score. (d) Understanding of the devil, Satan and its devices must be brought home to us, and its remedy, as Heb. 2:9-18, Matt. 4:1-11, etc., show us, before doubt is removed. "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us" = "for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11), said Paul. We have already dealt with the effective remover on this point - "to put on the whole armour of God" and thus be able to stand against "the wiles (the subtle methods of deceit) of the devil". Dibon dispenses courage and faith to us, as John 16:13 did to the disciples: "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" = "for God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape" (1 Cor. 10:13).

(2) Sufficient knowledge only comes through personal effort and conflict. Gad means, as we know, "a troop", "army", "arming" or "military invasion" (Gen. 49:19, 30:11). It is from this conflict between "flesh and spirit" (Rom. 7) that we learn the knowledge of sin. Paul again said, he "had not known save by the law" (Rom. 7:7-25). Just as Israel overcame Dibon-gad by warfare, so the blessing to which we attain at our spiritual Dibon-gad results from a holy warfare, which grows more fierce as we grow older. No wonder that this station comes so late in the Divine journeys. Paul speaks of the various encounters and conflicts in Eph. 6:12. We have outlined them in our earlier chapters. From this warfare results the sufficient knowledge which is a source of comfort and strength to the warrior. Harsha truly says, "No one can sincerely take up the weapons against envy, wrath, malice, injustice and unrighteousness without coming to a larger appreciation of peace and meekness, faith and love, truth and righteousness".

(3) As we said, the Word of God is the chief weapon in this warfare. Through the Word we obtain victory, and by it we are led to this "sufficient knowledge". The weapons which the Word provides are 'mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, and to the casting down of evil imaginations, that every high thought may be subject unto the obedience of Christ' (2 Cor. 10:4-5). It is at Dibon-gad that we realise the fulfilment of the blessed promise, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). In the midst of the uncertainties of human knowledge and the waverings of human opinions, let us encourage ourselves by looking into the Word of Truth and discover = What we know. Trace the sequence and note the progress in the series of the following passages in this order: (1) Rom. 7:18, (2) 1 John 3:5, (3) 2 Cor. 8:9, (4) 1 Pet. 1:18-19, (5) Job 19:25, (6) John 9:25, (7) 1 John 3:14, (8) 2 Tim. 1:12, (9) Rom. 8:28, R.V. marg. (10) 1 John 5:15, (11) 2 Cor. 5:1, (12) 1 John 3:2. If these truths are in us and we in them, we have within ourselves and experience sufficient knowledge and understanding to know the goodly things of God that await us at Dibon-gad.

The second derivation of "Dibon". Dibon was in Moab, and Moab from its inception (Gen. 19:30-38) is a picture of carnal thought and consciousness. Moab, as we know, was an inveterate enemy of Israel and no Moabite to the tenth generation could enter Israel (Deut. 23:2-6). The taking of Dibon-gad, one of its strong cities, together with Sihon and Og, the kings (Num. 21:30), highlights the victory of the understanding of God's Word and its diligent application to these carnal thoughts. Ruth the Moabitess did just this. Forsaking all Moabish hopes and ways, she "clave" to Naomi and the Hope of Israel, becoming, as we all know, the ancestress of Jesus our Lord (Ruth 1:16, etc.). The living water of the Word had penetrated her heart and "wasted" away what was of Moab; her heart had been "overcome" so completely as in the onslaught of Dibon by Israel's force of arms on the actual city. Just as truly as the river will find its way by channelling and erosion, so the Word of God had penetrated Ruth's heart until she was "consumed" with the desire to follow Naomi to Israel and Bethlehem. She had noticed the effect of being divorced from the Land and Hope in the family of Naomi - the name of Chilion in particular means to "pine away". This would not do for her! Ruth had also experienced in the attitude of Orpah a renewed longing for Moab. Orpah "pined" for Moab and returned there, to disappear from sight in Scripture - but perhaps not in reality, as perceived in her name, meaning "neck" or "mane", particularly in association with a lion. An investigation into this field, however, lies beyond our present achievement and so must be left for another study, God willing. Mahlon, the husband of Ruth, had revealed to her "mildness" in his attitude to sickness, and displayed characteristics entirely removed from the natural arrogance of her native background. So we see how the truth made deep inroads into the consciousness of Ruth, the water of the Word eroding away the fleshly instincts of her nature. What Ruth was and experienced concerning the Israel of God pleased her well and she sought the Lord God of Israel with all her heart. According to her name, Ruth had "beauty of character", the long view of faith, and now sought the third derivation of her name = Satisfaction, in Bethlehem-judah in Israel. She was granted satisfaction in the first instance in Boaz' household - a true "sufficiency of knowledge and understanding" - granted satisfaction by God. She awaits, however, with us the coming of the true Emmaus experience when spiritual satisfaction will be realised in the sufficiency of knowledge and understanding of 1 John 3:2 - "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is (even as He is, R.V.)."

This last quotation, as you will agree, is the promise of ultimate realisation for those who seek the true Dibon-gad.

Num. 33:46. Almon-diblathaim. Station No. 40.

It was with high hopes, no doubt, in the promise of Dibon-gad, that Israel heard the call to assemble for the march. This time, we are told, it was to Almon-diblathaim. We find upon investigation that it held high promise spiritually to us, apparently the very highest experiences of a true Christian. (1) Our aim, we think, would not be too high should we say that we may compare these concluding stopping places with the last months or years of the mature disciple's life in Christ. (2) A second appraisal would appear to typify the highest attainments of those who, by entire consecration to the Lord's will and work, are truly separated in life unto Him. As this attainment is reached in Ephesians in the New Testament, a comparative study between them would be of great value to those who would undertake it in a devout spirit. For obvious reasons of space it would be impossible to trace them out, so we offer the suggestion for your attention.

From "sufficient knowledge" of self, sin and salvation here at Dibon-gad, we enter into another rare spiritual experience. Straight north from Dibon, and just beyond Amorite country, will be seen Almon-diblathaim. It has been identified in a village which was still standing on the site in the late nineteenth century, just north of the Arnon. What has happened to it since we have no idea, but this information need not entertain our exposition. We are informed that it is supposed that the name was given to the place from the circumstance that it was the centre of vast rows of fig trees, whose fruit was very frequently collected and stored there for shipment. "Diblathaim" signifies "cakes" or "lumps" of "figs", and is used in 1 Sam. 25:8 and Jer. 48:22 as "Beth-diblathaim", which may be rendered "the house of fig-cakes". "Almon", the other word compounded into the name of the station, means "hidden", and comes from the same Hebrew word as "almah" (virgin), used of the virgin Mary in prospect in Isa. 7:14, and of the virgin choirs who sing the nuptial ode, Psalm 45, etc. It may be said that we are not very concerned with views about who the virgin in Isaiah 7 actually was, because the Hebrew definitive article is attached, "the virgin", which could only mean one person, Mary herself (see Wilson, Bible Quarterly, July 1965, on the Hebrew definitive article).

From these facts disclosed to us we perceive a very definite spiritual element involved in Almon-diblathaim. It becomes splendidly apparent that, following on sufficient understanding, hidden consolations are there for the happy pilgrims. Ezekiel 6:14 coincidentally mentions that in his time God would make Israel more desolate "than the wilderness throughout Diblath" in all their habitations (R.V.). (1) Israel must have made a thorough job of their assault upon this city. (2) Yet, in the midst of desolation and judgement, there is succour and consolation, even the "figs" of God's mercy. For those who follow the ways of God as pilgrims, behold then at Diblathaim "the goodness and severity of God". The sweet figs of His judgement are increased in spiritual worth to us = Almon-diblathaim, "hidden abundance of figs". What is the teaching around this name?

We can find at least three main lessons to be learned at this station:

(1) Hidden consolations. It has been truly said, "The refreshments and joys of the truth are not known to the world, or to those who give themselves in any large part to the world". We can enter fully into the saying of Jesus, "The world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me". The world at large has never seen Jesus in true recognition and spiritual understanding. The world in Israel did see Him -naturally - in the days of His flesh but utterly failed to recognise Him as the Lamb of God (John 8:39-48). We realise that Jesus grew up as a tender shoot in the midst of the wilderness of Jewry, unrecognised and unsung by the many. Using another figure, Jesus was the abundance of figs hidden to all except the eyes of faith in the midst of the wilderness through Diblathaim. Ruth, we are sure, would have found that hidden store of sweetness, should she have passed through Almon-diblathaim, and of course she did pass this way later. Ruth was a Gentile pilgrim as we are. She revelled in the succulent sweetness, was strengthened in "the inner man", and went on to satisfaction, as we have seen.

Jesus is the "hidden manna", "the true bread which cometh down from heaven" and of which we must regularly partake until Christ may give to us "the old corn" of the land after Gilgal. He is indeed the Hidden Manna to him that is overcoming (Rev. 2:17). All this we find realised when we come to our spiritual Almon-diblathaim, our "hidden place of figs". Col. 3:3 reminds us that "our life is hid with Christ in God". We can say to

those who find only desolation and stormy waste at Diblathaim, "we have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John 4:32). We are indeed nourished by interior sustenance, for we open our doors to the heavenly guest, and we are to "sup with Him and He with us" (Rev. 3:20). Compare Psa. 25:14, Prov. 3:32, 14:10, Matt. 13:11).

(2) Abundant consolations. The cakes or lumps of figs would point to the inexhaustible stores of refreshment in God's Word for us. At a king's feast everything was in abundance, on a lavish scale to show the greatness of the king's might and the vastness of his domain (cp. Esther 1:1-8). In Matt. 22:1-14 we have the parable of Jesus, the King's Feast. See Zeph. 1 for the apparent basis of these thoughts - very apt, we think. Burgon first drew our attention towards it. We just mark it to show the usual lavish scale of verses 4 and 9, "Come, for all things are now ready" . . . "They shall be abundantly satisfied" (Psa. 36:8). "My servants shall eat, drink and rejoice" (Isa. 65:13), and when Jesus shall preside at the Wedding Feast His gracious words will be, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved" (Song 5:1).

(3) Nourishing consolations. Figs have ever been noted for the amount of nourishment they contain; as a treatment for boils and a remedy for womb complaints. We notice that among the promises which God gave to Israel, to animate them to perseverance, and to impel them to hasten onto possess the land, was that they should find it to be the "land of fig trees" (Deut. 8:8). Cakes of figs were not only set before guests at their great entertainments (1 Chron. 12:39-40), but they were employed constantly as daily diet; so once again we are brought to the conclusion that we are taught at this station that God's consolations are designed to nourish us and strengthen us: not only for stimulation to cope with feasting, special occasions, but to give us stamina to live the daily round of life in Christ.

There is no sweeter thought in all the Scriptures than that of "Feeding upon Christ". We shall have gathered how this is referred to us. The constant and consoling privileges of a Christian. A brief list is appended - add to it at your pleasure -

- (1) Gen. 2:9, 3:22 Rev. 22:2 Ezek. 47:12 Set forth in figure as the Tree of Life.
- (2) The Paschal Lamb. Ex. 12:8 1 Cor. 5:7-8.
- (3) The Manna. "Angels' food". "Bread of the mighty". 1 Cor. 10:3, Psa. 78:25 (margin) cp. Psa. 103:20 (margin).
- (4) The Shewbread (Bread of the Presence). Lev. 24:5-9. Called the "continual bread".

This data really means that we find all the consolations and sweetnesses of God in Christ; and, since we can find Christ only in the Scriptures, then, if we desire this continual sweetness typified at Almon-diblathaim, we shall have our readings daily, read them, ruminant over them, masticate them; and if we are truly in Christ, they will not turn bitter in our bellies, as did the Word in Ezekiel, etc. Again we must remember that the sweetness must be reciprocal. The sweetness of Christ must be passed on to others; for, said Jesus, "if ye do this to the least of my brethren, ye do it unto Me", and so the sweetness of the fig tree will be there awaiting His coming and appetite. Beware the unfruitful fig tree of barren Israel, or else we shall be withered from our roots up (Matt. 21:19, etc.). May it truly be the time of the first ripe figs with us at His coming, that He may pluck, and eat, and be satisfied in us, finding the savour of Almon-diblathaim returned to Him in gratefulness and love.

The end of our journey is drawing near now. We have acquired "sufficient understanding", our doubts having passed; we have been fortified with the abundance of the hidden consolations at Almon-diblathaim, and we are eager to start. When will the advance sound? What shall we see from the heights of Abarim, because it is to this station that we must go?

Numbers 33:47. Mountains of Abarim. Station No. 41.

Soon our eagerness is satisfied. The camp of Israel moves forward and upward once more, ascending into the mountains of Abarim beyond Heshbon and before Nebo. Jordan, river of judgement, comes into sight, glinting under the sun. Jericho with its green belt, its walls standing starkly on "that side Jordan". Our eyes, used to the browns, reds and blacks of the arid waste of the wilderness, feast upon the rich beauty of the fertile fields north and west. This is the Land of Promise, of figs and grapes, whose stones are iron. What thoughts would rush through their minds, back into the past and on into the future for the majority. But what about the heartaches of the minority? There

still remained those whose carcasses were to lie this side Jordan! Had they applied their hearts to wisdom? If so, they will see that goodly land again and pass safely over Jordan to await their final cleansing at Gilgal. How about most of us? Our carcasses must lie this side Jordan if our Lord still tarries. Do we apply our hearts to wisdom? Daily, we hope, from the Word.

However this may be, the "goodness of the Lord" in all their way must have impressed them. Their hearts must have been truly chastened as they thought on the various murmurings and unbeliefs they had witnessed these last forty years. Come to think of it! — did this remnant which remained represent those who had done just this, applied their hearts to wisdom, and so been spared until this late time? Hardly so, it would seem, as to what happened at the last station. It was truly a renewed Israel that awaited the Second Reading of the Law (Deuteronomy) and now were almost at the Jordan. We would like to think that along with Moses there was a truly repentant minority, who will with him in the days so near ahead enter that goodly land. This may be so, but, later, 24,000 perished in the lust of Baal-peor in one day.

Again the map reveals the way: the mountains of Abarim are a continuation of the hills of Moab. The highest peak, situated right opposite Jericho, was called Mount Nebo. From the top of this Nebo, Moses was to behold the land of Canaan and then was to die "at the kiss of Yahweh" (Deut. 34:5).

"Abarim" means "Passages, passings over, or passings away". How truly fitting are these findings from the Hebrew. It is said that the mountains received their name from the circumstance that they ran down to the fords or passages of Jordan. So much from a natural angle, and wonderfully accurate from a spiritual angle. It is not without significance, think you, that Jesus came to be baptised of John in Jordan when John was baptising at Bethlabara - a word in the singular, with the meaning of "the house of passage" (John 1:28). The Law was to "pass away", in that it should be fulfilled in Christ, just as Moses would shortly "pass away" to be superseded by Joshua. In due time the hosts of Israel were to pass over. Jordan was now in sight. Even though this was the season of flooding, yet dryshod they would enter the land.

This Mount Abarim was most fitting in a spiritual sense. So we think first of all of (1) The passing away of Moses and the Old Covenant. Up to this time Moses had been the centre of God's work with Israel in the desert. His commanding presence represented the methods of Divine providence regulated through the law and penal ordinances. This place in its name signified, however, that "the law could make nothing perfect", and that it was the bringing in of a better hope (Heb. 7:19) that would. Therefore it was necessary for Israel to come up the spiritual heights where they should get a conception of the passing away of the Old Covenant. How much they grasped of this we do not know. How much Israel realised the significance of Jesus coming to the baptism of John at Bethabara we equally do not know. We do realise that God certainly meant to give them a glimpse of this great truth, and turn their eyes towards Christ, to Whom the law should lead. Miriam, the leader of the women, was dead; Aaron was also dead; and now Moses, the law-giver, was about to die - this side Jordan! It must have presented much room for thought for faithful Joshua and Caleb, etc.

(2) The preparation for passing from Law to Christ. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). We may never forget this; it is one of the supreme lessons of our spiritual Abarim. This truth enters more and more into our consciousness as we make progress in the separated life. "We are not under law, but under grace"; we serve not as slaves, but as children; we obey not through force, but by love. The Ten Commands as adapted by Christ to us still remain in binding force, but we keep them through the mighty power of a new motive, that of love to the Father, Who made the commands and laid them upon us.

(3) The preparation for passing from the observation of the letter to the love of the spirit - from prophecy to power. We have already hinted at the great change to come at the next station: Moses is to "pass away", and Joshua is to come in as leader and commander; and Joshua, as we all know, is a wonderful type of Christ, the "Salvation and Power of God", the "Lord from heaven" Whose cleansing spirit has been given to us to become "power" in us. All this is prepared for us in our spiritual Abarim. We searched these points out prior to our baptism (Jer. 31:31, etc.) and we still feel within the wonder of these adventures in Truth. "He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13). Its full fruition and

revelation were reserved for the New Testament, although we must keep to the forefront of our minds the fact that the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3), no matter in what age we live - yesterday, today, or tomorrow in the Millennium.

These mountains of Abarim may also signify to us, as they obviously must have done to Moses, a kind of exaltation into which the grace of God leads us as a preparation for death. We usually associate preparation for life in the Truth lived out in the life that now is, hoping to issue forth in eternal life at the coming of Jesus. The vista from Abarim and Nebo was, we believe, a gracious preparation for Moses for his near decease. This is a type to us of what Bunyan called the Delectable Mountains, from whose summits we as pilgrims can obtain inspiring glimpses of the Land and of the New Jerusalem. The sound of the swelling of Jordan is in Moses' ears, but he is able to forget the suggestions of terror which it conveys. The river of judgement (Jordan or death) may prevent his entry at the moment, for in a very little while he must receive the kiss of death at the hand of the Lord. He must go down into the valley, and though he must sleep on Nebo, it is only as a "shadow of death" ultimately. Because Moses "feared Him Who is able to save him out of death" and served faithfully, as a servant, the time is now imminent for him to wake out of sleep, along with all the worthies of God, and he, along with them - and ourselves, we pray - will pass over Jordan "dryshod". The rod and staff of our Greater Joshua will be our support. The waters shall divide before our feet, and, after Gilgal is passed for all of us, it is our fervent hope and prayer, that an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto us in Immanuel's Land.

Moses actually viewed the land from Abarim and Nebo. In the Transfiguration sequence he was granted an earnest of the Kingdom along with Elijah and the faithful three (Luke 9:28-36). Some of our number today have been privileged to view from the mountains and walk and live in the Land. We pray that this is an earnest to them, as it was to those transfigured on Hermon's height. Most of us, however, are not so privileged, but the most important aspect of our days is the capacity to ascend the Delectable Mountains in a spiritual way and view with the eye of faith Immanuel's Land as it will be when He assumes the title, "the Lord of all the earth". To visit the land today may be helpful but it does not presuppose an abundant entry into the Perfection Tomorrow, because comparatively few have been afforded this privilege. A love of the Land is essential, but not specific as an entrance. The application of such Scriptures as Matt. 25 is a must to every pilgrim. The evidence of these traits in our lives now reveals full well that we have ascended our Abarim and looked over Jordan into the Land; because these are the characteristics of Joshua Immanuel Himself. Death may overtake us before Christ returns, as it did Moses and countless others, but the view from the heights of Abarim will console and comfort us; for after the valley of the shadow of rest and forgetfulness, there lies ahead the eternal service yet to come in Immanuel's Land.

Abarim, then, gives to us the thought of Preparation. We should prepare for meeting God in the sanctuary, in service, and in the family, besides at death and judgement. Amos 4:12 has it: "Prepare to meet thy God". This applies to the present life and not to the future. We have already looked ahead for the meeting at Gilgal, and the crossing of Jordan to make this possible. We are to look ahead and by inward searchings and prayer get ourselves ready for the Breaking of Bread (1 Cor. 11:23-32). It is a solemn and momentous thing to "meet with God" under any circumstance. The Old Testament literally teems with this insistence. The need of preparation before engaging in worship or service. Compare Lev. 7:1-21. The law of the Peace Offering, the original of 1 Cor. 11:23-32. Compare Lev. 7:20 in particular. See also 2 Chron. 35:4, 1 Sam. 7:3, Ezra 7:10, Job 11:13, Jer. 46:14, and many other passages. Compare the New Testament and the Jews' special Preparation day for the partaking of the Passover (Matt. 27:62, John 19:14). We bear in mind how often the call came to Israel from God to "sanctify themselves" for some special manifestation of power on the morrow (Ex. 19:10, Lev. 8:30, Joshua 7:13, 2 Chron. 29:5, and many other passages).

It is, however, delightful and instructive to see how Yahweh Himself has set us an example by preparing duly for all things which He has purposed to bestow in blessings upon His people:

- (1) It is the goodness of God that has prepared the light and the sun (Psa. 74:16), the gentle showers and the plentiful rain (Psa. 65:10, 68:9-10, 147:8).
- (2) He also hath prepared the ground for the springing corn (Psa. 65:9, margin).
- (3) Compare the Book of Jonah. It is indeed a Book of Preparation. All things are prepared for the services they are to render: the fish (1:17); the gourd (4:6); the

worm (4:7); the vehement east wind (4:8) and the wind that caused the tempest (1:4). Here we are plainly taught that in the work of grace, God has made full preparation. God's "vessels of mercy" are afore prepared unto glory (Rom. 9:23); they are "vessels unto honour, prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21); they are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained" (margin, "prepared"); altogether, God's people are a "people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17). Paul said, "He that hath wrought us (made, fashioned, prepared us) for the self-same thing is God" (2 Cor. 5:5) - a superb text revealing how God has prepared, and we should prepare, that we may be fully able to become co-labourers with God.

Numbers 33:48. The Plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. Station No. 42.

The final journey must lead them into the valley once more - the Delectable Mountain heights must be left behind. So the long procession swept to encamp on the plains. Dangers still might lie ahead. The mountain summits from which they had obtained such wondrous views for the contest were now behind. A new generation, almost entirely new, faced Jordan. Their parents in the main had perished in the forty years' wanderings; new flocks and new herds had sprung up around them. How eager the people must have been to pass over into Canaan and enjoy the promised rest! Before this could be done, however, there was much training of heart and conscience to be done.

We appreciate that in the Divine system of learning or teaching the descent to the plains of Moab is an indication of the deep humiliation into which God saw it was necessary for them to enter. Numerically, this is the 42nd journey, and, as has already been indicated, the number 42 typifies in Scripture the whole period of spiritual training through which God causes a nation, or an ecclesia, or The Ecclesia, or an individual to pass (see Introduction). Consequently in the station before us, the 42nd, we are shown the completion of the wanderings and discipline under which Israel was prepared for Canaan. We have seen the people passing under every conceivable experience. They need now to pause before passing over into the "land flowing with milk and honey". Space is necessary for quiet thought and faithful self-examination.

Possibly, we could view this session first of all in three dispensations which are preliminary to maturity for Canaan: the drawing dispensation; the submissive dispensation and the dispensation of love.

(1) The drawing dispensation. At this time Israel were still under the leadership of Moses, whose name signifies "Drawings" or "Drawing forth", or, from the Egyptian, supported by Josephus, "saved or delivered from water". The story of Moses as a child has been well known to us from our youth. Drawn forth out of the Nile, to be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. But in Moses as a man history had repeated itself; Moses became a "drawer" himself to take the people out of Egypt. Having "drawn" them forth from the entanglements of Goshen and from the dangers and perplexities of the desert, he was now preparing them for the hands of Joshua as their chief leader. The dispensational type would appear to be seen in that the Father does draw us from out of worldly entanglements, in order that we may submit ourselves to Jesus, the greater Joshua. "No man cometh unto Me", said Jesus, "except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him." It has been argued that Jesus had in His mind when uttering these words this pitching near Jordan, and that His saying immediately following, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44), is a reference to the passage of Jordan, by which Israel escaped from the wilderness and came into the resurrection life of Canaan. However this may be, we do learn the lesson that it is God Who first "draws us" to Christ.

This camping at the final station at Jordan can be viewed in many ways apart from its historical setting. (a) The plains of Moab may stand as those experiences which will lead us in a final sense to complete surrender to Christ. (b) Taken as a whole, the desert wanderings typify the entire earthly life of the believer, showing us the Christian's pilgrimage through the world until, sanctified and made fit, he awaits the coming of his Lord. (c) Viewed from another angle, the experiences of Israel in this last station, the plains of Moab typify the struggles, hopes, fears and final surrender.

Romans 7 comes again into sharp focus and may be regarded as the fluctuating state of our feelings as we wait on "this side Jordan" for the coming of our Joshua. What Paul so gloriously portrays in Rom. 8 is the full consecration of the Canaan life. Death in Jordan and resurrection upon the other bank, so vividly portrayed by the various usages of the stones of Joshua 4, and Matthew's comments by John the Baptist in Matt. 3:8-9,

remembering Beth-abara where John baptised, form a delightful study sequence and a mighty spiritual lesson to us. Moses can "draw" the people out of Egypt, out of the Red Sea and from the dangers of the desert, but could never do so out of Jordan. Joshua alone can lead Israel into Canaan.

(2) The submissive dispensation. Of this we obtain a glimpse as we patiently await the command to follow Joshua. Israel was to come to perfect submission to Joshua. The lot that had befallen them in the weary journey was preparatory thereto; particularly were they to experience the humiliations of the plains of Moab in order that they might yield themselves body and soul unto their new leader. In like manner are we led into submission to the Son of God. When we are baptised into "the Name of the Son", it means that we are willing and determined to follow His leading through life and through death in total submission. Thus are we baptised into the likeness of His death and resurrection, passing with Him through Jordan to life in the Kingdom of God (Rom. 6:1-5).

(3) The dispensation of love. Matt. 28:19 also mentions the fact that we are baptised into the Name of the Father and Holy Spirit besides of the Son, and we are reminded that actually "all things are of the Father" and through Him and to Him. How often do the Scriptures emphasise that the power of God's spirit is revealed to us in love? Shall we not, then, constantly praise the Father for the strength of that love, that has never let us go through the moments of our uncertainties and clamourings in the 42 stations of our pilgrimage and wanderings to this place? We shall wonder how much of Paul's advice in 1 Tim. 1:5 we have put into practice during these years. "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned". This was seen in the Son, Who revealed the power of the love of God to men in this statement that we have just quoted. Yes, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, and Jesus likewise met this deed of love in perfect obedience by loving His own to the end, or "to the uttermost". Finally, note how the thought of love is connected with the Holy Spirit in the following passages: 2 Cor. 6:6, Gal. 5:22, Phil. 2:1, Col. 1:8; and may the words of Paul in Rom. 15:30 R.V. remain with us, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers". The completeness of the Christian life and consecration will be brought about only when all fear is dispersed within us. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18).

Pitching before Jordan - Part 2.

Could we conclude this final station by thinking of 7 points that have to do with Jordan? So Israel pitched, as the Hebrew has it, "by Jordan of Jericho". They are now facing the historic river which has meant so much to them and will mean ever so much to the Christian. Israel stood facing the plunge into perfect trust, and they shivered and shrank as almost every child of God does under like circumstances. We are aware that our Bible is full of references to the Jordan. Lot chose the plain of Jordan for his residence when he left the life of tabernacling in tents, and, leaving the light of God's prophet, he returned from whence he came, to city life (Gen. 13:11). From his day onward the river Jordan is associated with the lives of kings and princes, herdsmen and tillers of the soil. In hymnology, Jordan is usually associated with death. Let us grasp the lesson we have already hinted at, that the passing through the Jordan may mean to us a baptism into a larger and higher life in Christ.

(1) The meaning of "Jordan". First of all, "River of Judgement". "Yor" = "river", "Dan" = "judgement" or the "sending forth of judgement". Bromley favoured this idea. Other scholars derive the word from one signifying "descending", "humiliation", "being humble", or "the plunger", because of the ever descending nature of its course and because it empties into the Dead Sea. We can appreciate the typical picture very much and the reason why Jesus journeyed to Jordan for baptism at the hands of John the Baptist. Jesus as Joshua led the way for His people, and we who have followed should have inevitably experienced the effects of the River of Judgement in true humility of heart. It is a judgement upon self under the searchlight of the Word, and is evidence of our yielding in repentance and faith to the will of God. Trace out Ezekiel 47 in the light of these comments, where the Dead Sea is healed, etc. (see A. Hall, "Song of Solomon").

(2) The swelling of Jordan. Jer. 12:5, "How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?", a manifest allusion to the mighty floods which sometimes swept through this river's course at this particular time of the year, making great noise and roaring.

(a) These floods are emblematic of special judgements coming upon sin in us at different times in our lives. To lead us to self-surrender, God will deal sharply with the evil that lurks in us (compare Jacob, Gen. 32:33). Notice it is God who begins the contest: "There came a man and wrestled with Jacob". It ends with self-devising being cast away and Jacob seeking the blessing with tears and crying (Hosea 12:3-4). The floods of Jordan descended upon David in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. And who of the chosen of God has escaped such cleansing? All would have been purged in vain had not the greater Joshua withstood and prevailed, even though the floods flooded His very soul.

(b) Lesson No. 2. We must not forget that the swelling of Jordan also typifies the overflowing of judgement upon the ungodly, generally so called, at death. Isa. 43:2 makes obvious reference to this figure - speaking to Israel, "when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; they shall not overflow thee;" as they did with the Egyptian host at the Red Sea. As Israel pitched before Jordan, the minds of the people must have been vividly impressed by the thought of the special judgements as shown in the various afflictions and difficulties through which they had already passed. It is strange that they did not learn to avoid those sins which were yet to bring bitter results upon them, but how true to human nature - "out of sight, out of mind" is realistically true even in these circumstances.

(3) The baptism of Jordan. The waters were parted (driven back, in fact), and yet, as the people marched through, there was typified a baptism of suffering which is frequently mentioned in Scripture. Paul reminds us, "As many as were baptised into Christ were baptised into His death". The Jordan baptism is one which implies judgement and humiliation, as we have already seen in the name itself. We must submit to the chastening rod of the Lord, so that at last we might go into the land of peace. Jesus asked the question of James and John (Boanerges), "Are ye able to be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised?" - that of Jordan! We know today what He meant because we have the whole experience before us. They did not fully understand. May we in the light of these truths say, "Through Thy strength, Lord, we are able".

(4) The overflowings of Jordan. We have seen that it is said that Israel camped by Jordan of Jericho. Jordan of Canaan, on the border of whose land Jordan flowed. Jericho was a wicked city, always appearing in type as the world city of pleasure and riches, hence devoted to destruction. It would seem that Jericho had appropriated the Jordan in a special sense as its own. "The Jordan of Jericho" was doubtless an expression used much at that time. The obvious teaching is how cities and individuals unconsciously appropriate judgement to themselves, and it may show the nearness and the readiness of God's power to punish sin. It was an annual event for Jordan to overflow at the time of harvest (Josh. 3:15). Signally and suddenly, God's judgement, as a mighty flood, has often overwhelmed the nations (1 Thess. 5:3). The time of harvest represents the end of the age, as Jesus Himself taught (Matt. 13:39). Let us, then, always journey upwards to Jerusalem and peace, and never downwards to Jordan and judgement, particularly at floodtide.

(5) The partings at Jordan. Partings at the river, inevitable and sorrowful. Husband from wife, wife from husband, parents from children; sufficiently sad even when both or all are in the Truth. But particularly heartbreaking when they are not in the Truth; loved ones in the flesh, many personally known to the writer and no doubt to yourselves, who were "lovely and pleasant in their lives" in the Esau manner, but, like him, without spiritual affinity either to God, Christ or the Word. The time comes at death when the severance is final and we shall see them no more - all the reason, then, that we should give them affection while they are still with us, not forgetting, of course, our first love and duty to Christ, and that remorse is a very unwelcome guest, always loth to go. The partings here that resulted in death were caused by apostasy, and Jordan about to be crossed! Num. 33:49, in describing the camp limits, has something to tell us in the particular names of the places: "They pitched by Jordan from Beth-jesimoth even unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab". Added interest is gained from this place or city, Beth-jesimoth, being situated in the most fertile part of the plains of Moab, and consequently being allotted to the Reubenites by Moses (Josh. 13:15-20). In the light of this information, "Beth-jesimoth" is very significant, because it means "the house of desert or desolation; place of destruction" (Bagster's Meta Bible Dictionary). Something had caused the place of fertility to produce desolation. The plain did remain fertile, because Reuben inhabited it, as Joshua proved in Josh. 13:15-20. It was the residence of Israel upon it at that time, waiting to cross Jordan, that had made it a

spiritual desolation. This was necessary because of its close proximity to Moab, an idolatrous nation who brought desolation upon Israel by seducing them to their iniquities. Num. 22 - 25 are the chapters giving us the actual history, which we will briefly consider a little later.

(6) The meetings at Jordan. Harsha quite rightly puts it, "If there be sad partings through apostasy or through death beside the river, there are glorious meetings also". 2 Sam. 19:15, "The king returned and came to Jordan". Elijah and Elisha came to Jordan. "They two stood by Jordan" (2 Kings 2:7) and what a wonderful sequence this was! Jordan rolled back twice in one incident. Elijah can cross, coming out of the land to Gilead = The Land of Witness. But Elisha, a profound type of Jesus, can divide Jordan to enter the Land. We have, then, a threefold witness to the crossing of Jordan; two are types of Jesus - Joshua and Elisha - and the third is Jesus Himself. The first of these is a double type, Joshua and Eleazar (king and priest). John 10:39-42 is very instructive regarding these happenings. We are told that after Jesus had escaped from the Pharisees, etc., He went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptised and there He abode". This was the place where John baptised and where He Himself had been glorified, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17), and where Joshua had been magnified before all Israel (Joshua 1:5-9, 3:7). At Jordan we have the meeting with God and the Son. Typically in Joshua and actually in Jesus, both type and antitype are magnified and strengthened by the Father for the work they have to do. Jesus in John 10 returns to the same place to renew in memory that experience and gain strength for the test when He must experience the swellings of Jordan so near ahead. We pray that our meeting at Jordan will be sweet and memorable to us, brethren and sisters, and that when Jesus is truly magnified in Israel we may be present to offer our praises and fealty to Him.

(7) Victory over Jordan. We can exclaim joyfully with Zechariah, "the pride of Jordan is spoiled" (Zech. 11:3). The psalmist also exults, "The sea fled; Jordan was driven back" (Psa. 114:3). These find their full expression in Paul's words in 1 Cor. 15:55-57, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ... Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" We remember the expression in Scripture, "They passed clean through (over) Jordan". May our Jesus so lead us that we may pass through death in the day of His coming. Notice, the waters of judgement were rolled clean back as far as Adam; at least, as far back as Abel (Heb. 11:4), and no one was left, "they all passed clean over" (Josh. 3:14-16, 17). Such is the blessed assurance to each one who has followed faithfully from Goshen to Jordan.

The Plains of Moab - In contact with the Moabites.

It is always well that we realise the temptations that occur to us when we reside near to the Moabites. This lesson has been well illustrated in the history of Lot, "that righteous man" who took residence near Sodom, the most depraved city of his times, and ended up sitting as a judge in the gate of Sodom! (Gen. 19:9). Jacob ("Israel" after Peniel) went and camped near to Shechem, with the resultant defiling of his daughter, Dinah (Gen. 33:18 - 34:2). These are but two well-defined instances of this folly - in modern parlance, sailing too close to the wind. What happened to Israel as they camped before Jordan of Jericho between Beth-jesimoth ("the house of desolation") and Abel-shittim? There are at least two significant meanings of "Abel-shittim". One is "the plain of the acacia trees". It was from the shittim tree that quite a lot of the Tabernacle furnishings were constructed (Ex. 27:1, etc.). Two extremes are before us in the two places, as we have indicated. A fertile plain naturally has, in God's eyes, become "the house of desolation". In contrast is the plain of the acacias; leafy, shady trees, used in God's plan of redemption as foreshadowed in the Tabernacle and speaking of God's blessing and comfort for those who have been faithful during their pilgrimage. The second meaning of "Abel-shittim", favoured by Harsha, Bromley and some of the older scholars, is "the sorrow of scourges", and, instead of being in contrast with Beth-jesimoth, teams up with it and opens up the scene that fell upon the Israelites on account of their sin at this final camping place. Israel were still on the wrong side of Jordan; they were in the plains of Moab, a dangerous place to be in. It was because of their contact with Moab that Israel fell into so great a sorrow. To go into a full account of what happened would include a careful resume of Num. 22 - 25, beyond our scope in the present volume. It includes the story of Balak's conspiracy and Balaam's prophecy, if

we are to have a complete picture. However, let it be said that it was while the people were encamped here that these remarkable transactions took place. The "sorrow" of Shittim was evoked by the wrath of God that descended upon Israel - possibly, mainly upon Simeon. 24,000 of Israel were cut off (Num. 25:9). James apparently alludes to this situation in that very trite saying, "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15).

We suggest that our readers carefully read through Numbers, chapters 22 - 25, and we will furnish some relevant lessons from Num. 25 for the sake of brevity. Balaam appears to be the prime mover in this tragic drama. A decisive change in his plan of campaign against Israel is noted. Repeated attempts to curse Israel having failed, if Balaam could not curse, he would corrupt (Num. 31:16). The name of Balaam literally means a "destroyer" or "destroyer of the people". Num. 31 recounts the terrible reckoning that God exacted upon Midian for their part in the matter, and upon Balaam (31:8) - "and they slew Balaam also, the son of Beor, with the sword".

Num. 25:1-2. "The people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab", and "they called the people unto the sacrifice of their gods, and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. The result: "and Israel joined himself to Baal-peor; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel". Coates says, "How true it is, the friendliness and invitations of the world are more to be feared than its curses", and it must not be supposed that it is only the young brother or sister who is exposed to this snare, for it comes in at the end of the wilderness, as acting upon those who have typically made a good deal of progress in spiritual things, due to the fact that they have reached Jordan. It has great lessons for us, teaching us to be watchful and fully aware of the friendliness of the world: in many ways it can do more damage than the open warfare in spiritual conflict such as existed in the early days of the pioneers of the Truth. How often the friendliness of the world, and even an appeal to the lowest lusts of the flesh, have succeeded in casting the people of God down from their excellency, as the desert wanderings have revealed and further history has confirmed! It is noticeable that the appeal of John (1 John 2:15) is addressed not to little children in the Truth but to young brethren who are strong and have the Word of God abiding in them and have "overcome the wicked one": the exhortation is, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world", which approximates to our typical picture here. Harsha comments, "In the leading away of Israel by the fascinations of the surrounding life, how fully do we behold images of the gradual drifting into worldliness of which so many Christians are guilty!" At first they see no harm, doubtless, in associating with the Moabites; those who warned them of their dangers were set down as "squares" (as it is said today), extremists and old fogies. At first the conversations were entirely innocent, and such amusements as were offered seemed quite inoffensive, and . . . were not the Midianites "blood relations"? What harm could there be? Gradually their minds were blinded until they could not see at all. Headlong they plunged into the "sorrows of the scourges" typified in Abel-shittim.

There is too much drifting about in this generation. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (Heb. 2:1 R.V.). Midian was descended from Abraham (Gen. 25:2), so that they represent the influence which those naturally kindred to us may have in drawing us into worldly associations. "They invited the people", though there is an undoubted responsibility placed upon children of God regarding the welfare of our natural kin. Yet always our actions should be reviewed in the light of the Truth, and we should make sure that we sift out their overtures to us. After all, in some ways we can understand their point of view; say in the case of the writer, who only entered the Truth in his twenties; before then neither he nor his family had ever heard of the Christadelphians - consequently their attitude is that it is the writer who has changed, not them. A true brother or sister of Christ never ceases to love his family, whether in the Truth or not, and, as we have observed before, should act in the light of the fact that very shortly we may be taken away from them at the coming of the Lord. But it should be made unmistakably clear that with all their good intentions, we are not going to be led away from Christ to Baal - of any description. Blood may be thicker than water in a natural sense, but no natural tie can compete with the spiritual call and urgency of the blood of Christ. The advice of Paul is very apposite again, this time in 1 Cor. 10 regarding worldly invitations. How wonderfully Paul has cameoed all our 42 journeys in this chapter, and although he does not command going, he does not forbid it; he leaves them at liberty. Christianity

is a system of liberty, not bondage. "But if any one of the unbelievers invite you, and ye be minded to go", he says in 1 Cor. 10:27, and then proceeds to administer a wonderful lesson on Christian deportment. Trace it out for yourselves; the lessons never fade and they are always in context in our lives. Paul demonstrates the safest principles in an ideal sense in 2 Cor. 6:17, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you". Holiness cannot be maintained without separation, and if holiness is not maintained, some form of idolatry is almost sure to be present. Worldly and idolatrous associations call for stern measures: they are a provocation of the Lord to jealousy (1 Cor. 10:22). See the very vivid allusion here to Num. 25:4-5, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take the heads of the people and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel". 24,000 of the people perished in the dreadful apostasy at this time. "Hang them up before the Lord" - what a tragic contrast between this holocaust and the brazen serpent "lifted up" so that they might live, and, of course, Jesus, the Son of man, Who was "lifted up" that we might look to Him and live (John 3:14-15).

We are continually faced with the temptation to self-life. Our days in particular we apply to 2 Tim. 3:2, and usually in our lectures to the outsider, but it becomes painfully evident that the real application is to ourselves: "lovers of their own selves", or in the Revised Version, "lovers of self". Again, what a wide gulf separates self from the selflessness of Jesus in the last paragraph. As we stand before Jordan in spirit, how much confidence do we place in self or other persons or things? save from God and our Lord Jesus Christ. If we are truly Israel after the spirit, then we shall follow Paul, who wrote to the Philippians as "having no confidence in the flesh" - which was put down by Paul as one of the three marks by which the members of the true circumcision may be infallibly known (Phil. 3:3. What are the other two?).

In keeping with the things that happened in the Baal-peor incident, Jesus presents Himself in Pergamos as "He that hath the sharp two-edged sword" (Rev. 2:12). "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat of idol sacrifices and to commit fornication". The command comes sharply, "Repent, therefore, but if not, I will come to thee quickly, and I will make war with them with the sword of My mouth". This direct allusion to Num. 25 shows that what happened to Israel in Shittim has its counterpart in the Christian profession. Study also references to Balaam by Peter and Jude, which extend and confirm this (2 Pet. 2:15, Jude 11). It is very solemn to think that we have within our Body those who hold the doctrine of Balaam; who, as Peter puts it, "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15) and "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward" (Jude 11), who delighted in (putting it bluntly) sex and money and power. As they are found in every generation, it is of particular interest today, in what we expect to be the generation assembled before Jordan, as they were so many generations ago. The absolute apex of worldly desire and worship through all the ages of man - only in our days, when we await the call to pass through Jordan, it is being intensified with violence, as in the days of Noah's Flood. What a serious warning to us! To taste not, handle not, accept not, and so forth, the overtures of the world, either in church reunion, Oxfam, their doctrines and practices. What is of particular interest to us and considerable worry to us is that Balaamites are not only worldly in practice, but their teaching has the object of ensnaring those who are professedly God's people in that world out of which God would have them delivered. Against all such "the sharp two-edged sword" of the Son of man will assuredly make war. They are definitely His enemies and will be treated by Him as such.

True repentance means a turning from sin. It is not enough to weep and lament over our transgressions, nor is it sufficient in itself to "vex our righteous soul" as did Lot over the pollutions of Sodom. (1) First of all, we ought not to be there, and (2) we should do something about it, as Phineas and Eleazar did at Shittim. The Israelites wept and lamented, yet the wrath of God was not stayed (Num. 25:6). They were required to turn absolutely from their sins, and, in addition to this, Phineas was required to put Zimri and Cozbi to death (Num. 25:7-8). The principal offenders needed to be executed before the plague would cease. It is worthy of note that the name "Cozbi" signifies "Deceit". Thus it is by deceit that the Midianitish woman has always ensnared the foolish heart. We have before us the result in a spiritual sense of this folly, the magnitude of folly in the Scarlet Whore of the Roman Church. The central thought of repentance all through the Scriptures is a "turning away from" or "forsaking" of sin. True repentance is not feeling

sorry, but, as David did ever after the Uriah incident, "acting sorry". Num. 25 gives us this stern lesson. The body of sin must be destroyed, that henceforth we shall not serve sin. As in the parable of Jesus, when we have swept our house of demons, we keep it occupied by replacing Truth in it, or else seven other demons will make a comparatively easy counter-attack and take back the position they had lost. "Resist the devil, not bemoan its work". Feeling sorry for oneself never got us anywhere, except perhaps melancholia and inadequate personality in the natural sense; and this is precisely the effect in Christ's view. When our house has been swept of our evil habits, there can be no blank in the spiritual life: build it up rather, with the things of the Spirit, and be always ready to resist the assaults and wiles of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8-9) (Jas. 4:7), as Phineas was at Shittim (Num. 25:7-8): "he rose up from among the people, and took a javelin in his hand, and he went after the man of Israel into the tent chamber, and thrust both of them through", and this was done with the sanction of God. Yahweh said of him, "He was jealous with My jealousy". He was "jealous for his God". The uncompromising decision of Phineas, who would not suffer worldly and idolatrous associations, made atonement for Israel, and all benefited by it. It also secured for Phineas Yahweh's covenant of peace, and the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; so we find that, according to Ezekiel, his descendants will exercise priesthood in the Millennium (Num. 25:11-13, Ezek. 44:15). If there is absence of faithfulness in what is due to God, there cannot be true holiness, and "without holiness no man can see the Lord" - true priestly service must cease.

"Phineas" = "mouth of brass". He was indeed valiant and a treader down of opposition to Yahweh. We do not read of him as offering sacrifice or interceding in the way of priesthood - he is shown to us as a warrior priest. When Moses performed his last service to Yahweh before his death, he avenged Israel upon Midian (Num. 26:6). 12,000 men were sent to expedite the command, headed by Phineas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and the holy instruments, even the alarm trumpets, in his hand. Trace out from the concordance the doings of this warrior priest, son of the high priest of Israel, and, by way of further extension, compare his New Testament counterpart, Titus, and Paul's command to him in Titus 1:9-16, and contrast the tears of Timothy. Six times in two letters to Timothy. Timothy, though beautiful in his life, would never have made a Phineas; he was not made of such stern stuff. But Titus apparently was, and we must be so too. "All these happened to them as types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. 10:8, 11, 12). We find with interest that Phineas occupied another office which is not mentioned until long after. When the door-keepers are spoken of in 1 Chron. 9:20, we are told that "Phineas the son of Eleazar was the ruler over them formerly, and Yahweh was with him". The door-keeper of the House of the Lord has a very honorable and important office. Presumably Phineas was the first to be appointed in regard to the "Tent of Meeting" and "the Lord was with him". We can imagine that Phineas would execute the same zeal and diligence with this office as he did in despatching those who troubled Israel. It conveys to us a very clear intimation that vigilance is to be exercised in regard to the Meeting today, in the sense that particular care be observed as to who is allowed to enter. There is no thought in Scripture of spiritual privileges being open to anyone who chooses to take them up. To "whomsoever will", yes; but limited to "as many as the Lord shall call" and to those who are "drawn of the Father". Entrance to the Tabernacle, or afterwards to the Temple, was never left to the responsibility of those who wished to enter. From the very beginning of God's having a place where He might be approached by His people, there were door-keepers, commencing with the Cherubim at the east of Eden (Gen. 3:24). At a later period we learn that David and Samuel the seer had instituted them in their trust (1 Chron. 9:22).

The "door-keeper" is not restricted to the steward at the ecclesia. More particularly those who teach applicants the Truth, the examining brethren, the arranging brethren, and so on, should be the guardians of the "door" of the ecclesias. It would appear from the rising concern in our midst that in the past the door has been left unguarded and worldliness and wolves have entered into the flock. We must foster the spirit of Phineas within us and guard the door of our ecclesia with a similar vigilance to that found in him. It is well for the door-keepers, and really for all brethren and sisters, for all have this responsibility in some measure, to remember that Phineas was the ruler over the door-keepers and that Yahweh was with him in discharging that

trust. That should be the finest exhortation to hand. May each one find in his particular office the significance of the Ithiel name, "God is with me", and our joy will be full.

Two brief points to round off this review of Num. 25:

(1) Zimri of Simeon was the offending party who brought the Midianitish woman into Israel. It has been suggested that in the main Simeon as a tribe was led away, and it is interesting to note that Simeon's numbers are well down in the final numbering before entering the land (37,000 less than before). (Num. 26:14). "Zimri the son of Sallu" was a Simeonite prince, his name meaning "celebrated, the son of exaltation", words which emphasise the dignity and importance of this great sinner. He was a prince of a chief house, and his co-partner, Cozbi of Zur ("deceitful" - daughter of "rock"), was apparently from a chief house of Midian.

(2) It would appear from the Hebrew that the tent to which this woman was brought was a special one, a "kubbah" ("the alcove"), a word derived from "kabab" = "to hollow out"; hence "to vault over with an arch". It was not, then, an ordinary tent, but a fornex (whence the word fornication) and the definite article being applied to it shows that it was the tent for this vile person and purpose - a brothel, in our day. Some may like to trace out the counterpart of this illicit partnership in the claims of Rome. We think Wordsworth brings them out very aptly.

The ensuing conflict with the Midianites. Num. 31:2, "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites". This war was to be one of the last services of Moses to the people - "afterwards shalt thou be gathered to thy people". It would appear to have been among the most distinguished services which Moses rendered, and our readers should carefully study the whole of Num. 31 to learn its importance and to derive from it spiritual lessons. Here are just one or two headlines:

(1) The internal conflict. A battle against the spirit of strife and contention in our own hearts. "Midian" = "strife" or "contention". The root word from which it comes is in Prov. 18:18, "The lot causeth contention to cease". Consequently the war with Midian typifies our own inward turmoils and contentions.

(2) The universality of work. Num. 31:4, "Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war". No exemptions! No conscientious objection! No discharge in that war. So it is with us; we must all plead guilty to the possession within us of the works of the flesh, including "strife and contention" (Gal. 5:20). They must be resisted, mortified and cut off.

(3) The necessities of the war. Moses commanded: "Arm yourselves" (verse 3), "Go" (verse 3), "Sanctify yourselves" (verse 6). We are to take "the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:13); advance against the enemy with resoluteness and faith. In order that we may do this, we may pray that we be "sanctified by the Spirit" of the God of battle.

(4) The completeness of the work. Num. 31:8. The kings as well as the people were slain, and they cut off Balaam, the son of Beor. Not a single male member was left alive. So must we be ruthless in the battle against ourselves; we must cut off the enemy, root and branch. God will do it for us if we falter. Rom. 2:8-9. Contrast the two opposing forces in Jas. 3:14-18.

(5) The results of the work. From the spoiling of the Midianites the people returned with captives and prey and much treasure (Num. 31:12, 2 Cor. 2:14-17 in our own experience. Study them at your leisure).

While encamped in the plains, Moses repeated the Law with some additions and with most loving application to the details of the life that Israel might expect in Canaan. This is Deuteronomy, of course. The Hebrews called it "The Repetition of the Law" and "The Book of Reprehensions". This was their view of it. The object of this restatement of the Law was to produce obedience on the part of the people, and the key thought, perhaps, of Deuteronomy is, "I set before you life and death" (Deut. 30:19). Two important lessons are brought before us by this action of Moses in rehearsing the Law:

(1) Obedience in general. (2) Obedience in particular.

(1) If the nation brought forth obedience, blessings would follow (Deut. 28:1-14).

Detailed curses would automatically follow disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68).

Joshua himself later gave the lead: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15) - the way to a solid and spiritual background under the Law and for our days (Deut. 6:1-9).

(2) Obedience in particular. There are several forms of obedience:

(a) **Unthinking obedience.** There are some who obey God in a mere haphazard sort of way. "Are ye able to drink of My cup and to be baptised with My baptism?", Jesus asked; and they, with John and James, cry mechanically, "We are able". As Israel said before the burning mount, "All that the Lord hath commanded us we will do" - and very soon, like Israel, these over-confident and usually young brethren and sisters fall into disobedience and sometimes despair. Could we but heed the touching cry of the Father! "O that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always!" (Deut. 5:9). Obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22, Jer. 7:22-23, Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8).

(b) **Coerced obedience.** Sometimes we are very reluctant to obey God and will not do so until we are forced either by dire affliction or grievous loss or both to do so. Even David, the beloved of the Lord, at one period in his life, who in times of prosperity followed his own devices, rebelled against God; but when his child was taken away and when his own beloved son Absalom rose up against him in opposition, he was forced into penitence and obedience. We know and appreciate the lifelong repentance that followed in his life. The point we wish to make here is simply this: how much better for us to surrender spontaneously (as David usually did), lovingly at once to the Father's will. The obedience of children is the right sort, or was in those days (1 Pet. 1:14), given out of love and not because the lash of the slave-master has fallen upon us. It is to be noted that the same Hebrew word is used for "to hear" and "to obey". In Greek the same word is used for "unbelief" and "disobedience" (compare John 3:36, Acts 14:2, Rom. 2:8, 1 Pet. 2:7-8). Let not our "obedience to the heavenly voice" be coerced, but rather spontaneous, out of a willing heart (compare David's case, Psa. 51:9-11, etc.).

(c) **Intelligent obedience.** This would appear to be of a higher kind. It counts the cost and yet is willing to enter upon the building of the tower. It rightly estimates the army of the enemy and yet is willing to battle - up to a given point, because the real application is to Jesus in Luke 14:25-34. He alone was able to cost correctly the amount of opposition and the price of the building. That is why the demands upon His followers would be so severe. Behind it all we see the supreme example of Jesus equating what Messiahship would cost Him, and yet against such fearful odds as having to remain sinless - not one slip all His life. He went to battle and conquered. Intelligent obedience absolutely. Peter was told to supply this spiritual commodity in John 21:20-22, "If I will that he (John) tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me!" A similar kind of obedience was always rendered by Paul after the awakening by Jesus: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Intelligent obedience, Paul-like and Christ-like, is plainly demanded of us today. It is as Rom. 16:26 puts it, "the obedience of faith". For the student: compare John 13 and John 17, where obedience is made seven times the test of intelligent fellowship with Christ.

(d) **Uncommanded obedience.** The highest attainable kind. It means that we so much love God, that we are so in sympathy with His wishes, that even though uncommanded we obey. A superb example of this is seen in David's three mighty men of valour, when at the risk of their lives they broke through the ranks of the enemy and obtained the cup of water from the well at Bethlehem. David poured it out before the Lord. If only we could be in such close touch and sympathy with our Lord, then our joy of service would show unerringly where the path of duty lies. The Philippian ecclesia were so with Paul, and his praise and thanks for them to the Father were as the odour of a sweet smell (Phil. 4:15-19). He was "as a drink offering poured out on the sacrifice and service of their faith" (Phil 2:17 R. V.). So also with his prayers for the Thessalonians (1 Thes. 1:2). Even as David poured out the "water of the lives" of his mighties before the Father in thankfulness and joy. Psalm 103:20 reveals how the highest and noblest of obedience comes about when "dignity and power" are associated with "meekness" and "submission". Mark the progress between "doing His commandments", "hearkening to the voice of His Word" and the highest step of all, "doing His pleasure" even without a command (Psalm 103:20-21). With such an outlook on life even "a bird's nest in the way" is holy to the Lord (Deut. 22:6-7).

So our journey has reached its end and we have arrived at the valley of decision fronting Jordan. Bitterly has the adversary within us disputed every inch of ground we have made towards the baptism of full consecration. Fightings within, allurements without, Moabites to smile upon us, Midianites to attack us, losses to appal, and bitter tears to be shed - all these things befall him who would follow Jesus without reserve. It is a

heavy price to pay, yet "the half has not been told" of the gain to come in Immanuel's land. But before we attempt Jordan, "we would see Jesus", our File Leader (Heb. 12:1), and --

1. We see our erstwhile Leader praying to Yahweh in Num. 27:16, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation". How vividly we are reminded of the promise in Isa. 32:2, "A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry ground; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land". It has been well put - "That God might be all this to the people was no new thought; but that a man should be this was a startling prophecy". It was fulfilled in Christ Jesus, Whom Joshua, the man prayed for by Moses, typified. The humanity of Jesus thus brought forward is of priceless worth to us--sympathy, tenderness, oneness with us at all points (note carefully Heb. 2:14, 16, 17).

2. Moses prays for a Leader (Num. 27:17) who "may lead them out, that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd". As Joshua became the leader of the people he forms a fitting type of Jesus the Shepherd of the sheep. Jesus is called (a) The Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18)=the Shepherd Who dies; (b) The Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20) =The Shepherd Who rises from the dead; (c) The Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4)=The Shepherd Who is to come again in glorious majesty. Compare also Psa. 22, The Good Shepherd Who dies for His flock; Psa. 23, The Great Shepherd in resurrection; (c) The Chief Shepherd in glory, Psa. 24. The Shepherd was most certainly provided in type, and gloriously transcended in antitype in Jesus.

3. God's response in the individual (Num. 27:18) - "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him". Joshua, with Caleb 40 or rather 38 years previously, had shown another spirit from that of the spies who accompanied them in a spying out of Canaan. They had followed God's thoughts (Num. 14:24, 38) whilst the rest were afraid and turned the hearts of the people to murmuring and blasphemy. Freely God indicated the one to be chosen, and freely did God devote His own Son to fulfil the type, to become leader and commander of His people.

4. God's response made clear in sight of the congregation (Num. 27:19), "Set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: and give him a charge in their sight". As Joshua was set apart, Jesus in the fulness of time was made, in the sight of the high priest and all the people, the propitiation for our sins, and the leader of the church into glory, because, by His death on the tree Jesus made possible the passage dry-shod through Jordan; for through His death He slew him who had the power over death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:10-15); so He will be revealed as the true Joshua very soon leading His people to glory over Jordan.

5. God's direction as to a division of honour (Num. 27:20) - "Thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of Israel may be obedient". Compare John 5:41, Jesus said, "I receive not honour from men", but God shares His honour with the Son, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5:23).

6. God's direction as to the Urim (Num. 27:21) - "He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgement of Urim". Some have thought that because the verse reads that Moses should put some of his honour upon him, Joshua did not have the honour of Moses; but, putting it the other way, we could say that Moses did not possess the honour of Joshua at this time forward, because Moses had to die and Joshua led the flock over Jordan. It must also be remembered that at this time Moses was still the leader of Israel, and before his service was completed he could never have given another person, even Joshua, all the honour.

Again it has been argued that Moses had no need of Urim; he himself was the mediator, personally in touch with the Lord; he passed on guidance and gave directions to Aaron and Eleazar. Joshua was to be secular leader only and not the religious leader. He was to go to Eleazar and look to him for guidance. On face value there would appear to be good reason for this, but it is given, we believe, without the additional understanding of Josh. 1:5-9, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee... nor forsake thee," etc. (4:14) "the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life"; which appears to place another angle upon it. The fact that Joshua should stand before Eleazar the priest, who should enquire for him, by the judgement of Urim is very instructive. The association of the leader with the priest indicates how the two offices of Christ stand in relation to each other in the mind of God and should be so viewed, we believe, in the light of the expanding purpose of God. "The whole assembly" was represented in a priestly way in Eleazar, and the Urim in the priestly breastplate gave light as to God's present mind for that assembly. The leader was ever

to stand before the priest and to move as instructed by Yahweh in answer to priestly enquiry. The sense of waiting upon God and enquiring and receiving direction was always to be present with Joshua. Joshua, we know, is the type of Christ, and Moses of the child slave of the Law which would lead to Christ, and in applying this situation to the Lord Jesus we know that both offices are found in Him as Priest-King (Psa. 110, etc.). The situation explains how the whole assembly stood in relation to Him as in the breastplate and on the shoulders - that is, in heart and strength, or affections and power. Christ ever sought the mind of God for the decisions that not only affected Himself but the whole assembly as well. We are directed to the fact that all decisions of Joshua's movements would be decided by Urim, the counsel of God, the Divine estimate of things. All the victories in the land were the result of movements in which priestly direction had its place and the judgement of the Urim. Such was the character of Christ and of leadership; it never led to a wrong move. Christ Himself never forsook this principle, but Joshua did on occasion and suffered for it in consequence, as in Josh. 7:3 or 9:14. Search them out for yourself and so get the full benefit of the teaching. The antitype always transcends the type. Joshua, though faithful, was human like us and subject to failure at times. The antitype could have failed and been disobedient but was not so and chose to serve to the uttermost. This is the Jesus we sought to see before facing Jordan. We need have no fear, our Lord is a fitting match for all exigencies; and, as for the Urim (lights or understanding)'the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son' (John 5:22). Yes, Jesus is our Joshua Leader and Eleazar all in one.

7. The results of the investiture (Num. 27:22-23). "Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge". Thus the actual transaction was concluded or completed; but the results are found in Joshua 21:44, "There stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand". Victory over sin is the proof that we are in Christ, and that Christ, our Joshua, is in us.

We recommend a comparative study of Lev. 16 and Heb. 9 in order to see how fully Christ has become our victorious High Priest. "He has entered heaven itself", the symbol of Divine glory, clad in pure white robes of a spotless righteousness, with the blood of His atoning death in His hands. Unlike the high priest of Israel, who entered and returned from the Most Holy, He remains there as a constant and merciful High Priest for His people (John 17, etc.). Note the following sublime passages and revel in their majesty and beauty. This is Divine Wisdom, to be eagerly sought after. Forsake the "witches' brew" of the Nephilim, contemporary beings with Adam, and the Irish stew of putting the symbol before the object, and the pseudo-science of "here today, gone tomorrow", the travelling salesman of "It could have been, possibly" products of "Doubts Unlimited". The foundation of our whole standing in Christ is seen in Eph. 1:15-23, 2:4-22. -

(A) The Personal Glory of Christ (briefly only, extend as desired)

Song 5:10-16, Ezek. 1:26, Dan. 7:9-13, 10:5-6, Rev. 1:13-16, 19:11-13.

(B) The Official Glory of Christ also set forth in wondrous splendour.

Isa. 6:3 (margin), compare John 12:41, Isa. 9:6-7, Psa. 110, Phil. 4:19

and many other references in Revelation, such as Rev. 7:9-17, 14:1-5.

(C) The Personal and Official Fulness of Christ Linked Together. It has been well said that "the fountain, river and ocean can only faintly show what fulness of blessing it contains". Compare John 1:14, Col. 1:19, 2:9, Eph. 4:13.

The journey is now ended, the objective - the Jordan - has been reached; the Midianites have been punished; the Law has been rehearsed the second time; the leader, Joshua, chosen. The people are ready poised to cross the river; the final good-byes are said; the remainder of those who should remain on this side Jordan have been buried, and the time has come that the great leader and prophet extraordinary, Moses, should receive "the kiss of Yahweh" and die on the fastnesses of Nebo over against Jericho. We have the account of the prayer of Moses in Deut. 3:23-28. Its pathetic and beautiful sentiments have come before us on an earlier occasion. Study them again, long and earnestly, and see in them the depth of character in the words, "O Lord God, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness and Thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to Thy mighty works and according to Thy might? I pray Thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me; and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more to Me of this matter". We main-

tain that only Divinity could have withstood that prayer: the human heart would have melted and given way, no doubt to the detriment of all concerned. No. Divine strength, forethought and love withholds -- that in due season it can bless. For instance the many cases of barrenness among the chosen women of Scripture - until the set time. So with Moses on this consideration alone. We reviewed others earlier. Entry into that goodly land was denied. Moses went, as it had been determined of him by Yahweh.

Deut. 34 records the incident. Moses is given a preview by the Lord, the Yahweh-angel himself, wide in vision and expanse, no doubt extended in understanding under Divine supervision. "But thou shalt not go over". So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the Word of the Lord, and he (the Yahweh-angel) buried him in a valley over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre to this day" (Deut. 34:5-6). "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face"(verse 10). In the glory of such wonderful testimony we leave Moses the man of God, and law-giver and leader of Israel. The Law could give extended vision of the Purpose of God, but could never make anything perfect; but the bringing in of "a better hope" did. To Jordan for the Law and no further = Joshua and Christ to lead over the river of death and judgement.

The people mourned their leader a full month. Joshua has been magnified before them and preparations are going ahead to facilitate the crossing of Jordan at the sound of the final advance this side Jordan. We in their company have walked together all the long way and years from Rameses ("the washing away of evil") to this Jordan, yellow and turbulent before us, that separates from "the land of far distances"(Isa. 33:17 margin).

We await the call over Jordan with joy if yet with fear. Gilgal and its final cleansing awaits us. Will there be anything to survive the second circumcision? Will everything be rolled away? Shall we abide the Day of His Coming? If Christ has been formed in us, then we shall, but not unless. Soon those who are asleep will join us in our crossing over the Jordan to Gilgal. May it please the Father to roll away our uncleanness and grant that we eat of the old corn of the land (immortality) with our Joshua and Leader, Jesus.

In the short time that still falls to our lot we shall appreciate the teaching of the 42 stations, of sixes and sevens of affliction and trials of apostasy and rebellion. We shall also be glad that the 40 years wandering of our probation and testing are at an end. "We would see Jesus" and Moses and Joshua, Aaron, Miriam, Eleazar and Phineas. May God grant His "covenant of peace" with us at that day!

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