

THE
BOOK
OF
EXODUS

THE
CHRISTADELPHIAN
EXPOSITOR



A VERSE-BY-VERSE EXPOSITION
OF THE SCRIPTURES

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THE BOOK OF EXODUS

*The Pattern
of
Redemption*





AND YAHWEH came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and YAHWEH called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And YAHWEH said unto Moses, "Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto YAHWEH to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, which come near to YAHWEH, sanctify themselves, lest YAHWEH break forth upon them." And Moses said unto YAHWEH, "The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for Thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. And YAHWEH said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto YAHWEH, lest He break forth upon them." So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Introduction

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

The Pattern of Redemption

ITS SETTING AND TITLE

THE divine providence overshadowing the collation of the books of the Bible, is demonstrated in the remarkable order in which the books appear which illustrates the purpose of God in Christ in some way. Thus Inspiration seems not only to have dictated the words of Scripture, but determined the very placing of the various books in the canon of Scripture we have been given.

For example, it is not without significance that the Old Testament begins with the statement that “God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31) and ends with the two words “a curse” (Mal. 4:6). This indicates that the whole theme of the Old Testament is bound up in the curse that rests upon flesh because of its inability to keep the Law.

How appropriate, therefore, that the first book in the second volume of Yahweh’s wondrously well-balanced and wisely designed library, Matthew, should open with an account of the birth of the One who is to take away the curse!

Consider also the parable of the Pentateuch (Gr. *pentē*, five; and *teuchos*, book), the five books of Moses, called generally, “the Law.” Five is the number of grace, and the books of Moses foreshadow the progressive story of grace. This can be considered from the viewpoint of God, or from that of man. Considered from the divine standpoint, they reveal the following order of development:

- Genesis sets forth *Divine Authority and Power* — in creating, punishing and selecting.
- Exodussets forth *Divine Mercy* — in choosing and delivering.
- Leviticus.....sets forth *Divine Holiness* — in separating and sanctifying.
- Numbers.....sets forth *Divine Goodness and Severity* — in providing and judging.
- Deuteronomysets forth *Divine Faithfulness* — in disciplining and delivering.

Considered from this standpoint, the five books of the Law typically set forth five necessary steps to salvation. They begin with a recognition of Yahweh's divine authority and power; they move on to record divine mercy, they emphasize the need of divine holiness, they show the inevitability of divine goodness and severity, and finally reveal divine deliverance as an expression of divine faithfulness.

Now consider the same five books from the human standpoint and notice how they again set forth five steps of divine grace:

- **Genesis**speaks of *Ruin and Divine Selection.*
- **Exodus**speaks of *Deliverance.*
- **Leviticus**.....speaks of *Fellowship with God.*
- **Numbers**.....speaks of *Divine Grace.*
- **Deuteronomy**speaks of *Attainment of Hope.*

Again these five steps are essential to salvation. Man must recognise the fallen state of human nature, and the need of redemption therefrom if he would be saved. This will lead him to the waters of baptism, and to fellowship with God. Submitting to His guidance, he will ultimately attain unto that which has been set before him as a matter of hope.

Because these five books spell out the principles of divine grace on the background of Israelitish history, they have important personal lessons to teach all who would come unto Yahweh in truth.

EXODUS therefore, presents a **PATTERN OF REDEMPTION**. The whole book is summed up in one short sentence of the New Testament, which, itself, epitomises this pattern of redemption. In Acts 15:14, James outlines Peter's account of the purpose of Yahweh in the proclamation of the gospel, declaring:

*"God at the first did visit the Gentiles,
to take out of them a people for His name."*

This statement sets forth five steps of grace leading to redemption, which can be summarised as:

- (1) **Visitation:** Exo. 1:1 to 10:29 (*Theme: "Yahweh visited the children of Israel" — ch. 4:31*).
- (2) **Invitation:** Exo. 11:1 to 12:28 (*Theme: "Moses called for all the leaders of Israel" — ch. 12:21*).
- (3) **Separation:** Exo. 12:29 to 15:21 (*Theme: "Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage" — ch. 13:3*).
- (4) **Sanctification:** Exo. 15:22 to 19:25 (*Theme: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people" — ch. 19:5*).

(5) **Dedication:** Exo. 20:1 to 40:38 (*Theme: "I am Yahweh thy God... Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" — ch. 20:3*).

Pre-eminently, therefore, in Exodus there is set forth an amazing symbolic pattern of redemption for the edification of believers in all ages.

ITS PROVOCATIVE TITLE

The title of the book in Hebrew is *Ve-eleth Shemoth*, the words that form the opening of the book: "*And these are the Names...*"

It introduces the names of those who went down into Egypt, as people marked of God as His own in the land of sin, slavery and death. The children of Israel provided the basis for all God's future operations in delivering humanity from the bondage of corruption into which sin had brought it. They provide a pattern of redemption for all who subsequently seek the divine mercy.

The title *Exodus* is derived from the Greek word in the Septuagint Version, and signifies *Departure* or *Going out*. The word occurs in Heb. 11:22, "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the *departing* (RV "departure") of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

This statement links Exodus closely with Genesis. The link is made even stronger by the opening verse of Exodus which, in the Hebrew, commences with "*And.*" Exodus, therefore, is set forth as a continuation of Genesis, a new section in the developing revelation of God.

The Divine Plan for a Way Out

In Luke 9:31, the Greek ἐξοδῆ *exodos* is rendered "decease," but in such a remarkable way, as to provide a key to the whole record of Exodus with its types and shadows. It records that, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the apostles saw Moses and Elijah in glory, speaking of the Lord's "decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." *Decease* and *accomplish* are both significant words in this statement. The first is the word *exodon* and signifies *a way out*; the second is the word *pleroun*, and means to *finish* or *fulfil* a period or a task; or to *verify* or *complete* a prediction.

The Lord's death and resurrection are the means God provided for the *way out* of the slavery of sin and death which became the heritage of mankind, and revealed the way to deliverance. What was accomplished in Christ, was prefigured in Exodus, and therefore, it is appropriate that

the Lord's work should be described as an *Exodus*.

The pattern of redemption revealed in Exodus shows it to be closely linked with the work of Yahweh in Christ. Thus the events therein narrated, provide vivid, interesting typology of the dramatic deliverance of humanity as provided in Christ.

Therefore the title of the book before us is provocative, whether considered in its Hebrew or its Greek forms.

The Story of Deliverance from Sin and Evil

The book records that, through the intervention of God, Israel was able to snap the shackles that held the people bound to Egyptian slavery, and was shown the way out toward the liberty as revealed in divine worship. It records the establishment of the Passover, the giving of the Law, the confirming of the Mosaic Covenant, and the erection of the Tabernacle with all its amazing symbolism.

It is a book of tremendous drama. It commences with an account of the bitter bondage and hopeless sighing, of the people of God in Egypt. It moves on to their rejoicing at the deliverance effected through the passage of the Red Sea. It culminates in the spiritual elevation of Truth in the midst of the newly formed nation of Israel, constituted as the kingdom of God on earth.

Is there in all history a more amazing spectacle than the Exodus? Does the Old Testament record a more solemn and tremendous revelation of God than at Sinai — whether in revealing the divine Name to Moses, or delivering the Law to Israel? What human figure, apart from that of the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of his flesh, exceeds the man Moses (Deu. 34:10)? Where is there a political incident that is more significant than the founding of Israel as a theocracy?

All these facets of divine revelation, and principles of divine grace are revealed in Exodus.

The Principles of Power, Holiness and Wisdom

In the deliverance from Egypt there is revealed the *power of God* (chs. 1-18); in the revelation of the Law, there is emphasised the *holiness* of God (chs. 19-24); in the design of the Tabernacle there is symbolised the *wisdom* of God (chs. 25-40).

Israel reaches nationhood in Exodus. It is brought into a new *state*: that of freedom from bondage. It is given a new *constitution*: the theocratic. It is provided with a new *worship*: the Mosaic. The Exodus brought the Hebrews to a newness of *political* and *religious* life. The Law limited *liberty* and emphasised *responsibility*; whilst the Tabernacle granted *privilege* and provided *worship*.

Above all else, the Book of Exodus provides a pattern of redemption. Its history of deliverance is re-enacted today in the call of Gentiles to salvation in Christ. It sets forth nationally what every believer must go through individually if he would attain unto the kingdom of the future. Thus its lessons live as exhortations for those who would separate from the spiritual Egypt of modern life.

The Key Verse of Exodus

This is suggested as ch. 3:8, *“I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.”*

THE AUTHOR

The author was evidently a witness to the events narrated. The vivid descriptions of the plagues upon Egypt, of the thunderings at Mount Sinai, and of the manna in the wilderness, require an eye witness. The minute details concerning the wells and palm trees at Elim, the two tables of stone, the worship of the golden calf, and many other things testify to personal observation. Since there is little or no evidence of later additions to the book, it may be safely assumed that the writer of Exodus composed his material during or shortly after the experiences recorded, narrating the deliverance of Israel from Egypt — an entire race of people suddenly and forever flinging away the shackles of servitude in a land of slavery and death, migrating to a new country and a new corporate life — and doing so “through water.” This is followed by the establishment of the Mosaic Covenant, and the testing of the people by Law. There is recorded the erecting of that marvellously symbolical structure, the tabernacle as the centre of religious life for the nation; the formation of the tribes into a nation; the lessons of the wilderness wandering; the development of Moses as prophet and shepherd to the people.

Paul comments: *“Now all these things happened unto them as types; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”* (1Cor. 10:11). Therefore, in the amazing events recorded in Exodus, there is discerned a remarkable pattern of redemption, teaching its lessons to all succeeding generations, and providing a compelling exhortation for today.

Foreword

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

With Exodus begins the story of Moses himself. His own life and work form part of the subject matter of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy that he himself wrote. The account of his life comprises about one-seventh of the whole Bible, and is about two-thirds the volume of the entire New Testament.

As with Genesis, the Book of Exodus has been attacked by critics of the Bible, who have sought to discredit the account of the deliverance from Egypt, and the miracles associated with it.

The Israelitish population explosion it records, has particularly been challenged. It is alleged by critics that it would be utterly impossible for seventy people to grow into a population of about two million (600,000 males) in merely 215 years. But though the increase is large, it is not an impossible one. It requires that there should be a doubling up of population every fifteen years. Given prosperous conditions (and they are implied—Exo. 1:7), this is far from an impossibility. In fact, India almost does so in recent times, even under adverse conditions. To increase from two to seventy in the first 215 years from the time of Abraham and Sarah, required that the population double every twenty-five years, and this was done in spite of the small families of Abraham and Isaac.

But the statement of Exodus 1:1 implies that more than seventy went down into Egypt, for it expressly states that “every man *with his household* came with Jacob.” Abraham had a household of three hundred and eighteen males (Gen. 14:14), so that evidently a considerably larger number than seventy went down into Egypt. The remnant of Shechem had been taken into the tents of Jacob (Gen. 34:29), and these, with others, could have been included in one or other of the tribes, when officially incorporated into the nation.

In addition, an exceptional increase of population had been promised the fathers of the nation (Gen. 17:6; 26:4; 28:14; 35:11; 46:3), and later, such a development is recorded (Gen. 47:27; Exo. 1:7, 12; Deu. 10:22; 26:5).

In *The Exodus of Israel*, T. R. Burke claims that “the yearly increase in the Scripture narrative, lies about exactly midway between two opposing limits: the rate under ordinary circumstances, and the extreme rate compatible with the usual laws of birth, marriage and natural fecundity.” He continues: “Assume an average of six sons, the age of the father varying from 25 to 35 years. Six descents would thus range from 150 to 210 years; would be six compound additions of 51 (the number of grandsons at the descent), and would total 2,379,456. The interval of those who were twenty years old after the Exodus will be 196 years from the descent, or more than 200 from the birth of the grandsons. We have this to deduct from the above, the births in the last ten years, which would be about $51 \times 210 = 10,710$. Thus, at the above rate, there

would be a population of 2,369,000 males above twenty in the sixth descent alone.”

In view of the promise of great fecundity (cp. Psalm 127:3-5), the increase to 600,000 males within 210 years is not impossible. In addition, Israel went “with their households,” some of whom might well have been adopted into one or other of the tribes, and thus augmented the number from whom the population came.

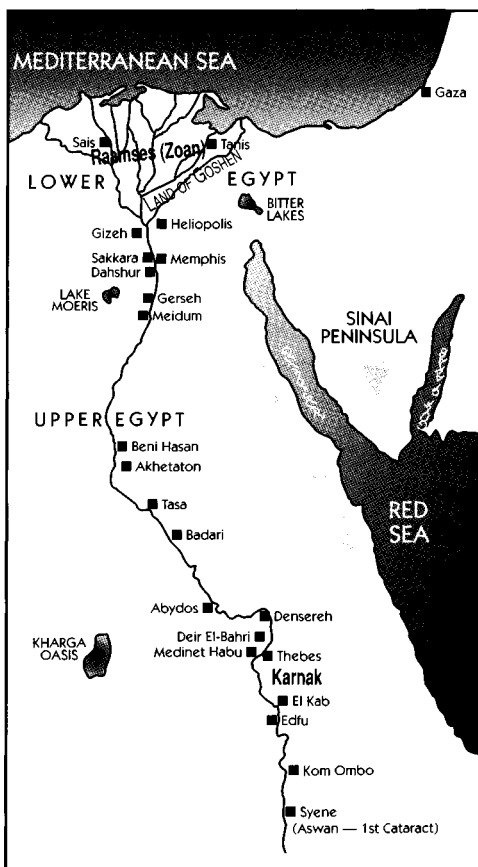
EGYPT AT THE EXODUS

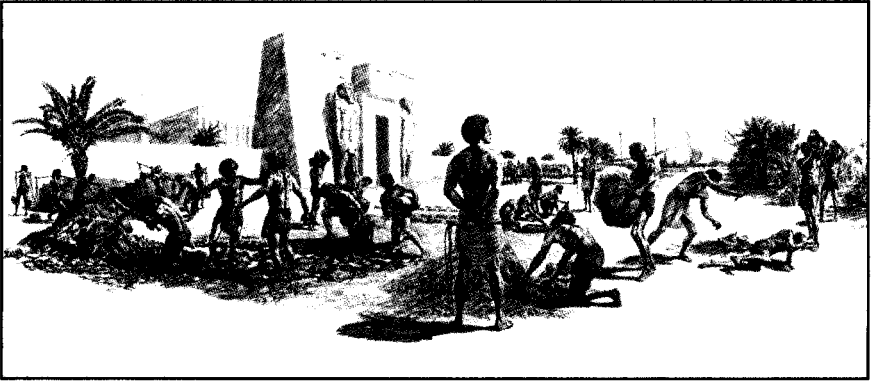
Egypt comprises a valley from 3.5 to 50 kilometres (2-30 miles) wide, with an average width of about sixteen kms (10 mls). It is some 1,200 kms (700 mls) long, cut by the Nile, through the east end of the Sahara Desert, from Aswan to the Mediterranean. On either side, it has a desert plateau about 300 metres (1,000 feet) high.

The floor of the valley is covered with black alluvial deposit of rich sediment from the Abyssinian highlands, providing unparalleled fertility, constantly renewed by the annual overflow of the Nile.

From the dawn of history the land has been irrigated with vast and elaborate systems of canals and reservoirs. Isolated and protected by the desert, one of the earliest empires of history, here developed a high civilisation. The ancient monuments and records of the past testify to the advanced culture and sophistication of the ancient civilisation. For a longer period than any other empire, it preserved its power and greatness. From shortly after the Flood, until the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, its power as a nation was feared and respected.

The Delta, a triangle formed by the spread-out mouth of the Nile, is about 160 kms (100 mls) long from north to south, and about 240 kms (150 mls) wide from east to west. The land of Goshen, main centre of Israelite habitation, was east of the Delta.





THE PHARAOH OF THE OPPRESSION

We believe that the Pharaoh of the oppression was *Rameses II*, sometimes called *Rameses the Great*. He was one of the greatest of the Pharaohs, and reigned for a period of sixty-five years, which gives adequate time for the events in Exodus to have occurred during his lifetime.

However, this is disputed by some on the grounds that it would be impossible chronologically. Others accept Rameses as the Pharaoh of the oppression, but reject the chronology of the Bible.

We believe that the chronology of the Bible, being inspired, is exact, and to be accepted. But we do not consider Egyptian chronology as inspired nor exact. In fact, Egyptologists do not agree amongst themselves upon the dates of the Pharaohs. For example, the first year of *Merneptah* (Rameses' successor) has been set by various authorities and archaeologists thus: A.G. Sayce: BC1280; E.A.W. Budge: BC1263; Breasted: BC1225; Flinders Petrie: BC1207. In *Light From The Ancient Past* (p .97) J. Finegan states: "From astronomical calculation of the date of a new moon mentioned in the fifty-second year of Rameses II, Rowton has placed the accession of Rameses II in BC1290."



Difficulties in Chronology

Disagreement among experts in regard to Egyptian chronology is contrasted with the inspired chronology of the Bible. In *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, Martin Anstey comments: "All Egyptian dates for this period are purely conjectural. The date of the Exodus is fixed quite definitely in the Hebrew text, and as there is nothing certainly known in the records of Egypt to conflict with the Hebrew Bible, there is no reason why it should not be accepted. The Exodus occurred on the 14th Nisan, in the year *an hom.* 2513, a year which would be

expressed by Usher as BC1492, but in terms of the scheme of the present writer as BC1530 (Bible dates) and in the terms of the ordinary received chronology as BC1612 (Ptolemaic dates)."

The Ptolemaic system of chronology is that generally accepted today. Ptolemy (AD70-161) was a constructive genius, and the author of the Ptolemaic system of Astronomy. He was one of the founders of the science of geography. But in chronology he was only a late compiler and contriver, for he lived in the second century after Christ. His table and chronology of the Persian kings is disputed. It is contradicted by the Persian National Traditions preserved in Firdusi, by the Jewish national traditions preserved in the *Sedar Olam*, and by the writings of Josephus. Therefore, though the Canon of Ptolemy is of greatest assistance in the study and synchronisation of history, it should not be used to challenge the inspired record of Scripture. Further comments are made to this effect in *The Romance of Bible Chronology*.

However, there is a problem in relation to Bible chronology, in that Luke inserts Cainan as the son of Arphaxad (Luke 3:36), whereas the Hebrew text gives Salah (Gen. 10:24). It is also noted that the *Septuagint* gives Cainan as the son of Arphaxad, and, in consequence, adds a further 130 years to the chronology. Despite this, however, it appears that the presence of Cainan in the genealogy at this point is an interpolation, and should be ignored. The *Companion Bible* comments: "Undoubtedly an interpolation in certain copies of the Septuagint towards the close of the Fourth Century AD." In support, it cites the opinion of A. Hervey in *The Genealogies Of Our Lord*: "The evidence against his existence is to the utmost possible degree, clear, full, and positive, and not liable to any mistake or perversion. On the contrary, the evidence for his existence... is inferential, obscure, or open to the suspicion of falsification."

F.W. Farrar comments: "In v. 36 [Luke 3] the Cainan [who must be distinguished from the Cainan of v. 37] is possibly introduced by mistake. The name, though found in this place of the genealogy in the *Septuagint*, is not found in any Hebrew mss. of the O.T., nor in the Samaritan, Chaldee, and Syriac Versions (Gen. 11:12; 1Chr. 1:24). It is omitted in the *Codes Bezae* (D), and there is some evidence that it was unknown to Irenaeus."

The exclusion of this Cainan greatly assists to consolidate Bible chronology to the time of the Exodus.

We therefore accept *Rameses II* as the pharaoh of the Exodus, without conceding the alleged chronological problem between the dating of Egyptologists and the Bible. We believe that the Egyptologists have made a mistake, and therefore accept the inspired chronology as exact.

In *Light From The Ancient Past*, J. Finnegan writes: "Unless we are to regard Exodus 1:11 as an erroneous or anachronistic statement, we must conclude that Rameses II was the pharaoh under whom the oppression of the Israelites reached its climax. This is in harmony with our knowledge of his vast building activities, and particularly with the fact that he resided in the Delta and devoted the opening years of his reign largely to building operations at Tanis. The general

impression given by the book of Exodus is that the Israelites were settled not far from Pharaoh's court, and in Psalm 78:12, 43, they are definitely said to have lived 'in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan.' Zoan is the Hebrew name for Tanis, as the rendering in the *Septuagint* shows, and thus we have a picture of the Israelites as living in the vicinity of Tanis at a time when Pharaoh's court was there. This situation is fulfilled in the time of Rameses II, but not in the earlier days of Thutmos III."

Zoan was situated on the northeastern frontier on the east bank of the Tanaitic Nile. The city had been established as early as the Sixth Dynasty of Pharaoh Pepi I (BC 2300 see Num. 13:22), and later became the headquarters of the Hyksos or foreign rulers of Egypt.

Rameses II practically reconstructed the place. It continued until about AD451, when it declined and became a heap of ruins in the midst of the village, San.

The temple of Tanis was one of the largest structures in Egypt, measuring 300 metres (1,000 ft.) long. It contained a colossal statue of Rameses II, some 29 metres (92 feet) high, weighing 900 tonnes. Its large toe was the size of a man's body!

The following list of pharaohs is given with the accepted dates of their rule, a chronology which we dispute because of the reasons advanced above. However, for sake of convenience, and to indicate the length of rule, we have included these "accepted dates."

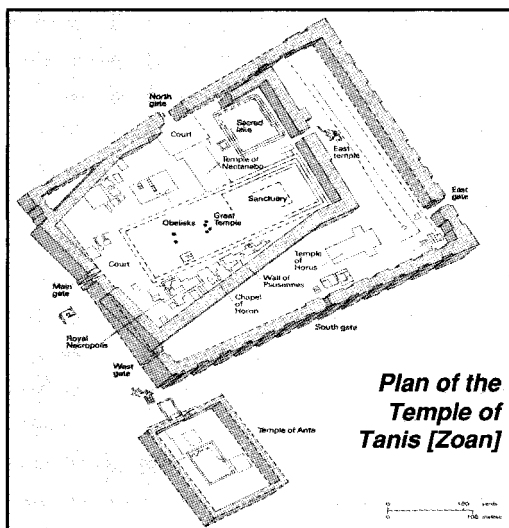
Pharaohs Of Ancient Egypt

Amosis — 1580. From Thebes, he organised opposition to the ruling Hyksos, and drove them out in BC1570. He besieged them in the Palestinian fortress of Sharuhem (Josh. 19:6).

Amenhotep I — 1560.

Thotmes I — 1540. He broke with the tradition of building pyramids and instead built a royal rock-faced tomb. He was an energetic ruler and made Egypt a world power. He extended his conquests to the Euphrates, which the Egyptians, in amazement, styled: *The River which Flows Backwards*, for it flows in the opposite direction to the Nile.

Thotmes II — 1510. This pharaoh was dominated by his half-sister Hatshepsut who was the real ruler. He made frequent raids to the Euphrates to maintain the empire established by Thotmes I.



**Plan of the
Temple of
Tanis [Zoan]**

Thotmes III — 1500. Hatshepsut, his half-sister, was co-regent for twenty years. He hated her, and after her death endeavored to remove her name from history. This pharaoh was the greatest conqueror in Egyptian history. He raided Palestine and Syria seventeen times, built a navy to control the sea, subdued Ethiopia, and ruled throughout the country to the Euphrates. He established the first great empire in history, and in doing so, accumulated great wealth. He also engaged upon great building projects, many of which still remain. His tomb is at Thebes; his mummy in the Cairo Museum.

Hatshepsut — Daughter of Thotmes I. One of Egypt's greatest and most vigorous rulers, and the first great queen in history. But because she was a woman, she never obtained supreme power. She hated the idea of inferiority of her sex in rulership, and made her statues representing herself as a man! She therefore was chief of the women's liberation movement of ancient Egypt! Under her influence the power of the empire was extended, and she attempted to add to its glory, by building many monuments. She was hated by Thotmes III whom she dominated during her lifetime, and who, after her death, obliterated her name from her monuments, and destroyed many of her statues — the broken remains of some having been discovered.

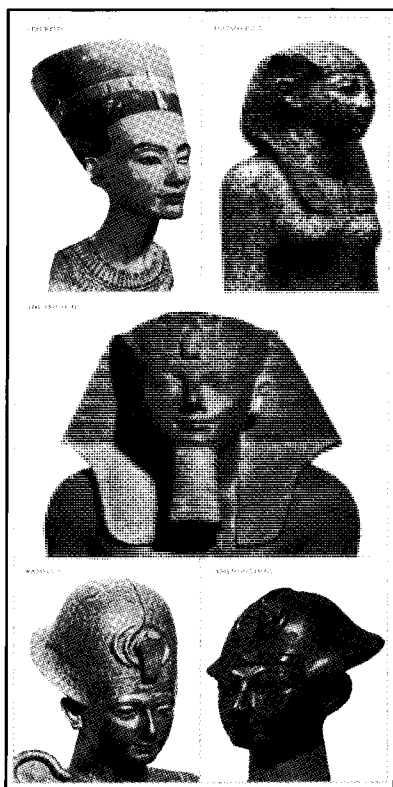
Amenhotep II — 1450. Many believe that he was the pharaoh of the Exodus. They claim that Hatshepsut was the "daughter of Pharaoh" who saved the infant Moses.

Thotmes IV — 1420.

Amenhotep IV — 1415. He built up the glory of the empire without the military prowess of his predecessors, so that under him Egypt lost her Asiatic Empire. He tried to establish monotheism throughout Egypt, and endeavored to force the people to worship one god, *Ra*. Opposed by the priests of Thebes who supported the polytheism of Egypt, he removed his capital to Amarna.

Semenka — 1362. A weak ruler.

Tutankhamen — 1360. Son-in-law of Amenhotep IV. He restored the old polytheistic religion, and moved the capital back to Thebes. One of the lesser rulers of Egypt, reigning at the close of a most brilliant period for the empire. He died at the age of about 18 years. He is



unique to Egyptian archaeology, inasmuch as his tomb was discovered intact by the archaeologist, H. Carter, in AD1922. The fantastic wealth revealed in the tomb of this comparatively obscure and lesser ruler of Egypt, is indicative of the tremendous glory that must have been manifested by the nation during its heyday, and of the fabulous wealth that must have been found in the tombs of greater pharaohs before they were robbed.

Ay; Setymeramen — 1350. Two weak rulers.

Horemheb — 1340. A religious reformer who restored the worship of Amon.

Rameses I — 1320.

Seti—1319. He extended the influence of Egypt by again conquering Palestine which had slipped from Egyptian control. He commenced the building of the Great Hall at Karnak.

Rameses II — 1308. One of the greatest of the pharaohs, and certainly one of the most pompous and dictatorial, ruling for 65 years. He was a great builder, a propagandist, and, according to some, a great liar! It is said that he sometimes claimed credit for the accomplishments of his predecessors; but that he was a great ruler is beyond dispute. He re-established the might of the empire from Ethiopia to the Euphrates, raiding and pillaging Palestine repeatedly. He completed the Great Hall of Karnak, and other vast works, including fortifications, canals and temples. He used slave labor for these projects, as he boasts upon monuments still standing. Among these slaves were included prisoners taken in war, negroes from the south, and local inhabitants of the working class. He forced them to toil in gangs in the quarries or brickfields, or in dragging great stone blocks over the soft earth. His mummy is in the Cairo Museum.

Merneptah — 1235. Probably the pharaoh of the Exodus. His throne-room at Memphis has been discovered.

Amenmeses; Siptah; Seti II — 1220-1200. Three weak rulers.

Controversy Over The Pharaoh Of The Exodus

Some favour Amenhotep II (BC1450-1420); others (including ourselves) believe that it was Merneptah (BC1235-1220).

The dated reign of Amenhotep II favors the chronology of the Bible, whereas that of Merneptah does not. However, the facts concerning the reign of Merneptah suggest that he is the pharaoh of the Exodus, and as we have indicated that Egyptian chronology is open to doubt, we suggest it should rather be made to conform to that of the Bible.

If Amenhotep were the pharaoh of the Exodus, then Thotmes III (BC1500) would be the oppressor, and Queen Hatshepsut, his half-sister who reigned as co-regent, probably the daughter who saved Moses' life. As noted before, though Thotmes despised and hated her, she completely dominated him, and represented the real power of the throne. After her death, he ruled alone for

thirty years. He was the greatest conqueror in Egyptian history. He subdued Ethiopia, and extended his rule to the Euphrates, establishing the first great empire in history. He accumulated great wealth, and engaged in vast building enterprises. His mummy is in the Cairo Museum.

If Merneptah was the pharaoh of the Exodus, then Rameses II would be the oppressor. He also was a great ruler, and re-established the empire brought into existence by Amenhotep. We believe that he was the pharaoh of the oppression because of the reference to the city named after him (Exo. 1:11), and Egyptian chronology should be made to conform to that of the Scriptures.

In AD1883, the archaeologist Naville, identified the site of Pithon (Exo. 1:11). On the gateway he found an inscription of Rameses II which read: "I built Pithon at the mouth of the east." In AD1905, Flinders Petrie discovered the city of Rameses. On a stele, discovered by Fisher at Bethshean in Palestine, Rameses claims that he "built Raameses with Asiatic Semitic (i.e. Hebrew) slaves."

Some scholars, however, claim that all he did was to rebuild or repair that which his predecessors had established before him with Hebrews who did not go out with Moses, and that the pharaoh of the oppression was Thotmes. This however, is mere supposition.

The only reference to Israelites on the monuments and inscriptions of ancient Egypt, is that found on the stele of Merneptah, which today is located in the Cairo Museum. Portion of it reads: "I plundered in Canaan with every evil. Ascalon is carried into captivity. Gezer is taken. Yenoam is annihilated. **Israel is desolated. His seed is not. Palestine is become a widow for Egypt.** All lands are untied; they are pacified. Everyone who is turbulent has been bound by king Merneptah."

The reference to Israel, and the claim that "his seed is not" could relate to the slaughter of the male children as recorded in Exodus, or even to the boastful but lying claim of the Pharaoh explaining to the people of Egypt the result of the attack on the Israelites at the Red Sea. Merneptah could have represented this as a victory, and have claimed to have driven the people into the wilderness to perish. Despite his boast, Merneptah's reign was of short duration, and full of disaster.

Bible chronology has established the Exodus as taking place approximately BC1450, thus favoring the reign of Amenhotep; but again we emphasise that Egyptologists are at variance in their chronology of its history. Budge gives Rameses as reigning in BC1350; others set it at BC1292. In the face of such uncertainty and disparity, we must accept the statement of Exo. 1:11 as implying that the oppression took place in the era of Rameses II.

Halley's Bible Handbook states about the unreliability of Egyptian chronology that: "Egyptian chronology is fairly well established back to BC1600; but beyond that it is very uncertain. Thus Menes, the first historical king, is dated by Egyptologists variously as follows: Petrie: BC5500; Mariette: BC5000; Brugsch: BC4500; Chabas: BC4000; Lepsius: BC3900; Bunson: BC3600; Hall: BC3500; Breasted: BC3400; Barton: BC3400; Meyer: BC3300; Scharff: BC3000;

Poole: BC2700; G. Rawlinson: BC2450; Wilkinson: BC2320; Sharpe: BC2000. Thus, Petrie and Breasted, two of the most famous Egyptologists, differ by more than 2000 years as to the beginning point of Egyptian history! These two “experts” differ by more than a thousand years on the date of the pyramids, and seven hundred years on the Hyksos period. Present tendency is to lower the dates, both of Egyptian and Babylonian chronology, placing the Great Pyramid at BC2400 or 2500.”

In view of such uncertainty as to actual dating, it would be foolish to accuse the Bible of being incorrect as to its chronological outline.

Memphis: Capital of Rameses

The main capital of Rameses II, the seat of his government, was in Memphis, a name that signifies *White Walls*. It was situated fifteen kilometres (10 miles) north of modern Cairo. Today all that remains of Memphis “once the greatest city on earth is a colossus and a sphinx” (*Historical Geography of the Bible*).

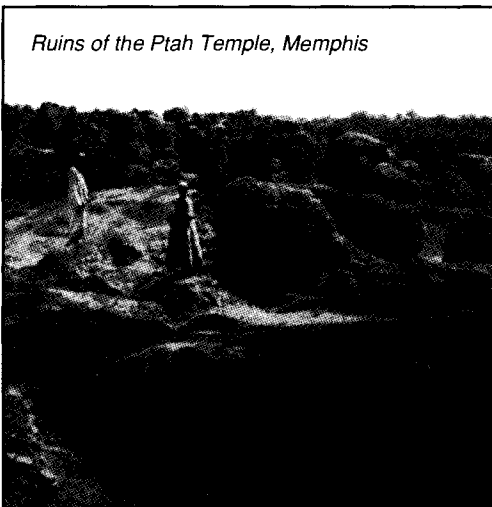
According to Herodotus, Memphis was built on land reclaimed by changing the course of the Nile under instructions of Menes “the first king of Egypt” (*Book 2, Sect. 3*).

It became the headquarters of the worship of Ptah, and of his living symbol, the Apis bull. It was recognised as “the temple city of Egypt.”

As the headquarters of the empire, it would have been visited by Joseph and Moses. Perhaps the Lord Jesus, as a babe taken to Egypt, was in Memphis. It was a city of glory and triumph in the days of Israel’s decline (Jer. 2:16), and was used as a place of refuge by Jews in the days of Jeremiah (Jer. 44:1). The prophets warned, however, that this place of refuge in Egypt, would become the grave of the refugees who sought its shelter (Hos. 9:6). Jeremiah predicted that

Memphis (Noph) would be punished by Yahweh (Jer. 46:14), and warned that it would become “waste, desolate without inhabitant” (v. 19). Ezekiel declared that its very idols and images would cease to exist (Eze. 30:13), and that it would be subjected to continued, daily distresses (v. 16).

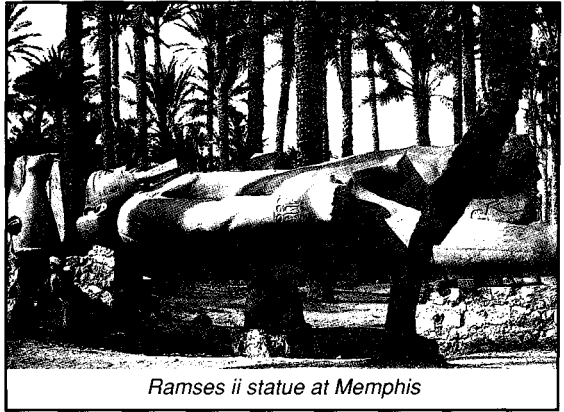
These prophecies in regard to the ancient capital of Egypt had amazing fulfilment. Memphis was sacked by the Assyrians under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. It was attacked by Nebuchadnezzar. Cambyses, son of Cyrus, occupied it, and made



Ruins of the Ptah Temple, Memphis

Egypt a satrap of the Persian Empire.

In spite of these attacks, however, Memphis still remained a city of considerable importance, despite the rivalry of Thebes. It challenged the supremacy of Alexandria in Greek and Roman times. It prospered until the time of the Emperor Theodosius (AD379-395) who ordered the destruction of its temples and the desecration of their statues, in an attempt to destroy paganism.



Ramses ii statue at Memphis

From thence onward it commenced to decline rapidly. In AD640 it fell to Arab invaders, who, in the name of Islam, set up their capital in nearby Al-Fostat.

In AD969, Al-Fostat was replaced by Cairo. Stones from Memphis were taken for building purposes, and the ancient capital was almost completely demolished. Its destruction, claims *The Historical Geography of Bible Lands*, is without parallel in the ancient world. The city has been completely demolished, and, unlike many other centres in Egypt, even its columns, statues and idols have gone. The ruins of Nineveh and Babylon remain for the archaeologist to excavate, but not those of Memphis. As the prophets of Israel foretold, they have completely disappeared.

In the light of Bible predictions, the destruction of Memphis is looked upon by students as among the greatest wonders of the prophetic word.

A Summary Of Egypt In The Bible

The word Egypt in Hebrew is *Mitsraim*, a plural word signifying "Oppressors." The plural denotes the duality of the nation, being combined of Upper and Lower Egypt. *Mitsraim* is the plural of *matsowr* signifying "to limit, hedge in, distress," from a root *tsuwr*, "to cramp, confine," rendered "adversaries" (Exo. 23:22), "beset" (Psalm 139:5), "distress" (Gen. 35:3; 42:21). To Israelites, therefore, Egypt stands for the oppressors who have caused them distress.

Mitsraim was a son of Ham and brother of Canaan, Put and Cush (Gen. 10:6). Ham (Heb. *Kham*) signifies "hot, dark," a symbol of spiritual ignorance. Egypt is identified with Ham in the poetical books of the Bible (Psa. 78:51; 105:23, 27; 106:22).

As types, the seductive aspects of worldliness are represented by Egypt; the corrupting ones by Babylon.

Egypt would be a sterile desert land, if it were not for the Nile. It has an extremely small rainfall (Zech. 14:18), and depends upon irrigation for water (Deu. 11:10). So dependent is the country upon the waters of the Nile, that the Greeks called Egypt *The Gift of the Nile*. Apart from the area close to the river, Egypt is a harsh, barren desert waste, relieved by a few oases, and over most of its area, receiving no greater rainfall than a meagre fall of 26 mm (1 inch) per year.

As life to the Egyptian was dependent upon the sun and the river, these were revered as the chief deities of worship; but their subordinate gods were multitudinous as those of unfaithful Judah, "as many as were their cities" (Jer. 2:28). Upon the multiplicity of their gods Yahweh poured out judgment (Exo. 12:12), thus providing signs by which all the pagan world might see and profit (Jer. 32:20).

Throughout the Bible, travel to Egypt is described as "going down" to that country: a mark of spiritual decline, or moral deterioration (Gen. 12:10; Isa. 30:2-3).

Egypt was noted for disease, and particularly that of leprosy (Exo. 15:26; Deu. 7:15; 28:27, 60).

It is described as the land of slavery and death (Deu. 4:20; 5:6, 13-15). The children of Israel were commanded never to forget the sabbath, for, among other things, it commemorated their deliverance from Egypt (v. 15).

It was noted for idolatry (Exo. 12:12; Josh. 24:14), for reproach (Josh. 5:9), for fleshly wisdom (1Kings 4:30; cp. Exo. 1:10; Acts 7:22), for luxury and plenty (Num. 11:5; Pro. 7:16; Heb. 11:26), for the proud war-horse (1Kings 10:28-29; 2Kings 18:24; Exo. 15:1), and therefore, for that which is spiritually decadent (Rev. 11:8).

Yahweh's sons are called upon to separate from associations with Egypt spiritually, that is, from the religious, political and social systems of civilisation, as a basis for their relationship to Him (Hos. 11:1; 2Cor. 6:17-18). This was exemplified by the Passover which separated Israel from Egypt whilst the former was in the land of the latter (Exo. 12:15); it was typified by Solomon taking his bride out of Egypt to a palace in Jerusalem (1Kings 3:1; Song 1:9); it was shown by the declaration that Yahweh gained a Name by calling out His people from Egypt (Isa. 63:12; Neh. 9:10; Jer. 32:20; Exo. 15:3; cp. Acts 15:14; Exo. 7:5).

The past foreshadows the future. Egypt is to be conquered by the Lord Jesus Christ as it was by Joseph, his type; it is to form a base from which Israel again will be restored to the land (Isa. 11:11; 27:12-13; Zech. 10:11).

Prophecy predicted the decline of Egypt, from its previous pre-eminence of pride and glory, to one reduced to dependence and shame. It was to become "a base" nation (Eze. 29:14-15); no more to rule over others (ch. 30:13); to be brought into subjection to Judah (Isa. 19:17); to prove a broken reed to all who might lean on her (ch. 36:6; 30:2-3). Her revival was to be as the payment of a ransom for Israel (ch. 43:3).

Prophecy also records that she is to be smitten, healed, and finally incorporated into Christ's realm (Isa. 19). Thus subdued she will be made submissive to him (Isa. 45:14). A new order of immortal rulers will be given her during the millennial reign of the Lord (Psa. 68:30-31).

Egyptian Rulers Mentioned in Scripture

Those mentioned by name in the Bible, are as follows:

Shishak (2Chr. 12:9) — He seized the shields of gold out of the temple in Jerusalem, in consequence of which they were replaced with shields of brass. Sheshonk I was the founder of the 22nd dynasty.

So (2Kgs. 17:4) — Hoshea, the last king of Israel, conspired with him against Assyria, with disastrous consequences. He is identified with Sabaka of the 25th dynasty.

Zerah the Ethiopian (2Chr. 14:9-15). His army of one million men and three hundred chariots was defeated by Asa. He is identified with Osorkon I, Shishak's successor.

Tirhakah (2Kgs. 19:9). — He is connected with Ethiopia, and contested the dominion of the world in the days of Sennacherib. He is identified with Taharka, the last king of the 25th dynasty.

Necho (2Kgs. 23:29) — An energetic ruler of the 26th dynasty who was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar. Josiah warred against him and was killed.

Hophra (Jer. 44:30) — The ruler of Egypt when Jeremiah was taken there. He is also known as Apries. Jeremiah predicted he would be defeated by his enemies, and the prophecy came true.

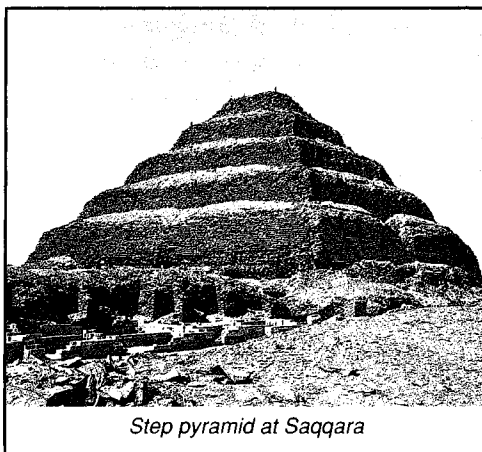
Unnamed pharaohs are referred to in Gen. 12; Exo. 1, etc.; 12:29; 1Kings 3:1; 11:14-22; 2Kings 18:21; 1Chr. 4:18.

Cities of Egypt Mentioned in Scripture

On or **Hieropolis** — Today a suburb of Cairo (Gen. 41:45; Jer. 43:13). In the latter reference it is called **Beth-Shemesh**.

Memphis or **Noph** (Hos. 9:6; Isa. 19:13; Jer. 2:16; 44:1; 46:14,19). — The city was about sixteen kilometres (10 miles) north of Cairo. A step pyramid, accounted the oldest stone structure extant in Egypt (Pyramid of Djoser), is close by at Saqqara.

Zoan, Tanis or **Raameses** — Site of Israel's slavery (Exo.



Step pyramid at Saqqara

1:11; Num. 13:22; Psa. 78:12,43; Isa. 30:4; Eze. 30:14).

Pithom or **Tahpanes** — (Exo. 1:11; Jer. 2:16; 43:4-9; 44:1; 46:14; Eze. 30:18).

Pathros (Eze. 29:14) — A district, not a city. Its name indicates its situation, for it signifies *Southland*.

A Remarkable Testimony About Religion

According to the celebrated Egyptian archaeologist, Flinders Petrie, the original religion of Egypt was *monotheistic* — the worship of one God. But before the dawn of the historic period, a religion had developed in which each tribe had its own god, represented by an animal.

The religion of Egypt, in the time of Moses, therefore, was *polytheistic*. The Egyptians had gods for everything. They worshipped the Nile, the beasts of the earth, the fowls of heaven, as well as the heavenly bodies themselves. As Paul wrote: “they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things” (Rom. 1:23).

The plagues affected many of God’s created things that the Egyptians worshipped, and this, partly, was the reason why they were sent. Yahweh declared: “Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment” (Exo. 12:12).

Some of these gods are as follows:

Ptah (Apis) was god of Memphis, represented by a *Bull*.

Amon was god of Thebes, represented by a *Ram*.

Hathor, Egypt’s leading goddess, was represented by a *Cow*.

Mut, the wife of Amon, was represented by a *Vulture*.

Horus, god of the sky, was represented by a *Falcon*.

Ra, the sun god, was represented by a *Hawk*.

Set (Satan), god of the east frontier, was represented as an animal headed with a long, curved, pointed snout, and was held to be the god of evil, darkness and violence.

Sebek, the *Crocodile* god.

Osiris, god of the underworld, was represented by a *Goat*.

Isis, wife of Osiris, was represented by a *Cow*.

Thoth, god of wisdom, was represented by an *Ibis*.

Heka, a god of magic, was represented by a *Frog*.

Nekhbt, goddess of Upper Egypt, was represented by a *Vulture*.

Bast, the “mother-goddess” of Bubastis in the eastern Delta, was represented by a *Cat*.

There were innumerable other gods: a god of *Night*, a god of *Death*, a god of the *Horizon*, and so forth. The pharaohs were deified; the Nile was deemed sacred; and gods of all things elevated for worship.

Analysis

THE TELESCOPIC VIEW

The telescopic view provides an overall, general outline of a book, enabling its basic message to be comprehended in perspective. On the other hand, the microscopic view considers the meaning of words, phrases, and verses, providing a more detailed exposition.

The former sets forth background and context; the latter provides depth and detail. Therefore before providing a detailed exposition of each verse in the book, we have set out a general analysis, so as to give an outline of Exodus in its simplest form.

Stages of Development in Exodus

Notice that each section contains a proposal or plan, an objection by which the proposal is resisted, and an accomplishment, in which the proposal is eventually achieved.

(1) Oppression:

This was first *proposed* by Pharaoh (1:10); then *resisted* by the Israelitish midwives and Moses' mother; but finally *accomplished* when Moses was forced to flee from the land.

(2) Visitation:

This was first *proposed* by Yahweh (2:24-25); then *resisted* by Moses who pleaded his inability (4:10-12); finally *accomplished* when the Israelites were visited by Moses, and the Egyptians visited with plagues.

(3) Invitation:

This was first *proposed* when Yahweh called upon the people to make preparation to leave (11:2-4); it was *resisted* when the Israelites were pursued by Pharaoh's army; it was *accomplished* when they accepted the provision of the Passover lamb.

(4) Separation:

This was first *proposed* when the command was given to Moses and Aaron to leave (12:31-33); it was *resisted* when the Israelites were pursued by Pharaoh's army; it was *accomplished* when they passed through the Red Sea.

(5) Sanctification:

This was first *proposed* by Yahweh as a condition for immunity from trouble (15:26); it was *resisted* by faithless murmuring on the part of the people (16:2); and it was *accomplished* when they accepted the Mosaic Covenant and committed themselves to obedience to the divine will (19:8).

(6) Dedication:

This was first *proposed* by the instructions given regarding the erection of the tabernacle; it was *resisted* by Israel's lapse into idolatry at the time of the

golden calf; it was *accomplished* by the subsequent confirmation of the tabernacle worship.

There is a poetical symmetry in the literary construction of the book of Exodus illustrating the principle that, although that which Yahweh *proposes* might be *resisted*, His purpose will be *accomplished* ultimately.

LAYOUT OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS

(1) OPPRESSION: ch. 1:1 to 2:22.

(1) *Proposed* — ch. 1

Introduction: Death of Joseph	ch. 1:1-6
A New King: A New Policy	7-14
The faithful defiance of the midwives	15-21
Pharaoh's ruthless decree	22

(2) *Resisted* — ch. 2:1-12

Moses hid in the ark	ch. 2:1-4
Moses saved and named	5-10
Moses seeks to save his people	11-12

(3) *Accomplished* — ch. 2:13-22

Moses forced to flee	13-15
Moses marries a Midianitish woman	16-22

(2) VISITATION — ch. 2:23 to 10:29

(1) *Proposed* — ch. 2:23 to 4:9

God recalls His covenant	23-25
God reveals Himself at the bush	ch. 3:1-6
Moses instructed to return to Egypt	7-10
Moses seeks to know the Divine Name	11-13
The Memorial Name proclaimed	14-15
Moses given his commission	16-18
God proclaims His intention of revealing His power before Egypt	19-22
The sign of the serpent rod	ch. 4:1-5
The sign of the leprous hand	6-8
The sign of water turning to blood	9

(2) *Resisted* — ch. 4:10 to 5:23

Moses' reluctance to return	10-13
Aaron appointed as spokesman	14-17
Moses commences his return	18-23
The rite of circumcision re-confirmed	24-26
Moses and Aaron meet	27-28
The people convinced	29-31
Moses interviews Pharaoh	ch. 5:1-4
Pharaoh increases Israel's workload	5-9
Israel's miseries increase	10-14
Pharaoh refuses to relieve the burden	15-19

Moses blamed by the people, pleads Yahweh's help	20-23
(3) <i>Accomplished</i> — ch. 6:1 to 10:29	
Yahweh proclaims His intention to deliver	ch. 6:1-8
The people are discouraged	9-13
Genealogy of Moses and Aaron	14-27
Yahweh confers His authority upon Moses	v.28 — ch. 7:9
Moses' contest with the magicians	10-13
• First Plague: water into blood	14-21
Miracle imitated: heart hardened	22-25
• Second Plague: frogs multiply	ch. 8:1-6
Miracle imitated—but Pharaoh seeks Moses' intercession	7-11
Respite—Pharaoh's heart hardened	12-15
• Third Plague—Dust into lice	16-17
Magicians thwarted	18-19
• Fourth Plague — Flies—Goshen Immune	20-24
Pharaoh stubbornly refuses to honour his promise	25-32
• Fifth Plague: Murrain on Egyptian beasts	ch. 9:1-7
• Sixth Plague: Ashes into boils and blains	8-12
Pharaoh warned of the next plague	13-21
• Seventh Plague: hail and storm	22-26
Moses intercedes for Pharaoh	27-35
Pharaoh warned—his servants plead in vain	ch. 10:1-11
• Eighth Plague: Locusts darken sky	12-15
Moses intercedes for Pharaoh again	16-20
• Ninth Plague: Darkness over the land	21-23
Pharaoh pleads for relief—but remains obstinate	24-29

(3) INVITATION — ch. 11:1 to 12:28

(1) <i>Proposed</i> — ch. 11:1-8	
Israel borrows from the Egyptians	ch. 11:1-3
The firstborn threatened	4-8
(2) <i>Resisted</i> — ch. 11:9-10	
Pharaoh remains stubborn	9-10
(3) <i>Accomplished</i> — ch. 12:1-28	
Beginning of the year changed	ch. 12:1-2
Passover instituted	3-14
The Feast of Unleavened Bread	15-17
When it was to be kept	18-20
The Elders instructed to keep the Passover	21-28

(4) SEPARATION — ch. 12:29 to 15:21

(1) <i>Proposed</i> — ch. 12:29 to 14:4	
• Tenth Plague: Firstborn slain	29-30
The people urged to leave	31-36
At Succoth	37-39
The night of observations	40-42

Who shall eat the Passover 43-51
 The firstborn in Israel to be sanctified ch. 13:1-2
 The Passover memorial explained 3-4
 How to keep the Passover in the Land 5-7
 Children to be taught its significance 8-10
 The firstborn to be set apart 11-16
 Yahweh’s careful supervision of His people 17-18
 They take the bones of Joseph with them 19
 Yahweh’s protection of them 20-22
 They journey to Pihahiroth ch. 14:1-4

(2) *Resisted* — ch. 14:5-18
 Pharaoh pursues the Israelites 5-9
 The people panic 10-12
 Moses’ faith 13-14
 Yahweh answers Moses’ prayer 15-18

(3) *Accomplished* — ch. 14:19 to 15:21
 Israel walks through the Red Sea 19-22
 The Egyptians destroyed in the Red Sea 23-31
 Moses’ Song of Deliverance ch. 15:1-21

(5) CONSECRATION — ch. 15:22 to 24:18

(1) *Proposed (in type)* — ch. 15:22-27
 From the Red Sea to Shur 22
 Bitter waters at Marah healed 23-26
 Refreshment at Elim 27

(2) *Resisted (by faithlessness)* — ch. 16:1 to 17:16
 The people complain of hunger ch. 16:1-3
 Flesh and bread promised 4-8
 Glory of Yahweh manifested 9-12
 Quails and manna supplied 13-14
 Instructions regarding manna 15-21
 Instructions regarding the Sabbath 22-26
 Penalty of sabbath breakers 27-30
 Manna described 31
 The Memorial Pot of manna 32-36
 The people complain of thirst ch. 17:1-3
 Water from the smitten rock 4-7
 Victory over Amalek 8-16

(3) *Accomplished* — ch. 18:1 to 24:18
 Moses’ family united to him ch. 18:1-6
 Moses preaches the gospel to Jethro 7-12
 On Jethro’s advice Moses delegates his labor 13-26
 Jethro leaves Moses 27
 Yahweh proclaims His covenant to Moses ch. 19:1-6
 The people accept the terms 7-9
 Moses instructed to sanctify the people 10-13

The people are sanctified	14-15
The trembling people and awe-inspiring God	16-25
The ten commandments	ch. 20:1-17
Moses the mediator	18-21
The Yahweh Altar—sole means of approach	22-26
Laws concerning masters and servants	ch. 21:1-11
Laws concerning physical injuries	12-36
Laws concerning property rights	ch. 22:1-15
Laws concerning evil practices	v.16—ch.23:9
Laws concerning Sabbaths and Feasts	10-19
Laws concerning angelic supervision	20-33
Moses called into the mount	ch. 24:1-2
The covenant endorsed by blood	3-8
The glory of Yahweh manifested	9-11
Moses ascends the mount to receive the covenant	12-18

(6) DEDICATION — ch. 25:1 to 40:38

(1) Proposed (the tabernacle designed) — ch. 25:1 to 31:18.

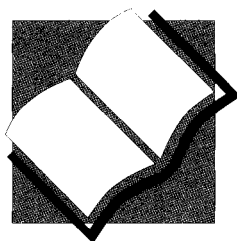
The ark, table, lampstand	ch. 25:1-40
Curtains, boards, veils	ch. 26:1-37
Brazen altar, hangings, oil	ch. 27:1-21
The priests and their garments	ch. 28:1-43
The consecration of the priests	ch. 29:1-35
Sanctification of the altar	36-37
The continual burnt offering	38-44
Yahweh's promise to dwell with Israel	45-46
Altar of incense	ch. 30:1-10
The ransom of souls	11-16
The laver	17-21
The holy anointing oil	22-33
Composition of incense	34-38
Workmen of wisdom appointed	ch. 31:1-11
The sabbath sign	12-17
The Tables of stone	18

(2) Resisted (The Tabernacle Delayed) — ch. 32:1 to 34:35

Israel lapses into idolatry	ch. 32:1-6
Moses' intercession	7-14
The return of Moses and Joshua	15-18
The anger of Moses—tablets broken	19-24
Levi slays the disobedient	25-29
Moses returns to intercede	30-35
Yahweh refused to go with the people	ch. 33:1-3
Moses again intercedes	4-13
Moses given reassurance	14-17
Moses is promised a revelation of divine glory	18-23
Moses again invited into the mount	ch. 34:1-4

The Glory revealed in the Name	5-9
The separateness demanded of the people	10-17
Feast of unleavened bread to be kept	18
Firstborn must be Yahweh's	19-20
Sabbath must be observed	21
Harvest Festivals must be maintained	22
Three annual feasts must be celebrated	23-24
Leaven must be excluded from sacrifice	25
Seething a kid prohibited	26
The ten commandments	27-28
The shining face of Moses	29-35
<i>(3) Accomplished (Tabernacle Completed) — ch. 35:1-3 to 40:38</i>	
The spiritual obligations of the people	ch. 35:1-3
Free gifts solicited for the tabernacle	4-19
The people's willing response	20-29
Workmen called to labor	30-35
The work commenced	ch. 36:1-4
The people restrained from giving	5-7
Curtains—coverings—veils—hangings for the door completed ..	8-38
The tabernacle furniture completed	ch. 37:1—38:31
The priestly garments completed	ch. 39:1-31
The work inspected and approved by Moses	32-43
The command to set up the tabernacle	ch. 40:1-8
The tabernacle anointed	9-11
The priests are sanctified	12-16
The tabernacle is set up	17-19
The most holy set in order	20-21
The table of shewbread set in order	22-23
The lamps are lit	24-25
The altar of incense put in place	26-27
The hangings and altar of burnt offerings	28-29
The laver and court set up	30-33
A cloud covers the tabernacle	34-35
The cloud leads the people	36-38

The above analysis of *The Book of Exodus* gives the general outline of its contents, and provides a basis for a verse by verse exposition of its message. With the above thoroughly mastered, we can put aside the "telescope" and take up the "microscope," in order that the hidden wisdom of Yahweh might be more completely revealed. To do so, we now commence our verse by verse exposition of Exodus.



Exposition

EXODUS: A PATTERN OF REDEMPTION

In Exodus, Israel's history as a nation really begins. The book covers a period of some 145 years, from the death of Joseph, where Genesis ends, reaching to the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness at the foot of Mount Horeb.

It is a book revealing the principle of deliverance from oppression, recording the manner in which Yahweh visited His people to redeem them as a nation unto Himself.

The account begins with Moses recording the causes and motives of the persecution levelled against the Israelites in Egypt, at the order of Pharaoh who "knew not Joseph." His objective was the permanent suppression of the Israelites, and therefore his decree against them constituted the first planned national policy of anti-Semitism.

We have headed the first section of the book: *Oppression*.

It can be divided into three parts:

- (1) *Proposed*: by Pharaoh's policy of extermination (ch. 1).
- (2) *Resisted*: by the mother of Moses who hid her child from Pharaoh's servants; and, later by Moses, when he refused to conform to the demand of Pharaoh's daughter (ch. 2:1-12).
- (3) *Accomplished*: when Moses was forced to flee from Egypt and set up home in Midian (ch. 2:13-22).

Every subsection of the book can be divided according to this threefold pattern.



A shepherd grazes his flock in the shadow of Mount Horeb with Sinai in the background. It was here that Moses came after he fled from Pharaoh in Egypt. It was here that, later, the Israelites assembled to receive the law of Yahweh, and to commit themselves to a national covenant of obedience.

EXODUS: A PATTERN OF REDEMPTION

SECTION ONE

OPPRESSION PROPOSED

CHAPTER 1:1-21

(1) Proposed — ch. 1

Introduction: Death of Josephch. 1:1-6
A New King: A New Policy7-14
The faithful defiance of the midwives15-21
Pharaoh's ruthless decree22

(2) Resisted — ch. 2:1-12

Moses hid in the arkch. 2:1-4
Moses saved and named5-10
Moses seeks to save his people11-12

(3) Accomplished — ch. 2:13-22

Moses forced to flee13-15
Moses marries a Midianitish woman16-22



(1) OPPRESSION PROPOSED**EXODUS CHAPTER ONE**

Israel in Egypt rapidly increases in number, until the problem of their presence is brought to the attention of the authorities. A new king ascends the throne with a new policy toward the problem. He considers that the large and increasing numbers of Hebrews present a threat to the stability of the nation, and decides upon a ruthless policy of extermination. Forgetting the benefits Egypt already had received from the Israelites, he reduces them to the status of slaves, appointing them difficult and degrading tasks. But this fails to accomplish his purpose. The more the Israelites are afflicted, the more they multiply in number. This causes consternation among the Egyptians, and results in an even more extreme policy being adopted. Pharaoh issues a decree that all male children are to be destroyed at birth, and orders the Israelitish midwives to murder such babes as soon as they are born. The midwives, however, resist the policy of Pharaoh, and are blessed of God for so doing. Driven to desperation, Pharaoh incites his people to the most ruthless acts of anti-Semitism. He orders them to destroy all Hebrew male children that are born. The chapter reveals how God overshadowed His people for good: when few in number (vv. 5-7); when under oppression (vv. 8-14); when threatened with extinction (vv. 15-22).

Introduction: The Death of Joseph—vv. 1-6.

The names of the children of Israel who went into Egypt are repeated from Genesis, and this section of the history concludes with the recording of the death of Joseph and all of his generation.

VERSE 1

“Now these are the names of the children of Israel” — “Now” is *vau* in Hebrew, and literally, “And.” This conjunction joins this book with the previous one, Genesis. Both Leviticus and Numbers begin the same way, while Deuteronomy is similarly linked with that which goes before. This shows that the five books of the Pentateuch are really five divisions of one book: *The Law*. Many other books of Scripture are similarly linked with those that precede them (cp. Josh. 1:1; Jud. 1:1; Ruth 1:1; 1Sam. 1:1; 1Kings 1:1, etc). This is unique in a book of many authors,

and indicates that each of the writers of the inspired Word instinctively felt that he was contributing a section of a single book: the complete revelation of God.

The Hebrew title of the book is *Ve-elleh Shemoth* forming its introductory statement: “And these are the names.”

The English title is from the Septuagint, *Exodus*, signifying “going out,” or “departure.” The book contains some thirty-five references to the “going out” of Egypt; and this “departure” is described as Israel’s “redemption” (ch. 6:6; 15:13) whereby God “made Himself an everlasting name” (Isa. 63:12). Thus Exodus is pre-eminently the *Book of Redemption*.

The word “exodus” is used in the Greek text of Luke 9:31, translated as “decease;” thus the discussion of the Lord with Moses and Elijah concerned his “way out” by which was accomplished his redemption.

“Which came into Egypt” — They first *“came out”* of the loins of Jacob (v. 5), and then entered *into* Egypt. God subsequently brought them *out of* Egypt to enter *into* covenant with Him: “He brought us out, that He might bring us in” (Deu. 6:23).



“For Joseph was in Egypt already” — Cp. Gen. 37:28-36; 39:1-50.

VERSE 6

“And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation” — This statement links Exodus with Gen. 50:26. It is the

“Every man and his household came with Jacob” — This important addition reveals how the Israelites increased into such a large number in so short a time. The seventy that went into Egypt, took their households with them. We do not know how many this constituted, but Abraham had 318 males of responsible age in his household (Gen. 14:14), and it is quite possible that these groups were also of considerable number. The “household” of each individual patriarch could have been incorporated into his tribe as it developed.

VERSE 2

“Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah” — The meaning of these names joined together make up the exhortation: “*See a son... hear [him]... join and... praise him.*”

VERSE 3

“Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin” — These names add to the thought: “*He will Reward... [by providing a] Dwelling... [with the] Son of His right hand.*”

VERSE 4

“Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher” — This can be paraphrased: “*[After] Judgment... [and] Wrestling... [with a] Company... [of the] Blessed.*” See comments on the names of the patriarchs as listed in Genesis 49, in *The Christadelphian Expositor: Genesis*.

VERSE 5

“And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls” — See comments on Gen. 46:8-27.

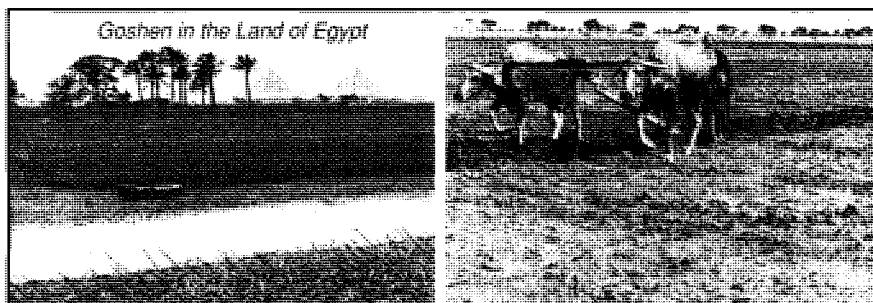
inevitable law of nature that, in the absence of Christ’s coming, leaders and fathers in Israel will eventually rest from their labors in death. This provides opportunity for those who are left to continue the work of the Truth and to undertake a measure of responsibility. Instead of vainly lamenting the fact that a leader has departed, the new generation must take over where the previous one left off, profiting from the faithfulness manifested by those who have gone before, or learning from the mistakes recorded of them.

New King and a New Policy — vv. 7-14.

The Israelites are experiencing unprecedented prosperity, increasing in numbers and possessions, so as to fill the land of Goshen. To match this new generation, a new king arises in Egypt. He views with concern the growing prosperity of the foreigners in the midst of his land. He reminds his ministers of the problem that could arise if Egypt were attacked and the Israelites joined forces with the enemy. He proposes a policy of oppression in order to restrict the opportunity for the Jews to develop further, and sets the people tasks that cause them grief. Their lives are embittered with hard bondage.

VERSE 7

“And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly” — Moses (Deu. 26:5) and, later, Stephen (Acts 7:17) referred to this fact, which was a development of the instruction of God to Adam (Gen. 1:28), and fulfilled His promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:14; 17:6). This population growth evidenced God’s blessing upon the people (Psalm 127:3). The term “increased abundantly” signifies



in Hebrew *to teem*, or *swarm*, as in marine life.

“And multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty” — The Hebrew emphasizes the rapid increase and prosperity of the people. They not only were great in number, but also “exceeding mighty,” becoming powerful and influential in the land. In this phrase, health and vigor are suggested, as the people later were required to recall: “A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty, and populous” (Deu. 26:5). In this is seen the divine hand of blessing, overshadowing all the experiences of the Jewish people.

“And the land was filled with them” — This evidently refers to the district of Goshen, where Jacob originally settled with his family (Gen. 45:10; 47:1); but as the people grew in number, they probably spread outside the borders of this area to mingle more generally with the Egyptians. Ultimately, this was their downfall, for it led to the people being influenced by the evil principles of the surrounding society.

VERSE 8

“Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph” — This statement suggests the establishment of a new dynasty, and not merely the elevation of a new king. For about 150 years, about the time of Joseph, Egypt was ruled by foreigners, the Hyksos dynasty. However Pharaoh Amosis (BC1580) organized resistance from Thebes, and ultimately drove them out, about BC1570 (according

to the “received” dating). The new dynasty looked with disfavor upon the growing Israelitish minority in Goshen, fearing that it might rise to dominance over the nation, as the Hyksos had before it. That is the sense in which the word *know* is used in this verse (see similar use of the word in Jud. 2:10; Psa. 78:6; 31:7). It would appear that the new dynasty, the eighteenth, hated all persons associated with the earlier kings, so that the Hebrews, as a whole, came under its disapproval. The benefits received by Joseph’s wise administration were overlooked, as the reigning monarch saw a potential threat to his rule in the presence of so many foreigners whom he considered sympathetic to the Hyksos dynasty recently deposed. The statement of this verse is quoted by Stephen as constituting the point of crisis of Israel in Egypt at the time (Acts 7:18).

VERSE 9

“And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we”

— As it stands in the AV, this is a deliberate exaggeration designed to instill fear into the hearts of the people. However, Rotherham renders the statement as: “the people... ar too many and mighty for us!” This rendition suggests that the numbers of the Hebrews had grown to the extent that they constituted them a threat to the nation, should it be attacked or should they seek to overthrow it. The statement of Pharaoh is supported by the declaration of the Psalmist, who recognised the growing numerical strength of the Israelites as

indicative of Yahweh's care for His people (Psa. 10:14).

VERSE 10

“Come on, let us deal wisely with them” — Pharaoh recognised a real threat in the presence of so many foreigners in the midst of Egypt, and presented to his ministers a subtle policy designed to guard against any national emergency. His policy was probably dictated by fear as to what the Israelites might do if the Hyksos kings attempted to regain power in the land.

Thus in a remarkable manner, typical in its application, he anticipated the anti-Semitic fears of modern nations. Gentiles have ever been suspicious of Jews and have reacted accordingly.

Notice, too, how the expressions used link the action of Pharaoh with the serpent in Eden. Pharaoh had said, “Let us deal wisely...” Stephen adds that he “dealt subtly with our kindred” (Acts 7:19). Genesis teaches: “The serpent was *more subtle* than any beast of the field” (Gen. 3:1). It is significant, therefore, that one of the signs given Moses was control of the serpent-rod (Exo. 4:2-4), for the serpent, in Scripture, is used as a symbol for Egypt.

“Lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land” — Pharaoh's suspicions reveal his awareness of an expectation among the Israelites concerning some future migration from Egypt to the land of Promise. This would have been in response to the dying message of Joseph: “God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob” (Gen. 50:24). Their expectation then, foreshadowed the modern efforts of Jewry to re-establish their nation in the land. Brother Thomas interpreted the passage in that way, writing: “From this it would seem that the idea prevailed in Pharaoh's court that the Israelites contemplated a wholesale emigration to some other country. His policy, however, was to prevent it,

and to maintain the numerical superiority of the Egyptians, by exhausting the Israelites by oppressive toil, and destroying their children at birth.

But what can the policy of kings effect when they undertake to combat the purposes of God? The cup of Egypt's iniquity was well nigh running over. They had not retained God in their thoughts, being wholly given up to the basest superstition and idolatry. They had forgotten their obligations to God, who had saved their nation by the hand of Joseph, whose posterity they had enslaved, and cruelly destroyed.

What, then, remained, but that God should judge them? That He, the Lord of all the earth, should step in between the profane tyrant and those whom He purposed to be His people, and give to Egypt according to its works? Israel's four hundred years of affliction were accomplished. They had served the oppressor long enough; and the time had at length arrived when the nation which had reduced them to servitude should be judged, and themselves remunerated for their past sufferings and services, by the spoil of their adversaries.” (*Elpis Israel*, page 286). How clearly the events of the past foreshadowed the present! Today, the world of Gentilism is repeating the folly of Egypt, and God will shortly intervene to save His people.

VERSE 11

“Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens” — The word “taskmasters” is from the Hebrew *sari massim* signifying *lords of tribute* or *lords of service*. It was the official Egyptian title for overlookers of forced labour. The word signifies *a burden so as to cause to faint*, thus, *lords of heavy burdens*.

“And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities” — In 1Kgs. 9:19 and 2Chr. 8:4, *mickenoth*, here rendered “treasure cities,” is translated “store cities.” They were centres where provisions and goods were stored for the use of the people.

“Pithom and Raamses” — Pithom is



Suggested to be one of the store chambers at Pithom built by the children of Israel in the oppression.

identified with Tell el-Maskhuta on the northeastern border of Egypt.

Dr. E. Naville (AD1833) excavated in the area, and was convinced that the ancient place was called Per-Atum, *The House of Atum*, a close approximation to "Pithom." He discovered a number of rectangular chambers, without doors, separated from one another by thick walls of brick, which he assumed to be store-houses built by the Hebrews. His conclusions have been questioned by some archaeologists, though endorsed by others. He found bricks of three varieties. Those of the lowest level were made of clay mixed with chopped straw; higher up the straw, apparently being no longer available, was replaced with reeds; at the top level the bricks had no binding substance at all! This supports the fact that, at first, the Hebrews were given straw to use in their brickmaking, but that later this was withdrawn, and they were expected to find it for themselves. Apparently, as pressure was exerted upon them, they omitted to gather straw at all, and used only clay.

Raamses has been identified with ancient Zoan. It was situated on the northeastern frontier, on the east bank of the Tanaitic Nile. The city had been established as early as the sixth dynasty of Pharaoh Pepi (BC2300), and later became the headquarters of the Hyksos kings (cp.

Num. 13:22). Raamses II practically reconstructed the place, which continued until about AD451, when it began to decline, ultimately to become a heap of ruins in the midst of a village called "San" (similar to Zoan).

The temple of Tanis in Zoan was one of the largest structures in Egypt, and measured 300 metres (1000 ft) long. It included a colossal statue of Raamses II, some 28 metres (92 feet) high, weighing 900 tonnes. The large toe of this huge statue was the size of a man's body.

Some of the archaeological findings of ancient Zoan are today in the Cairo Museum.

The fact that Exodus records that the Israelites built the storehouses of Raamses, indicates that Raamses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression. Many dispute this on chronological grounds; however, we have shown in our introduction, that Egyptian chronology cannot be trusted, and, most certainly, should not be urged as an argument to dispute biblical claims. In *Light From The Ancient Past*, Finegan states: "Unless we are to regard Exodus 1:11 as an erroneous or anachronistic statement, we must conclude that Ramesis II was the Pharaoh under whom the oppression of the Israelites reached its climax. This is in harmony with our knowledge of his vast building activities, and,

particularly with the fact that he resided in the Delta and devoted the opening years of his reign largely to building operations at Tanis (Zoan or Raamses). The general impression given by the book of Exodus is that the Israelites were settled not far from Pharaoh's court, and in Psa. 78:12, 43 they are definitely said to have lived 'in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan.' Zoan is the Hebrew name for Tanis, as the rendering in the *Septuagint* shows, and thus we have a picture of the Israelites as living in the vicinity of Tanis at a time when Pharaoh's court was there. The situation is fulfilled in the time of Rameses II, but not in the earlier days of Thutmos III" (page 119).

Those who dispute that Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and yet endorse the Bible as true, claim that the use of the word in Exo. 1:11 is a modernisation of an archaic place-name by an unknown writer, after the death of Moses — but surely this would suggest that the Bible record is unreliable. Naville claims that he found an inscription of Rameses II on the gateway of Pithom: "I built Pi-tum at the mouth of the East." Fisher, of the University Museum of Pennsylvania (1922) found at Bethshean in Israel, a stele of Rameses II, 2.4 metres (8 feet) high on which he says, he "built Raamses with Asiatic Semitic (i.e. Hebrew) slaves."

However, it is claimed by those who reject Rameses as being the Pharaoh of the oppression, that he was a great plagiarist, taking to himself credit for some of the labors of his predecessors, having his own name carved on their monuments.

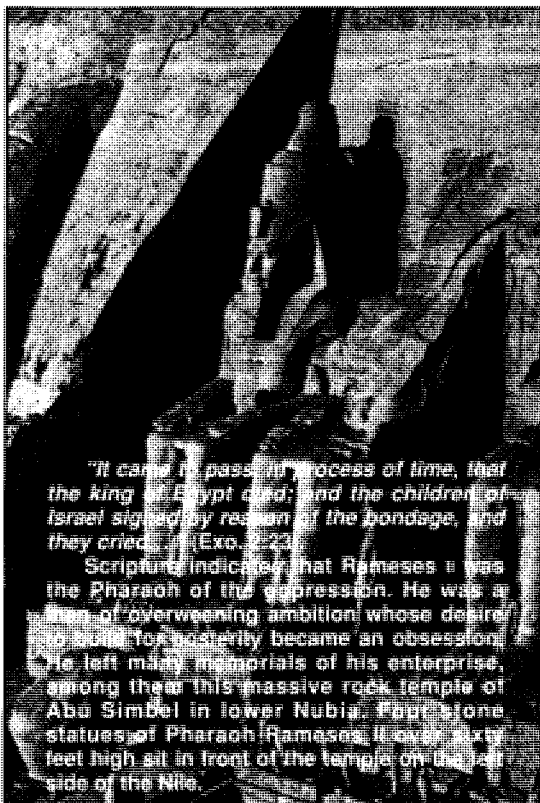
Those scholars who hold to the earlier date for the Exodus and Thotmes III as the builder of these cities, take these inscrip-

tions to mean that Rameses II rebuilt or repaired them with Hebrews who did not go out with Moses (see Halley's *Bible Handbook*).

To our mind, the statement of the verse before us is conclusive evidence that Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and that Egyptian chronology should be adjusted accordingly.

VERSE 12

"But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" — Pharaoh pitted his puny strength against the might of Yahweh but failed in his objective, for God was with His people (see Psa. 105:24; Pro. 21:30). The experiences of Israel in Egypt illustrate two



important principles of divine revelation: [1] "All things work together for good to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28); [2] "Whom Yahweh loveth He chasteneth" (Heb. 12:6-11). Though the state of the people became extremely difficult, it drove them to God, and made them conscious of their need of Him. Ultimately this proved to be to their advantage.

"And they were grieved because of the children of Israel" — The Hebrew *quits* signifies "vexed; weary." The word "expresses a mixture of loathing and alarm." The Israelites were rapidly growing into a powerful minority of over two million people, and this was sufficient to cause the greatest alarm on the part of the Egyptian authorities, inducing them to view the Hebrews with loathing. See Gen. 46:34.

VERSE 13

"And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour" — The word "rigour" is significant. It is from the Hebrew *perek* which derives from a root meaning *to break apart, crush, or fracture*. Their lives were embittered by the harsh oppression and the constant opposition and loathing they experienced from the Egyptians (see Exo. 2:23; 6:9). But true Israelites are expected to learn from their experiences, and to avoid inflicting similar suffering on others (Lev. 25:43, 46, 53). The same word is rendered "cruelty" in Eze. 34:4. The exercise of cruelty, either inflicted mentally or physically, is to be avoided by God's people.

VERSE 14

"And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage" — "Bitter" is the Heb. *marah*, the word used by Naomi to describe her bitter experiences in the land of her exile (Ruth 1:20).

"In mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field" — Their labor involved digging the clay to make bricks; kneading the clay to its proper consistency; forming the bricks; drying them in the sun; using them for the construction

of buildings. The "service in the field" may also have involved the digging of canals and trenches for purposes of irrigation. The Israelites were a rural people, unaccustomed to the industry of brick-making, so that they found it difficult and degrading.

"All their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour" — Note the repetition of the word "rigour" (v. 13) to emphasize the difficulties faced. The Egyptian taskmasters went out of their way to harry the Israelites, taking them from their normal work, and making unreasonable demands in regard to such labor for which they were not fitted. Their objective in this overwork, this constant drudgery of toil, and the deep affliction that it induced, was to so wear out the people as to stop any further increase in their numbers. In this, however, they failed, leading Pharaoh to take a further measure.

The Faithful Defiance Of The Hebrew Midwives — vv. 15-21.

Pharaoh, who thought to "deal wisely" with the Hebrews, devised the plan of crushing them and preventing them from increasing by sheer hard labor. Finding his plan of no avail, he now resorts to violence. Egypt had a guild of midwives, including a group of Israelitish women who ministered to the necessities of expectant mothers in their community. Pharaoh now issues secret orders to the two chief Hebrew midwives, and through them to the rest, that all male babies must be put to death. The midwives, "fearing God," disobey the king's command, for which Yahweh blesses the children of Israel.

VERSE 15

"And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives" — Pharaoh evidently spoke to the two chief midwives, who were expected to pass his decree on to those under them. Two midwives would not be sufficient to serve the needs of such a large community as Israel had developed into, particularly in view of the rapid increase of the people.

“Of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah” — Shiphrah signifies *beauty, splendor, glory*. Puah is from a root signifying to *cry out*, suggesting the pain of birth. The two names combined convey the thought of the manifestation of glory and splendor through a new life in birth. The king’s demand, therefore, was a negation of their life’s labor, as expressed in the meaning of their names.

VERSE 16

“And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools” — The Hebrew *obnayim* rendered “stools” is literally *double stones* or *birthstool*. This was a chair of peculiar form used in Egypt upon which the expectant mother sat during parturition. Illustrations of these appear on Egyptian monuments.

“If it be a son, then ye shall kill him” — This brutal decree demanded of the midwives that they negate their training, occupation and title as expressed by their names (see v. 15). It was the command of a tyrant driven by fear. When fear dominates, it turns men into cowards, and when a coward rules, he becomes a bully and a tyrant.

“But if it be a daughter, then she shall live” — Pharaoh considered he had little to fear from a nation of women!

VERSE 17

“But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive” — The midwives were both faithful and courageous. In manifesting those characteristics, they walked in the way of wisdom (Pro. 1:7), rectitude (ch. 16:6), and life (Gen. 42:18).

Later the apostles manifested the same faithful courage, refusing to obey the commands of the authorities when they conflicted with the commands of God: showing that it is better to obey God than man (Acts 4:19; 5:29).

Scripture requires that believers

should obey the laws of the land until they conflict with the law of God (Rom. 13:1-7). That principle was followed by the faithful midwives in Egypt.

VERSE 18

“And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive?” — The king’s enquiry contained an implied threat, and that he would exercise the terms of his decree. Cp. Ecc. 8:4.

VERSE 19

“And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively; and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them” — The Hebrew *chayoth*, translated “lively” signifies *strong, vigorous*, and the explanation of the midwives was evidently strictly according to fact. Women who lead an active life, normally have little inconvenience in childbirth. Therefore, the very labor that Pharaoh had put upon the Israelites, under God, contributed to the defeat of the monarch’s plan.

That being the case, contrary to the usual interpretation of the incident, there was neither lie direct, nor deceit, in the explanation of the midwives. Indeed, it would appear, that their services were rendered largely unnecessary, by the intervention of God and the natural condition of the Hebrew women, partly induced by Pharaoh’s own action. Pharaoh would have easily discovered the deception of the midwives if their statement had been false.

VERSE 20

“Therefore God dealt well with the midwives” — God showed His pleasure at the faithful attitude of the midwives who had manifested a greater fear of offending Him than Pharaoh.

“And the people multiplied” — They received the especial providence and blessing of God. Normally, in a state of slavery the increase is small, and child

mortality high, because the women, through excessive labor cannot care properly for their offspring.

“And waxed very mighty” — The Hebrew *atsam*, rendered “mighty” signifies *bony, substantial* and therefore *strong*. As the bones of a body give it strength, so the body-politic of Israel was built up in strength by God, in spite of Pharaoh’s attempts to destroy it.

VERSE 21

“And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that He made them houses” — Thus the action of the midwives contributed largely to the defeat of Pharaoh’s scheme, and ensured the continuity of the various “houses” into which Israel was divided.

In the Hebrew, “God” is *ha-elohim*, with the definite article, and signifies: “*the* God” in contrast to the Pharaoh, who was worshipped as a deity by the Egyptians.

“Them” (Heb. *lahem*) is in the masculine gender, showing that the “houses” did not relate to the midwives, but to Israel generally as divided in its twelve tribes with lesser divisions. See the promise of Psalm 68:6, “God setteth the solitary in families,” i.e., *in a house* (see margin), that is, within a large and numerous community.

The action of the midwives, brought about by fear of God, contributed to the development and continuance of the “houses” or family and tribal divisions of Israel. Their fearless courage exhibited the quality of their faith and worship, for they feared and worshipped the true God.

The term “house” is used especially of progeny, as in the expression “the *house* of David.” The book of Exodus commences by drawing attention to the “households” that came into Egypt (v. 1), and moves

on to reveal how that they continued in being.

Pharaoh’s Ruthless Decree — v. 21.

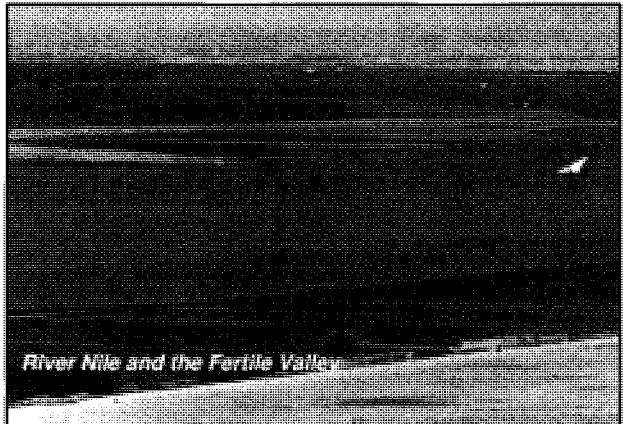
All other stratagems having failed, Pharaoh resorts to murder, and orders that the people generally co-operate in seeing that every Hebrew male child born is killed. It introduces a great crisis in the nation.

VERSE 22

“And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive” — The whole Egyptian population was now incited to acts of violence against the Hebrews. Spying and informing were made acts of loyalty, whilst compassion and friendliness were treated as high treason. Whilst many would hesitate to adopt the measures suggested, others would take a special delight in carrying out the decree of the king.

Moreover, as the Nile was held to be a sacred river by the Egyptians, the form of death suggested by this murderous and heartless decree, could be considered as sacrificial in its significance.

Pharaoh’s controversy with the Hebrews, therefore, now became a holy war between the god of Egypt and the God of Israel.



River Nile and the Fertile Valley

EXODUS CHAPTER TWO

THE ADVENT OF MOSES THE DELIVERER

From every point of view according to the flesh, the edict of Pharaoh spells the extinction of Israel. However, the oppression proposed by Pharaoh is resisted by the parents of Moses, whose stratagem succeeds to the point that, in spite of the decree, Moses is saved, and is brought up in the very house of Pharaoh. Nevertheless, having come to manhood, and manifesting a tendency to assist his Hebrew associates, Moses is forced to flee from Egypt. He makes his way to the desert of Midian where he marries the daughter of the local prince. Meanwhile, the oppression in Egypt intensifies, and the cries of the people are heard in heaven.

(2) OPPRESSION RESISTED

Chapter 2:1-12

Moses is born of God-fearing parents who hide their son from the prying eyes of their Egyptian enemies. When this becomes no longer possible, his mother, convinced that God has a purpose with her son, devises a plan that she feels can succeed. She prepares an ark for him, and places it in the river where she knows the daughter of Pharaoh regularly visits. The ark is found and the crying babe excites the sympathy of the Egyptian princess who decides to keep him for her own. The scheme of Moses' mother succeeds to the point that she is actually employed to care for her son. She not only nurses him, but educates him in the principles of the true worship in relation to the hope of Israel. Brought up in Pharaoh's palace, Moses, on reaching manhood, realises that God has a purpose with him in the deliverance of His people, and seeks means to further it.



Moses Hid In The Ark — vv. 1-4.

A faithful woman, Jochebed, respecting the will and purpose of God, resists the decree of Pharaoh, by first hiding her son in the house, and afterwards in the ark, which is strategically placed in the river where she knows it must be seen by the daughter of the monarch. She realises that her son will only find safety if sheltered by his enemies.

VERSE 1

“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi” — The word “man” is the Hebrew word *ish* (upright; strong), not the usual *adam* (earthy, mortal), implying that this man was of high repute among the people.

The actual names of the couple are not here given, but are later revealed as Amram and Jochebed (Exo. 6:20; Num. 26:59). Why are their names here withheld? Possibly because originally they may have differed from the form in which they are subsequently recorded.

Jochebed signifies *The Glory of Yahweh*. It is the first occurrence in Scripture in which the divine Name is incorporated in that of an individual. From this some conclude that the announcement of the Yahweh name, was earlier than when He revealed Himself in a special manner to Moses in the burning bush, and proclaimed the divine Name to him. But who gave this name to Jochebed? We believe that *Yah-Thy-Glory* was the remarkable name that Moses later gave to his mother as he looked back upon all that she had done for him, and he owed to her. Accepting that proposition, the significant fact of this being the first occasion when the name of a person is compounded with *Yah*, its abbreviated form, argues for its revelation in the time of Moses, for thence after such usage was quite common.

Jochebed’s faith and courage were recognised by Moses as a manifestation of the glory incorporated in the Name of Yahweh, he later revealed to Israel.

Apart from her faithfulness, humanly considered, Moses would not have developed as he did, so that her actions illus-

trate the name she was given.

But it would appear that it was given to her subsequently, for in the important verse before us she is nameless. This suggests that her original name has not been retained in the record.

VERSE 2

“And the woman conceived, and bare a son” — This was actually, at least, her third child (cp. v. 4). Aaron was three years older than Moses (7:7), whilst Miriam was older than both. She evidently was several years senior to Aaron, who, apparently, had been born prior to Pharaoh’s decree.

“And when she saw him that he was a goodly child” — Her newborn baby was an extremely well-formed and outstandingly beautiful child, and this caused her to conclude that God had a purpose with him. As a godly mother in Israel, she would recall the declaration of Joseph relating to the promised visitation by God (Gen. 50:24), and in view of the extremity into which the nation had been brought, would be awaiting the advent of the promised deliverer.

As Stephen observes (Acts 7:25), Moses certainly grew up with the conviction that he was appointed to deliver his people, and this belief could have been the result of his mother’s instruction, as well as by divine revelation. Stephen comments that the young child “was exceeding fair” which the *Diaglott* renders as “divinely beautiful,” and which can be rendered as “comely to God” or “fair to God” as in the margin of Acts 7:20. This certainly implies that Jochebed perceived a divine purpose in the birth and appearance of her son. Paul comments that it was “in faith” that the parents of Moses took the course they did. He defines faith as “the confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1, cp. v. 23). He records that they “saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment,” which suggests that in defying the decree of Pharaoh, Moses’ parents risked their own lives. They were prepared to do this because of

their love of God and their confidence in His promise.

“she hid him three months” — A significant period of time, and representative of the three days that the Lord Jesus was “hidden” in the grave before appearing to accomplish his divinely directed mission of salvation.

VERSE 3

“And when she could no longer hide him” — The growing child could not always be kept inside the house; and the danger of being detected was such as to put the lives of all members of the family in jeopardy.

“She took for him an ark of bulrushes” — The Hebrew word *tebah*, “chest” or “box,” is used only here and for Noah’s ark. The drama of Noah’s day was again to be enacted on a smaller scale, and the elect of God again saved through water. Jochebed made her chest (ark) of bulrushes. The papyrus reed is a strong-growing reed, with a triangular stem, which attains a height of 3 to 4½ metres (10 to 15 feet). It was used by Egyptians for making paper, mats, rope and boats, and provided excellent material for Jochebed’s purpose.

“And daubed it with slime” — “Slime” is bitumen (Gen. 11:3; 14:10), and was frequently used in boat-building.

“And with pitch” — This was probably a vegetable substance, which was coated over the intertwined reeds to make the little ark watertight.

“And put the child therein” — We might imagine with what trepidation and anxiety Jochebed resigned her young son to an unknown destiny. Being a woman of great faith, she would have gone undoubtedly with a prayer in her heart.

“And she laid it in the flags by the river’s brink” — The word *suph*, rendered “flags,” is better translated “reeds.” This was a different specie of reeds from the “bulrushes” mentioned above. They grow in profusion on the banks of the Nile to this day. Tourists in Cairo, are shown the traditional spot where the ark was placed in the water!

VERSE 4

“And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him” — Miriam, the sister of Moses (15:20), was probably set to watch by her mother. The context implies that she was carefully instructed in what to do and say in the event that someone from the palace might discover the basket in the river.

Moses Saved and Named — vv. 5-10.

Pharaoh’s daughter, coming down to bathe, sees the ark. She secures it and is attracted to the beautiful baby inside. Her sympathy is won by the helpless cry of the child. She perceives that he is one of the Hebrew children, and, according to Josephus, is so attracted by his outstanding beauty, that she decides to adopt him as her own. Interceding at this moment, Miriam is instructed to seek for a Hebrew mother who could tend the child, and in the amazing ways of Providence, Jochebed, who, a short time previously had been in fear and dread of her son’s life, is now employed and paid to care for him! How inscrutably wonderful and just is Yahweh in all His ways.

VERSE 5

“And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river” — As “herself” is in italics in the AV, some have concluded that she was there to supervise the washing of clothes, and not for the purpose of personally bathing. However, the river Nile was considered sacred to the Egyptians, and there is nothing improbable in the princess bathing in its waters in a place reserved for women. Indeed, Egyptian monuments depict women bathing at specific places set aside for that purpose.

Who was this daughter of Pharaoh, whose action on this occasion helped to change the course of human history? She could have been a daughter of Pharaoh Seti I, and a sister of Rameses the Great.

“And her maidens walked along by the river’s side” — They did so as attendants to the princess.

“And when she saw the ark among



the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it” — Her curiosity was aroused by the appearance of the little ark bobbing up and down upon the water, so she sent one of her attendants to fetch it.

VERSE 6

“And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold the babe wept” — The beautifully formed child doubtless appealed to the motherly instincts of the princess, and her heart was drawn to the infant by helplessness emphasised by its weeping. One can imagine how the group of women would laughingly try to calm the beautiful little baby, probably taking it up in their arms, and snuggling it close in order to do so. The more this was done, and responded to, the more the princess would be attracted to it (cp. Psa. 106:46).

“And she had compassion on him” — The word “compassion” is *chamal*

which means *to commiserate* so as to *spare*. The Hebrew word has frequently been rendered *to spare*, though this is its first occurrence in Scripture. Thus as sympathy and compassion took possession of the heart of the princess, she sought for means to save the child, in spite of the decree demanding its death.

How wonderful are the ways of Providence! Here is another example of how, through weakness, there came strength. At that moment, Israel’s mighty deliverer was a helpless babe, crying in the arms of one of the nation’s oppressors. That instance of abject weakness, produced circumstances through which the nation was saved and redeemed, to yet grow in power so as to ultimately conquer Egypt itself (Isa. 19:17-25). Thus faith triumphed (Heb. 11:23) through the courage and compassion of women: first the midwives, then Jochebed, then Pharaoh’s daughter, finally Miriam. In a sense, therefore, Moses became a type of the “seed of the woman” who bruised the serpent’s head; the latter being a symbol of Egypt.

“And said, This is one of the Hebrew’s children” — Pharaoh’s daughter recognised that only a desperate Hebrew mother, trying to save her child from destruction, would thus expose it to the dangers of the river. However, her statement evidently was uttered meditatively, as she pondered the problem.

VERSE 7

“Then said his sister to Pharaoh’s daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?” — Evidently Miriam had been carefully schooled by her mother as to how she should act, and what she should say. Even so, she conducted herself with admirable skill, carefully hiding her own emotion, and tactfully speaking up at the crucial moment.

VERSE 8

“And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called

the child's mother" — Proverbs declares "A word in season, how good it is!" Miriam's proposal (if it was Miriam, for concerning this we are not specifically told) was of God. Pharaoh's daughter instantly grasped it. It solved every problem. It relieved her of the burden of the child, and at the same time preserved the child to her. So Miriam was commanded to do as she had suggested.

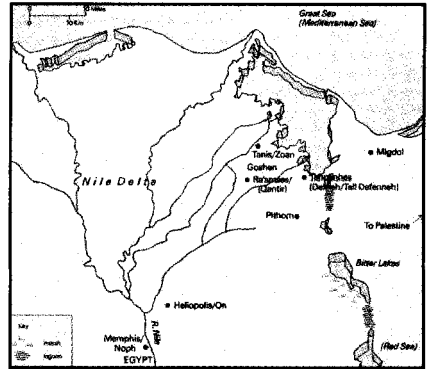
"And the maid went and called the child's mother" — We can imagine with what bounding steps Miriam flew on her mission; her excitement as she told her mother the joyous news, the wondering response of Jochebed whose heart would fill to overflowing with love for God as she hastened with her daughter to the spot where her son was in the arms of Israel's oppressors!

VERSE 9

"And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages" — What feelings of wonder must have flooded the heart of Jochebed when she heard those words. Wages! Wages for doing what she would have been glad to pay any amount of money to be permitted to do! How exquisitely beautiful are all the ways of God (see further comments in *The Ways of Providence*, p. 76).

"And the woman took the child and nursed it" — Now, more than ever before, she would perceive that her son was a "goodly child," that God had a purpose with him, and perhaps would wonder whether he might therefore be the promised deliverer of her people. Under such circumstances, with what loving care would she have nursed him; how faithfully and carefully she would have instructed him!

In this, the early experiences of Moses typed those of the Lord Jesus who, likewise, had the benefit of a godly mother, who carefully supervised his early instruction. How important is the training and instruction of children by their mothers in the early days of their lives. It is claimed



that the "learning curve" is extremely high in the first ten years of a child's life. Frequently, a foundation for future character can then be laid.

VERSE 10

"And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter" — It would have been with sorrow of heart that Jochebed did this, but also with faith and confidence in God, recognising that He doeth all things well, and that her sacrifice was for the ultimate benefit of the child.

"And he became her son" — Stephen comments: "When he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son" (Acts 7:21). The child Moses had evidently been taken back to the home of his parents and, at least, remained there until he was weaned, and perhaps longer. Josephus suggests that he was about twelve years of age when he was given up to the care of Pharaoh's daughter, but supplies no proof for his suggestion.

During those most impressionable years of his life, his mother must have instilled into him a firm belief in the God of Israel, a knowledge of His acts in creation, and an outline of the revelation of His purpose to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, an understanding of the divine promise of deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

When Moses went to the palace, he was further educated in “all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). At the time, Heliopolis was the centre of Egyptian learning, and Moses may have been sent there to be instructed in accordance with the education given to boys of the highest rank. Egyptian culture was of an extremely high order, and Moses would have been taught many things, which, from a Hebrew point of view, were extremely undesirable for him to know. The attractive sciences and learning of Egypt included belief in many gods; in the benefits of the Egyptian way of life; in the privileges and glory of the palace.

But the early training and teaching of his mother stood him in good stead, and equipped him to withstand the effect of the sophisticated environment into which he was now plunged. In spite of all attempts to the contrary, he remained a true Hebrew. Therefore it is obvious from Stephen’s comment in Acts 7:22, that what he learned, helped to equip him for the work that God had yet in store for him. In the Egyptian court, he received the instruction essential for a leader of men, that would equip him to later effectively oppose those who then trained him, and so lead his people away from their influence.

How inscrutably wonderful are the ways of Providence! The early instruction of his parents during childhood enabled Moses to withstand the sophistication of Egyptian education based upon idolatry; while his upbringing in Pharaoh’s court, protected him from the oppressive and enervating influence of slavery which affected many of the Hebrews at this time.

“And she called his name Moses” — The Hebrew form of the verb, *masha*, gives the meaning as “drawn out,” and this is explained in that he was “drawn out of water.” But in the Egyptian language, *Mose* signifies “the child,” and is preserved in such composites as “Ah-mose”: *Son of Ah*, the god of light; “Thutmose”: *Son of Thot*, and so forth (A. H. Gardner, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1918).

Pharaoh’s daughter called him *The*

Son, because he was “drawn out of water” to be her child, even as a babe is born from its mother. The unusual combination of pronunciation and circumstances, however, connected the name Moses in the Hebrew mind with his remarkable deliverance from death through water, and, later, his leadership of the nation to safety by the same means.

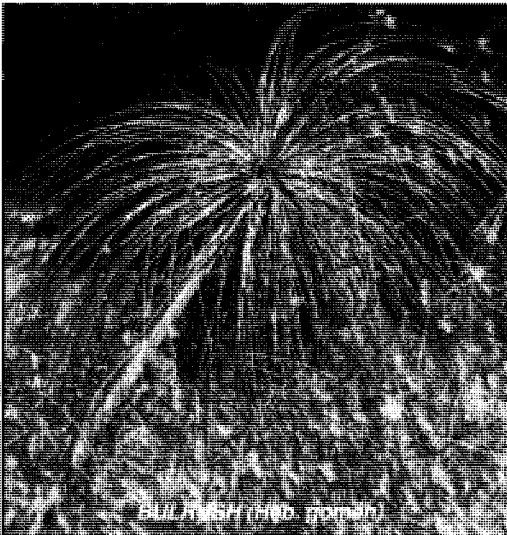
Pharaoh’s daughter, therefore, in naming the baby “Moses,” testified that he had been called to sonship by being drawn out of water. What a remarkable type of baptism!

“And she said, Because I drew him out of the water” — Pharaoh’s daughter saw him as born to her by such means; but the divine revelation uses the circumstances as signifying a new birth through the waters of baptism. As a child, and as the leader who drew the people to safety and to a new life through the baptism at the Red Sea (1Cor. 10:1), Moses qualified for the name he was given.

Moses Seeks To Save His People — vv. 11-12.

The Egyptian education Moses receives, as well as the glory of Pharaoh’s court, fails to influence him away from his people. He remains a Hebrew in heart, though he appears as an Egyptian in dress and mannerisms. On coming to manhood, he makes a crucial decision. He has been trained as a prince of the realm, and is





A beautiful and graceful plant, with a large and very heavy root that protects it from being swept away in the floods. From this root grow triangular stems reaching a great height and branching out at the top into a plume of fine stalks resembling feathers, upon which grow clusters of little brown, rushlike flowers that produce the seeds. From this plant the ark was made (Exo. 2:3).

now expected to take his place as such. But he refuses to do so, which leads to arguments and recrimination. With great courage, Moses is determined to identify himself with his people, then in abject slavery. He realizes that there is no eternal future in Egypt, and has pondered long and earnestly upon the hope set before all those who seek to do the will of God (Heb. 11:26). Therefore he rejects the offers of honor and glory set before him, and does so courageously, entirely indifferent to the wrath of the king. One of the great terminal points in the history of both Moses and the nation has been reached.

VERSE 11

“And it came to pass in those days when Moses was grown” — At the age of forty years, Moses decided to seek out the children of Israel (Acts 7:23), in such a

manner as to negate his position as prince of the realm (Heb. 11:24-25). The Hebrew word *gadal*, in addition to growth in age, signifies to become great in body, mind, honor, ability. Josephus declares that Moses was renowned in Egypt for his prowess in war, as well as for other abilities. The “goodly child” had become the “goodly man” and was recognised as one eminently equipped to rule.

“That he went out unto his brethren” — This is evidence of the true greatness of Moses. The natural tendency of a man who becomes great, is to avoid his brethren, particularly if they occupy a lower strata of society than those among whom he has become accustomed to dwell. Not so Moses. He went out of the palace into the brickfields, where his brethren toiled in agonising bondage, to consider what should be done to relieve their state. The expression *he went out* implies a complete change in the life of Moses, such as Stephen and Paul describe in the references quoted

above. Moses boldly demonstrated that he was going to completely change his way of life.

“And looked on their burdens” — He set aside the court of Egypt with its attractions and glory, its riches and pleasures, its status and opportunities, to assist his brethren, then in abject slavery. In this way he acted typically as did the greater Mediator, the Lord Jesus, in order to “bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows” (Isa. 53:4). In this action, Moses identified himself with the oppression felt by the people of Israel as he inspected their circumstances for himself.

In fact, this was an act of defiance, in the face of the expectations of his adopted princess-mother, and of Pharaoh, and was performed in courageous faith, “not fearing the wrath of the king” (Heb. 11:27).

“And he spied an Egyptian smiting

an Hebrew, one of his brethren” — He probably witnessed one of the taskmasters applying the lash to an Israelite, such as are depicted upon monuments. Perhaps for the first time, Moses saw a poor Hebrew flogged. This was normal punishment for an idle slave, but often taskmasters grossly abused their power, and such a circumstance evidently excited the anger of Moses.

His feelings were aroused as he considered the relationship of himself to the sufferer, and he saw that the Egyptian had gone beyond the bounds of what was normal in those cases. Stephen declares: “Seeing one of them suffer *wrong*, he defended him and avenged him that was *oppressed*” (Acts 7:24).

It was not merely natural feelings that motivated Moses, but a deep-seated conviction stemming from divine revelation, that he was the one appointed to deliver his people (v. 25).

VERSE 12

“And he looked this way and that way” — Moses did not act recklessly, but exercised due and proper caution.

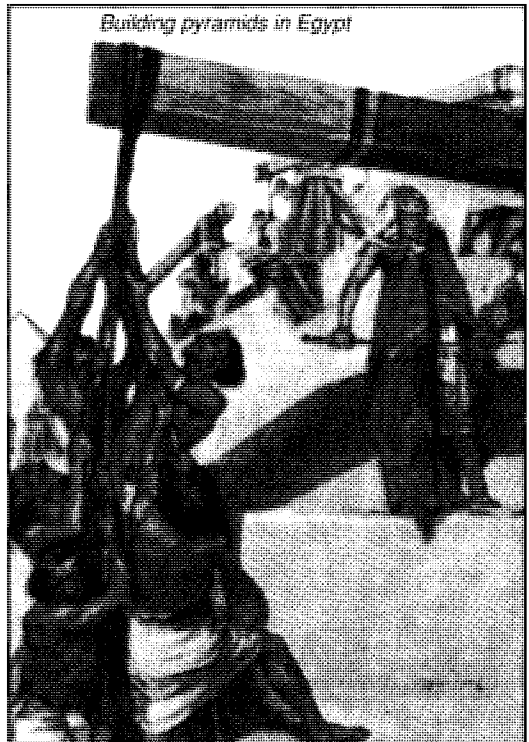
“And when he saw that there was no man” — So that his action would not be observed, and bring unnecessary retribution upon himself.

“He slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand” — It is probable that Moses did not intend this, but the circumstances induced it. His action was hasty, and its immediate results fruitless, though it did ally Moses definitely with his brethren. Brother Roberts comments: “His conclusion was right as events ultimately showed, but he was premature in the way he attempted to give his conclusion practical effect. He did not wait for God himself to use the situation thus providentially prepared. He began to act without directions. Of his

own motion, he smote an Egyptian who wronged a Hebrew. He did the thing secretly, and supposed it would remain secret. Such things do not remain secrets. The matter was soon reported, and, fearing the consequences at the hand of Pharaoh, he found himself under the necessity of absconding” (*The Ways of Providence*, p. 78). God used this humanly provided circumstance to further Moses’ education to equip him to become a more effective deliverer of his people.

Meanwhile, Moses buried the slain Egyptian, to hide his action from the authorities, in order that he might more effectively organise Hebrew resistance to Egyptian authority. But that was not the way Yahweh intended the deliverance of His people.

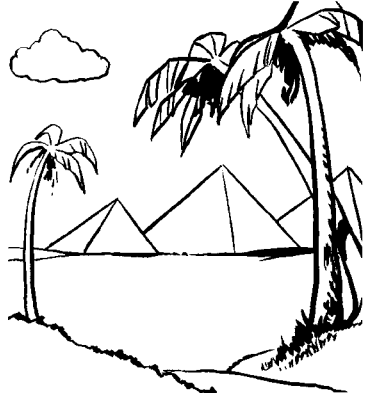
Both Moses and the people had further lessons to learn.



(3) OPPRESSION ACCOMPLISHED

Chapter 2:13-22

Moses' action in slaying the Egyptian is reported to Pharaoh, who determines to destroy him. Moses is forced to flee from Egypt, and finds himself a wanderer in the wilderness of Midian. Through an act of courtesy, he obtains an introduction to Reuel, a leading man of the country, and a flockmaster. He obtains employment from him as chief herdsman, and



ultimately marries one of his daughters. Meanwhile, this act of defiance on the part of Moses who had been brought up in Pharaoh's court, arouses the worst suspicions of the king. He increases the oppression of his Hebrew slaves. Thus the oppression proposed in the beginning, but resisted by the midwives, by Jochebed and Moses, is now accomplished by the ruthless violence in which the Israelites are treated. In these



transactions, Moses types the Lord, the prophet promised, "like unto him" (Deu. 18:18): he first appears before his people as deliverer, is rejected by them as such; and appears the second time to effect it. The fulfilment has been and yet will be manifested by the Lord Jesus.

Moses Is Forced To Flee — vv. 13-15

Moses' attempt to free his people has proved premature. There is still much he has to learn before he is properly equipped to lead his people as a shepherd. Therefore, though his own actions led to his retreat, God used it to his benefit.

VERSE 13

“And when he went out the second day” — Moses indicates a keen zeal to assist his people. But on this occasion he faces a distressing scene: conflict between his own people.

“behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together”— The sight of Hebrews quarreling, when they should have been united against their common enemy, deeply concerned Moses. Strife between brethren is always a matter of deep concern to those spiritually minded (1Cor. 3:3; Phil. 2:3).

“And he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow”— Moses evidently examined the evidence to see who was in the wrong. Stephen declares (Acts 7:26-28) that he endeavoured to reconcile them on the grounds that they were brethren, and in doing so, discovered that one was in the wrong more than the other.

The word “fellow” is *raiah, neighbor, friend*, so that by its use, Moses tried to bring home to the more belligerent the incongruity of him harming his “friend” or “neighbor” — particularly in such a hostile environment, as Egypt presented. How foolish for brethren today to engage in unnecessary strife, in view of the hostile pressures of modern “Egypt” (2Tim. 2:14).

VERSE 14

“And he said” — In reasoning with the one in the wrong, Moses evidently gently placed his hand upon him to smooth away his anger, but, according to Stephen (Acts 7:27), the belligerent Jew angrily thrust him away, as he repudiated Moses' claim to authority over the Hebrews. His contemptuous repudiation of Moses' intercession is significant. It illustrated to Moses that the Hebrew who had

wronged his brother did not fear any punitive action that Moses might threaten, even though he was a prince of the realm, and the harshest treatment could be meted out to Hebrews by their taskmasters. Instead, his angry retort revealed that Moses' secret was common knowledge, and that it would be only a matter of time before it came to the ears of Pharaoh himself.

A similar retort was made by the Jews against the Lord Jesus, in rejecting his judgments (cp. Jn. 8:59).

“Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?” — This rejection of Moses' mission by an angry, belligerent Hebrew, foreshadowed the rejection of the Lord Jesus by those Jews who, in effect, declared: “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14) and “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15). Indeed, Stephen cites this incident in the life of Moses, to illustrate to his accusers the significance of their rejection of Christ. Stephen declared: “This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush” (Acts 7:35).

The implication of this statement is, that, as Moses was first rejected but afterwards, on returning from a time of absence, was acknowledged as ruler and deliverer, so also was his antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ rejected, but will return to assert his authority and position.

“Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?” — There was an implied threat in these bold, defiant words of the Hebrew. The man knew that Moses had the power to put him to death, but indicated that if that were done, the crime of the previous day would be revealed.

“And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known” — In Hebrews 11:27, Paul states that Moses “by faith forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king,” but here the allegation is made that he did fear the king. Sometimes the two statements are advanced as a contradiction. But there is no real contradiction.

Moses, having “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,” had already “forsaken Egypt” as far as being identified with its power and glory, and had made the fact well-known to Pharaoh and his court, in spite of the anger of the king.

According to Josephus (see also Stephen’s partial endorsement of the evidence — Acts 7:22), Moses was a popular and powerful prince in Egypt; skilful in war, as well as in culture. Therefore, Pharaoh would have hesitated to discipline him, for fear of a public reaction. But the killing of the Egyptian could not be defended by public feeling. By this action, Moses had placed his life in jeopardy, providing Pharaoh with a legitimate excuse to put him to death. Moses now had real cause to fear the king’s authority.

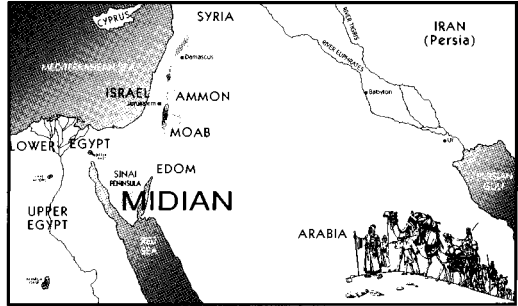
VERSE 15

“Now when Pharaoh heard this thing” — If we are correct in assuming the Pharaoh of the original oppression to have been Seti I, the present Pharaoh to be Rameses II. Rameses reigned for sixty-five years, the only ruler of the New Empire whose reign exceeded forty years. As Moses fled when he was “full forty years old” (Acts 7:23), Rameses would have still been living until shortly before Moses, returned to deliver the people, at eighty years of age. He is the only monarch of that period who fulfils these requirements, made necessary by Stephen’s speech in Acts.

“He sought to slay Moses” — Thus typically representing the action of the authorities of Judah who, combined with the Roman power, sought the death of Jesus (Jn. 5:16; Mt. 26:59; Lk. 19:47).

“But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh” — Stephen implies that Moses forestalled the attempt of Pharaoh to slay him. He fled “at the saying” of the Hebrew aggressor. He anticipated the accusation and retaliation of the monarch, and left Egypt before he could be apprehended.

“And dwelt in the land of Midian”



— Midian is the fourth of the six sons of Abraham named in Gen. 25:2. The Midianites were mostly nomads, wandering from place to place, mainly along the Arabian Gulf. At the time of his call, Moses was at Horeb, in the peninsula of Sinai (Exo. 3:1), probably only as a temporary station for pasturage.

“And he sat down by a well” — The Hebrew word *yashab*, rendered “sat down,” also signifies *dwelt*, and the definite article is given to “well” as “*the* well.” It is impossible to identify the well, but it was adjacent to the dwellingplace of Jethro, who in this chapter is called Reuel.

Moses Marries A Midianitish Woman

— vv. 16-22.

Through an act of courtesy, Moses is introduced to the leading man of the district, Reuel, also known as Jethro, a shepherd-priest, with whom he subsequently obtains employment as chief herdsman, and ultimately marries one of his seven daughters.

VERSE 16

“Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters” — The word *kohen*, priest, seems correctly interpreted rather than *prince*, as in the margin, for later Jethro is described as exercising priestly functions (Exo. 18:12).

“And they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock” — A normal procedure on the part of the women in ancient times. See also Gen. 29:9.

VERSE 17

“And the shepherds came and drove them away” — The shepherds roughly and crudely drove the daughters of Reuel away from the water they had drawn for their flocks, and selfishly used it for their own animals. They certainly showed no respect for the priest or his daughters.

“Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock” — It was characteristic of this great man to help the oppressed, so he stood up in defence of these women so thoughtlessly and discourteously treated by the local shepherds. He was of such commanding appearance that the shepherds succumbed to his demands to leave the girls alone.

VERSE 18

“And when they came to Reuel their father” — Reuel signifies a *Friend of El (God)*. He is elsewhere named Jethro signifying *Excellence* or *Pre-eminence*. One of these names is evidently a title used for the Priest of Midian. If the former is his title, and the latter his name, it would imply that he worshipped the One God. As he was a descendant of Abraham through Keturah, this was not at all unlikely. His priesthood then assumes a matter of greater importance, and the fact that he had *seven* daughters is also significant, for seven is the number of a covenant.

He is called Jethro in chs. 3:1; 4:18; 18:12, but Reuel here and Hobab in Num. 10:29-32, where his conversion to the Hope of Israel is recorded. His descendants entered the land, and became associated with the Kenites (Jud. 1:16).

The Kenites are found throughout the records of Israel as a minority group who refused to be assimilated with the nation. As Rechabites they were later commended by Jeremiah (Ch. 35). They were Gentiles in the midst of Israel, who provided an example of faith to their contemporaries and lived as pilgrims without a settled abode throughout their sojourning in the land. Their descendants shall be found in the Kingdom when it is set up by Christ, and will be appointed as priests before Yahweh (Jer. 35:18-19). Therefore Moses’

presence in that family, and their kindness to that great man of faith, not only drew the family of Jethro to the Israelites, but did and will provide lasting benefits to its descendants.

“He said, How is it that ye are come so soon today?” — Reuel was surprised at the early return of his daughters from a task that normally took them so much longer.

VERSE 19

“And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock” — Moses appeared to them as an Egyptian, probably because of his dress and mannerisms. The account of Moses delivering his future bride from the violence of antagonistic shepherds, and watering the flock provides a pastoral scene, and typifies the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the shepherd prince providing for his flock (John 10).

A literal translation of the expression used by Reuel’s daughters would read: “also drawing he drew for us.” This contains an element of wonderment: “He actually drew water for us!” They experienced unexpected kindness from their deliverer: a characteristic of Moses that also foreshadows that of Christ his great antitype.

VERSE 20

“And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread” — Reuel was concerned that his daughters had failed in hospitality towards a stranger who had befriended them in such a manner. He accused them of being remiss in so doing.

VERSE 21

“And Moses was content to dwell with the man” — The Oxford Gesenius renders “content” as “willing.” Moses had fled from the wrath of Pharaoh without any definite plan in mind. He was drawn of God to the land of Midian, and to the dwelling of Reuel, to prepare him for the

great revelation he was to receive. This, of course, he did not know at the time. His main objective was to obtain a living. Accepting the invitation of Reuel to enjoy his hospitality, a mutual regard sprang up between the two men. Subsequently, Moses agreed to continue with Reuel and enter his service as shepherd, as had Jacob for Laban earlier (Gen. 29:15-20). So the prince became a *shepherd* (Exo. 3:1), as did the Lord.

As a shepherd, Moses was further educated in principles that would later assist him in the great work that God had in store for him. In Egypt, he had learned to *command* men; in Midian he learned to *lead* them. Both aspects of leadership were necessary for the one who was to both command and lead God's flock out of Egypt (Psalm 77:20).

“And he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter” — Zipporah signifies *A Little Bird; a Sparrow*. It is from a root signifying to *chirp*. In marrying Zipporah, Moses threw in his lot with the Midianites. Thus: “Moses, after a life of elevation and Egyptian education, had to have zeal and his general views sobered by adversity. He had to be prepared by quietness and humiliation for the mighty work which God had in reserve for him. So here he was, in the unexciting wilderness in a monotonous occupation, perplexed perhaps by the inexplicable delay, and discouraged by the total absence of direct tokens of God's promised interference on behalf of Israel... We can easily imagine that, as month after month rolled by in the routine of a shepherd's life, without witnessing any token of the promised visitation, the sickness of deferred hope crept over him and reconciled him to the idea of spending his days where he was.” (*The Ways of Providence*, p. 79).

VERSE 22

“And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom” — The name signifies *A Stranger Here*.

“For he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land” — This not only explains the meaning of the name of

Moses' elder son, but also suggests that Moses had fallen into a depressed state of mind.

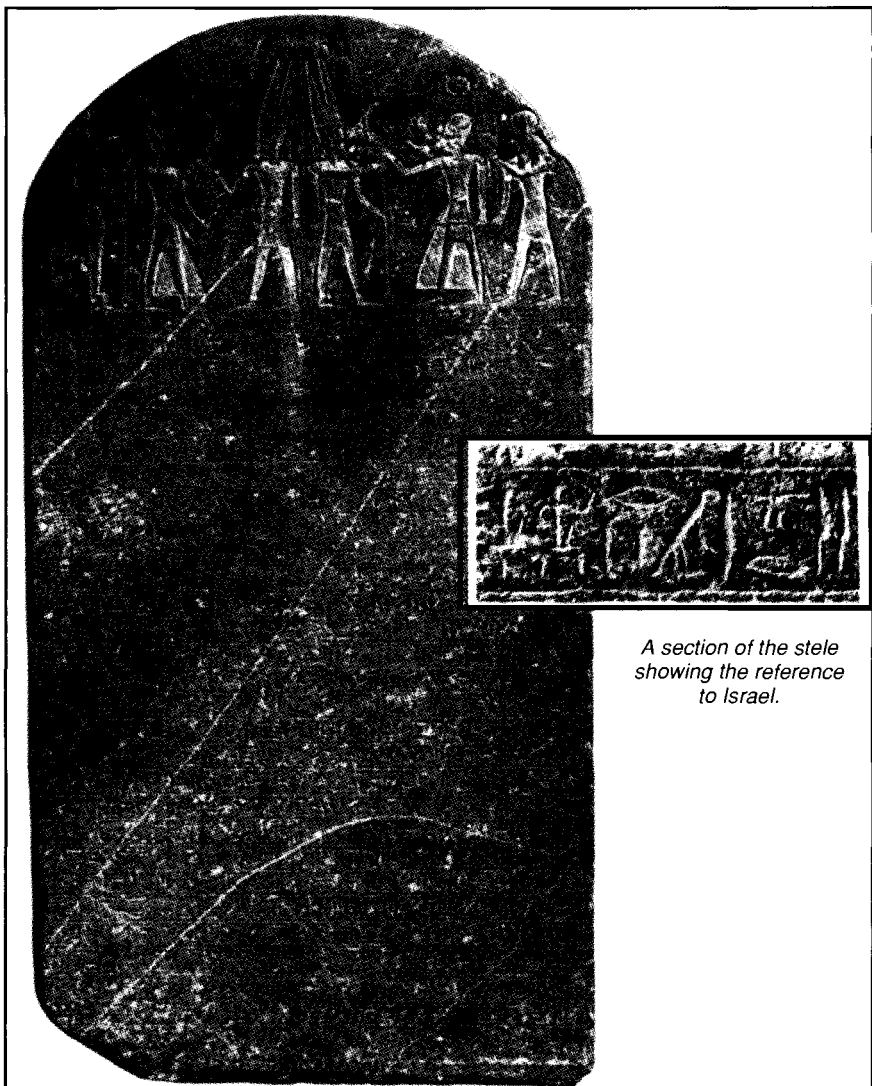
Drake's Reference Bible states that “Following this verse, in a number of Mss we find, ‘And the name of the second he called Eliezer, for God of my father has been my help, and delivered me from the hand of Pharaoh’” (see Exo. 18:4).

Eliezer signifies *My God (El) is My Help*. The names of Moses' two sons, therefore, reveal that he did not abandon hope. Together they signify that though he was a stranger in Midian, God was still his ready help in time of trouble.

One strange, unaccountable omission, is the neglect of Moses to circumcise his younger son. This has been attributed to the opposition of Zipporah to the rite, but there is no indication of that in the text. In any case, Moses should have overruled his wife. Perhaps it is indicative of his despondency that he omitted to carry out this rite of the Abrahamic covenant; perhaps he imagined that God had repudiated him as the promised deliverer, and believed that deliverance would come from another source; perhaps Moses felt that he had failed God, and therefore did not feel justified to perform this rite. The reason is not recorded.



Helicopolis (On) in Egypt.
— Ruins of Ramses Temple



A section of the stele showing the reference to Israel.

STELE OF MERNEPTAH

The only reference to Israel found on Egyptian monuments of the period is a claim on the stele of Merneptah that Israel has been destroyed. Merneptah was the son of Pharaoh Rameses ii, and therefore could have been the Pharaoh whose army perished in the Red Sea. It is thought by some that his reference to Israel on the stele was to cover up the disaster to his own forces, by claiming that he, in fact, had destroyed the Israelites, who then disappeared from the land.

EXODUS: A PATTERN OF REDEMPTION

SECTION TWO VISITATION

CHAPTER 2:23 to 10:29

Having introduced Moses, and recorded the circumstances that drew him out of Egypt to the land of Midian, Exodus now moves on to the second division of the book, recording the visitation of God to His people. As in the previous section, this is divided into three parts:

- (1) Proposed — ch. 2:23 to 4:9**
- (2) Resisted — ch. 4:10 to 5:23**
- (3) Accomplished — ch. 6:1 to 10:29**

The first sets out the great revelation of God to Moses at the bush, and proclamation of the covenant Name, presenting the commission and signs given to Moses and endorsing his credentials of divine authority.

The second reveals Moses' reluctance to return to Egypt; how the people's work load is increased by Pharaoh who refuses to relieve them of their burdens.

The third records Yahweh's proclamation to deliver the people; how plagues are poured out upon Egypt; and the preparations made for the infliction of the final plague which ends Pharaoh's resistance.

The section is an extremely significant one in the divine record. First of all, it shows that God always watches over His own, even though they may imagine that He has deserted them. He does so in Egypt. In His wisdom he postpones the deliverance of Israel until the "set time," in order that both Moses and Israel are made ready. Moses needs the discipline of shepherding in the wilderness; Israel's desire to leave Egypt for the liberty that Yahweh holds out to them needs to grow. Thus God hearkens to the cries of His people, but waits until "the fulness of time" before effecting their deliverance.

Finally, the deliverance proves to be of so mighty a nature that it is ever afterwards recalled in the yearly feast of Passover, at which time Yahweh "made Himself an everlasting Name," in the outpouring of judgment on the one hand, and the deliverance of his people on the other (Isa. 63:12).



(1) VISITATION PROPOSED

Chapter 2:23-4:9

God hearkens to the cry of His people, and decides to deliver them. He reveals Himself to Moses at the bush, proclaims unto him His covenant Name, delivers to Moses his commission, providing him with signs to demonstrate the divine authority vested in him.

God Remembers His Covenant

— vv. 23-25.

The bitterness of bondage in Egypt increases, causing the people to cry unto God for help. He determines to do so on the basis of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

VERSE 23

“And it came to pass in process of time” — This important statement reveals that God is never in a hurry, but awaits the proper moment to act. There is such a thing as the “patient waiting for Christ” (Rev. 1:9), who, at the set time appointed, will return. In the meantime, God’s workmen must be prepared for apparent delay. Moreover, they need time in order that they may be thoroughly prepared for the duties He has for them to perform. In the case of Moses, a further forty years were required to properly prepare him for the great work God had in store for him (cp. Acts 7:30).

We, too, must learn the lesson that thorough preparation is necessary to perform the work of God properly. For that reason, Paul warns against a “novice” being given a position of prominence in ecclesial activities. Time should be provided for the development of those who aspire to any office of responsibility (1Tim. 3:6).

Similarly, it is important to realize that while the “longsuffering of God” (2Pet. 3:9) may wait, He has determined “a set time to favor Zion” (Psa. 102:13), and His purpose of intervening in the affairs of mankind will inevitably be accomplished,

according to His wisdom. This was now to be revealed in the seeming “natural” circumstances of life in Egypt.

“That the king of Egypt died” — The long reign of Rameses II came to an end, and his son Merneptah ascended the throne. The only direct reference to Israel discovered upon Egyptian monuments of the time, has been found on the stele of Merneptah, today in the Cairo Museum.

“And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage” — The people experienced the difficulties of life in Gentile lands, and manifested their distress in a continual “sighing.” Yet, the drama of the Exodus revealed that the sighing of the Israelites would ultimately turn into singing when they were finally led out of Egypt (Exo. 15:1). The same principle is experienced by those under sin and death (Rom. 8:26), who are relieved of their distress by the knowledge of saving truth (vv. 18-19).

“And they cried, and their cry came up unto God” — Three different Hebrew words are used to describe the “cries” of Israel at the time. In the phrase before us the word is *zaaq*, and it signifies *to shriek from anguish or danger*, and, by analogy, “to announce or converse publicly.” This suggests a public convocation to loudly call upon God to deliver them from their burdens. The second word in this verse is *shavah*, *to cry for help*, signifying the purpose for the public convention and cry. The third word, found in ch. 3:7, is *tsaaqah* from *tsaaq*, signifying *to shriek, to proclaim, an assembly*. As the trouble deepened, so the cry became more urgent,

and assemblies were called by the Hebrews for the purpose of considering their lot, and beseeching the help of God in their misery.

“By reason of the bondage” — The Hebrews had probably imagined that with the death of Rameses, their miseries would cease, or at least, be reduced. Instead, they found them increased by the new ruler, and so their cry became more bitter and desperate.

It was obvious that the regime of ruthless oppression toward Israel, inaugurated by Rameses, had now become the national policy. Those who waited for Rameses' death, expecting that it would be followed by some alleviation of their state, now realised the hopelessness of their position, and “cried unto God.”

VERSE 24

“And God heard their groaning” — See also ch. 6:5. Four acts of God on behalf of Israel were: [1] He heard their groaning; [2] He remembered His covenant; [3] He took heed to their sufferings (v. 25); [4] He had respect unto them (v. 25).

“And God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob” — Cp. ch. 6:5. The covenant with Abraham is the binding principle of God's dealings with man; around which His whole purpose revolves. It includes the provision: “I will curse him that curseth thee” (Gen. 12:3). It promised the deliverance of Israel from their oppressors (Gen. 15:13-21).

VERSE 25

“And God looked upon the children of Israel” — He made them the object of His special regard.

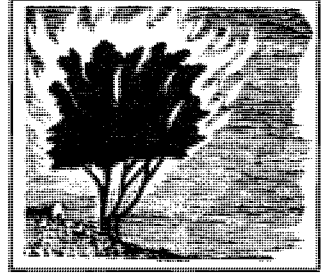
“And God had respect unto them” — The margin renders the verb literally, “God *knew* them.” The R.V. has: “God *took knowledge* of them.” He bore in mind their sufferings, their despair, their cries for help, and felt for them. See Isa. 63:9. He did not act openly for the moment, but laid the foundation of future activities for their help and release.



*Merneptah:
Pharaoh of the Plagues.*

EXODUS CHAPTER THREE

THE REVELATION TO MOSES AT THE BUSH



The record now moves on a further forty years (Acts 7:30). Rameses is dead, and the Pharaoh on the throne is his son, Merneptah. He is an obstinate and vain despot, with the habit of claiming the achievements of others as his own. Under this inefficient but stubborn tyrant, the Hebrews find their oppression intensified, and their sufferings more bitter. Meanwhile, in the wilderness, Moses continues to tend his sheep, enduring the solitary life of a shepherd. The time arrives, however, when God decides to move. Moses is attracted by the stupendous miracle of a burning bush that is not consumed, and hears the voice of the angel proclaiming the purpose of God. The divine revelation in regard to the Name of God is declared, and Moses is commissioned to return to Egypt to deliver His people.

God Reveals Himself At The Bush

— vv. 1-6.

Moses is attracted to the sign of a burning bush that is not consumed, and is commanded by the angel to humble himself in view of an impending revelation.

VERSE 1

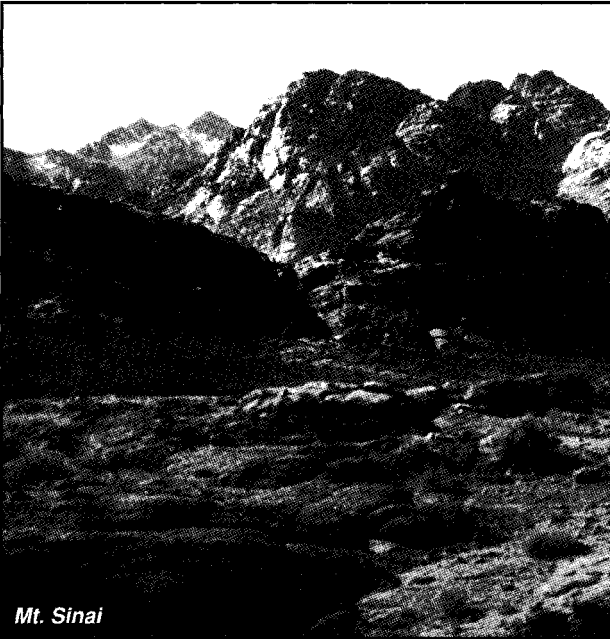
“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian”

— Moses had become a shepherd, and the training was valuable, for it taught him the need of patience and care in leadership. It prepared him for the shepherding work to which he was about to be called in regard to his people in Egypt. The term “father-in-law” is *chathan* in Hebrew, and comes from a root signifying to *give away*, and thus a relative by marriage. The same term is rendered “husband” in ch. 4:25.

“And he led the flock to the backside of the desert” — The “backside” would be towards the west. This was an appropriate place for the tremendous revelation to be given. The pastoral life is both peaceful and elevating, and Moses appar-

ently enjoyed a peace of mind as he meditated upon the things of God. The lonely desert was well calculated to draw him closer to God. Rawlinson comments, “All around is stillness. Great bare mountains, scarred and seamed, raise their bald heads into the azure sky, casting broad shadows at morn and eve over the plains or valleys at the base, at noonday searched and scorched by the almost vertical sun, which penetrates into every recess and spreads everywhere a glare of quivering light, except where some overhanging rock casts a grateful but scanty shade. The herbage in the valleys and plains is short, but sweet and nourishing. Trees are rare; but low shrubs and bushes, chiefly camel-thorn and acacia, abound; while here and there a clump, or even a grove, of palms afford the eyes a welcome variety.”

The wild peaks of the granite mountains are both grand and awe-inspiring. Mount Horeb itself rises suddenly like a huge altar of red granite before a wide plain. It seems as though the area has been reserved of God for the purpose of special



Mt. Sinai

revelations to His creatures.

“And came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb” — Horeb signifies *desolation*. It is at the northwestern end of a five-kilometre plateau dominated by two peaks, at the southeastern end of which is Sinai. Horeb and Sinai, therefore, are two distinct mountains. Horeb is named “the mount of God” (ch. 3:1; 4:27; 24:13; 1Kings 19:8), a description never given to Sinai. The mount called *Ras Sufsafeh* has been identified as Horeb. It rises abruptly from a wide plain, and answers to all the requirements of Scripture concerning the mount from where Yahweh spoke to the people. See notes on chapter 19.

VERSE 2

“And the angel of Yahweh appeared unto him” — The angel spoke in the name of Deity, and therefore can be identified with the angel referred to in ch. 23:20-23.

Examples of angels speaking in the name of God are found throughout the

Word. A typical example is given in Judges 2:1. The angel of Yahweh visited Israel with the message: “I made you to go up out of Egypt.” The work is there attributed to the angel, whilst elsewhere it is declared as being of Yahweh. In fact, the work of deliverance was effected by Yahweh through “His ministers,” the angels as the Elohim (cp. Psa. 103:20-21; Heb. 1:14).

“In a flame of fire” — Elsewhere God is represented as a “consuming fire” (Deu. 4:24; 9:3; Heb. 12:29), but on this occasion, the fire did not consume. Fire can act as both a master or a servant. Yahweh used it to either punish

or protect. As a “pillar of fire” He protected Israel from the Egyptian forces while they made ready to attack Israel when the nation withdrew from the land of oppression (Exo. 14:24).

He later manifested Himself as a “devouring fire” on Mount Sinai (ch. 24:17), after the nation had entered into covenant relationship with Him, to teach the danger of trifling with His commands. During the wanderings, the manifestation of His presence in the nation was symbolised by the “pillar of fire” that led and protected the people (Deu. 1:33). The fire of God, therefore, is able to defend or destroy, and for this reason, Moses recalled the theophany at Horeb at the end of his life, and prayed for “the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush” (Deu. 33:16).

“Out of the midst of a bush” — The Hebrew word for “bush” is *seneh*. It is the name given to a thorny shrub, a species of acacia, common in the Sinaitic district. In *Antiquities of The Jews*, W. Brown says

that the root word signifies *to prick, to pierce*, and therefore relates to the acacia, referred to in the Bible as the shittim tree, a prickly shrub. The wood of the acacia was used for the tabernacle, and there symbolised that which pierces, a fit description for human nature, in which Christ appeared among men (cp. Isa. 53:2). In order to rationalise the miracle Moses saw, some see the "flame of fire" as the red, transparent, glowing berries of the *Loranthus acacia*, a species of acacia that is common to the area. But Moses was not dim of eye so as to mistake the flaming berries of this plant for the fire of God (see Deu. 34:7)! The fire he saw was very real, flaring up in the clear light of the midday sun.

"And he looked, and, behold" — This phrase is used to introduce a unique and startling epiphany, with important principles of divine revelation. Moses



The Sinai Valley
illustrating the rugged terrain of the area.

The Loranthus acacia is a thorny acacia with red, glowing berries believed by some to be the "burning bush."



would have drawn back in wonder at this spectacular scene before him.

"The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed" — The bush represented Israel enveloped in the fire of trouble and divine discipline, but not consumed. This is a phenomenon that mankind has witnessed throughout history. The nations have seen Israel enwrapped in trouble, ablaze with the fire of affliction, and yet not consumed, without comprehending its real significance.

Even as the bush at which Moses gazed in wonder, the Hebrews in Egypt were burning with fire, but were not completely overwhelmed. Why? Because God was with them, carefully supervising the troubles they experienced, which were for the ultimate good of the nation.

The "bush" blazed with fire in the days of Nazi Germany, but was not consumed, for out of that dire trouble developed the modern State of Israel.

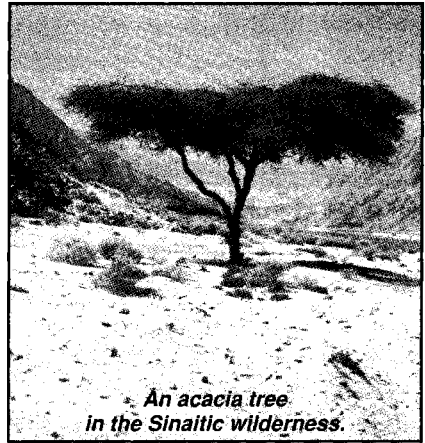
Moses likened the deliverance of

Israel from Egypt to people being drawn out of "the iron furnace;" and the deliverance of Israel in modern times is described in similar terms (Jer. 16:16-18). In reviewing the history of the nation to his time, the Psalmist concluded: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psa. 66:12).

Through Isaiah, in the spirit of prophecy, Yahweh spoke of His protective care of Israel in the following terms: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. 43:2).

The revelation at the bush, and the astounding miracle of Israel's preservation, despite the bitter persecution it has experienced, was dramatised when the three friends of Daniel were flung into the fiery furnace by order of Nebuchadnezzar, and were protected from the destroying force of the flame (Dan. 3:25-27). They "came forth out of the midst of the fire." That, however, was not the lot of all who were consigned to the flames by the king of Babylon. There were certain false prophets who defied the King of Babylon as did these faithful friends of Daniel, but they were destroyed by the flame (Jer. 29:22). The symbol of the unconsumed burning bush does not apply to individual Jews, but to the nation as a whole, and to the faithful within it. In that regard the nation is indestructible and this constitutes a "sign" and a "witness" to all the world in regard to Yahweh's covenant to Abraham, and His purpose with Israel (Isa. 43:9-11).

Therefore, as the sight of the burning bush attracted the attention of Moses, so the sufferings and preservation of Israel throughout the ages has constituted an outstanding witness to the truth of God's Word. Indeed, Yahweh invites all to heed that witness which He has placed among the nations, as He desired Moses to take heed to the amazing sign in the Sinaitic wilderness, for it testifies to the truth of



*An acacia tree
in the Sinaitic wilderness.*

His Word, and the certainty of fulfilment of His promises (Isa. 43).

VERSE 3

"And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt" — Having been drawn to the burning bush, Moses, as a man of wisdom, now decides to examine it more closely. He may have thought that there was some natural explanation that would fit the circumstances! But let flesh consider the evidence of Israel, Yahweh's witnesses, and it will be forced to recognise the miraculous nature of their preservation (Jer. 30:11), as evidence of the divine purpose with that nation.

VERSE 4

"And when Yahweh saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him" — In this verse, *Yahweh* and *Elohim* (God) are used interchangeably with "the angel" of v. 2. That angel, evidently, was "the angel of His presence" (Isa. 63:9-14). Stephen declared that Moses saw "an angel of the Lord" (Acts 7:30), and that in the speech of this angel "the voice of the Lord came to him" (v. 31). Thus Yahweh was manifested to Moses through the angel of Exodus 23:20-21, the Captain of Yahweh's host (Josh. 5:13-15).

"Out of the midst of the bush" — The bush, as a symbol, represents Israel:

small and humble among the nations, thorny to the touch, but indestructible (cp. Deu. 33:16).

“And said, Moses, Moses!” — The double call suggests urgency. Cp. 1Sam. 3:10; Gen. 46:2.

“And he said, Here am I” — A ready response by Moses reflects the compliant attitude of the faithful. It was the expression of Abraham as he prepared to offer his son (Gen. 22:7); the answer of Samuel (1Sam. 3); the willing response of Christ (Heb. 10:9).

VERSE 5

“And he said, Draw not nigh hither” — The principle of Lev. 10:3 indicates the separate and lofty position of the Almighty: “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me.” Approach to the divine presence requires acknowledgement of the dignity and exclusiveness of Yahweh.

“Put off thy shoes from off thy feet” — This was a mark of respect (cp. Josh. 5:15). It symbolised the laying aside of all pollutions from walking in the way of sin. Sanctified by the divine presence, every spot where God manifests Himself is holy ground (cp. Gen. 28:16-17; Exo. 20:24; Acts 7:33).

“For the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” — The word “holy” signifies *to be separated for exclusive use*. The ground was not different from soil elsewhere, but was constituted “holy” because Yahweh used it for the purpose of His theophany to Moses.

VERSE 6

“Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father” — Though the word *abicha*, “thy father,” is here used in the singular, Stephen, in quoting this passage (Acts 7:32), uses the plural, “the God of thy fathers” which is the intent of the passage, and probably its original form.

“The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” — This title of God is cited by Christ to testify that as God is “the God of the living and not of the dead,” the patriarchs must rise from

the dead to life. He therefore taught that these words proved the reality of the resurrection (see Mat. 22:31-32; Mark 12:26-27; Luke 20:37).

It is significant that the Lord quoted these words as proving the validity of the doctrine of the resurrection, and not of the immortality of the soul — thus affirming that the latter theory is false.

In Hebrews 11:16, Paul comments upon the title of this verse: “God is not ashamed to be called their God.” The verb “to be called” is *epikaleisthai* and signifies “to be called upon” or “surnamed.” Thus: “God is not ashamed to be surnamed their God.” What a wondrous honor this is for mortal men; how privileged we are to be called to that great covenant that linked the patriarchs so closely with God. The promise made to those who overcome is that God’s name will be named upon them (see Rev. 3:12). The fact that God delights to be known as the “God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” reveals that His purpose with men will be established through them, and shows that He can only be properly worshipped through the channel of Israel’s hope (see Eph. 2:11-13).

“And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” — He was conscious of the overpowering glory of the divine manifestation in the angel (cp. Mat. 28:3-4).

Moses Is Instructed To Return To Egypt — vv. 7-10.

The angel reveals to Moses that God is not indifferent to the trials and sufferings of His servants, even though it might sometimes appear so to be. Yet He knows the state of His people, hears their cry, recognises the injustice of their taskmasters, and now has sent His angel to deliver them. Moses is commissioned to return to Egypt and deliver the people of Israel from out of the hand of the oppressor.

VERSE 7

“And Yahweh said” — In the book of Exodus, statements are attributed to Yahweh or to Elohim some sixty-seven times.

“I have surely seen the affliction” —

This verse states that God *saw* the afflictions of Israel, *heard* their cry, and *knew* their sorrows. Yet to the people of Israel it must have seemed as though He was indifferent to their lot. This emphasizes the importance of Christ’s exhortation: “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). We must manifest sufficient patience to await God’s answer to prayer, and not imagine that He is indifferent to our plight, or that prayer is ineffective, merely because an answer is delayed. This statement is further cited in Neh. 9:9; Psa. 106:44; Acts 7:34.

“Of My people which are in Egypt” —

This is the first of the seventeen occurrences in which the term *My people* is used. The term is significantly employed in Ezekiel 38:16 in regard to the “latter days” when “Yahweh shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people” (Isa. 11:11). Therefore events in Egypt in the days of Moses type those about to happen in the last days. There shall come a further “time of Jacob’s trouble” out of which he again shall be saved (Jer. 30:7) in order to be ultimately established in the land promised to the fathers.

“And have heard their cry” — See note ch. 2:23.

“By reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows” —

The word for “taskmasters” is *nagasim* and signifies “to drive,” in contrast to *sarey massim*, “lords of tribute” of ch. 1:11. The taskmasters of the verse before us were not the general overseers, but subordinate officials. They used their petty authority in a very overbearing and violent manner.

VERSE 8**“And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians” —**

This statement sets the pattern of this second section of Exodus which we have headed as *Visitation*. This was not the first time that the Creator visited the earth through His angels. He did so at Babel (Gen. 11:7), and again at the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18:21). Now He proclaims



His intention of doing so on behalf of His people, “for His name’s sake” as He later declared (Exo. 9:16; Psa. 106:8).

“And to bring them up out of that land unto a good land, and a large” —

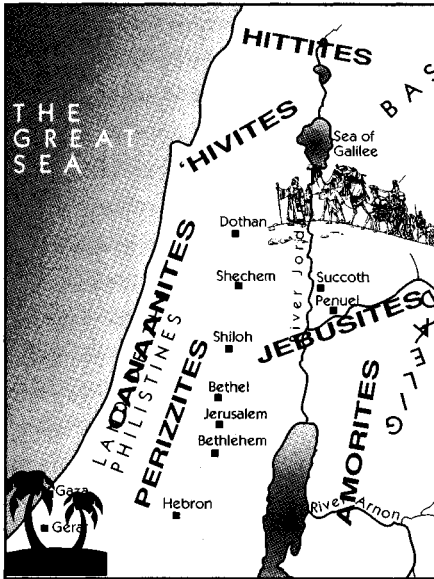
Deu. 11:9-12 describes this land as one which “Yahweh sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey... a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which Yahweh thy God careth for: the eyes of Yahweh thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.”

The fourfold description of Canaan given to Moses presented it as [1] providing a place free from fear, “a good land”; [2] adequate in size, “a large land”; [3] as prosperous, “flowing with milk and honey”; [4] as populous, a land inhabited by many nations.

“Unto a land flowing with milk and honey” —

This is the first occurrence of this description, that is so frequently used hereafter. It signifies a land of excellent pasturage, abounding in herbage and flowers, so that cattle and bees are adequately catered for, yielding abundance of milk and honey.

Figuratively both characteristics relate to the divine doctrine: “milk” builds up the body (cp. Job. 21:24; Pro. 27:27) and speaks of the wholesomeness of the Word (1Pet. 2:2); “honey” soothes and strength-



oppress them” — The Hebrew word *lachats* rendered “oppression” comes from a root signifying to *press*, thus, to squeeze or compress, so as to distress.

VERSE 10

“Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt” — In this commission, Moses was called upon to form the Hebrews into the ecclesia of God. Stephen describes them as “the ecclesia (*called out ones*) in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). They became such by being “called out of Egypt.” Moses constantly reminded the people of this separation as he emphasized their divine origin and called upon them to understand the destiny to which Yahweh had called them (Deu. 5:15; 6:21-23, etc.). A similar call goes out to Gentiles today through the appeal of the gospel (Acts 15:14).

ens (Jud. 14:18). Moses was promised a land of plenty that would build up, sustain and strengthen those who dwell therein.

“Unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites” — See reference to these nations in *The Christadelphian Expositor* under Gen. 15:18-21 and Deu. 7:1. They dwelt throughout the land known as “Canaan.” Moses must have understood, from the mention of so many nations, the greatness of his mission. Even the armies of Egypt were unable to completely conquer and control all the warlike peoples of Canaan. Moses would have known this, particularly if, as Josephus alleges, he has been once one of Egypt’s most successful military commanders.

VERSE 9

“Now therefore, behold” — This exclamation draws attention to what follows, and the reason for the divine appearance to Moses.

“The cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me; and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians

Moses Seeks To Know The Divine Name — vv. 11-13.

Moses is reluctant to return to Egypt for the deliverance of the people, but is commanded by God to do so. He then enquires as to what constitutes the divine Name, so that he might reveal it unto the people.

VERSE 11

“And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” — Forty years earlier, Moses was eager to perform this great work. but, to his amazement, the oppressed Hebrews then were not ready to receive him as their deliverer (Acts 7:25). Now, as an older man who had been in isolation for forty years (v. 30), the mission seemed beyond him, particularly in view of the powerful nations that then held Canaan in their grip. The people who knew him forty years earlier, would now have forgotten him. The years of seclusion as a shepherd in Midian, had caused him to become timid and critical of himself. So he shrank from the task.



Modesty is good; but if it reaches the point of utter lack of confidence to do the bidding of God (no matter how difficult the task might appear) it is to be overcome.

This was the lesson that another great man of faith had to learn. So Paul, shortly before his death, wrote to the timid, retiring Timothy, urging him to courageous action: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord" (2Tim. 1:7-8).

Moses' expressed reluctance to return to Egypt as deliverer, is the first of the ten complaints uttered by him during the course of his ministry to the people. They can be summarised thus:

- [1] I have not the ability to deliver the people — Ex. 3:11.
- [2] The people will not believe me — Ex. 4:1.
- [3] I am not sufficiently eloquent to move them — Ex. 4:10.
- [4] Send by the promised Seed — Ex. 4:13.
- [5] Why do you permit the people to be afflicted? — Ex. 5:22.
- [6] Pharaoh will not heed me — Ex. 6:12.
- [7] I stammer — Ex. 6:30.
- [8] I cannot satisfy this people — Ex. 17:4.
- [9] The burden is too great for me — Num. 11:14.
- [10] How can the people be fed? — Num. 11:21.

When we are despondent, or when we lack faith in our own ability to perform the work of God, let us remember this great man, and find renewed encouragement from the Source in which he inevitably found it: from his God. The Father knows our limitations, and recognizes our weaknesses. He does not call upon us to accomplish more than we are able, and is always ready to extend His help if we but seek it.

James declares: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (ch. 4:8). Paul adds: "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6). What a tremendous work was accomplished by Moses who, at first, lacked the ability to do it, was timid in attitude, and hesitant in speech. We need to similarly lay aside our lack of ability; in faith we, too, can accomplish great things through Christ (Phil. 4:13).

VERSE 12

"And he said, Certainly I will be with thee" — Here is a grand promise given to mortal man; and, indeed, a promise given to all those who answer the invitation of Acts 15:14 that declares "God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name."

The declaration "I will be" is *ehyeh* in the Hebrew. It is in the first person, singular, future tense of the verb, *hayah*, signifying "to be."

In v. 14, this same word is rendered "I Am," and is attributed to God. Moses had asked, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh?" The question was posed in true humility, and not in any doubt as to the power of God to accomplish His mission through Moses or any other man. Moses felt quite inadequate to the task, but now receives reassurance in the significant use of the Hebrew *ehyeh*. "I will be." It is a declaration of purpose and determination.

"And this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee" — The words "shall be" are in italics in the AV and should be eliminated. The literal Hebrew reads: "And this for thee, the sign that I have sent thee" (see *A New Old Testament*). The sign, or token, was not the promise that follows, but the sight even then before the eyes of Moses: the burning bush. It guaranteed the certainty of the accomplishment of Yahweh's purpose with him.

"When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt" — This constituted the divine intent to rescue Israel from the

oppression and ignorance of Egypt. The purpose for the redemption of the nation is now set before Moses.

“Ye shall serve God upon this mountain” — This is a promise, not the token. Moses is told that even as he receives his commission at the mount to deliver the people, so the nation would receive its commission there also. See the fulfilment recorded in Exodus 19:3.

The token of God (the burning bush), therefore guaranteed that Moses would fulfil his mission: there would be no doubt about the deliverance of the people.

VERSE 13

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?” — In Scripture a name is frequently synonymous with identity, character and purpose. Adam was named because he was formed from earth, the *'adamah*. Abram had his name changed to Abraham so as to express the purpose of God in him: *A Father of a Multitude*. Nabal (*Folly*) was called such because of his personality. God's name is thus expressive of His identity, character and purpose. Moses, therefore, desired to know it, so as to provide the people with a caption that identified the person of God as well as His character and purpose. Previously Jacob had requested this information, but it had been denied him (Gen. 32:29). Now, however, the time was ripe for it to be revealed.

In *Phanerosis* (p. 65), Brother Thomas comments: “Moses was commanded to return to Egypt, from which he had fled forty years before, and to go to his oppressed countrymen, and tell them that ‘the *Elohim* of their fathers’ had sent him to deliver them from the power of the Pharaoh. Though they served the gods of the Egyptians, they had not forgotten their own history. They would remember the three *Elohim* (Mighty Ones) that visited Abraham and partook of his hospitality (Gen. 18:1-5)... Moses knew that they

were acquainted with the many Mighty Ones of their history; and that, consequently, if he should present himself to them as a messenger of *Elohim*, they would say to him: ‘*What is his name?*’ As if they should say: ‘We have heard of many gods; what is the name of Him who sends you?’ As Joshua says, they were worshippers of other gods than Yahweh at the time Moses went to them; Moses was aware of that, and, therefore, felt the importance of being made acquainted with the name of Him who sent him, that he might be able to answer their question should they ask it.”

The Memorial Name Proclaimed

— vv. 14-15.

Jacob's request to know the divine Name had been refused (Gen. 32:29), but now Moses' request is granted, for the time has come when circumstances would cause it to be revealed in all the earth for the redemption of the oppressed people of Israel (cp. Isa. 63:11-14). Those circumstances would also manifest the means by which individuals are called out to be a “people for the name.” So the revelation is granted to Moses as a memorial to all generations.

VERSE 14

“And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am” — These words should be rendered as in the Revised Version margin: **“I will be whom I will be.”** Upon this, Brother Thomas wrote in *Phanerosis*: “The *memorial*, in its simplest form, is *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, ‘I will be who I will be.’ *Asher* ‘who’, the relative pronoun in this memorial, is both singular and plural, masculine and feminine. It will therefore, stand for ‘ten thousand times ten thousand,’ as well as for two or three persons. The other two words of the memorial are the first person singular, future tense of the verb *hayah*, ‘to be.’ In this memorial the eternal Spirit is the ‘I’, and the *Elohim* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are the ‘who’ of whom it is memorialised they ‘*shall be*.’ The reader will

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observe that it is not 'I will be who *tihyeh-nah*, they shall be'; but '*who* I will be,' for although '*who*' refers to a plurality, that plurality, when developed, is but the manifestation of the One eternal Spirit" (pp. 66-67).

This means that the name of God (יהוה) proclaimed that His purpose is to manifest Himself in a multiplicity of sons and daughters who shall be united as one in Him. Those potential sons and daughters must separate themselves from Egypt (whether literal or spiritual) and dedicate themselves unto Him, building into their lives the divine characteristics revealed in the Son, as a foundation for the bestowal of divine nature in the age to come.

In proclaiming His name to Moses, and permitting it to be announced to Israel in Egypt, God revealed to the people that they were not to be called out of deadly oppression merely to be saved, but rather that they might be separated from Egypt so as to manifest the qualities of Yahweh in their lives, as a basis for ultimate salvation. Salvation would be granted them, if they proved themselves worthy of it by building into their lives those characteris-

tics in which the Father delights, and which the Name epitomises. This requires separation from Egypt through sacrifice and water, without which there can be no salvation (Acts 15:14; 2Cor. 6:17-18).

In expounding upon the prophetic aspect of the name of *Ehyeh*, and the related name of *Yahweh*, J. W. Thirtle wrote: "Out of over forty other occurrences of this first person, singular number of the future tense of the verb, in such a grammatical comparison with this verse, there is only one instance of *Ehyeh* being rendered 'I am' in the AV. We have 'I will be,' twenty-seven times, and the remaining occurrences represented by 'will I be,' 'I shall be,' 'shall I be,' 'though I be,' 'should I be,' etc." Examples of this are found in Ex. 3:12; 4:12, 15; Hos. 13:10, 14 etc.

It is obvious therefore, that the translation of I AM contained in the AV is incorrect. It should be *I will be*. The Name is therefore prophetic of Yahweh's intention to reveal Himself in a people of His choice.

"And He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath



sent me unto you” — As noted above, the name *Ehyeh* (“I am”) is prophetic, and signifies *I Will Be*. In the lips of mortal man, the name becomes *Yahweh: He Who Will Be*.

VERSE 15

“And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Yahweh God of your fathers” — As we have seen the name *Ehyeh* is in the future tense, and therefore prophetic of the Divine purpose, signifying: “He Who will be (manifested) in Mighty Ones of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” As with the longer definition given in the previous verse, it proclaimed the purpose of El to manifest Himself through the Seed (both singular and plural) promised to the fathers of Israel. The seed singular is not here particularly noted, but was more fully explained in succeeding revelations, and finally manifested as the Word made flesh, providing the pattern, or ideal, to which all other sons and daughters should aspire to attain (see John 1:14; Mat. 1:25; 1Tim. 3:16).

Concerning the name *Yahweh*, Thirtle wrote: “*Yahweh* is the third person, singular number, future tense of *hava... Ehyeh* and *Yahweh* have in their origin a meaning in common. The former is the first person, singular number, future tense of *hayah*, ‘to be,’ and the latter is the third person, singular number, future of *havah*, an older form of the same verb.”

Thus the Memorial Name as given in the statement we are considering is *Yahweh Elohey abotheychim*: “He who will be Mighty Ones of your Fathers.” The latter section of the Name expresses that a selection, or choice, would be made from among Israelites as to who will constitute the “mighty ones” of the future.

In his *Hebrew Lexicon*, Dr. Samuel Lee states regarding *Ehyeh* and *Yahweh*, “It seems to me that the terms, and more particularly the latter, were chosen in order to keep up... the memorial of His promised manifestation in the flesh.” (See *The Christadelphian*, vol. 61, p. 290). Bro. C.C. Walker commented: “Rightly under-

stood *Yahweh* is a prophetic name — a name predicting a purpose... The prophecy veiled in the Name did not find complete fulfilment in Jesus (*Yahweh is Saviour*) the Anointed. It will be accomplished when, as the Head of a multitudinous body Christ shall, in the midst of Israel, show forth the power and wisdom of the Eternal Father who has said, ‘I am *Yahweh*, and beside Me, there is no saviour,’ when the firstborn of all creation with ‘a multitude which no man can number, glorified together with him’, shall reign and exercise all authority in the earth for and in the name of Him who has said to Israel: ‘I, *Yahweh*, am your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your king’; when the well beloved Son of the Most High, with his brethren and saints — under whom the world to come will be placed — shall be *Elohim* to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, — all, from the highest to the lowest embodiments of the Spirit and power of Him who said to Moses, ‘I will be whom I will be,’ ‘I am He who will be.’ The name and memorial will, in a word, be illustrated by the consummation of the divine purpose.”

“The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you” — Significantly, the divine Name is here defined as *Yahweh Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, denoting: “He who will be the Mighty Ones of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” As constituting the divine Name, it implies that only those associated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can worship Him in truth. That is the reason why Paul taught that, outside of the commonwealth of Israel, there is no hope (Eph. 2:11-12), and why the elect, drawn out of “all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues” (Rev. 7:9; 5:9-10), are identified with the true Israel of God (Rev. 7:4-8; Gal. 6:16).

Seeing that the Name of God specifies His manifestation in full glory of mind, character and nature, its complete development, as far as saints are concerned, awaits the future, and is based upon a selection of mighty ones from all those claiming allegiance to the fathers of the

Hebrew race.

Notice how the names of the patriarchs find fulfilment in the description of the great, rejoicing, multitude of the redeemed of Revelation 7:

- Abraham—*The Father of a multitude*: “I beheld a great multitude” (v. 9).
- Isaac—*Rejoicing*: “Saying: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving” (v. 12).
- Jacob—*Supplanter*: “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes” (v. 14).
- The God of the Hebrews (Ex. 3:18) or *Mighty Ones who have crossed over*: “A great multitude out of all nations” (v. 9).

“**This is My name for ever**”— The word “ever” is *olam* in Hebrew, and signifies “a hidden period.” It is frequently used to indicate the millennium. When the millennium is established in the earth, the divine Name will be comprehended in its fulness, and its manifestation will be apparent in the multitude of the redeemed.

“**And this is My memorial**” — This word is the Heb. *zeker* from *zakar*, signifying *to mark so as to remember*, and by implication *to mention*. Reference to the memorial Name of God is found in Psa. 135:13; Hos. 12:5; Isa. 26:8 which the RSV renders: “Thy memorial Name is the desire of our soul.”

Israel had many memorials to mark, for remembrance, chief of which was the Passover (Ex. 12:14). This finds reflection in “Christ our passover” which constitutes the *memorial* of believers, for in the repudiation of flesh, and dedication of life to Yahweh, symbolised in the emblems, there are set forth the real principles of the divine Name.

In introducing the feast, Paul repeated the words of the Lord: “This do in remembrance of me” (1Cor. 11:24). But the Greek *anamnesis* signifies “memorial,” not “remembrance.” The “breaking of bread and drinking of wine” must point to the Memorial. The word signifies not a mere recalling to mind, but an awakening of the mind to the significance of the act of communion.

So with the use of the divine Name. It is not unthinking repetition of the Name that Yahweh desires, but the constant awakening of the mind as to what is required of the one using it in order to fully manifest it. The Lord Jesus Christ, the prophet “like unto Moses,” proclaimed and manifested the Name to the apostles (John 17:6, 26). His action in so doing, is a warning against those who, with mistaken zeal, cause God’s people to “forget His name” (see Jer. 23:27).

“**Unto all generations**” — This attachment to the divine Name signifies that it will have relationship to every generation; for there will be those out of every age who will be called to manifest it. See Psa. 45:17; 79:9, 13; 100:4-5; 102:12; 105:8; 135:13; Luke 1:48-49; Eph. 3:21.

Moses is Given His Commission

— vv. 16-18.

Moses is commanded to call the elders of Israel together and proclaim to them in the name of Yahweh, the divine will and purpose with the nation, after which he is to go to Pharaoh and request leave of absence for the Israelites that they might sacrifice unto their God in the wilderness.

VERSE 16

“**Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Yahweh Elohim of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me**”— This was the first time those elders had heard the proclamation of the divine Name as a memorial to be honoured. Thus proclaimed to them it was to demonstrate that what was presented was on the basis of the covenant made by God to the fathers of the nation, now to be revealed in a token form by their redemption from Egypt.

“**Saying, I have surely visited you**” — This declaration fulfilled the prediction of Joseph (Gen. 50:24). It later formed the basis of Simeon’s explanation of the Jerusalem Conference, as to why the gospel was preached unto Gentiles (Acts 15:14). It also provides the caption for this second section of Exodus which we have

headed "Visitation." See note Ch. 2:8.

"And seen that which is done to you in Egypt" — The declaration of Moses, therefore, would come as a direct answer to their cry for help (Ex. 2:23).

Conditions in Egypt at the time typed those that face Jewry today. Bro. Thomas observes in *Elpis Israel*: "But spiritually dark as were the Egyptians with all their wisdom, the Israelites could boast of little more light than they. The relative condition of these two people was very similar to what it is now in regard to the Jews and papal nations among whom they are scattered. The Jews have a vague idea of the promise made to Abraham, and, therefore, cherish the hope of restoration to Canaan; but of the name of God they are as ignorant as the generation to whom Moses was sent. 'Who is Yahweh', said Pharaoh, 'that I should let Israel go? I know not who the Lord God of Israel is.' This is the predicament of existing nations. They are called by the name of Christ, but as to God's character, they are as ignorant of it as of His person... Thus, without an understanding of the promises, ignorant of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and serving the gods of Egypt, they differed only from the Egyptians in being the oppressed instead of the oppressor, and 'beloved for the father's sake' — a type of their [*the Jews*'] present condition, preparatory to their everlasting emancipation from the tyranny of nations as ignorant as, but more brutal than, themselves" (p. 287).

VERSE 17

"And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey" — See notes on v. 8. This was an appeal to manifest faith; the people were called



upon to act on the basis of Yahweh's promise to protect them from their enemies.

VERSE 18

"And they shall hearken to thy voice" — Reverses had made them amenable to the appeal.

"And thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel" — Moses was to recruit the support of the leaders, as Christ sought out certain disciples to present the Truth to the apostolic generation.

"Unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, Yahweh Elohim of the Hebrews hath met with us" — Emphasis is given to the "God of the Hebrews" in implied contrast to the gods of the Egyptians. As "God of Abraham," Yahweh is the "God of the Hebrews," for the title of *Hebrew*, signifying *A Passer Over*, was first given to Abram, when he passed over the Euphrates to enter the land. See notes on Gen. 14:13. For the fulfilment of this part of the commission, see Ex. 5:3; 7:16.

"And now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God" — Though "three days' journey" was a current expression for a considerable, though undefined, distance (Gen. 30:36; Num. 10:33) it was still limited by the rate at which the people could travel. Burdened with their children and animals, this would not take them far. The Israelites were to ask for what could not reasonably be refused.

This request, which Pharaoh rejected, could have been granted without any damage to Egypt, or any risk of the Israelites passing beyond the sphere of the nation's influence. After three days' journey with their children, the Israelites would still be within the strongly fortified frontier of Egypt. The request was not granted, and so it resolved itself into a demand for the unconditional release of the people, and their actual departure from the land of Egypt entirely. Thus Pharaoh was tested by the reasonableness of the first request.

**God Proclaims His Intention Of
Revealing His Power Before Egypt**
— vv. 19-22.

Every opportunity was to be given Pharaoh to co-operate, but Yahweh, knowing the obstinacy of the man, forewarns Moses that he would stubbornly resist. Nevertheless, by the outpouring of divine power he would be forced to yield, and that in the end the very resistance received would work out to the benefit of the Israelites.

VERSE 19

“And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go” — Rotherham renders this: “I know that the king of Egypt will not suffer you to go.” The divine foreknowledge recognized the natural inclination of Pharaoh to resist the proposal. The request would constitute a test upon Pharaoh, his subjects, and the children of Israel.

“No, not by a mighty hand” — The Hebrew *velo* rendered “no, not” is compounded of two particles *lo* (“no”) and *ve*, a copulative particle signifying “not.” However, Gesenius states that when such is “prefixed to adversative sentences it may be rendered *but*.” The statement, therefore, should read: “Not but by a mighty hand.” The *Berkeley Version* accordingly renders: “I am aware that the king of Egypt will not let you go *except* by a mighty hand.”

VERSE 20

“And I will stretch out My hand, and smite Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in the midst thereof” — Yahweh declares that He will deal with Egypt as a parent might do with a recalcitrant child: He will stretch out His hand to punish by slapping! To the mighty *El*, the disciplining of Egypt in spite of all its fleshly power, was as easy as that! His “wonders” in doing so were later commemorated (Exo. 15:11).

“And after that he will let you go”
— The final issue was never in doubt.

VERSE 21

“And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians” — The Egyptian people are shown throughout as far friendlier to the Israelites than the hard-hearted king. Not only would they have let the Israelites go, but ultimately they assisted them to do so.

“And it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty” — This is in accordance with the divine law. In Deuteronomy 15:12-14 it is commanded that when a faithful Hebrew slave left his master after many years service, he was to be liberally rewarded from his owner’s property. The phrase, “Thou shalt furnish him liberally” (Deu. 15:14) is a paraphrase of the Hebrew which literally means “make him a necklace,” the metaphor being that of ornamenting and embellishing, of giving some striking gift, as from a man who wishes to show his lasting regard for a servant who has served him faithfully through many years” (J.H. Hertz, a Hebraist). Such, Yahweh announces unto Moses, would be the farewell which the Egyptian people accord the departing Israelites.

VERSE 22

“But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour” — The word “borrow” is from the Hebrew *shaal* signifying “to ask.” It is so rendered by the RV. Out of 168 occurrences in the Bible, the word is translated “borrow” only six times. Here it cannot possibly mean “borrow” as we understand the term, and should be rendered “ask” or “request.”

“And of her that sojourneth in her house” — Israelites certainly could not have Egyptians sojourning in their houses because of their strict caste system (Gen. 43:32), and the statement does not necessarily relate to Egyptians. It could concern the mixed multitude of other non-Israelitish nations, some of whom may have lodged with Israelites, and who may not have desired to leave with them.

“Jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment” — Some of this was later used to embellish the tabernacle. In the

kingdom age, the wealth of the Gentiles will be acquired by the king to "beautify the house of his glory" (see Isa. 60:5 mg; Hag. 2:8-9).

Furthermore, in a spiritual sense "the wealth of the Gentiles," in the saints (Acts 15:14) is being "taken out" of their midst to beautify the spiritual house that is in course of formation (1Pet. 2:5).

"And ye shall put *them* upon your sons, and upon your daughters" — Implying that they really belonged to them, and that they had been stripped of these things during their servitude.

"And ye shall spoil the Egyptians" — The word "spoil" is from the Hebrew *natsal* and signifies "to snatch away." If the phrase referred to the goods of the Egyptians, it would signify to bear these off; but it relates to the Egyptians and not to their goods, and therefore signifies that *they* would be snatched away. In that sense, the word should be rendered "save," and the statement implies that the Egyptians would be *saved* from further disaster by treating the Israelites favourably.

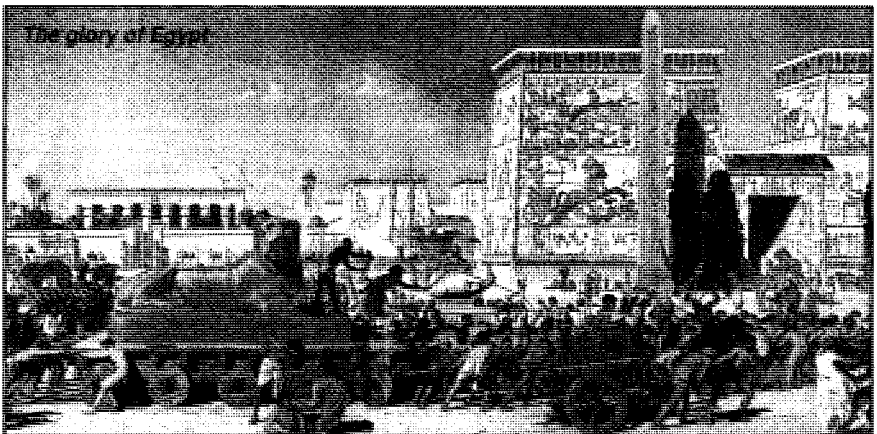
J. H. Hertz comments: "*Spoil* is an incorrect, nay impossible rendering of the Hebrew text. The root *natsal*... occurs 212 times in Scripture, and in 210 instances, its meaning is admitted by all to be *to snatch* (from danger), *to rescue* (from a wild beast), *to recover* (property)... Its direct

object is never the person or thing from whom the saving, or the rescue, or the snatching has taken place, but always the person or thing rescued. The usual translation... is therefore unwarranted for two reasons.

It takes the persons from whom the things are snatched as the direct object; and furthermore, it necessitates an entire reversal of the meaning of *natsal* from *save* into *despoil*."

The same word is rendered "deliver" in Isa. 19:20, where, significantly, the saving of Egypt is again the subject of the statement. The readiness with which the people responded, when the time came (see Exo. 12:36), illustrated that they did not fully endorse the policy of Pharaoh and his courtiers, and this saved them from the disaster that would otherwise have overtaken them as it did the king's army. The people feared an impending national disaster (v. 33), and set about assisting the Israelites to depart. In giving them the valuables they did, the Egyptians merely restored to them what had been taken from them during their servitude, and by this means purchased themselves back into favour.

Thus the Law commanded: "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian" (Deu. 23:7). The submission of the people was the salvation of Egypt, otherwise it would have been destroyed.



EXODUS CHAPTER FOUR

MOSES' OBJECTIONS AND YAHWEH'S ASSURANCES

Expressing doubts as to his ability to lead the people out of Egypt, Moses is provided with signs to endorse the assurance that Yahweh will be with him in all that he attempts. Unbelief or doubt are often manifested against God because of failure to accept within oneself the reason for believing. The secret of success, as now revealed to Moses, is for him to firmly "take this rod in thine hand" (v. 17). This is "the rod of God" and symbolises full surrender to Yahweh (vv. 2-4), the means whereby the people will come to recognise His presence among them (v. 5), and the avenue through which His power will be made manifest (v. 17). So long as Moses kept hold of the rod, it remained a support for him; but when he relaxed his hand it became a serpent ready to bite.

Similarly, Christ becomes for believers either a "savour of life unto life, or death unto death" (2Cor. 2:16), depending upon whether they hold fast to the rod, or let it fall to the ground.

This chapter continues the theme of "Visitation — Proposed."

The Sign Of The Serpent Rod — vv. 1-5.

Having been rebuffed on his previous attempt to deliver the people forty years earlier, Moses shows some reluctance to return to Egypt. He complains that the people will not believe him, and is provided with miraculous signs to witness that the authority of Yahweh has been conferred upon him, thus authenticating all that he is called upon to proclaim unto the people.

VERSE 1

"And Moses answered and said, But, behold" — He draws attention to a difficulty he foresees in approaching the people.

"They will not believe me, nor hear-ken unto my voice: for they will say,

Yahweh hath not appeared unto thee"

— Moses was human, and his faith had yet to be strengthened. He recalled the previous unbelief of the people (Acts 7:25), and presented it now as a reason against the task that Yahweh imposed upon him.

During the course of his labours, Moses uttered ten complaints before Yahweh (see note p. 65). On each occasion, Yahweh dealt with him in such a way as to strengthen his faith.

VERSE 2

"And Yahweh said unto him, What is that in thine hand?" — God directed him to the evidence of His power near at hand.

"And he said, A rod" — As a shepherd, Moses had his familiar shepherd's

rod in his hand. But what power was transmitted to that rod! With it, Moses plagued Egypt (Ex. 8:5), divided the sea for Israel to pass through (ch. 14:16); and smote the rock to produce water (ch. 17:5). It was called "the rod of God" (ch. 4:20) because of what Yahweh accomplished through the rod by Moses.

VERSE 3

"And He said, Cast it on the ground" — It was to be identified with that which is "earthy," and its associated problems, in order to provide a means of redemption.

"And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent" — The Hebrew is *nachash* as in Gen. 3:1. The pharaohs wore a basilisk in the form of a serpent on their crowns as the symbol of royal and divine power. In classical legends the basilisk was said to have the power to kill



by its breath or look. It, therefore, was the symbol of Egypt, and consequently to be feared.

By the miraculous sign of the shepherd's rod turned into a serpent, Moses was taught that, as shepherd, he would oppose the serpent forces of Egypt through the power that Yahweh would grant him. As a type of Jesus Christ, Moses prefigured the good shepherd provided by Yahweh (Jn. 10:14), who would gain the victory over the serpent in human nature (sin and death) or nationally (see Isa. 27:1). This is the first miracle performed by man recorded in the Bible.

"And Moses fled from before it" — The serpent was to be feared, whether it represented Egypt as a nation, or sin bringing forth death, as in Num. 21:6.

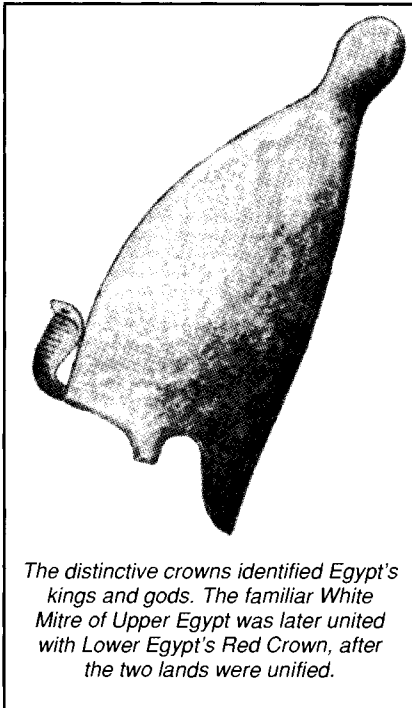
VERSE 4

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail"

— This was a call to faith and courage. Moses had to advance upon the serpent, and take it by the tail. Normally a snake is grasped at the back of the head, where it can be best controlled. When taken by the tail, there is danger that it will twist back and bite. Moses had to be aware of the dangerous character of the power he was handling.

"And he put forth his hand, and caught it" — In obedience to the instruction, Moses acted immediately.

"And it became a rod in his hand" — The living serpent became a staff in the hand of Moses, symbolising that he would ultimately have complete control over the



The distinctive crowns identified Egypt's kings and gods. The familiar White Mitre of Upper Egypt was later united with Lower Egypt's Red Crown, after the two lands were unified.

flesh. It was only through the power of Yahweh that the serpent became a rod in the hand of Moses; and it was only because God was "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2Cor. 5:19) that the Good Shepherd gained mastery over sin and death (Rom. 8:3). As the sign of the serpent rod revealed to the people that Yahweh was with Moses, so the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to eternal life demonstrated his conquest of sin and death, confirming that God was with him for the salvation of his people (Acts 17:31).

VERSE 5

"That they may believe that Yahweh God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" — The divine Name and titles constituted the guarantee that, as God had responded to the faith of the fathers, so He would to their seed. "Abraham" signifies *Father of a Multitude*, and reflects the divine purpose to develop a family of faith (Rev 7:9). "Isaac" signifies *Rejoicing*, and speaks of the joy that comes to those who manifest the faith of his father (Rev. 7:12). "Jacob" signifies *Supplanter*, for the Spirit will ultimately supplant the flesh (Rev. 7:14).

"Hath appeared unto thee" — Accordingly, the sign was first displayed to Israel (vv. 30-31), and afterwards to Pharaoh (v. 21; 5:1). In similar order, Christ's power over the serpent in the flesh was first displayed to Israel and afterwards to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16).

The Sign Of The Leprous Hand

— vv. 6-8.

A second sign is now given to Moses: that of the leprous hand. Moses is told to put his hand into his bosom. He does so, and when he draws it out, it is covered with leprosy. He is told to return it to his bosom. He does so, and when he draws it out again, it is clean.

VERSE 6

"And Yahweh said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy

bosom, And he put his hand into his bosom" — A hand resting upon the bosom is a sign of inactivity (see Psa. 74:11; Pro. 19:24; 26:15). If Moses refused to do the will of God, or the people delayed to respond, or Pharaoh defied the divine decree, the condition of the hand would symbolise their state before Yahweh.

"And when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow" — The word "behold" draws attention to the remarkable result.

Leprosy denotes uncleanness (Lev. 13:3). In its worst form, the whole skin becomes glossy white, dry and ulcerous. There is no hope when the leprosy appears "as snow." Thus the first part of the sign revealed the hopelessness of man caught in the grip of sin, and helpless to effect a cure; or of a nation, like Israel, enslaved to the sin power, and unable to effect deliverance.

But why place the hand in the bosom? Because the leprous hand in the bosom implies the deceitfulness of man's heart (Jer. 17:9).

VERSE 7

"And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh" — At the direction of Yahweh, the hand was healed of its leprosy. What man cannot do, Yahweh can accomplish (Rom. 8:3). He would deliver the nation from the captivity of Egypt, and heal the people from "all their diseases" (Psa. 103:3; Exo. 15:26).

The first sign revealed Yahweh's ability to save; this second sign demonstrates His ability to heal (see 2Kgs. 5:7).

VERSE 8

"And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign" — Even inanimate objects are said to have a voice. They can mutely testify to the glory of Yahweh (Psa. 19:1-3; Hab. 2:11).

The Sign Of Water Turned Into Blood
— v. 9.

A third sign is now given in order that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." The water of the Nile is poured out upon the ground, and becomes as blood.

VERSE 9

"And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river" — The Hebrew *ye'or* is a word of Egyptian origin, and signifies a channel or canal. It is used of the Nile

which was worshipped as a god, and was also a symbol of national greatness.

"And pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land" — The life of Egypt depended upon the

water of the Nile, and therefore the latter is appropriately represented as turning into blood, for "the life is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11). When life was shed in order that people might eat or live, the blood was poured out upon the ground to indicate from whence came the life, and the Israelites dependence upon Yahweh for all things (Lev. 17:13). Moses was called upon to act similarly.

This third sign, therefore, taught that if Pharaoh failed to heed the appeal of Moses (v. 21), or if the people rejected the message of redemption that he would proclaim, their blood would be shed.



(2) VISITATION RESISTED

Chapters 4:10 to 5:23

Though Moses is given a divine commission fortified with outstanding signs as a seal of its authenticity, he is still reluctant to visit the people. Their previous resistance to his attempt to help them, plus forty years of isolation from the land have left their mark, so that he now feels completely inadequate to the task.

He pleads inability to speak fluently. When that is set aside, he prays that Yahweh sends instead the One whom He has promised to send, even the Messiah.

Moses' resistance arouses the anger of Yahweh. He appoints Aaron as spokesman for Moses, and then orders him to return to Egypt and visit the people. But even now, Moses is not yet ready for the part assigned him. He has neglected to circumcise his youngest son, and this must be rectified before he attempts to "circumcise" the nation. His return to Egypt is therefore delayed, and his wife and family are placed in the care

of Jethro. The two brothers confer together regarding the divine commission, and returning to Egypt, call the elders of Israel together to hear the proposition of Yahweh. The people accept it and worship. The two brothers then request an interview with Pharaoh. This is granted, but their reasonable request on behalf of the people for leave of absence to withdraw into the wilderness to worship Yahweh, is contemptuously refused.

Pharaoh harshly and unreasonably orders that the peoples' burdens be increased. Finding that the intercession of Moses has only added to their workload and sorrow, the children of Israel turn upon him in anger. Frustrated by the seeming hopelessness of the situation, Moses turns to Yahweh with a word of complaint, seeking to know the reason for the resistance to a visitation that is divinely designed.

Moses' Reluctance To Return

— vv. 10-13.

Ordered by the angel of Yahweh to return and visit the children of Israel, Moses resists the command on the grounds that he is not eloquent of speech, and therefore Yahweh should send the promised Messiah, to redeem the people.

VERSE 10

"And Moses said unto Yahweh, O my Lord" — According to C.D. Ginsburg's comments on *The Massorah* (Jewish exposition on the ancient Hebrew text), this is one of the 134 passages where the *Sopherim* (an organisation of Jews after the return from Babylon whose work was to carefully revise the text of Scripture and set it in order) altered *Yahweh* to *Adonai*. It is suggested, therefore, that Moses' address should read, "O Yahweh," and not "O Adonai" (see *The Companion Bible*).

"I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant" — Literally, as in the margin, "I am not a man of words." Thus, "Words do not come readily to my tongue; I have never been a fluent speaker, neither yesterday (of recent times) nor since the third day (i.e. previously — see mg). Nor do I find myself suddenly speaking freely, by divine inspiration, since Thou spake with me."

Moses' lack of ability to speak elo-

quently, or freely, was a constant, though unnecessary, source of embarrassment to him (see Ex. 6:12). His objection to perform the duty given him by Yahweh on that account, was effectively set aside by Yahweh's rebuke of v. 11. It could have been that Moses suffered from an impediment of speech, even though Stephen claimed that he was "mighty in words" (Acts 7:22). A man can be "mighty in words" though hesitant in speech. Paul's critics said of him that "his speech is contemptible" (2Cor. 10:10), but God said to him: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for strength is made perfect in weakness" (2Cor. 12:9). When a man of faith attempts to accomplish something for God beyond his normal ability, it is evident that he is motivated by something greater than flesh, and Yahweh can be glorified in his work.

"I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" — The Hebrew indicates "heavy" of speech and of tongue. Moses may have had an actual impediment in his speech, but if so, it did not necessarily have to impair the effectiveness of the labor set him. The very silence of a man of God can be eloquent (see Eze. 3:26-27; Jn. 19:9-10).

VERSE 11

"And Yahweh said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth?" — Moses

was reminded that he is not expected to visit the people in his own strength, wisdom, or ability, but in complete reliance upon Yahweh. The apostles, being granted the Holy Spirit, were given the same instructions (Luke 21:15). Even the Lord was not to rely upon worldly wisdom, but was given a commandment, "what he should say, and what he should speak" (John 12:49; 7:16). In Christ, a person is commended if he is "swift to hear, slow to speak" (James 1:19).

"Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I Yahweh?" — The verb "maketh" is *siym* in Hebrew, and signifies "to put, to appoint" as well as "to make." The greatest lesson for all to learn is that even extremely difficult things are not impossible with God. He made the faculties, and can also use them. If a man has a natural gift, let him use it to the glory of the Giver that "God in all things may be glorified" (1Pet. 4:10-11).

VERSE 12

"Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" — Moses was thus taught a lesson that other men of God had to learn, namely that the words they use in His service and the effectiveness of what they proclaim and do is dependent upon His blessing. See Isa. 50:5; Jer. 1:9; Mark 13:11. The verb "I will be" is *ehyeh*, the root verb of the divine Name. Yahweh thus promised Moses that He would manifest Himself in the effectiveness of what he would proclaim, as well as in the message itself — both in his mouth and his teaching.

VERSE 13

"And he said, O my Lord" — As in v. 10, the *Sopherim* have changed the Name from *Yahweh* to *Adonai*. Why should they have done so? Perhaps to express the fact that Moses was actually speaking to an angel, Yahweh's representative or similitude (Num. 12:8), and not to the Father personally. However, the angel acts with the authority of the Deity, and in His Name (Exo. 23:21).

"Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send" — The number of words in this statement that are expressed in italics in the AV indicates some uncertainty as to the meaning of the original text. The margin adds to this uncertainty by providing a further suggestion, "Send by the hand of him whom Thou shouldest send." The Hebrew *shelach na beyad tishlach* signifies "send now by the hand Thou wilt send." The statement is an appeal to Yahweh to send immediately the promised Seed of the woman.

The name of Yahweh, *He Who Will Be*, is prophetic of the divine intention to send a saviour to redeem His people. Having heard that Name pronounced, and being reluctant himself to return to Egypt, Moses prays that Yahweh will send the One whom He promised He "will send." He therefore attempted to avoid his own responsibility by requesting an alteration of the divine purpose in the immediate appearance of the one promised. However, Yahweh had provided a set time for the first advent of the Lord (Gal. 4:4), as there is for his second coming, and would not change that determination.

Aaron Appointed As Spokesman — vv. 14-17.

Moses' reluctance arouses Yahweh's anger. He appoints Aaron to share the leadership with his brother, though Moses is still to retain the pre-eminence. These arrangements are apparently accepted by Moses as being adequate, for he makes no further objection to the mission set before him.

VERSE 14

"And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Moses" — The words *anger* and *angry* are found 258 times in the O.T. and 16 in the N.T. Over 200 of these passages refer to God being angry at men. It is not God's nature to be angry without just cause. He is by nature 'slow to anger' (Neh. 9:17; Psa. 103:9; 145:8), and His anger lasts but for a moment (Psa. 30:5; 103:9). Under certain circumstances,

therefore, anger is a divine characteristic. The Lord Jesus manifested it when conditions warranted (Mark 3:5).

However, the anger of the Father and that of the Son was controlled; that of the mortals is not always so, and therefore can lead to sin. Paul exhorted: "Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26).

In regard to Moses, the context of the verse before us suggests that Yahweh's anger was kindled against him because of the excuse advanced in v. 10, and not because of any lack of ability on Moses' part, nor because of his appeal for the coming of the One promised (v. 13), for in providing Aaron, the angel declared: "I know that he can speak well." Meanwhile, Moses' petition for the coming of the Promised One still stands, and with the coming of the Lord Jesus will be completely answered.

"And He said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother?" — This is the first mention of Aaron in the Bible. The *The English and Hebrew Bible Students' Concordance* gives the meaning of his name as *A Shining Light*, or *Enlightened*, though this is uncertain.

Both Moses and Aaron typed the Lord Jesus Christ: the former as shepherd-leader, the latter as high priest. There is obvious reference to his future priestly office (even though he was not appointed to this position) in the title given him: *Aaron the Levite*. It also suggests a contrast to the Melchizedek order of priesthood to be set up by Messiah at his coming. Thus, instead of the coming of the antitypical Melchizedek Priest for whom Moses had prayed, Israel would be given the Aaronic priesthood. In regard to the general organization of the nation, it has been well said that among the mature males of Israel there were three classes presented before God: from the tribes of Israel came the *warriors*; from the tribe of Levi came the *workers*; and from the family of Aaron there came the *worshippers*.

"I know that he can speak well" — The literal Hebrew is emphatic: "speaking he can speak," that is, he is remarkably

fluent in speech.

"And, also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee" — Aaron had been instructed to meet Moses (v. 27). Many years later, in the days of Samuel, the message of God came to Eli: "Thus Yahweh has said, I revealed Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh. And I chose him out of all the tribes to be My priest..." (1Sam. 2:27-28, RSV). Evidently, about this time, in some way, Yahweh revealed Himself to Aaron, and sent him on a mission out of Egypt to seek his brother.

"And when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart" — After an absence of forty years, the knowledge that his illustrious brother was alive would rejoice the heart of Aaron.

But what message did he convey to Moses? Perhaps advice that the Pharaoh who had sought his life was dead. If so, there was a foreshadowing of Christ's experience as a babe; for when he was in Egypt the message came to Joseph that the one who sought the life of the child in his care was dead (Mat. 2:20).

Meanwhile, Israel, in dire extremity in Egypt, needed the presence of the one whom the people had despised forty years earlier, so an urgent appeal went forth for him to return.

VERSE 15

"And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth" — Moses was to instruct Aaron in what he should say, and Aaron was to express it in appropriate speech.

"And I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth" — As in v. 12, the verb "I will be," is *ehyeh*, the root of the divine name of *Yahweh*. In promising to be with Moses in the manner described in this verse, Yahweh defined the work of inspiration. He put words in the mouths of the prophets, endorsing their utterances, though leaving it to them to express them according to their own manner. The prophets were spokesmen for Yahweh, guided by His spirit to utter words to

instruct the people (Neh. 9:20).

In the case of Moses and Aaron, the more powerful and direct form of inspiration was to the former, whilst lesser measure was given to the latter. In this there seems a foreshadowing of the work of the Spirit with the Lord Jesus and his apostles. The Lord had the Spirit without measure (John 3:34), whereas it was given unto them in measure. Nevertheless, Yahweh was with the mouths of both. Christ declared: "The Father gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49; Deu. 18:18); and the apostles were taught, "I [Christ] will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Luke 21:15).

"And will teach you what ye shall do" — Thus foreshadowing the work of Christ in instructing the apostles.

"And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth" — See Ex. 7:1-2.

"And thou shalt be to him instead of God" — Moses was to retain his position as mediator and prophet. As such, he stood in the place of the Elohim to Aaron. His words would be words of God (see Ex. 7:1). Divine inspiration conferred an authority upon those who so spoke, so that they were to be accepted as God's representatives to the nation. See Psa. 82:6; John 10:34-35.

VERSE 17

"And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs" — The shepherd rod was to become the insignia of his office. He was to return as shepherd to lead the people out of Egypt, guiding them to the land of promise. This types the work of the Lord Jesus at both advents (Deu. 18:18; Jn. 10:11; Eze. 34:23-24). For the power manifested through the rod, see notes on v. 2.



This rod is also called "the rod of God" (v. 20), for Yahweh also is a Shepherd to Israel (Psa. 80:1). To take that rod in hand was to fully surrender unto Yahweh as to a Chief Shepherd (Psa. 23:4). At the same time it also would make evident His presence among them (v. 5) and the avenue through which His divine power would be demonstrated (v. 17).

Moses Commences His Return — vv. 18-23.

Obtaining the approval of Jethro, Moses commences his return to Egypt. He receives further instructions and assurances from Yahweh as he sets forth upon his mission.

VERSE 18

"And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law" — See note Ex. 3:1.

"And said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace" — Prudently, Moses refrained from disclosing his true mission. If it became known, Pharaoh would have been put on his guard, and might have moved to destroy Moses before his work commenced. Silence is sometimes a valuable aid to a successful mission (cp. Neh. 2:16).

VERSE 19

"And Yahweh said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt" — Midian was north of Sinai. Evidently Moses had returned to that area, to await a further call of Yahweh. He then proceeded to the mount to meet Aaron; thus this second commission revealed that the time was ripe for him to leave: information which had not previously been given him.

"For all the men are dead which sought thy

life” — This statement indicates that the Pharaoh of the oppression must have reigned for over forty years, the period of Moses’ absence in Midian. It confirms the identity of Rameses II as the Pharaoh, for, of the rulers of the period, only he continued for that long (see note, p. 12). See similar comments in Mat. 2:20 in regard to the family of Jesus, who waited in a foreign land until advised of the death of Herod.

VERSE 20

“And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass” — The Hebrew is *ha-chamor*, “the ass.” The ass was the only unclean animal whose first-born was redeemed. It was redeemed through the death of a lamb (Ex. 13:13) — a remarkable symbol of the redemption of Israel. Moses rode upon an ass: the Lord rode upon a colt and led the ass into the city of Jerusalem. In the type, the ass represents the Israel of old; the colt, the new Israel of God brought into being through the preaching of the gospel to Jew and Gentile. Moses rode upon the first into Egypt; Christ rode upon the colt and led the ass into Jerusalem — a remarkable type of the work of both of these great men of God. As to Moses’ sons at the time, Gershom has already been mentioned in Ex. 2:22, and Eliezer (ch. 18:4) was probably but an infant.

“And he returned to the land of Egypt” — The Hebrew *shuwb*, here rendered “returned,” signifies merely to “turn back,” and not necessarily to complete the journey. It could be rendered “set out to return.” His journey back was delayed by the intervention of the angel referred to later in this chapter.

“And Moses took the rod of God in his hand” — His normal shepherd’s rod is now referred to as the “rod of God” because it was a medium of outstanding miracles (vv. 2-4, 17, 20; 7:9, 20; 8:5, 16-17; 9:23; 10:13; 14:16; 17:5-9; Num. 20:11).

VERSE 21

“And Yahweh said unto Moses,

When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all these wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand” — The miracles wrought in Egypt, are called *mophethim*: “portents” (here rendered “wonders”), *othoth*: “signs” (cp. Ex. 4:9,17 etc.), and *nipheloth*: “marvels” (rendered “wonders” in Ex. 3:20; 15:11). *Mophethim* signifies something out of the ordinary course of nature, and corresponds in the NT to the Greek *teras*, “wonders,” such as in Acts 2:22, 43, etc.

It is a different word from that used in Ex. 3:20 where “All those wonders” include, not only the three signs of Ex. 4:3-9, but the whole series of miracles afterwards wrought in Egypt, referred to in ch. 3:20. Outstanding wonders, outside the ordinary course of nature were performed subsequently by Moses, indicating that he was the medium of a power greater than man’s.

“But I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go” — This is the first reference to the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart, a theme upon which Paul discourses in Romans 9.

Some foolishly claim that Yahweh deliberately and unreasonably hardened Pharaoh’s heart in such a way as to be Himself responsible for the king’s actions, unrighteously condemning the monarch for that which He made him do.

That was not the case. Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart by manifesting clemency toward him, in the circumstances which were brought about. As the sun melts the wax but hardens the clay, so Pharaoh revealed that he had a heart of clay that became hardened by the heat of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2). Thus, Pharaoh, being a very stubborn man, hardened his heart when Yahweh, in clemency, withdrew the plagues inflicted on the land. The plagues softened the heart of the king through fear, but it became hardened when they were withdrawn. Thus the Scriptures declare that Pharaoh hardened his own heart by being unresponsive to the divine mercy.

The word “hardened” in this place is

the Hebrew *chazaq*, which means "to strengthen, prevail, become strong; thus harden, and is found in Ex. 4:21; 7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:12, 35; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17. Two other words translated "hardened" are *qashah*, (meaning "to be dense, i.e., tough, severe, hard, cruel," found in Ex. 7:3; 13:15), and *kabed* ("to be heavy, i.e., difficult, burdensome, severe, stupid," found in Ex. 7:14; 8:15, 32; 9:7, 34; 10:1; 1Sam. 6:6).

The first word suggests that Pharaoh was encouraged to resist once the immediate danger had passed; the second word shows that he was by character stubborn, dense, hard and cruel; the third word reveals that his very stupidity caused him so to act. Yahweh "hardened his heart" only by manipulating circumstances that caused Pharaoh to react as he did because of his natural characteristics. In the verse before us, Yahweh declares that He would "harden" Pharaoh's heart, and the word *chazad* is used to signify that Pharaoh would be emboldened to resist by the danger being withdrawn.

Upon this important point, Brother Thomas comments in *Elpis Israel* (p. 267): "Pharaoh of Egypt is another illustration of this principle [*i.e. that nothing is left to the will of man*]. God purposed to show forth His power that His name might be declared throughout all the earth. This manifestation was not left to the wisdom or pleasure of Moses. The display was to be according to the divine will. The world was overspread with ignorance and superstition; and Pharaoh was the autocrat of the age. He was totally ignorant of who the Lord was, and therefore refused to obey Him. He was 'a vessel unto dishonour:' an idolater under the dominion of the propensities. Had he been left to himself, he would have continued like all other chiefs of the sin-power, 'a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction.' His tyranny had come to this crisis, namely, either the Israelites must be exterminated, or the oppressor and his power must be destroyed. The judgment in the case belonged to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; the result could not, there-

fore, be for a moment doubtful. He that has power over the clay, had appointed Israel to be 'a vessel unto honour,' upon whom it was His sovereign pleasure to have mercy. They were, therefore, 'vessels fitted for mercy,' whom He had before prepared, that on them He might make known the riches of His glory, both then and in a time to come. To effect their deliverance then; to punish Pharaoh and his abettors for their tyranny; and to make Himself known to the surrounding nations, He stirred up the Egyptian king to show all that was in his obdurate and relentless nature. Upon this view of the case, He elected Pharaoh and his host to a terrible overthrow; while He elected Israel to become His people in the land of Canaan. Thus 'He had mercy on whom He would have mercy, and whom He would He hardened' (Rom. 9:14-33)."

However, it should be recognised, that in acting upon this principle, Yahweh did not do so arbitrarily, but on the basis of His foreknowledge. He knew that, in spite of all their faults, Israel would constitute the best medium of the manifestation of His mercy to the world, and acted upon the basis of that knowledge. Pharaoh's obstinate refusal to act according to the request of Yahweh, brought prominently before mankind the demonstration of God's purpose with Israel, and resulted in others beside Israelites being saved. It attracted a "mixed multitude" who left Egypt when Israel departed (the faithful Caleb possibly being among this "mixed multitude"). These circumstances were an essential part in the conversion of Rahab and her family (Josh. 2:9-14), through whom came David and the Lord Jesus Christ (Mat. 1:5).

Thus Pharaoh's obduracy performed a useful part in the plan of salvation, that reaches down to our own times.

VERSE 22

"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Yahweh, Israel is My son, even My firstborn" — Israel enjoyed a special relationship to Yahweh, being not merely His national son, but His *firstborn*.

Thus when God told Abraham that He had constituted him a *father* of many nations, He spoke of many national sons; for a father implies sons. But who of this family of national sons is the firstborn son? Scripture declares that it is Israel (see *Elpis Israel*, p. 291).

Other national “sons” will be incorporated into the family of God at the return of Christ (see comments on Gen. 17:5).

Meanwhile, as Israel is constituted *firstborn*, which position included priestly responsibilities for the family, the channel of approach to Yahweh is through the hope of *Israel* (Acts 28:20; Eph. 2:11-12). In his preaching of the gospel, Paul taught that the “adoption” (or *sonship* as the word really signifies, indicating authority and maturity) still “pertains to Israel” (Rom. 9:4; Hos. 11:1; Jer. 31:9). Because of that fact, the Lord declared “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22).

VERSE 23

“And I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me” — There would be nothing unreasonable, nor confusing by Pharaoh on making this demand in the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel. The king would be familiar with the claim that a God can have a son, for the Pharaoh was considered as a son of the gods, and therefore, divine. However, the question remained as to who is more powerful: Yahweh, or the gods of Egypt?

“And if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn” — For the fulfilment of the threat, see Exodus 12:29. Moses did not utter it until all other arguments were exhausted, and he knew that he was having his last interview with the king (Ex. 10:29; 11:4-5).

In delaying his threat, and in all his dealings with Pharaoh, Moses carried out the special directions that he received from Yahweh after his return to Egypt. He was in constant communion with God (see Ex. 6:10; 7:8, 14, 19; 8:1, 5, 16, 20 etc.). Only the carrying out of the threat that alone caused Pharaoh to finally renege, and permit Israel to leave.

The Rite Of Circumcision Reconfirmed — vv. 24-26.

In preparation for the mission before him, Moses is disciplined and taught that Yahweh requires obedience of all that He requests. Though he obeys God, returning to Egypt, there is one serious matter of failure: he has omitted to circumcise his younger son. This dereliction of duty threatens the success of his mission. Moses is forcibly shown that whatever Yahweh commands must be properly carried out.

VERSE 24

“And it came to pass by the way in the inn” — This has been rendered: “On the way he tarried in a lodging place.” Though we are not told why Moses tarried, it does suggest that he was still unsure of himself in regard to his mission. Perhaps the realisation of his neglect to circumcise his son contributed to this.

“That Yahweh met him, and sought to kill him” — To kill whom? The son of Moses who had not been circumcised, and who was therefore under the sentence of death. Yahweh had warned Abraham of the consequences of such neglect: “The uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant” (Gen. 17:14). Moses was engaged in a mission that would result in the national circumcision of Egypt; how incongruous to do so when he had neglected to carry out the requirement of Yahweh in regard to his own family! The threat to his son revealed that he must scrupulously carry out every requirement of Yahweh if his mission is to succeed.

VERSE 25

“Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin” — For earlier reference to Zipporah, the wife of Moses, see note on Ex. 2:21. The fact that she took the lead in circumcising her son, suggests that she considered herself partly responsible for the neglect.

But why should such a man as Moses permit her action? Possibly there was no

real attempt to avoid the rite, for it may have been that Jethro and Zipporah had prevailed upon Moses to delay performing it until the son was thirteen years old in accordance with the Arab custom (Gen. 17:25). Be that as it may, Moses now had a graphic demonstration that if Yahweh's national firstborn was not freed, he would carry out His Word to slay the firstborn of Egypt.

For the important significance of the rite of circumcision, see comments on Gen. 17. In neglecting to circumcise his son, Moses exposed him to the risk of being *cut off* in death. Yahweh's insistence upon the rite also taught that His son, then in Egypt, must be nationally "circumcised" by entering into covenant with Him at Sinai: a covenant that demanded the denial, or cutting off, of flesh.

The Messianic Psalm 118:10 shows that there will ultimately be a national circumcision: "All nations compassed me about; but in the name of Yahweh surely I will make them be circumcised" (see *Rotherham*).

The "sharp stone" was evidently a stone knife such as was commonly used in Egypt for making the incisions necessary when bodies were embalmed. Joshua ordered the preparation of stone knives for the circumcision of those born in the wilderness (Josh. 5:2). Stone was considered less defiling than iron or steel (Ex. 20:25).

"Of her son" — Evidently the younger son of Moses (cp. v. 20 with v. 25) whose name was Eliezer, *God is My Help*.

"And cast it at his feet" — This should be rendered: "made it to touch his feet" (see Hebrew as in the margin). In so doing, Zipporah linked Moses with her action: she performed the rite because of him.

"And said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me" — The RV renders this: "a bridegroom of blood." Having become aware of the danger to her son through her own neglect, Zipporah performed the rite herself. She now believed herself allied to Yahweh through the covenant of circumci-

sion (Gen. 17:11). To her, Moses now took on a new relationship. He became *a bridegroom of blood*, through the blood of the covenant. She now considered herself united to him in the bonds of the covenant as well as those of matrimony.

By circumcision of this son, Zipporah was brought into covenant-relationship with her husband and with Yahweh: a foreshadowing of the effect of the "cutting off" of the Lord Jesus by which a believer is brought into association with the Lord and Yahweh.

In Arabic, the word for circumcision is a synonym for that of marriage.

VERSE 26

"So he let him go" — This is a reference to the "angel of Yahweh" who had belligerently opposed the progress of Moses and Zipporah. The *Septuagint* renders v. 24 as "The angel of the Lord met him."

"Then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision" — The RV renders: "a bridegroom of blood art thou." Zipporah recognised that she was more closely united to her husband through the bonds of the covenant she now fully endorsed, than formerly when only through marriage.

Moses And Aaron Meet — vv. 27-28.

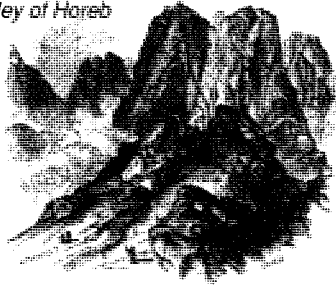
Moses returns his family to the care of Jethro until he will send for them (Ex. 18:2). Meanwhile Aaron makes his way into the wilderness and meets Moses. The two brothers confer in regard to the mission before them, thus establishing complete mutual confidence for the work appointed for each of them to do.

VERSE 27

"And Yahweh said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses" — Aaron would have been told more than this, but Yahweh's instruction is here merely summarised.

"And he went, and met him in the mount of God" — "The mount of God" is a title given to Horeb, as distinct from that given to Sinai. The two mountains are

Valley of Horeb



separated by a distance of about five kilometres (3 mls) on a plateau. Scripture is careful to specify the particular use that Yahweh made of each site.

“And kissed him” — An act of affection indicating the great pleasure experienced at the meeting. Eastern men are more demonstrative than those in Western communities. The kiss is the common form of greeting among Arabs to this day.

VERSE 28

“And Moses told Aaron all the words of Yahweh who had sent him” — Aaron was carefully instructed in all that Yahweh intended to do, and thus was better equipped to assist his brother, whom he recognised as one appointed and sent of God, as was the Lord Jesus (see John 3:2; Heb. 3:1).

“And all the signs which He had commanded him” — The signs authenticated the words and gave them added power.

The People Are Convinced — vv. 29-31.

Back in Egypt, the brothers report the intentions of Yahweh to the people. The signs Moses performs convince them that Yahweh had revealed Himself to him. The oppressed Hebrews are filled with joy to learn that their prayers to heaven have been heard, and, in anticipation of their early deliverance, they worship Yahweh in gratitude and thanksgiving.

VERSE 29

“And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel” — Though the chil-

dren of Israel were in bondage to the Egyptians, they had their own internal organisation that maintained their separateness as a group from the powerful nation in which they dwelt. Now, Moses and Aaron gather the appointed elders of the nation together as instructed by Yahweh (Ex. 3:16).

VERSE 30

“And Aaron spake all the words which Yahweh had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people” — The power of performing these miraculous signs was thus conferred on Aaron as well, demonstrating that Yahweh approved the delegation of duties to him.

The fact that these “signs” were performed in the “sight of the people,” shows that two meetings were called: first, one for the elders to whom the mission of the two brethren was disclosed; second, a meeting for the people generally, to show them the signs authenticating the position of Aaron and Moses as men “sent of God.”

VERSE 31

“And the people believed” — Humbled by reverses, and humiliated by slavery, the people were more ready to accept the teaching of Yahweh.

“And when they heard that Yahweh had visited the children of Israel” — This is a key verse in this section of *Exodus* (see the introductory *Analysis*, p. 23). It links with the statement of ch. 3:16 (“I have surely visited you”) and that of Acts 15:14 (“God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name”).

According to Gesenius the Hebrew term *paqad*, implies more than merely to



visit, and includes the idea of visiting in order to enquire into the state of a person, with the idea of punishing or helping. A cognate word is translated: *The Day of Visitation*, and is related to those times when Yahweh gave close inspection to His people to ascertain what should be done in regard to them (see Isa. 10:3; Jer. 8:12; 10:15; 11:23; Luke 19:44, etc.).

“And that He had looked upon their affliction” — This additional clause gives added point and emphasis to the significance of the word *paqad*.

“Then they bowed their heads and worshipped” — In their joy that Yahweh had heeded their prayer for help, they

humbled themselves before Him.

The word “bowed” is *qadad* and signifies “to shrivel up.” The Jewish custom was to bend the body so that every joint of the backbone became incurved, and the head was bent towards the knees in such a way that the body resembled a bow.

By so doing, the people felt in every part of the body the feelings they tried to express in prayer. They did not try to “stand comfortably” whilst engaged in such worship.

A similar expression is used in Gen. 24:26 which records the gratitude of Eliezer toward God for the success of his mission in obtaining a bride for Isaac.

EXODUS CHAPTER FIVE

PHARAOH REJECTS MOSES' MISSION

This chapter records the first visit of Moses to Pharaoh. The children of Israel await the outcome with excitement. Knowing that Yahweh has promised to help them, they expect their deliverance to be swift and easy. But, as Moses has been warned, the reverse proves to be the case. Instead of relief from their burdens they find them increased. Accusing them of idleness, Pharaoh orders that they now gather the straw as well as make the bricks. In disappointment they turn on Moses and blame him as the cause of their increasing problems. In turn, he takes the complaint to Yahweh in prayer.

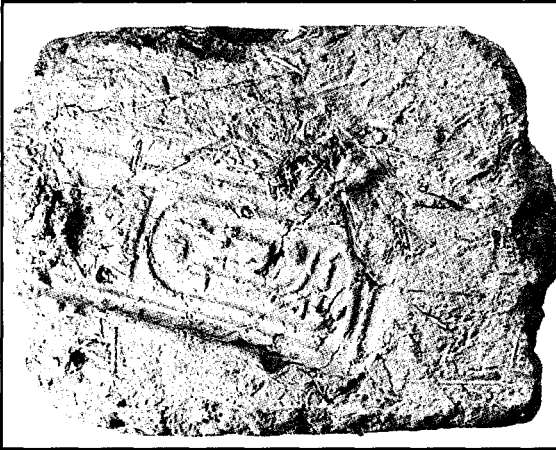
Moses Interviews Pharaoh — vv. 1-4.

The time has arrived when the real test must be made. Moses and Aaron are equipped for it, and instructed in what to do. It is an exciting time. The people appear ready to follow Yahweh, and to seek freedom in the land of promise from the servitude of Egypt. It is time to confront the tyrant Pharaoh. In the name of Yahweh, Moses seeks permission for the people to hold a religious feast in the wilderness; but his request is rejected out of hand.

VERSE 1

“And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith Yahweh God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness” — The name of the Pharaoh who succeeded Rameses II was *Merneptah*, a weak, self-opinionated prince. His reaction to Moses' demand as recorded in this chapter, is in true accord with his character as indicated in historical records.

The request to hold a religious festival



A typical Egyptian building brick is stamped with the royal seal of Pharaoh *Rameses ii* and has clearly visible pieces of straw embedded in it as a binding material. To make these bricks, slaves first moistened muddy Nile Delta clay with water brought to the building site in large pottery jugs. The clay was then trampled to the proper consistency, and shaped into bricks by wooden molds. When partly dry, the bricks were removed from the moulds and arranged in stacks for final drying in the sun.

in the wilderness was a reasonable one, particularly in view of the explanation given by Moses in Ex. 8:26, yet it was rejected by the king. During the course of the negotiations, Moses made the same request seven times (Ex. 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3). Seven is the covenant number, and Yahweh had covenanted to deliver His people. Notice the basis of Yahweh's demand on Pharaoh: "I have remembered My covenant" (Ex. 6:5).

VERSE 2

"And Pharaoh said, Who is Yahweh, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" — This was the reaction of flesh to the grand proclamation of the Memorial Name. That Name became the ground of antagonism between those called by it (Acts 15:14) and the world at large.

The attempt to manifest the qualities of that Name (Ex. 34:6-7) effectively separates a true Israelite from the world at large.

Pharaoh's answer, therefore, is understandable, though not justified. He knew of many gods, but nothing of Yahweh, and contemptuously repudiated His authority to demand or command.

"I know not Yahweh, neither will I let Israel go" — Pharaoh disclaims any knowledge of Yahweh, but declares that

even if he did, he would refuse to let Israel go.

His use of the term *Israel* shows that it had become a national title for the people. It is also significant that the name *Israel* appears on the stele of Merneptah, and is the only reference to God's people found on the ancient Egyptian monuments. The stele, which claims that "Israel is destroyed" is today in the Cairo Museum.

VERSE 3

"And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us" — This statement was in explanation of the Name of *Yahweh* in v. 2. The title *Elohim* was used generally for "God," whether pagan or otherwise. But the term "God of the Hebrews" signifies "God of the Separated Ones," and sets both the people and their God apart from Egypt. In delivering this message to Pharaoh, Aaron (being spokesman for the brothers), expressed Yahweh's request in the very language He had instructed them to use (see Ex. 3:18). In claiming that God had "met with them," Aaron set forth a special divine manifestation and revelation to them. In doing so, they used language that was quite familiar to Pharaoh, for he, too, claimed revelations from the gods.

"Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice

unto Yahweh our God” — Three is the number of completion in Bible numerics, of new life. It was on the third day that life appeared for the first time upon the earth (Gen. 1:11-13).

“Lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword” — The reference to the sword suggests war, and therefore invasion. As Goshen was on the northern border of Egypt, the Israelites would be the first to be attacked in the event of any invasion from that direction. Aaron’s claim indicated that Egypt would be adversely affected if Pharaoh did not grant the request of the brothers. It was a challenge to the monarch’s status and pride, and he reacted accordingly.

VERSE 4

“And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? Get you unto your burdens” — Pharaoh rejected the request out of hand, and threatened the two leaders of his slaves with punishment. Basically his answer was: “What right have you to interfere in my affairs and in my conduct of the nation?” He then ordered both leaders and people to busy themselves with their labours.

Pharaoh Increases Israel’s Workload — vv. 5-9.

Concerned with the increase in the number of the children of Israel and inter-

preting their demand as an indication of their growing power and rebellion, Pharaoh decrees even more repressive measures.

VERSE 5

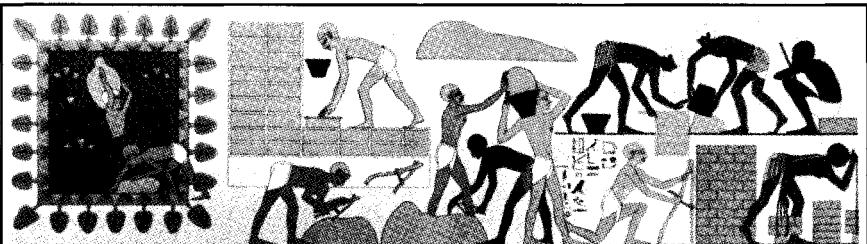
“And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens” — The population explosion among the Israelites was causing secret fear to the rulers of Egypt. They were concerned that if an enemy invaded the land, the invaders might well receive help from the Israelites (Ex. 1:9-10).

Aaron’s reference to “the sword” evidently increased the concern. Merneptah’s fears of invasion were far from groundless, for a large force of Libyans invaded Egypt during his reign.

VERSE 6

“And Pharaoh commanded the same day” — Pharaoh lost no time in his determination to crush any insurrection. Therefore, by heavy labour, he sought to prevent the children of Israel convening meetings in order to agitate against the government. Perhaps the reason why he did not further restrain Moses and Aaron as the leaders of the people was fear of a revolt. He recognised that their followers were “many,” and did not want to goad them to the point of rising against him in rebellion.

“The taskmasters of the people” —



Egyptian Brickmakers and Brickmaking.

From Left: Carrying water and preparing the site; obtaining water from a tank supply; digging and transporting clay; stacking moulded bricks; man laden with prepared clay; builders at work.

The Hebrew word is *nogeshim* and signifies *exactors* or *oppressors*. It is a different word from that used in Ex. 1:11. The "taskmasters" referred to there probably were general superintendents, comparatively few in number, and of high rank. The *nogeshim* were more numerous, and were inferior in status.

"And their officers" — The word *shoterim* signifies *scribes*. They were Hebrews employed to keep tally of the number of bricks made. They were beaten when the total fell below that required. See v. 14.

VERSE 7

"Saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore" — This was a further restriction, making the task of the Israelites more difficult.

Some writers have commented: "The manufacture of bricks gave employment to a great number of slaves and others, for almost every building in Egypt, with the exception of the temple, which was of stone, was made of unbaked bricks. The muddy soil of Egypt was particularly suitable for brickmaking, for it was free from stones and could be easily mixed with water and kneaded with the hands into a paste of the necessary consistence. A mass of paste was thrust into a wooden mould of the size of the brick required and the top of it smoothed with a flat stick, and when the brick was dry enough to take out of the mould it was laid in a row with others on the ground to dry in the sun; in a day or two it was ready for use. Bricks varied in size from 10 to 15 inches in length, from 4½ to 7½ inches in width, and from 5 to 6 inches in thickness" (E. A. Budge, *The Dwellers On The Nile*, p. 119).

"The making of bricks in ancient Egypt was a process which involved breaking up the Nile mud with mattocks, moistening it with sand and chopped straw. After that it was formed in moulds and taken out and baked in the sun. Among the makers and layers of bricks pictured in Rekmire's tomb are Asiatic foreigners, and the accompanying inscrip-

tion refers to the 'captives brought by his majesty for the works of the temple of Amun.' The bricklayers are quoted as saying, 'He supplies us with bread, beer, and every good sort,' while the taskmasters say to the builders, 'The rod is in my hand; be not idle.'" (From *Light From The Ancient Past*, p. 100). Brickmaking, therefore, was considered labour for slaves.

"Let them go and gather straw for themselves" — Previously the straw which the Hebrew slaves mixed with the clay was brought to the brickfields. Now they had to gather it for themselves. This required a greater number of workmen, for they had to scatter over the harvest fields to gather the straw in order to bring it to the brickfields.

VERSE 8

"And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them" — The term *tales* signifies *total*, or *number*.

"Ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle" — The *Amplified Bible* renders "idle" as "lazy."

"Therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God" — Pharaoh claims that the reason Moses and Aaron had given for leave of absence was false. He did not believe that Yahweh had met with them, and in view of his fear of an uprising, he was determined to break the spirit of the people.

VERSE 9

"Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein" — The margin supplies the Hebrew: "Let the work be heavy upon the men." Pharaoh was determined to wear the people out with toil. He saw that the Israelites still had some leisure, for they were able to find time to cultivate their fields (Deu. 11:10). He therefore increased their labour. Actually, whilst denying the Israelites the right to worship as they desired, and increasing their toil, Pharaoh looked after their material needs very well. Later, they recalled the tasty food they had enjoyed in Egypt, and hankered after it

(Num. 11:5). In a very shrewd manner, whilst denying the people the privilege of true worship, Pharaoh devised a policy that supplied them with material wants, and filled their time with activity. The modern world repeats the policy of Pharaoh. It supplies all material wants to those who are prepared to give their time entirely to its service, whilst discouraging spiritual development. Unfortunately, spiritual Israelites today, like Israel in Egypt, all too often succumb to the pressures brought to bear upon them in that way.

“And let them not regard vain words” — The expression “*vain words*” describes words without any truth or substance in them. The R.V. renders it as “*lying words.*” Pharaoh did not accept that Yahweh had manifested Himself to Moses; he rejected Moses’ claim that a revelation of the divine purpose had been given him.

In like manner flesh frequently deprecates the wisdom of God, and spurns the requirements of His Word. In advising, “*Let them not regard vain words,*” Pharaoh recommended that the people cease attending meetings convened by any “*agitators;*” that is, religious meetings organised by Moses and Aaron.

Israel’s Miseries Increase — vv. 10-14.

Pharaoh’s orders are carried out by the taskmasters. The Israelites are scattered over the land to gather in the straw; and are pressed on by their overseers who are anxious to maintain their own position. When the manufacture of bricks falls in number, the officers are beaten, and the miseries of the people are increased. It appears as if Moses has completely failed in his attempt to deliver the people.

VERSE 10

“And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw” — They left the palace where they had been summoned to hear Pharaoh’s decree, and were compelled to collaborate in his ini-

quitous demands upon the people (cp. Pro. 29:12).

VERSE 11

“Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it; yet not ought of your work shall be diminished” — Straw could be obtained from the harvest fields after reaping. Corn and grass were so plentiful through the flooding of the Nile, that straw was not required for fodder. But though straw was plentiful, the gathering of it exacted a greater toll of time and labor by a people already under oppression, and required to fulfil extreme exactions. Expecting deliverance through the intervention of Moses, the people were dismayed at this ruthless demand for more work.

VERSE 12

“So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw” — “*Straw*” is *teben* in Hebrew, and signifies “*chopped straw.*” Previously this had been provided for the people, but now they had to gather the long stalks of stubble, and chop them up themselves. The stubble was plentiful enough, but gathering it and chopping it into small parts so as to mix with the clay, involved additional long labour.

VERSE 13

“And the taskmasters hastened them” — The word *uwts* rendered “*hasted*” signifies “*to press.*” The RV has “*were urgent.*” The taskmasters kept at the people, urging them on, subjecting them to extreme pressure, wearing them out by ceaseless demands.

“Saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw” — The people were set an impossible quota to fulfil, whilst the taskmasters, fearful of their own position, kept hounding them to complete their scheduled quotas.

VERSE 14

“And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh’s taskmasters

had set over them” — See comment in v.6 to the Hebrew “officers.”

“Were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick” — The officers received a severe punishment. The common method of beating in Egypt was by the *bastinado*. The victim lay on the ground face down with his legs drawn up, and was beaten on the soles of his feet. This sometimes crippled him for life.

“Both yesterday and today, as heretofore?” — The expression “yesterday and today” is a Hebrew idiom for “recently.”

Pharaoh Refuses To Relieve The Burdens — vv. 15-19.

An appeal is made by the officers to Pharaoh to relieve the people, on the grounds that some mistake has occurred, as they feel sure that Pharaoh would not make such impossible demands. But any optimistic notions they may have had regarding his mercy, are soon dispelled, for he orders them to fulfil their quota of bricks, and pre-emptorily dismisses them.

VERSE 15

“Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?” — Smarting under a feeling of injustice, believing that they had an excellent case to present to the ruler of Egypt, and perhaps having appealed to the taskmasters in vain, they now bypass them and make a direct approach to Pharaoh.

VERSE 16

“There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick” — They claimed that the fault was with the Egyptian overseers controlling them, and whom they accused of acting tyrannically. The Hebrew is in the present continuous tense: “they are saying” that is, “they keep saying.” Thus: “the overseers are constantly pressuring us to do the impossible.”

“And, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own

people” — They are convinced that a mistake has been made, and that Pharaoh will treat their reasonable request with proper consideration.

The word for “fault” is *chataoth*, a plural word which signifies to “miss the mark,” and is frequently rendered “sin” (see its usage in Jud. 20:16, where the word is translated “miss”). They advise Pharaoh that his taskmasters are guilty of extreme injustice towards them by the unreasonable demands made, and that they were sinning in so doing. This was a hint to Pharaoh that the tyrannical conduct of the overseers constituted a sin that might call down the punishment of heaven on the nation. Pharaoh’s answer shows that he was impervious to the point made, and reacted sarcastically to the complaint.

VERSE 17

“But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to Yahweh” — The king could hardly claim that the people were idle, nor did he say that. The *Amplified Bible* renders his words as “You are lazy.” Pharaoh mocked at the overworked people, rejecting again their claim that they had been given a revelation from their God. He pretended that they had time to spare and thus sought opportunity to “do sacrifice.” He thus condemned their religion for causing “laziness.”

VERSE 18

“Go therefore now, and work, for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks” — Pharaoh’s statement clearly showed the Israelites that if there was sin in the demands of the taskmasters, he was the author of it!

VERSE 19

“And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task” — They recognised that they could expect no justice from Pharaoh; he was determined to humiliate them, and ulti-

mately to exterminate them as a people. There was only One to whom they could really appeal (see Deu. 32:36; Ecc. 5:8), but in the extremity of their position, they overlooked this. *Berkeley* renders "evil case" as "grave trouble."

Moses Blamed By The People, Pleads for Yahweh's Help — vv. 20-23.

Having failed in their appeal to Pharaoh, the Hebrew officers blame Moses and Aaron for the grave trouble in which they now find themselves. Typically, Moses turns to Yahweh, seeking His help and direction in the troubles now afflicting both him and the people.

VERSE 20

"And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh" — The literal Hebrew renders this: "Moses and Aaron standing to meet them at their going out" (*A New-Old Testament*). It was not by accident, but by design, that the Jewish officers met the two brothers as they left the palace of Pharaoh. Knowing of the approach being made to the king, Moses and Aaron had come to the palace to await the result of the officers' appeal.

VERSE 21

"And they said unto them, Yahweh look upon you and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh" — In their disappointment, irritation, and lack of faith, the officers call upon Yahweh to punish Moses and Aaron for the evil they allegedly had brought upon the people. The Hebrew (see margin) states that they claimed that Moses had made them "to stink" in the nostrils of the king, signifying that he could not bear their presence near him.

"And in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us" — By "a sword," they meant a pretext in order to bring them to ruin. Thus the people commenced to complain.

This is the first of twelve such complaints, and this characteristic became an

element in the subsequent failure of the people to manifest the divine quality of patience (Exo. 5:21; 14:10; 15:24; 16:2; 17:2; 32:1; Num. 11:1; 11:4; 14:1; 16:41; 20:2; 21:5).

VERSE 22

"And Moses returned unto Yahweh" — The Hebrew expression *shuwb* does not necessarily mean to return, as though Moses had deserted Yahweh, but also signifies "to turn to," or "to retreat to." He turned to the shelter of Yahweh, recognising that "the name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Pro. 18:10).

"And said, Yahweh" — See note Ex. 4:10.

"Wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me?" — The increasing miseries of the people deeply grieved Moses who was very sensitive to their sufferings. Yahweh had warned him not to expect success at once (Ex. 3:19; 4:21), but Moses had not anticipated that there would be such increase of suffering. He did not lack faith, but desired to know more of Yahweh's reason for permitting such wretchedness to come upon the people.

Eleven times Moses questioned the purpose of God in that way — see Ex. 3:13; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:22; 6:12, 30; 17:4; Num. 11:10, 12. Yahweh's design in delaying the deliverance of the people was that He might make Himself an everlasting name (Isa. 63:11-12), that Israel, Egypt and the whole world might appreciate His purpose with His people (Ex. 3:15; 9:14; 15:2; Josh. 2:11).

Adversity brought the Jewish community into a proper state of humility, which provided a basis for the development in them of characteristics such as Yahweh desired to see revealed.

VERSE 23

"For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all" — Moses could not

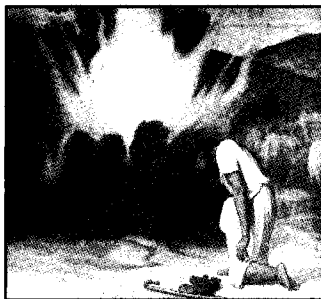
understand that the longsuffering delay of Yahweh provided time to repent and be saved (see 2Pet. 3:15, and also Isa. 26:29; Heb. 10:36; 12:5-11).

Yahweh provided Moses with an answer, as recorded in the next chapter.

He is not displeased when His servants turn to Him for further information.

While faith is growing, it will also have its setbacks. Yahweh often brings a person low before He shows His strong arm, and then elevates him.

(3) VISITATION ACCOMPLISHED Chapters 6:1 — 10:29



The set time having arrived for the deliverance of the people, Yahweh proclaims His intention to do so. He again commissions Moses to undertake this labour, and confers upon him divine authority to conduct negotiations with Pharaoh. Accordingly Moses seeks an audience with the monarch, and demonstrates his credentials to speak on God's behalf by performing dramatic miracles. But Pharaoh's magicians imitate the miracles of Moses, so that the king's heart is hardened, and he refuses to let the people leave. He remains stubborn even though the magicians are ultimately thwarted in their contest with Moses. Thus, through the obstinacy of its foolish ruler, Egypt suffers nine great and terrible plagues as the result of divine visitation. But Pharaoh remains obdurate, until the final great and dreadful plague, when, at last, he capitulates.

EXODUS CHAPTER SIX

YAHWEH'S NAME AND COVENANT PROCLAIMED

This chapter records Yahweh's answer to Moses' prayer (ch. 5:22-23). He announces that the time has come for the manifestation of His Name, and the vindication of His promise to deliver the nation. Moses proclaims Yahweh's answer to the people, but they are so discouraged by their problems and miseries that they do not heed. The genealogy of Moses is recorded, and Yahweh's important commission to him renewed.

Yahweh Proclaims His Intentions To Deliver The People — vv. 1-8.

Despite the disappointment of the people, and the complaints of Moses, God reveals that He has not forsaken them. He reminds Moses of the Covenant Name, and proclaims that the time has come for its significance to be revealed in action.

VERSE 1

“Then Yahweh said unto Moses” —

It is significant to note the time indicated by the opening word “then.” It was at a period when Israel had given up in despair; when even Moses had questioned God (Ex. 5:19-23). This situation is typical of a future “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:3-6) when Israel will despair of relief (Eze. 37:11), but out of which there again shall be deliverance by the hand of the redeemer Yahweh provides, and who bears His Name (Jer. 30:7).

“Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh” — Yahweh calmed the agitation of Moses by renewing the promise of redemption. The title *Pharaoh* claimed divine power for the king. It signifies *The Gift of the Ra*, rendered by some as *The Servant of the Sun*, or, *The Child of the Sun*. *Ra* was the sun-god of Egypt. It was against this pagan claim of divine authority that Yahweh was about to vindicate His power.

“For with a strong hand shall he let them go” — The word for “hand” is *yad* and denotes the open, pointing hand. It is symbolic of power, guidance and direction. Pharaoh would be caused to act in such a way as to urge the people to leave Egypt.

“And with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land” — There would be some urgency in his decree, after Yahweh had brought His judgments to bear upon the land. Thus under extreme pressure, Pharaoh, himself, would “force” the people to leave. See Psa. 136:12; Isa. 63:12.

VERSE 2

“And God said unto him, I am Yahweh” — The divine Name is used four

times in this declaration of deliverance (see vv. 2, 6-8). As the covenant Name of God, it emphasizes that aspect of the divine revelation (cp. v.4), providing assurance of success for Moses in his mission. That name would later be represented in the four ensigns of the camp of Israel, indicating the divine principle of salvation by which the nation was established (Num. 2). It would ultimately be revealed in the character and life of the “Word made flesh” in his perfect manifestation of the Yahweh-Name (Jn. 17:6).

VERSE 3

“And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty” — See note, Gen. 17:1.

“But by My name Yahweh was I not known to them” — The use of “Jehovah” as in the AV is quite unwarranted. It is a Gentile combination of Hebrew consonants and vowels in a way never intended by the Jews, and certainly not in the original text. The original text of Scripture supplied only consonants יהוה; the vowels were added between 600-800AD, the work of Masoretic scholars, notably at Tiberias in Palestine.

In a superstitious regard of the divine Name, Jewish scribes inserted the vowel points of *Adonai* or *Elohim* wherever these four consonants representing *Yahweh* (יהוה, YHWH) occurred. The eye read *Yahweh* but the voice proclaimed *Adonai* or *Elohim*, as the case might be.

There was no intention, originally, that the consonants and vowels should be combined as they are in *Jehovah*, and the Hebrews never used that form of the Name. The Jewish scribes intentionally wrote alien vowels, *not* for combination with the consonants or the name, but for the purpose of cautioning the Jewish reader to enunciate a totally different word, namely, some other familiar title of the Most High.

One final comment on the Name. In modern times with men, a name is merely a mark of difference or identification. Not so with God. A person’s relationship with

the One he worships will be governed by his knowledge of His Name, for the significance of the Name is designed to reveal God unto him. If God is known as *Annon*, the main idea will be that He is a mystery, a riddle; if it be *Shaddai*, that He is powerful; if *Mazda*, that He is wise and bountiful; if merely as *God*, that He is good, or *Lord*, that He is a monarch.

The various titles, as *El*, *Elohim*, *Adonai*, *Elyon*, set forth Yahweh's many and varied attributes and manifestations. His name *Yahweh*, therefore, pronounces that *He will become* manifested and revealed in sons and daughters of His choice. It proclaims that He desires worship of such a nature that His attributes and characteristics become revealed in those who bow before Him. His name, *Yahweh*, therefore, is both His covenant name and His family name. It announces that He is a God who "keepeth covenant and mercy for them who love Him and observe His commandments" (Neh. 1:5), as well as constituting them members of His family (Eph. 3:14-15).

The Lord Jesus both manifested and declared the Name of Yahweh to the apostles (John 17:6, 26) and taught them to pray: "Hallowed be *Thy Name*."

On the other hand, the false prophets of Israel, were indicted by Yahweh because, as He declared, their teaching caused the people to "*forget My name*" (Jer. 23:27). The Name of the Father must be treated with understanding and reverence.

VERSE 4

"And I have also established My covenant with them" — This was manifested to their fathers (cp. Gen. 15:18-21; 17:7-8; 26:3; 28:13).

"To give them the land of Canaan" — The men referred to were then dead, but the angel spoke as though they were living, upon which fact, Christ effectively argued the doctrine of bodily resurrection, claiming that "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living," adding "For all live unto Him" (Luke 20:37-38).

But upon what grounds can it be rea-

soned that dead men already live unto God? On the principle advanced in Romans 4:17, "God quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were." Yahweh can speak thus because of the certainty of accomplishment of those things He proposes to do.

"The land of their pilgrimage wherein they were strangers" — A pilgrim is a wanderer in a strange, or foreign land, who moves forward with an objective in mind. See note at Gen. 47:9. Whilst such a journey may subject the wanderer to many privations, he remains joyful in anticipation of accomplishing the purpose of his pilgrimage; hence the Psalmist exulted: "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage" (Psa. 119:54). All true saints (separated ones) are strangers and pilgrims in the earth (Heb. 11:13; 1Pet. 2:11).

VERSE 5

"And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage" — See Ex. 2:24; 3:9. Note the comment of the Psalmist (Psa. 106:44-45), and Yahweh's tender feelings for His people as expressed by Isaiah (ch. 63:9). Now, to Moses, God gives assurance that He will act on behalf of Israel. Moses had remonstrated with Him, but is reminded that Yahweh does not forget the needs of His own people, even though circumstances may appear to imply that He does (see Heb. 13:5-6).

"And I have remembered My covenant" — See Ex. 2:24.

VERSE 6

"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Yahweh" — This statement identified the Name with the covenant of divine manifestation and redemption of the seed of Abraham.

"And I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" — In this declaration made on the basis of the covenant confirmed with Abraham, the verb *I will* occurs seven times. This is appropriate, for, in biblical numerics,

Evidence Concerning the Pronunciation of the Memorial Name of Yahweh

Paul Haupt, General Editor of *The Polychrome Bible* states in an article on the Psalms, "The pronunciation *Jehovah* was unknown until 1520, when it was introduced by Galatinus; but was contested by Le Mercier, J. Drusius, and L. Capellus, as against grammatical and historical propriety." *Jehovah* therefore is merely a combination of the sacred *Tetragrammaton* [יהוה] and the vowels in the Hebrew word for Lord, *Adonai* [אדני], which the Jews substituted for YHWH because they shrank from pronouncing the Name, owing to a misconception of Ex. 20:7 and Lev. 24:16.

In *The Emphasised Bible*, Rotherham considers this matter at length in an introduction explaining why he restored *Yahweh* to the text of his translation. He declares that to give the Name *YHWH* the vowels of the word *Lord* (Heb. *Adonai*) and pronounce it *Jehovah*, is about as hybrid a combination as it would be to spell the name *Germany* with the vowels in the name *Portugal*, namely *Gormuna*.

He concludes: "From this we may gather that the Jewish scribes are not responsible for the 'hybrid' combination. They intentionally wrote alien vowels — *not* for combination with the sacred consonants, but for the purpose of cautioning the Jewish reader to enunciate a totally different word, namely, some other familiar name of the Most High." (p. 25).

The name *Yahweh* occurs some seven thousand times in the OT, but, apart from a few occasions, it has been suppressed and rendered by being printed as LORD or GOD. An example of this is found in Ezekiel 38:1-3. The word *Lord* occurs twice in this passage, but on the first occasion it is printed in small capitals (v. 1 = LORD), and on the second occasion, in the lower case (v. 3 = Lord).

Again, the word *God* is used twice in Eze. 37:27 and 38:3. On the first occasion it is printed in the lower case, and on the second occasion in small capitals. The latter [LORD] is to indicate that the original Hebrew word is *Yahweh*, and is identified wherever the words *Lord* or *God* are printed in small capitals [LORD, GOD].

How could the angel declare to Moses that the divine Name was unknown to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, seeing that it occurs frequently in Genesis? In our notes on Ex. 3:14 we pointed out that the name *Yahweh* is built up of the Hebrew verb *havah* הוה, denoting "to become." The verb was in common use among Hebrews, and as God had proclaimed His future purpose from the beginning, He might well be referred to as *He Who Will Become*, the basic meaning of *Yahweh*, and later so indicated by Moses in his records. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may well have applied such a title to Him without knowing that God intended this to become known as His memorial Name. This fact is shown by the refusal of the angel to disclose that Name to Jacob when he had enquired as to what it was (see Gen. 32:29).

The proclamation of the Name at the time of Moses, therefore, was a new and important development. It indicated that God was about to move on the behalf of His people in a way that would be an object lesson for all time, "unto all generations" (Ex. 3:15). His future intentions are indicated in the repetition of the declaration *I will* in context with the proclamation of the Name, and in setting forth His intentions on behalf of His people (v. 6), constituting them as His family (v. 7), and providing them with the heritage of Abraham (v. 8). After stating this, He proclaimed the formula: *I am Yahweh!*

The real significance of the Name is beautifully expounded in *Phanerosis* and *Eureka*. We add here a confirming comment from *The Emphasised Bible*:

"Men's names are throughout the Scriptures fraught with significance, enshrining historical incidents, biographical reminiscences, and so forth; and why should the

Name of the Ever-Blessed be an exception to this rule? Does not the Almighty Himself employ this Name of His as though it had in it some self-evident force and fitness to reveal His nature and unfold His ways? His Name is continually adduced by Himself as His reason for what He does and what He commands: 'For I am Yahweh.' Israel and the nations are placed under discipline, says the Divine Speaker, 'that they may know that I am Yahweh.' Is it not probable, then, that His Name was intended to be understood? Thus encouraged, we proceed, only requesting that the exposition which follows may be regarded as an individual opinion respectfully submitted:

"(a) The conclusion formed may be thus expressed: The name itself signifies, 'He who becometh;' and the formula by which that significance is sustained and which is rendered in the AV, 'I am that I am,' expresses the sense, 'I will become whatsoever I please'; or, as more exactly indicating the idiom involved, 'I will become whatsoever I may become.' We amplify the 'may,' and more freely suggest the natural latitude which the idiom claims, by saying: 'Whatsoever I will, may, or can become.'

"(b) The reasons for this conclusion are two: *First*, that it gives the simplest, most obvious, most direct force to the derivation of the Name itself, as generally admitted. Yahweh is almost always regarded as the third person, singular, masculine, imperfect tense, from the root *hawah*, an old form of the root *hayah*. The one meaning of *hawah* is 'become.' So that the force of *Yahweh* thus derived, as a verb, would be 'He will become'; or, as expressive of use and wont, 'He becometh.' Then, passing into use as a noun, it is: 'He who becometh,' 'The Becoming One.' That is precisely how any other Hebrew name would be formed and would yield up its inherent significance. Thus viewed, its human-like simplicity would be its great recommendation. If the Eternal would speak to man so as to be understood, we seem compelled to expect that He will speak after the manner of men. And if, after the manner of users, He pleases to make and bear a Name, it would seem the very perfection of condescension that His Name should be formed after the manner of men's names. *Second*, the sense of the formula given above is very simply and idiomatically obtained. The formula itself is *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, in which it should be noted that the verb *ehyeh*, 'I will become,' runs forward into a reduplication of itself; for it is that which constitutes the idiom. As a mere repetition, the assertion would be unmeaning. To escape this we must resort to mystery or imagination or — idiom. How, if the mystery itself is imaginary; and where is imagination to end? How is it to be reduced to any trusty significance? Would it not be more humble and childlike to be prepared to find that the All-wise and All-loving is simply addressing us in an idiom of our own? We have many such idiomatic formulas even in English: 'I will speak what I will speak,' and the like. Only after the manner of our tongue, we avoid the semblance of meaningless repetition by emphasising the auxiliary verb: 'I will speak what I *will* speak' — my mind is made up; or 'I will speak what I *can, may, must* speak' according to need and opportunity. Now, in Hebrew, the future (imperfect or incipient) tense (the one used here) is freely employed to express *mood*; in other words, to convey those nicer shades of thought which in English are conveyed by such helping words as 'will,' 'can,' 'may,' 'could,' 'would,' 'might,' 'must.' The only question is whether we can assure ourselves that we are not acting fancifully in resorting to that principle of interpretation in the important statement before us. Have we any examples of such an idiom finding place where, as in Ex. 3:14, a word is folded back upon itself? As a matter of fact, we have in the Old Testament at least three examples in which the recognition of this simple idiom brings out an excellent sense, and in which the Authorised Version leads the way (followed by the Revised) in so expressing the sense."

The three examples supplied by Rotherham are those of 1Sam. 23:13; 2Sam. 15:20; 2Kings 8:1. He then continues: "We thus gain all needful countenance for the

idiomatic explication of Ex. 3:14, 'I will become whatsoever I will — may — can — become.' The only difficulty is to suggest the suitable latitude, without multiplying words and without violating any known characteristic of the Speaker. Perhaps the best word on this momentous occasion is: 'what I please,' since we know that the divine resources are infinite, and that God will please to become to His people only what is wisest and best. Thus viewed, the formula becomes a most gracious promise; the divine capacity of adaptation to any circumstances, any difficulties, any necessities that may arise, becomes a veritable bank of faith to such as love God and keep His commandments. The formula is a promise, the promise is concentrated in a Name. The Name is at once a revelation, a memorial, a pledge. To this Name, God will ever be faithful; of it He will never be ashamed; by it He may ever be truthfully proclaimed and gratefully praised: 'This is My Name to times age-abiding, and this My Memorial to generation after generation' (Exo. 3:15)."

Seven is representative of the covenant (Heb. *sheva*).

Further: there is certainty expressed in this promise of Yahweh; it will be fulfilled. Therefore faith must take hold of that assurance in relation to divine promises, acknowledging that they will be fulfilled even though circumstances might suggest the opposite, or cause a delay in the performance.

The first act of Yahweh, in fulfilling His covenant as stated to Moses, was to *separate, take out, or deliver* His people from the burdens of the Egyptians. His seventh, and final act, was to *bring them into* the land (v. 8). Thus there was revealed a progressive development in what Yahweh declared He would accomplish on the behalf of the people of Israel, as there is in what He has, and will accomplish on the behalf of those who, today, seek Him through Christ (Acts 15:14).

Meanwhile, Christ invites those who are burdened with the bondage of spiritual Egypt, to come unto him for rest therefrom (Mat. 11:28).

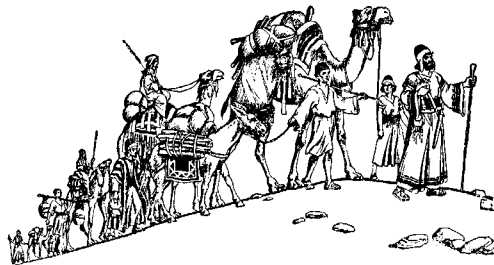
"And I will rid you out of their bondage" — The word "rid" is *natsal*, and signifies "to snatch away." It indicates a violent and dramatic action in order to rescue from a particular situation.

"Bondage" is better rendered "service." Based on the service of a slave, it declares that servitude to Egypt would be overcome by the redemptive work of God that He would achieve in Israel through Moses.

The call of Christ is the ultimate deliverance from the "service of sin" (Rom. 6:16-18) in order that the "service of righteousness" might be achieved.

"And I will redeem you" — "Redeem" is *ga'al*, to act as next of kin. The law required the next of kin to deliver his brother in time of need or trouble. Therefore, in declaring His intention to act in that way, Yahweh revealed that He would manifest Himself in one of Israel's own race in order to deliver the people from out of trouble. In this case, it was Moses (Ex. 7:1), who typically represented the Redeemer who would come. The law of the *Goel* taught that redemption would come to humanity through Yahweh manifesting Himself in flesh, thus becoming *next of kin or redeemer*, to those He would save.

"With a stretched out arm" — Expressive of one extending to help. According to Rawlinson, an outstretched arm in Egyptian hieroglyphics denoted *action*. This phrase, so common else-



where, is used in Ex. 3:20 for the first time as “stretched out hand.”

“And with great judgments” — These had been hinted at earlier to Moses (Ex. 3:20; 4:22), but had not been previously styled *judgments*. Nevertheless, such had been predicted to Abraham: “That nation whom they serve will I *judge*” (Gen. 15:14). The plagues of Egypt were not merely “wonders,” but punishments inflicted upon a proud and cruel nation by its righteous Judge.

VERSE 7

“And I will take you to Me for a people” — Yahweh will take Israel for His own people: a unique, exclusive privilege. Similar words are used for the ecclesia called out of Gentilism: “God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name” (Acts 15:14).

“And I will be to you a God” — The Hebrew text has: “I will be to you for Eloh^{im}”. This expresses a promise to develop *Eloh^{im}* out of the people that Yahweh had taken unto Himself.

Bro. Thomas comments in *Phanerosis*, p. 66: “There had been previous manifestations of spirit, and the then already-existent *Eloh^{im}* were its fruit. But now a new manifestation was predetermined — a manifestation of Eloh^{im}, or Sons of God, out of human flesh and spirit.”

“And ye shall know that I am Yahweh your God” — Moses and Israel knew the name of God was *Yahweh*, because it had been proclaimed to them. But as yet they did not understand its implications. They were to “know” it experimentally by the deliverance to be effected.

“Which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” — The only way the Name of Yahweh could be revealed thus to Israel was by separation from Egypt, and by bringing them out from under its burden. Separation remains the keynote of a person’s relationship to the Father to this day, for without such action, He will repudiate the claim of sonship (see 2Cor. 6:17-18). Therefore, though the Name of Yahweh had been

proclaimed to the people of Israel by Moses, and though they used it in addressing God, they did not *experimentally* “know” it, or experience it to its full significance, until they had left Egypt behind. Then they had seen openly demonstrated its real meaning, and acknowledged its power (Ex. 15:3, 6). Isaiah declared: “He led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make Himself an *everlasting name*” (Isa. 63:12).

VERSE 8

“And I will bring you in unto the land” — The purpose of Yahweh was not merely to separate the people from Egypt but also to bring them into the Promised Land. This is analogous to His present work among the Gentiles, in “taking out from the Gentiles a people *for His name*” (Acts 15:14). Mere separation does not complete the process. The people so influenced are drawn out of the world, that they may be constituted “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1Thes. 1:1). There are both negative and positive aspects to the divine call.

“Concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” — See Gen. 26:3, and note Paul’s comment in Heb. 6:13-18.

“And I will give it to you for an heritage” — The Hebrew *morashah* signifies “a possession.” The same word is used of the Law in Deu. 33:4. Thus Israel was given two heritages: the Law and the Land. The obedience to the former was necessary to obtain the latter.

“I am Yahweh” — Rather: “I Yahweh.” The emphasis is not intended to inform Moses of the divine Name, but to impress upon him, and upon Israel, that the guarantee of the fulfilment of the promises was to be found in the Name and nature of the One who had given them.

The name *Yahweh* signifies *He who will be*, and, therefore proclaims that the future will see the reality of that promised, or predicted in the Name. As the phrase “I am Pharaoh” (Gen. 41:44), is an assertion of royal authority and power, so the

proclamation of the divine Name, in such a context, is a declaration of intent, together with an indication of the power and ability to perform it.

Moses And The People Discouraged By Opposition — vv. 9-13.

Moses carries Yahweh's message to the people, but the severe opposition of Egypt has so crushed their spirit that mere words of promise are not sufficient any more to rouse them. Even Moses is discouraged. When commanded to seek an audience with Pharaoh, he again raises an objection, claiming that he lacks ability to do so.

VERSE 9

“And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel, but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage” — The word “anguish” is better rendered “impatience” (see mg.). The people were utterly crushed by disappointment, and paid no heed to fresh promises of redemption. Their oppressions made them short-tempered, a contrast to their previous belief and excited anticipations (Ex. 4:31). “Hope deferred makes the heart sick” (Pro. 13:12). The severe opposition caused them to lose all faith, hope, heart and spirit. Their apathetic indifference to God's promises also discouraged Moses.

VERSE 10

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses saying” — Despite the despondent, faithless attitude of the people, Yahweh proceeded to fulfil His purpose.

VERSE 11

“Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land” — Previously the bidding had been limited to a period of three days (Ex. 5:3); but now it is absolute, without limitation of time. In the transaction, Pharaoh types the power of sin, redemption from which is no easy task. Significantly, Paul, in his chapter upon the principle of baptism, likens sin to a

monarch that has dominion over flesh (Rom. 6:12-14), from whose reigning influence, believers must withdraw their allegiance and give it unto Christ. This way to redemption was foreshadowed by the Exodus from Egypt.

VERSE 12

“And Moses spake before Yahweh, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me?” — Moses claims that his failure to move the people of Israel by his message argued the failure of his mission before Pharaoh. If Israelites would not heed him, why should Pharaoh do so? His attitude reflected the despondency of the people.

“Who am of uncircumcised lips” — According to the Hebrew idiom, this denotes an imperfection of the lips which interferes with their efficiency. An uncircumcised ear is one that will not hear (Jer. 6:10); an uncircumcised heart is one that cannot comprehend (Lev. 26:41), and uncircumcised lips suggest hesitating or stammering speech (see Ex. 4:10).

VERSE 13

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt” — In answer to Moses' complaint, Yahweh drew Aaron into the scope of the charge (Ex. 4:14). “Charge” is from the Hebrew *tsavah* and signifies “to order, direct, or summon” a person to a task.

The transactions between Yahweh, Moses and the people, recorded in the early chapters of Exodus, reveal many serious challenges to faith:

[1] delays in God's promised action (ch. 5:22-23); [2] the crushed, despondent spirit of the people (ch. 6:9); [3] their lack of response to Moses' appeal (ch. 6:12); [4] the infirmities of the flesh (ch. 6:9).

Faith was weakened by dwelling too long on these problems. On the other hand, it could be strengthened by bringing into focus Yahweh's power (v. 1), name (v. 3), covenant (v. 4), response (v. 5),

promise (v. 6), relationship (v. 7), and assurance (v. 8).

Genealogy Of Aaron And Moses — vv. 14-27.

This genealogy, recorded against the background of the charge given to Moses and Aaron, illustrates the important principles of Rom. 9:11-12, that the divine call is by election through Yahweh's foreknowledge. Though Moses rose to such eminence as to become Israel's greatest son until the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Deu. 34:10-12), every point in the line of descent departs from that which would imply natural pre-eminence. Moses is not descended from Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, nor from Joseph, his most beloved son, but from Levi, the younger son of the two united in a curse (Gen. 49:5-7). Yet not even from the eldest branch of the tribe, but from Kohath, the second son. Again, Moses was not the natural firstborn of Amram, his father, but the younger of his two sons.

All this stresses the principle, emphasized by the Lord Jesus Christ, that "the flesh profiteth nothing," and that divine selection is not according to natural advantage. These important principles are revealed in the seemingly dry details of genealogical descent.

VERSE 14

"These be the heads of their fathers' houses" — Thus what follows is not a complete genealogy; only heads of families, or leaders of the people, are given, and not lists of entire families.

"The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel" — But see 1Chr. 5:1, and notes on Gen. 49:3.

"Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these be the families of Reuben" — See notes on Gen. 46:9.

VERSE 15

"And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon" — See notes Gen. 46:10.

VERSE 16

"And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari" — See notes Gen. 46:11.

"And the years of the life of Levi were an hundred and thirty and seven years" — This indicates the longevity of the Israelites at this time, accounting in part for their remarkable increase in numbers.

Levi was 43 years old at the migration, when he had already three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari (Gen. 46:11) but no daughter. From his birth to that of Moses are 178 years, which must be shared between Levi's age at the birth of Jochebed, and that of Jochebed at the birth of Moses. If Jochebed was 65 years old at the birth of Moses, Levi would have been 113, and she would have been born 70 years after the migration, and just before the death of Joseph.

Is it, then, at all probable that Levi had three sons and no daughter at 43, no son or daughter for 70 years, and one daughter at the close of that long interval? And this at a time of population explosion? All probability points to the other way: that both sons and daughters were born to him during the earlier part of those seventy years which are not recorded in the genealogy because it is confined to the "heads of houses" (v. 14). Their absence in the list is no objection, because the words of Jacob furnish a key to genealogical reckoning: "Thine issue, which thou begetteth after them... shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance" (Gen. 48:6).

Thus any later-born sons of Levi, and any sons-in-law from the household, who might marry elder sisters of Jochebed, would be ranked under one of the three "heads of the fathers of Levi" — Gershon, Kohath, and Merari — without being specifically named, and therefore would anonymously contribute to the numerous progeny attributed to a particular *house* in Israel.

We shall see that this answers a problem and a criticism that some have

advanced against the records of Exodus, and the genealogy of Moses in particular.

VERSE 17

“The sons of Gershon” — The line of Gershon, as the eldest, is taken first. Moses and Aaron are descended from the second son. Again we emphasize that the genealogical record is concerned only with “heads of father’s houses,” not in recording all the descendants of such.

“Libni” — Sig. *White*.

“And Shimi, according to their families” — Similar to Shinei, signifying *Renowned*.

VERSE 18

“And the sons of Kohath” — See note Gen. 46:11.

“Amram” — Sig. *High People*.

“And Izhar” — Sig. *Anointing*.

“And Hebron” — Sig. *Uniting, or Fellowship*.

“And Uzziel” — Sig. *My Strength is God (El)*.

“And the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years.” — See note, v. 16.

VERSE 19

“And the sons of Merari” — See Gen. 46:11.

“Mahali” — Sig. *Weak, Sickly*.

“And Mushi” — Sig. *Sensitive*.

“These are the families of Levi according to their generations” — See Gen. 46:11.

VERSE 20

“And Amram” — This Amram appears to be the unnamed “man of the house of Levi” of Ex. 2:1 who married Jochebed the “daughter of Levi,” but it is claimed that he could not have been the Amram of v. 18, because at the time of the Exodus, the Kohathites (of which the Amramites were a prominent branch) numbered 8,600 people (Num. 3:27-28), and presumably, a quarter of these would have been descendants of Amram. Yet, as far as we know, Amram only had three children: Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. In

Moses and the Gods Of Egypt, the problem is stated in the following terms: “If Amram, the son of Kohath and the tribe father of the Amramites, was the same person as Amram the father of Moses, Moses must have had 2,147 brothers and brothers’ sons. This is deduced from the fact that in Moses’ time the Kohathites were divided into four branches (Amramites, Izharites, Hebronites and Uzzielites) who consisted together of 8,600 men and boys (Num. 3:27-28). If divided equally, a fourth, or 2,150 men, would belong to the Amramites.”

Is here a mistake in the genealogy? Or do we have to assume that the Amram of this verse is a different identity to the Amram of v. 18, and so do violence to the context? Either explanation is far from satisfactory, as casting doubts upon the narrative.

Are there any alternatives? There are two. The first is, that though we have the total of Kohathites, we have not the number of individual houses, and that of Amram could have been but few in number at the Exodus. However, such great disparity would surely be noted in the narrative which implies that each division among the Kohathites contributed fairly generally to the overall total of 8,600 men.

The second is, that Amram had other wives before Jochebed whom he married late in life, and from these other marriages there came a progeny which laid the foundation of the House of Amram at the Exodus. The implications of Scripture strongly favor this explanation. Consider the evidence. Kohath lived 133 years (v. 18), and probably from 120 to 130 of these were after the descent of Jacob into Egypt. It is a likely inference, from 1Chr. 6:22, that he had a daughter, the mother of Amminadab, when about 70 years old — for Amminadab is not given as a son of Kohath in Ex. 6:18, and the term *son*, in Hebrew includes a descendant such as a grandson. That being the case, there would be a probable space of 30 or 40 years between the birth of this earliest and latest child. Four sons and one daughter, in so long a space, do not correspond to a

promise of unusual fertility. Hence it is almost certain that he had several daughters, and might have had several younger sons, who are not expressly named. These also would be included in one of the four sub-families, and probably, on the principle of the law of inheritances to daughters (Num. 27:1-7), and of 1Chr. 23:11, would be added to the less numerous family, so as to lessen the inequality. In other words, the Amramites of Num. 3:27-28 could have included the descendants of Kohath from sons and daughters other than Amram, not specifically noted in the genealogies, and who were not accorded the honor of being heads of recognised houses in the family of Kohath.

Consider also the facts with regard to Amram in the light of our suggestion that he could have been married to wives other than Jochebed. It is usual to assume that Moses and Aaron were his only sons, the offspring of a first and only marriage. But when the various statements of the text are compared, they lead naturally to a very different view.

From the order in which he is named, Amram seems to have been the firstborn of Kohath, and therefore would probably be born not more than 35 years after the descent into Egypt, perhaps earlier. This would be just 100 years before the birth of Moses, and 35 years before the birth of Jochebed. Is it likely, in a time of great fertility, that the eldest son of Kohath would abstain from marriage till the age of 55 years, and then 42 years more elapse, before a son is born to him? If the Amramites were numerous at the time of the Exodus this would be impossible, and the strong implication is that he had children from other marriages long before he married Jochebed. The first mention of the birth of Moses has none of the marks of a complete family history (Ex. 2:1-2). No allusion occurs in it to the previous birth of Aaron, and even the fact that a sister was already born comes out quite incidentally in the narrative.

Therefore, we do not have the full marital circumstances of Amram. If he had contracted one or two previous marriages,

it is plain that they would also be passed by in silence. Neither in Ex. 6:20, nor in Num. 26:59, have we a direct statement of the sons of Amram; but we are informed that he took Jochebed to wife, and she bare him "Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister."

However, since it results from the whole account that Amram was probably just a century old at Moses' birth, we have the strongest historical presumption that he had one, if not two wives, before Jochebed, by whom he might have had a number of children. None of these, and probably none of their children, would have been living at the Exodus, so that the prominence in the genealogy, of Moses, Aaron and Miriam, who were two descendants nearer to Amram and Levi than all the other Amramites, is quite explicable, even apart from the supernatural commission, on the ground of this real precedence alone.

These facts and implications, taken from *The Exodus Of Egypt* (T. R. Birks), dispose of the problems advanced by J. Davis above, and which are suggested by most commentators. They show that the record can be accepted as it stands in *The Book of Exodus*.

"Took him Jochebed" — Jochebed signifies *The Glory of Yah*. Since *Yah* is an abbreviation of *Yahweh*, Jochebed is the first name in the Bible to incorporate the divine Name, a practice that afterwards became common.

From this it has been argued that the divine Name must have been known before the revelation at the bush, because it forms part of the name of Moses' mother (cp. Gen. 4:1). But that does not necessarily follow, and, indeed, there are reasons to suggest otherwise. Firstly, if the Name were known previously, why was it not incorporated in names of people before this, as it is from this point onwards? Secondly, as we have noted previously, the Name is built up from a Hebrew verb in common, everyday use among the people, and Jochebed's original name may have been only slightly different from the form in which it now appears,

without use of the Name itself, and subsequently changed through the influence of Moses, after the theophany at Horeb. In support of this hypothesis, it is significant that the name of Amram's wife is not given when first she appears in the narrative (Ex. 2:1-2), and only now is she introduced as *Jochebed*.

"His father's sister to wife" — This description indicates that Jochebed was Amram's aunt and the daughter of Kohath.

However, the explicit meaning of the Heb. *dodatho*, rendered "father's sister," is uncertain. It is the feminine of *dod*, a word frequently denoting an "uncle," but also used for an "uncle's son" (Jer. 32:8, 12), and therefore denoting a cousin. Accordingly, Jochebed, could have been the cousin of Amram and not his aunt. The *Septuagint* renders it "the daughter of the brother of his father"; the *Syriac* has "the daughter of his uncle"; the *Vulgate*, "his paternal cousin." Marriages between a man and his aunt were prohibited by the Law (Lev. 18:12), suggesting that Jochebed was the cousin of Amram.

"She bare him Aaron and Moses" — She also had a daughter, Miriam, but emphasis is given to the two brothers because of their pre-eminence in the redemption of Israel from Egypt.

"And the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years" — From this statement, the following approximate chronology (dated from creation) emerges:

Kohath born in Canaan.....	approx. ac2298
(Gen. 46:11)	
Married at age of 16 (?)	2314
Amram born 1yr later	2315
Amram marries Jochebed	(?)
Miriam born	(?)
Aaron born (Ex. 7:7) 115yrs later	2430
Moses born 3yrs later	2433
Amram dies 19yrs later	2452
• Moses 80 at the Exodus	2513

VERSE 21

"And the sons of Izhar" — See note v. 18.

"Korah" — Sig. *Baldness* or *Icy*. The rebellious cousin of Moses (Num. 16:1).

"And Nepheg" — Sig. *A Sprout* or *Offshoot*.

"And Zichri" — Sig. *Famous*.

VERSE 22

"And the sons of Uzziel" — See note v. 18.

"Mishael" — Sig. *Who is El?*

"And Elzaphan" — Sig. *El hath concealed*.

"And Zithri" — Heb. *Zickri*, sig. *Mindful, Famous*.

VERSE 23

"And Aaron" — Sig. *Enlightened*.

"Took him Elisheba" — Sig. *The Oath of El*.

Thus these two names combined signify: The *Enlightened* seeks the *Oath* or *Covenant of El*.

"Daughter of Amminadab" — Sig. *The People are Generous*. A prince of Judah through whom came Christ (1Chr. 2:10).

"Sister of Naashon, to wife" — A prominent prince of Judah (Num. 1:7). His name signifies *An Oracle*.

"And she bare him Nadab" — Sig. *Of his Freewill* or *Liberal*. He died in tragic circumstances brought about by rebellion (Lev. 10:1).

"And Abihu" — Sig. *He (God) is Father*. He died with his brother in the contest for leadership (Lev. 10:1).

"Eleazar" — Sig. *El hath Helped*.

"And Ithamar" — Sig. *Palm-coast*.

VERSE 24

"And the sons of Korah" — See note v. 21.

"Assir" — Sig. *Captive*.

"And Elkanah" — *El hath Created*.

"And Abiasaph" — Sig. *Father of Gathering* (perhaps in the sense of removing reproach), thus *Remover of Reproach*.

"These are the families of the Korhites" — The sons of Korah escaped the judgment that was poured out upon their rebellious father, and established renowned families in Israel (Num. 26:11). Their names spell out their experience.

VERSE 25

“And Eleazar, Aaron’s son, took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife” — His name signifies *Afflicted of El*. Nothing more is known of him, but the meaning of his name, together with those of the sons of Korah, indicate the adverse circumstances experienced by the Israelites in Egypt.

“And she bare him Phinehas” — The courageous and faithful grandson of Aaron. His name is Egyptian for *The Nubian*.

“These are the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their families” — The purpose of this brief genealogy is to provide the tribal setting of Moses and Aaron.

VERSE 26

“These are that Aaron and Moses” — Stated to emphasize the main purpose of the genealogy.

“To whom Yahweh said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies” — They were to be organized from a rabble of slaves into companies of marching armies. The word “armies” in Hebrew (*tsaba*) denotes battalions of orderly arranged troops under the direction of *Yahweh Sabaoth*, the “LORD of hosts” (see ch. 7:4).

VERSE 27

“These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron” — The genealogical record of vv. 13-27 is arranged as a separate document that may be used independently of the rest of the narrative.

Yahweh Confers His Authority Upon Moses — vv. 28 to ch. 7:9.

Moses is now commissioned to go in unto Pharaoh, monarch of Egypt. He is warned of the difficulties that will face him, but is instructed as to how to proceed.

VERSE 28

“And it came to pass on the day when Yahweh spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt” — Exodus ch. 7 should commence here, for the phrase introduces a new order of events.

Moses is reminded that “the day” had come for Yahweh to act. Previously it seemed to him that God would never fulfill His covenant and promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or even those to Moses and his generation. He and all Israel had become completely discouraged (Ex. 5:19-23; 6:9-13, 28-30). But now Yahweh, on His appointed day (ch. 6:1, 28) began to work, and in but a short period of time had brought Egypt and all its power into complete subjection. He has likewise “appointed a day” in these latter times, when He will move to vindicate His Name and promise through the one leader He has provided for that purpose (Acts 17:31). In the meantime, patience must be exercised.

VERSE 29

“That Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying, I am Yahweh: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee” — The proclamation of the divine Name promised success in the mission set Moses. See notes ch. 6:2.

VERSE 30

“And Moses said before Yahweh, Behold I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?” — The repetition of these words (cp. v. 12) is provided as a background to the authority conferred on Moses (ch. 7:1). They contrast the reluctance of Moses with the work Yahweh accomplished in him (see Ex. 4:11), and therefore illustrate God’s remarkable power.

Moses’ “uncircumcised lips” were given a charge and a power that constituted him as “God” to both Aaron and Pharaoh (see Ex. 4:17; 7:1).

For explanation of the reference to “uncircumcised lips” see note on v. 12.



CHAPTER SEVEN

MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH

Armed with their divine commission and the power of miracle, Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh and display their credentials in the signs given them. These are imitated by the magicians, so that Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and he refuses to grant the request of the Israelites. In consequence, the first of the plagues smites Egypt. The water of the Nile is turned into blood, so that the fish die. Again, the magicians imitate the miracle. Pharaoh's heart is again hardened; he again refuses to let the people go, so that for seven days there is a dire shortage of water.

Moses' first sign contrasts with Christ's first sign: turning water into wine (Jn. 2:11). But whereas Moses caused the people to mourn, Christ caused them to rejoice.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh” — The authority thus conferred upon Moses was bestowed in view of objection stated in ch. 6:30. He was also strengthened and encouraged to the task before him by the promise of supernatural powers that he would manifest.

By this means Moses would become “a god (Heb. *elohim*),” a manifestation of Yahweh unto Pharaoh. In this he typed the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 20:28). The title *elohim*, literally *mighty ones*, is thus used of men who acted in God's place before their fellows (see ch. 21:6; 22:8-9 where *elohim* is rendered “judges”; Psa. 82:1, 6; and Christ's comment in Jn. 10:34-35. See also Ex. 4:16). Those “in Christ” live in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2), of divine nature (2Pet. 1:4), and of bearing the name of God (Rev. 3:12). Thus to bear the title of God is to be a manifestation of the power and authority of the Almighty.

“And Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet” — By “prophet” is meant “spokesman,” the original meaning of the Semitic root of the Hebrew *nabi*, prophet.

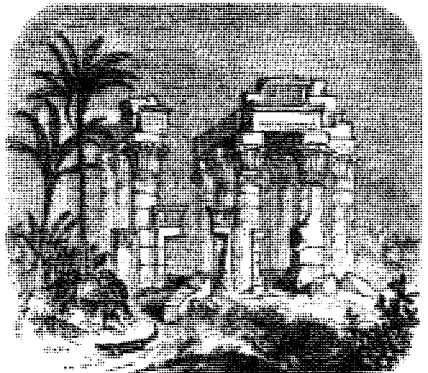
Aaron would speak forth the words

communicated by God to Moses, or the thoughts which He put into the mind of Moses with reference to Pharaoh.

The prophets were inspired *spokesmen* of God's will. They set forth the divine Word, presented exhortations to faithfulness, and warned the people of the consequences of disobedience, as well as often foretelling events as a secondary feature of their work.

VERSE 2

“Thou shalt speak all that I command thee” — The *Septuagint* adds: “to



him," that is, to Aaron.

"And Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land" — Aaron was to be spokesman to Pharaoh, giving voice to the request of Moses (Ex. 4:15-16).

VERSE 3

"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart" — See note Ex. 4:21. The word, here, is *chazaq*, and signifies *to make bold, stubborn*. Pharaoh's heart was hardened by Yahweh's manipulation of circumstances and events, not by any direct compelling influence on him personally. When Pharaoh saw that Moses' miracles could be imitated by the magicians, he hardened his own heart (1Sam. 6:6).

"And multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt" — *Signs* are given to point to a certain way, or to convey a message, such as by the three already given (Ex. 4:3-9); *wonders* are miracles that speak of supernatural power, the ability to perform the extraordinary. An incident can be both: it can signify a *sign* and a *wonder*, as did the three already given to Moses. These signs and wonders poured out upon Egypt, were long remembered by that nation, as by others (Jer. 32:20; cp. Josh. 2:10). Pharaoh's stubbornness resulted in Yahweh increasing His miracles and therefore contributed to His power being more widely known, and His judgments more extensive.

VERSE 4

"But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay My hand upon Egypt" — The expression "that I may lay My hand" denotes that God would display His almighty power.

Pharaoh's obstinacy was foreknown and permitted because it advanced Yahweh's purpose. The very stubbornness of the resistance revealed His omnipotence, and brought the amazing deliverance of His people before the notice of all people (Ex. 9:15-16; 15:14-16; Deu. 2:25; 11:25; Josh. 2:10).

That also is the case today. In remarkable circumstances, Israel has revived as a

nation. Though small in number, and minute in size, the existence of Israel has been impressed upon people everywhere. Yahweh's purpose is advanced by the very resistance of the opposition as it was in the times of Moses (cp. Jer. 32:20-21).

"And bring forth Mine armies" — See note on ch. 6:26. Israel was to march out as conquerors, in military order, with Yahweh (represented by the cloud and fire) at the head as Commander (Psa. 80:1).

"And My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments" — This repeats the expression of ch. 6:6-26, etc. There is ever a need of constant reminders of Yahweh's purpose.

VERSE 5

"And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh" — The verb *yada* signifies "to know in reality" by personal observation; to actually *see* the revelation, and not merely to know it by report or instruction.

Yahweh declared that the Egyptians shall be brought to see the power of His covenant Name, so that they will be compelled to acknowledge that what He pro-



Fighting crocodiles: Aaron's rod swallowed up those of the magicians.

claims, He will surely accomplish.

“When I stretch forth Mine hand upon Egypt” — There are various Hebrew expressions for “hand.” The word here is *yod*, and signifies the open, pointing hand, indicative of *power*, *means* and *direction*. It is the symbol of activity. See its use in Psa. 119:73-80.

“And bring out the children of Israel from among them” — The divine purpose is to bring out a family from mankind for the honour of the Name (Acts 15:14), and this was now to be manifested in the redemption of Israel by Moses.

VERSE 6

“And Moses and Aaron did as Yahweh commanded them, so did they” — This general statement anticipates the activity of Moses and Aaron at this time, and summarizes what they accomplished during the course of their ministry. The simple statement that they “did as Yahweh commanded” sums up the secret of true success in life (Josh. 1:7-8; 2John 6).

VERSE 7

“And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh” — Aaron was the elder of the two brothers, but Miriam was older still (cp. Ex. 2:4).

VERSE 8

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying” — The words were given to Moses, and relayed through Aaron to Pharaoh.

VERSE 9

“When Pharaoh shall speak unto you saying, Shew a miracle for you” — Such a request would be made in order that Pharaoh might consider their divine credentials.

“Then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent” — The Hebrew word for “serpent” in this verse is *tannin*, whereas that in ch. 4:3 is *nachash*. This is most significant. The ser-

pent referred to in Ex. 4:3 denotes “the snake” as in Genesis 3, and that sign illustrated Moses’ power over sin.

But *tannin*, as in this case, relates to a different animal altogether, a sea-monster. Rotherham renders it as “sea-serpent,” while elsewhere it is translated “dragon” (Isa. 27:1; 51:9; Eze. 29:3), and there used for the crocodile, as a national, political symbol for Egypt.

As a sign, the miracle implied that Moses and Aaron, through the divine power vested in them, could control the movements of Egypt. In the symbolism of *The Apocalypse*, the dragon (*tannin*) and serpent (*nachash*) are united as Sin in political manifestation (Rev. 12:9), as representative of Babylon the Great: Rome (v. 3; 17:9), and elsewhere identified spiritually with Egypt (11:8), the historic

Natural — or Divine?

Some attempt to explain the plagues as merely natural phenomena, perhaps somewhat intensified, and then give a theological interpretation by Moses. They point out that the Nile becomes reddish in color at certain times of the year; frogs multiply, and so forth. But the fact that the narrative of Exodus presents the plagues as miracles is beyond all doubt. Whatever natural phenomena might reveal, there is an intensification of frogs, insects, murrain and so forth, far beyond any ordinary occurrence. There is the fact of *prediction*: Moses proclaims the moment of arrival and departure of the various plagues. There is *discrimination*: certain plagues do not occur in Goshen where Israel abode. There is a *gradation*: a gradual, increasing severity of plagues culminating in the death of the firstborn. There is the *moral or religious purpose*: the plagues are directed against “all the gods of Egypt” (Ex. 12:12; 18:11; Num. 33:4). In each case, a god was involved, revealing to Israel and Egypt alike, the omnipotent power of Yahweh and the worthlessness of idolatrous terms of worship.

oppressor of God's people.

Moses had already demonstrated his power over the serpent; now he is called upon to do so over the dragon. It is left to Christ to crush the former on the head, and destroy forever the influence of the latter, as revealed in *The Apocalypse*. The first conquest was personal, as Christ destroyed the *diabolos* sin-power within himself (Heb. 2:14); the latter represents the conquest of the nations to be accomplished at his return to earth (Isa. 60:12).

Moses' Contest With The Magicians — vv. 10-13.

Moses and Aaron are granted an audience with Pharaoh, at which Aaron displays their credentials: his rod becomes a crocodile. But the miracle is imitated by Egyptian magicians who do likewise, and Pharaoh's heart is consequently hardened.

According to Paul (2Tim. 3:8), there were two leaders of the magicians, matching the two leaders of Israel. He gives their names as Jannes ("He who Seduces") and Jambres ("He who makes Rebellious"), and states that they "withstood Moses" with their imitation of spirit power, even as false religion, with its pretensions of possessing Holy Spirit power, withstands the Truth today.

VERSE 10

"And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as Yahweh had commanded" — Courageously they stood before the monarch of Egypt, and did so with the commission of the great Monarch of heaven.

"And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent" — It became a crocodile (Heb., *tannin*) a national emblem of Egypt, worshipped by

the people. Aaron's action implied power over the national gods of the land.

VERSE 11

"Then Pharaoh also called the wise men" — The Hebrew word is *chakamim* and denotes men of learning, skilled in magic. The contest that ensued was more than one of skills: it was religious in character. Yahweh and His ministers challenged the gods of Egypt and their ministers.

Egypt was a very religious nation. The multitude of shrines, inscriptions and religious objects of its ancient culture are a constant reminder that nothing in it was really secular. Therefore, Moses' challenge to Pharaoh, who was considered divine by the people, constituted the declaration of a religious war (cp. Ex. 12:12).

"And the sorcerers" — Heb. *mekashephim*, signifying, "to whisper (a spell); to enchant," and therefore to practise superstitious magic, as Rome does today (Rev. 18:23).

"Now the magicians of Egypt" — The word "magicians" is *chartomim*, from a root *cheret*, "to engrave," and therefore to act as a horoscopist who looks to the heavens for signs, guidance and inspiration. The word has been rendered "sacred scribes," or "bearers of sacred words."

These men were very skilled in their practices, as are many today who claim supernatural powers of healing and performing miracles. Paul warned Timothy against the deluding pretensions of such (2Tim. 3:8), and Christ predicted the uprise of false teaching and lying superstition which would be so expertly paraded as to "deceive the very elect" (Mat. 24:24).

"They also did in like manner with their enchantments" — As a counterpart of the miracle-working magicians of Pharaoh's court, *The Apocalypse* refers to the "miracles" performed by the "false prophet" of Rome in his attempt to destroy the witness of Truth (see Rev. 13:14; 19:20).

Egypt was ridden with superstition, so that the description of Exodus is in accor-

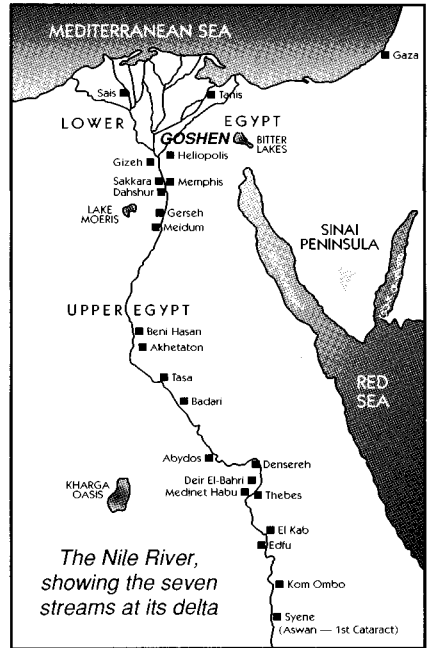




dance with archaeology. In *Moses and the Gods Of Egypt*, J. J. Davis writes: "We know from ancient documents that magic and sorcery were not only common throughout the land of Egypt, but played a significant role in the lives of the Pharaohs. From the Old Kingdom period comes a very interesting and informative tale about King Khufu and the magicians (Papyrus Westcar in Berlin). While the story relates to King Kheops, the builder of the great pyramid, the present papyrus manuscript dates back only to the Hyksos period. The story concerns tales told by the son of Kheops relating to the wonders which magicians had performed in the past. Later one of his sons informed him that he knew a living magician who could work miracles. This magician was brought before the king and worked miracles in the king's presence, and in addition to that predicted the future. What precisely do we mean when we speak of 'Egyptian magic?' Included in this multifaceted subject is 'cursing' (included killing); curing, erotic magic; agricultural (including weather); divination; and resurrection. Since magic and medicine are hard to untangle, and since the Egyptians did not, as a rule try to untangle them, we will discuss curative magic under medicine..."

The work of the magicians, therefore, was no clumsy contrivance as we might imagine, but the skilful opposition of a highly trained and deeply respected section of the community, in a nation of outstanding cultural development. They constituted the scientists of the day to whose instruction men everywhere gave heed. In *The Visible Hand Of God*, page 78-79, Bro. Roberts states: "The miracles in Egypt were a necessity. They had a logical relation to the result to be accomplished.

They were not mere prodigies like the legendary feats of the heathen. They were rationally connected with an object aimed at. Moses at the time, and David long after, recognised and proclaimed this connection. David's recognition is briefly but pointedly expressed in one of the foregoing quotations: 'He saved Israel for His Name's sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known' (Psa. 106:8). Moses repeatedly alludes to the matter in the magnificent addresses delivered to Israel at the end of the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, just before their entry into the Land of promise. Let an example or two suffice: 'Your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which He did: Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day' (Deu. 11:7-8); "Hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors,



according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD He is God: there is none else beside Him' (Deu. 4:34-35)."

The very strength and skill of the opposition Moses encountered served Yahweh's purpose, inasmuch as it demonstrated His great power before His people, and enabled both them and Egypt to recognise His omnipotence.

The record states that the magicians imitated Aaron's miracle "with their enchantments." The Hebrew word *lahatim* is from *lahat* and signifies "to burn, set on fire, blaze up, to flame." It is rendered "flaming" in Gen. 3:24, and implies that fire and smoke were used in performing the "miracle." By clever manipulation of the hands, probably covered and partly hidden by a cloud of burning incense or smoking sacrifices, the magicians imitated Aaron's sign and Pharaoh readily accepted as miracle the seeming evidence of his eyes.

The Greek *Septuagint* uses the word *pharmakeiais* for "enchantments," a word that is rendered "witchcraft" in Gal. 5:20, and there described as a "work of the flesh." It is from a root signifying "to drug," and in its NT usage implies the stupefying and deceptive effects of false religion (see Rev. 9:21; 18:23; 21:8).

See additional comments on the magicians at Ex. 9:11.

VERSE 12

"For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents" — The word is *tanninim*, and can be rendered "crocodiles."

It would have been a great relief to Pharaoh, to see Aaron's miracle imitated by his own magicians.

"But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" — This demonstrated that the power wielded by Moses and Aaron was greater than that of Jannes and Jambres, the leaders of the Egyptian magicians. The sign was prophetic, indicating that no matter how Pharaoh and his supporters might resist the demands of Yahweh, He will

prevail ultimately.

VERSE 13

"And He hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them" — The literal Hebrew is "and was hard the heart of Pharaoh" (*A New-Old Testament*). Pharaoh hardened his own stubborn heart as he witnessed Aaron's miracle imitated by his own magicians, and closed his eyes to the subsequent action of Aaron's "serpent" in swallowing up the others.

The word for "hardened" in this place is *chazaq*, for which see note at Ex. 4:21. Why should Pharaoh thus harden his heart? Because to do otherwise would be to abdicate his position. The wise men, sorcerers, magicians and priests of Egypt comprised an important professional class in the nation, high in the positions of state organisation. For them to submit to the demands of slaves within their midst would be to acknowledge that their wisdom was not divine. In addition, Pharaoh was considered a god. His birth was announced as a divine act. In Egyptian mythology he was considered as being begotten by *Amon-Ra* upon the queen mother, and therefore treated as a child of the gods, possessing the property and authority of a god. As regards his divine potency, he was *Horus*, the son of *Hathor*. As such a god, Pharaoh had sole rule over the people. To capitulate to Moses was to publicly acknowledge his fallibility in the face of Israel, to abdicate his position as god-king, and to abandon everything upon which Egyptian supremacy was established. Astonished at the miracle of Aaron, he gratefully witnessed the apparent ability of his magicians to equal it, and so hardened his heart.

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"As Yahweh had said" — Confirming the prediction spoken to Moses, and thus demonstrating the foreknowledge of Yahweh.



First Plague: Water Into Blood

— vv. 14-21.

The first plague involves the water of the Nile, the important river of Egypt. Moses is commanded to accost Pharaoh early in the morning with his demand, and on refusal, to smite the water of the river with the serpent rod. The water turns to blood with disastrous effect upon Egypt, causing death of fish-life and bringing dismay throughout the land. In contrast, the "first sign" of the Lord Jesus was the turning of water into wine, which resulted in great rejoicing at the marriage feast.

VERSE 14

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go" — The Hebrew word for "hardened" in this place is different from that in the previous verse. It is *kabed*, "to be heavy, i.e. difficult, burdensome, severe, stupid," and denotes the natural condition of Pharaoh's heart. See note Ex. 4:21.

VERSE 15

"Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water" — It was customary for Pharaoh to visit the Nile in the morning (cp. Ex. 8:20). The purpose of the visit is not recorded, but most likely it was for some religious ceremony, some act of worship. The Nile was the very lifeline of Egypt, and the centre of many of its religious beliefs. For example, the god *Khnum* was considered the guardian of the Nile sources. *Hapi* was believed to be the "spirit of the Nile" and its "dynamic essence." According to *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, *Osiris*, one of the greatest gods revered in Egypt, the god of judgment and of the dead, was worshipped as the god of the Nile. The Egyptians believed that the river Nile was his bloodstream, so that it was appropriate that its waters should be turned into blood by Yahweh!

The Nile also was worshipped in the god *Hapi*, considered to be the *Sustainer of the People*. In the *Hymn of the Nile*, its worshippers are represented as honouring

it as "The bringer of food, rich in provisions, creator of all good, lord of majesty, sweet of fragrance." What a shock when that same river is seen as blood; with its banks lined with dead fish, and the smell of rotting carcasses filling the air.

The religious, political and economic wellbeing of Egypt were all dependent on the Nile, and would have been adversely affected by this miracle.

The Nile is at its lowest point in May. Its rise begins around June and the main flood waters reach the country in July and August, with the peak around September. However, we have no indication as to what time of the year the miracle occurred.

"And thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come" — The word for "river" is *ye'or* and is of Egyptian origin. It is used both for the Nile and for the channels that were constructed from it. It doubtless was at the Nile where the encounter took place.

"And the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand" — This was Moses' rod, not that of Aaron. The word for "serpent" is *nachash*, as in Ex. 4:3, and not *tannin* as in Ex. 7:10.

VERSE 16

"And thou shalt say unto him, Yahweh God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they might serve Me in the wilderness, and, behold, hitherto thou wouldst not hear" — For the divine Name used on this occasion see note at Ex. 3:15, 18.

VERSE 17

"Thus saith Yahweh. In this thou shalt know that I am Yahweh" — Contrast this statement with Pharaoh's earlier boast (Ex. 5:2, 4).

"Behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood" — The waters of the river Nile, the source of life of Egypt, would become a river of death. The

expression of the verse need not mean any more than that the water should have the appearance of blood as in Joel 2:31, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood." Whatever the nature of the miracle, the water would have all the physical appearance, taste, and smell of blood.

It is alleged, that at certain times, the Nile has a reddish tinge, a discoloration caused by the red soil of Abyssinia or other ingredients. The archaeologist, Flinders Petrie, states that the Nile has a tendency at certain times to become stagnant and red with microscopic organisms. He tried to explain the miracle as denoting nothing more than that. But we can be sure that Pharaoh would not mistake the miracle of Moses for a natural phenomena of which he would have been very familiar; nor would such discoloration result in the death of fish.

VERSE 18

"And the fish that is in the river shall die" — The Egyptians lived largely upon fish, so that the miracle was to create an economic problem.

"And the river shall stink" — The smell of blood and of death would permeate the land. The miracle was to become a pollution problem.

"And the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river" — The Nile is noted for the sweetness of its water, and was praised for this by the ancient Egyptians in their religious ceremonies. The river was styled *The Father of Life*, and *The Father of*

the Gods. Thus, the miracle would cause a religious problem.

The word "lothe" may be rendered "weary themselves" (cp. Gen. 19:11). They were to exert themselves in vain to find a remedy to make the water of the Nile palatable.

VERSE 19

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt" — There were evidently two phases to the miracle: firstly, Moses smote the water of the Nile with his rod in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants; and secondly, Aaron extended his rod towards the channels and pools of water throughout the land.



Ancient Illustration of Four Plagues

“Upon their streams” — The canals that were constructed to irrigate the land.

“Upon their rivers” — The seven divisions into which the Nile was divided throughout the Delta as it emptied itself into the sea (see *Herodotus* 2:17).

“And upon all the pools of water” — The Hebrew has *“the gathering of their waters”* (mg.). These would constitute the artificial reservoirs established throughout the land.

“That they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt” — The effect of the miracle was felt throughout the whole nation, with the exception, evidently, of the land of Goshen (see v. 24).

“Both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone” — The water of the Nile is muddy and must be treated before being drunk. The Egyptians filtered it through various kinds of pots. The vessels of wood could relate to some form of filter, after which it was stored in those of stone. To the amazement and dismay of the people, the water stored in their homes, suddenly appeared as blood, and became undrinkable.

VERSE 20

“And Moses and Aaron did so, as Yahweh commanded” — Both took part in the action.

“And he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants” — See Psa. 78:44; 105:29. The

“he” evidently relates to Moses who initiated the action, which was then continued by Aaron (see Exo. 8:5).

“And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood” — The dramatic action confirmed the divine instruction.



VERSE 21

“And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt” — The miracle caused a national disaster. We can imagine the horror of Egyptians as they viewed their sacred river, previously an object of joy, beauty and reverence, now apparently flowing with blood, its banks lined with dead and stinking fish, whilst other animals, such as crocodiles, crawled away from its precincts. What would the worshippers think of *Hapi* the god of the Nile who was sometimes manifest in the form of a crocodile! In a temple in Thebes, the god *Sepek* was worshipped in the form of a crocodile, whilst the sacred animal was accommodated in a separate pool attached thereto. That pool, as with others throughout the land, was now filled with blood!

Miracle Imitated and the Heart Hardened — vv. 22-25.

In desperation, Pharaoh seeks the help of his magicians, and they are able to counterfeit the miracle. Their deception is sufficient for Pharaoh, and restores his confidence in the gods of Egypt. Accordingly he dismisses the request of Moses. Through his stubbornness the miracle is continued for seven days, and the people are greatly distressed. But as Pharaoh has slaves to dig wells for him, he gives no thought to the plight of his people.

VERSE 22

“And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments” — The word for “enchantments” in this place is different from that in v. 11. It comes from a root signifying “that which is covered,” and has been translated “secret arts” (*A New Old Testament*).

Previously, the magicians imitated Moses’ miracle behind a smoke-screen of incense or similar; now they produced a “miracle” secretly, and not open to the view of all, as was that of Moses and Aaron.

But if all the water of the land was

CHAPTER SEVEN

affected, where did the magicians obtain water for their experiment?

There were two stages in the miracle. First, the water of the Nile was affected; and afterwards, as Aaron turned his rod towards all points of the compass, the water throughout the land became polluted. The statement of v. 23 implies that the contest between Moses and the magicians took place as Pharaoh was by the bank of the river. They evidently obtained a small amount of water prior to the water throughout the land being polluted, and brought it to Pharaoh, probably in vessels, upon which to perform their trickery.

“And Pharaoh’s heart was hardened” — He was easily pleased, and accepted the deception as evidence of the divine power in his own magicians. To do otherwise would be to abandon the very foundation of Egyptian power, worship and culture. Pharaoh viewed the apparent success of the magicians against the demands of Moses and Aaron as a triumph for his gods.

“Neither did he hearken unto them” — He repudiated the testimony of Moses and Aaron.

“As Yahweh had said” — His stubbornness was actually a vindication of Yahweh.

VERSE 23

“And Pharaoh turned and went into his house” — Implying that the contest

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

between Moses and the magicians had been concluded before Aaron turned his rod upon the other water of the land (v. 20).

Having rejected the warning of Yahweh, the miracle was now extended throughout all Egypt.

“Neither did he set his heart to this also” — Pharaoh refused to thoroughly examine the evidence; he became self-deceived because he wanted to believe the evidence of the magicians.

VERSE 24

“And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink” — The Egyptians did this, but not the Hebrews. Apparently the water of Goshen, the settlement of the Israelites, was unaffected.

“For they could not drink of the water of the river” — Evidently the wells thus dug were not affected, which served to emphasise the miraculous nature of what had been done.

VERSE 25

“And seven days were fulfilled, after that Yahweh had smitten the river” — For seven days there was a dire want of drinking water throughout Egypt, although, apparently, supplies could be obtained from nearby Goshen.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE FINGER OF GOD REVEALED

Again Moses is sent to Pharaoh with the request, Let Yahweh’s people go! The king is warned that Egypt will be plagued with frogs if he refuses. This merciful warning is ignored, and with the stretching forth of Aaron’s rod, the plague commences. It is imitated by the magicians, who, however, fail to be able to rid Egypt of the plague, so that Pharaoh is forced to plead the help of Moses to that end. With the respite that follows, the king’s heart is

hardened, and, in consequence, the nation is afflicted with a third plague: that of lice. On this occasion, the magicians fail to imitate the plague, declaring, "This is the finger of God." But now Pharaoh even ignores their warning, and so Egypt is afflicted with the fourth plague, that of flies. Pharaoh learns that Goshen is exempt from the plague, and, at last compromises with a partial agreement to do as requested. But when the plague ceases, he again refuses to co-operate.

Second Plague: Frogs Multiply

— vv. 1-6.

Pharaoh is warned that if he does not comply with Moses' request, the land will be plagued with frogs. He refuses the request to let the people go, and frogs multiply from the river to swarm over the land. They invade the homes and are found in bedrooms, kitchens, and cling to even the persons of the Egyptians.

VERSE 1

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Yahweh, Let My people go, that they may serve Me" — The repetition might have sounded monotonous, but, at least it made the issue clear! One thing only was required of Pharaoh, and it became an oft-repeated demand: *Let My people go!*

VERSE 2

"And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs" — The word for "frogs" is *tesphardaim*, derived from *tsaphar*, meaning "to skip about," and denotes a swamp-jumper or marsh-leaper. The second plague was also a contest between Yahweh, and certain aspects of the Egyptian system of superstition. It struck a blow at the worship of *Heqt*, the wife of the great god *Khnum*. *Heqt* was a frog-headed goddess and the frog was sacred to her. It was the symbol of the resurrection, and the emblem of fertility. According to H. Rim-

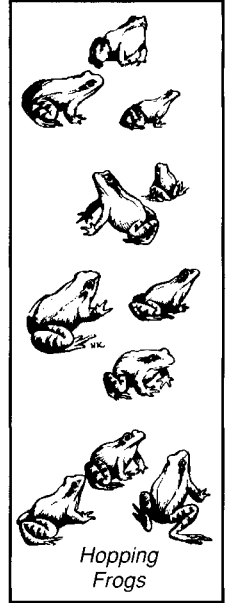
mer in *Dead Men Tell Tales*, the frog "was revered by the people, and to have one around the dwelling place was a sign of good fortune and was supposed to ensure a fertile year for farm and family alike." At the same time "the frog was unclean to the Egyptians and their invasion would be abhorrent" (*Animals of Bible Lands*).

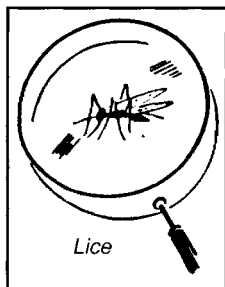
The Egyptians were to have quite enough of frogs, before they got through this second plague!

VERSE 3

"And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house" — Ancient Egyptians were noted for their extreme cleanliness (see *Herodotus* 2:37), and this invasion of their homes must have been both disagreeable and disgusting. The frogs even clung to their persons (v. 4).

"And into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servant, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs" — With a little imagination the description becomes quite humorous, but must have been most distressing to the Egyptians! Frogs were everywhere: in the streets, in the houses, in utensils. The revolting creatures were in the very bread





troughs, and got tangled up in the dough, thus adding a rather quaint flavor to the bread!

The bread could not be baked, however, as the ovens crawled with frogs, and swamped the fire. "Like a blanket of

filth, the slimy, wet monstrosities covered the land, until men sickened at the continued squashing crunch of the ghastly pavement they had to walk upon. If a man's feet slipped on the greasy mass of their crushed bodies, he fell into an indescribably offensive mass of putrid uncleanness, and when he sought water to cleanse himself, the water was so solid with frogs, he got no cleansing there" (*Dead Men tell Tales*).

Another writer (L. Untermeyer, in *Moses*) graphically describes the presence of myriads of frogs: "Small green peepers, no larger than locusts; distended toads, the colour of excrement; mottled frogs like bloated vegetation; frogs that were lumps of bronze; frogs with eyes of unblinking demons; frogs subtler than salamanders; frogs motionless; frogs that leaped into the laps of screaming children; wart-breeding frogs; frogs like droppings of mud; frogs tailing their slime after them; flying frogs that built nests in high reeds; frogs that died and bred death. Once again the sacred Nile was the source of pollution."

VERSE 4

"And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants" — They invaded even the palace, and hopped onto Pharaoh himself, perhaps to the amusement of others, but certainly not that of the king.

VERSE 5

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thine rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and

cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt" — There was to be a complete demonstration of the power of Yahweh. See comment on ch. 7:19.

VERSE 6

"And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt" — In Hebrew, the word "frog" in this verse is in the singular number: "*the* frog," though elsewhere it is plural. The frogs moved as an united army to invade the land. They came hopping out of the river, along the roads to invade the cities and houses of Egyptians. Their noisy croaking deafened the people.

Miracle Imitated: But Pharaoh Seeks Moses' Intercession — vv. 7-11.

The magicians imitate the miracle, but it is evident that they cannot remove the plague, so that Pharaoh is forced to seek the intercession of Moses.

VERSE 7

"And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and so brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt" — For "enchantments" see note ch. 7:22. Evidently, by some sleight of hand or some secret covering of their action (as the word suggests), the magicians imitated the miracle of Moses. But their heart was not in it, as the following verses reveal. They recognised that they were in the presence of a miracle, and that the effect of the miracles demonstrated by Moses and Aaron was increasing. Each miracle built upon those before.

VERSE 8

"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat Yahweh, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people" — The monarch suffered the terrible conditions, and on behalf of his nation now pleaded with the Hebrews to remove the threat.

"And I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice unto Yahweh" — In this promise, Pharaoh recognised Yahweh

as a god, but, as subsequent events revealed, he had reservations as to His real power.

VERSE 9

“And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me” — This was probably a phrase of normal courtesy signifying that Moses was prepared to submit to the request of Pharaoh. The margin renders: “Have this honour over me.” The *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* render it as “Appoint thou unto me.”

“When shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?” — Rotherham renders this: “For what time shall I intreat...?” The margin has “Against when...” Moses invited Pharaoh to have the honor of naming the very time when the miracle should be performed in reverse as proof that Yahweh had power, both to afflict and to heal.

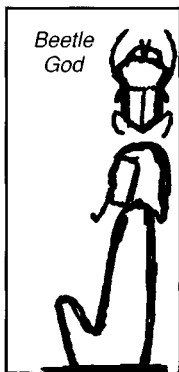
VERSE 10

“And he said, To morrow” — The Hebrew is as the margin: “For tomorrow.” Pharaoh desired the plague to instantly come to an end, that very day, that “tomorrow” might be free of the plague.

“And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto Yahweh our God” — Moses accepts the date fixed by Pharaoh, and makes an appeal to him to recognise the power and authority of Yahweh, if the event corresponds with the time agreed upon.

VERSE 11

“And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only” — From this it would appear that the frogs had invaded



more than one of Pharaoh's palaces.

Respite: Heart Hardened — vv. 12-15.

Moses' prayer unto Yahweh is successful, and the land is relieved of the plague. Pharaoh, however, dishonors his word and again refuses to let the people go.

VERSE 12

“And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh” — The meeting was terminated in order that the plague might be removed, and Pharaoh given opportunity to respond to the demands of the Hebrews.

“And Moses cried unto Yahweh because of the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh” — The expression used is a strong one, and denotes particular earnestness in the prayer. The word signifies “to shriek.” Rotherham renders it: “Moses made outcry.” He had ventured to promise Pharaoh that the plague would be removed at a specific time, and now gave himself to earnest prayer to Yahweh that it might be vindicated in accordance with the agreement with Pharaoh.

Moses' attitude reveals the need for earnest concentration of mind upon such a request. Elijah “prayed earnestly” in similar fashion and was granted his request, upon which James comments: “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Prayer must represent the “sacrifice of the lips” to be really effective (Hos. 14:2; Heb. 13:15). We must earnestly desire the things prayed for, and *feel* the communion of prayer in order to make it powerful.

VERSE 13

“And Yahweh did according to the word of Moses” — A clear example of answered prayer.

“And the frogs died out of the houses, and out of the villages, and out of the fields” — The RV renders “villages” as “courts.” Rotherham has a footnote: “enclosures — perhaps courtyards.” Egyptian houses were generally built with a courtyard attached. These now became

filled with the dead bodies of frogs, heaped up everywhere so that the stench of dead and decaying bodies afflicted the nostrils of Egyptians. One would imagine, that after such a plague as this, there would be somewhat of a decline in the fervency of frog worship by that generation of Egyptians!

VERSE 14

“And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank” — Heaps of dead, decaying and stinking corpses of frogs, all over the land, were a constant reminder of the power of Yahweh, and of the inefficacy of the Egyptian gods.

VERSE 15

“But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them” — See 1Sam. 6:6. The word “respite” is literally “a breathing space.” Pharaoh was autocratically stubborn, but it must also be recognised that for him to capitulate meant reversing all that both he and Egypt stood for. Egypt was a theocracy, and Pharaoh himself considered as a god. Therefore the demand, “Let My people go,” required that Pharaoh recognise the existence of Yahweh, and His superiority over all other forms of worship. It was upon those forms of idolatrous worship that the greatness of Egypt was established, and for this reason, and not only stubbornness of heart, Pharaoh grasped at every opportunity to evade what was demanded of him.

“As Yahweh had said” — This addition to the narrative emphasises that the very resistance of Pharaoh was indicative of the truth of Yahweh’s prophecy.

Third Plague: Dust Into Lice

— vv. 16-19.

Again Aaron’s terrible rod is outstretched, and the dust becomes swarming with lice, tormenting men and beasts. To add to the irritation of the Egyptians, the Israelites are exempt from the plague whilst they, the lords of the land, itch and scratch away like monkeys as they are

subjected to the misery of this vicious pest. Again, one of the two thousand two hundred different gods and goddesses that archaeologists have been able to name as being worshipped by the Egyptians, is humbled.

VERSE 16

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod” — This was Aaron’s rod as distinct from the rod used by Moses (cp. ch. 7:10).

“And smite the dust of the land” — According to E. Budge in *Dwellers On the Nile*, the earth itself was worshipped through the god *Geb*.

“That it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt” — The Heb. *kennim* is from a root signifying “to fasten.” This is thought to be the mosquito-gnat, and not lice as rendered in the AV. The specie is so small as to be hardly visible to the eye, but it has a very irritating and powerful sting. The Hebrew term may be derived from the Egyptian *khennems*, “gnats” or “mosquitoes.”

VERSE 17

“And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast” — In afflicting man, the plague would have included the official priesthood of Egypt, to the great humiliation of its members. In afflicting beasts, it would also have humiliated the sacred animals of Egypt which were worshipped as gods. It is said that the mosquito-gnat flies into the nostrils and eyes of animals driving them to maniacal fury.

“All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt” — The dust became impregnated with these mosquito-gnats. Every step taken in the soil which Egyptians normally worshipped, caused a cloud of these irritating creatures to arise and settle upon the body, resulting in painful and irritating bites.

Magicians Thwarted — vv. 18-19.

Again Pharaoh appeals to his magi-

icians to demonstrate their skill, but on this occasion they are unable to do so. They claim it reveals the finger of God in such a way as is beyond their ability to perform.

VERSE 18

“And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not” — For some reason the trickery of these magicians failed, and they claimed that this was due to supernatural powers beyond their control. It is obvious from the text that they attempted to imitate the miracle. Why were they not successful? Perhaps Pharaoh demanded that they do so openly without covering up their actions. He had obviously been humbled to the extent of recognising the existence of Yahweh (v. 8); now he wanted incontestible evidence of the power of his gods, and called upon his priests to demonstrate their ability beyond all doubt. This they failed to do.

“So there were lice upon man and upon beast” — The nation continued to suffer whilst Pharaoh wasted his time with the magicians.

VERSE 19

“Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God” — Lit. “This is the finger of *a god*” — it is supernatural, beyond the power of man. See the expression used elsewhere with the same emphasis: Ex. 31:18; Deu. 9:10; Psa. 8:3; Luke 11:20.

“And Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them” — The magicians had given up the unequal contest and urged upon him to do likewise; but too much was at stake for that to happen!

“As Yahweh had said” — Again, the opposition received from Egypt served to emphasize the omniscience of Yahweh.

Fourth Plague: Flies, Goshen Immune
— vv. 20-24.

Pharaoh’s stubbornness results in yet another plague, and the sphere of judgment widens. Previous plagues affected water, river and earth; now the air

becomes the arena of punishment as it is filled with insects afflicting the Egyptians, humbling yet another of the gods.

VERSE 20

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Rise up early in the the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water” — The early morning visit of Pharaoh to the Nile was obviously for religious purposes: an appropriate time for him to be accosted on behalf of the God of Israel. See also ch. 7:15.

“And say unto him, Thus saith Yahweh, Let My people go, that they may serve Me” — Behind this reiterated demand is the principle that apart from separation from Egypt, Israel cannot effectively serve Yahweh. See 2Cor. 6:15-18.

VERSE 21

“Else, if thou wilt not let My people go, behold, I will send” — The first nine plagues can be divided into three groups of two in each, with a warning, and the third without. Note: Ex. 8:16; 9:8; 10:21.

“Swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses; and the houses shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are” — Reference to this plague is also made in Psa. 78:45; 105:31. But what flies, if any, are meant? Rawlinson comments: “The exact character of the fourth plague depends on the proper translation of the word *‘arob*. The Jewish commentators connected this word with *‘ereb* and *‘arab*, words meaning ‘mingled’ or ‘mixed’; and supposed a mixed multitude of animals — beasts, reptiles, and insects — to be meant. But the expression used throughout, which is *har-‘arob*, the ‘*arob*,’ marks very clearly a single definite species. So much was clear to the Septuagint, who rendered the word by *kunomuia*, ‘the dog fly’ which is not the common house-fly (*musca domestica*), but a distinct species (*musca canina*). Flies of all kind are said to constitute a terrible affliction in Egypt: but they attack men chiefly, and do no harm to houses or to the fruits of the field, whereas the *‘arob* is

spoken of as a pest in the houses, and as 'destroying the land' (v. 24).

It has been, therefore, suggested that the *blatta orientalis*, or kakerlaque, a kind of beetle, is really intended. These creatures suddenly appear upon the Nile in great numbers; they 'inflict very painful bites with their jaws; gnaw and destroy clothes, household furniture, leather, and articles of every kind, and either consume or render unavailable all eatables' (Kalisch). They sometimes drive persons out of their houses; and they also devastate the fields."

The beetle was sacred to *Ra*, the sun god (*Dwellers On The Nile*), so that the miracle demonstrated that Yahweh controlled the very forms of nature which Egyptians worshipped.

In *Dead Men Tell Tales*, H. Rimmer suggests that the *ichneumon* fly is intended in the record. He writes: "the ichneumon fly is a symbol of this god (i.e. *Uatchit*), and their figures in tiny statues and on papyri are well known to the modern archaeologist. They are a brilliant and beautiful insect, somewhat prized by the entomologists of our day as specimens, but they can be a pest when they come in too numerous companies!"

However, the description of the text of the verse before us favors the beetle more than the fly, particularly the statement: "the ground whereon they are." This describes the beetle, but not particularly the fly.

As the result of the plague, these biting, gnawing creatures were found everywhere: outside, inside, swarming on people and property alike, biting, consuming, destroying; sending people mad with their painful presence.

In commenting upon this plague, the Psalmist declares: "He sent divers sorts of flies (one word in Hebrew, '*arob*') among them, which *devoured* them." The *ichneumon* fly does not attack people, but the *kakerlaque* beetle will do so.

VERSE 22

"And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people

dwelt, that no swarms of flies shall be there" —

This does not necessarily mean that the previous plagues had afflicted the land of Goshen, but is an invitation to Pharaoh to observe that this severance was, in fact, the case. It demonstrated that the plagues could not be explained away merely as unusual manifestations of nature, but were, in fact, miraculous manifestations of divine power on the part of the God of Israel. Though the immunity of the land of Goshen had not been specifically noted previously, it had been strongly implied. For example, Moses records that the Egyptians dug wells for water during the period of the first plague, but is silent about any such action on the part of the Hebrews, implying that they were not affected by it.

"To the end thou mayest know that I am Yahweh in the midst of the earth"

— The ultimate purpose of Yahweh is that all mankind might recognise His power and honour His purpose (see use of the phrase in the prophecy of Ezekiel: ch. 32:15; 33:29; 34:30; 35:4, 9, 12, 15, etc.

VERSE 23

"And I will put a division between My people and thy people" — The literal Hebrew for the word "division" (*peduwth*) signifies, "a redemption." This, together with the comparison established by the pronouns "*My* people" and "*thy* people," clearly shows that the One whose power had been manifested in the previous plagues, would once again save His people from the Egyptians.

The word *peduwth* is in the feminine gender, signifying "deliverance" and "distinction." The *Septuagint* renders it by the Greek *diastole*, rendered "difference" in Rom. 3:22; 10:12. Pharaoh was bluntly told that Yahweh had established a difference between Hebrews and Egyptians, and that the purpose of the division was the redemption, or deliverance of His people. The feminine form of the word is appro-



priate to His purpose, for it implied that Yahweh had selected His people to become His national Bride for marriage. Thus Isaiah declared: "Thy Maker is thine husband; Yahweh of hosts is His name" (Isa. 54:5; cp. Eze. 16:6-14).

Compare the application of the word, on the background of these events, as used in Isa. 50:2; Psa. 111:9; 130:7-8. "He sent redemption unto His people," declared the Psalmist.

The message of Yahweh to Pharaoh announced that God was claiming His people, and that Pharaoh must no longer view the Israelites as his slaves.

"Tomorrow shall this sign be" —

Particulars of time and place are stated beforehand, to demonstrate that the visitation would not be by chance, but by divine interposition.

VERSE 24

"And Yahweh did so" — Confirming the declaration of Moses, demonstrating that Almighty God was the power behind the threat against Pharaoh.

"And there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servant's houses, and into all the land of Egypt" — By the following day, Pharaoh literally "felt" the effect of the plague, for the gnawing, biting little

creatures had invaded the palace as well as the houses of his ministers, bringing pain or ruin to everything they attacked.

"The land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies" — The margin supplies the word "destroyed." The reference is to the land, suggesting that the beetles seriously damaged the growing crops.

Pharaoh Stubbornly Refuses To Honor His Promise — vv. 25-32.

The frightful damage caused by the fourth plague is followed by an urgent appeal from Pharaoh to Moses to remove it. He promises to allow the Israelites to sacrifice in the land, but Moses is insistent upon leaving Egypt for the purpose. The monarch agrees to let the people go, and again, at the request of Moses, the plague is stopped. Nevertheless Pharaoh further hardens his heart.

VERSE 25

"And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land" — In this comment, Pharaoh, at least, recognised the status of Yahweh as the God of the Hebrews, though he endeavoured to limit the concession he was prepared to grant them to worship Him.



VERSE 26

“And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to Yahweh our God” — The word “abomination” is from *towebah*, derived from the root *ta’ab*, “to loathe, detest.” It is used in Jer. 16:18 and 44:4 for idolatry. It could well be that Moses used the term in that sense, and warned Pharaoh that the Hebrews would be compelled to sacrifice animals that were sacred to the Egyptians.

Pharaoh, however, could have understood it to mean that the form of Hebrew worship would be considered abominable by Egyptians, which also would be the case. Both men viewed the problem from different perspectives.

“Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?” — In speaking of the local worship as “the abomination of the Egyptians,” Moses effectively revealed that the two forms of religious exercise were entirely irreconcilable, and demanded complete separation. *Rotherham* renders the statement: “Lo! could we sacrifice that which is an abomination to the Egyptians before their eyes, and they not stone us!” Sacrifice was essential to the worship of Yahweh, and this would have resulted in some of Egypt’s sacred animals, such as bulls or heifers, being put to death. The result could well have resulted in bloodshed.

VERSE 27

“We will go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to Yahweh our God, as He shall command us” — The exact form of service, required by Yahweh, had not then been revealed, as Moses again informed Pharaoh at a later date (Ex. 10:26).

VERSE 28

“And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to Yahweh your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away” — Pharaoh makes it plain that he is not prepared to allow the Israelites to escape altogether, and therefore agrees to let them go on the proviso

that they remain close to Egypt’s borders. Moses did not oppose that proposition, being prepared to leave the working out of the divine plan of redemption to Yahweh.

“Intreat for me” — See note on v. 8. Pharaoh no longer retained confidence in the mediation of his Egyptian priests and counsellors.

VERSE 29

“And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat Yahweh that the swarms of flies depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow” — As Pharaoh had fixed the time for the cessation of the second plague (v. 10), Moses does so now for the fourth.

“But let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Yahweh” — As Moses’ confidence increased, he became bolder in his speech. What now of his earlier excuse: “I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue” (Ex. 4:10)! The power of divine proclamation and his abhorrence of Pharaoh’s duplicity shows now in Moses’ forthright challenge.

VERSE 30

“And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated Yahweh” — The word “intreat” is *athar*, and signifies “to burn incense.” This suggests that because of the importance of the occasion and of the request, a careful, ceremonial approach was made to Yahweh.

VERSE 31

“And Yahweh did according to the word of Moses; and He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one” — Divine intervention was shown in the removal, no less than in the infliction of the plagues. The sudden and complete disappearance of the pests was as abnormal as their coming.

VERSE 32

“And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go” — See Ex. 7:13, 22.

CHAPTER NINE

YAHWEH'S WORD RESPECTED BY
PHARAOH'S SERVANTS

Pharaoh remaining obstinate, three more plagues are poured out upon his land, and more of Egypt's multiplicity of gods are humiliated. Plagues of murrain, boils and hail devastate the people, animals and land of Egypt, though the people of Israel in Goshen remain immune. Moses' warning words proving true on every occasion, some of Pharaoh's servants begin to respect them, and follow his instructions. Pharaoh, however, remains obdurate.

Fifth Plague: Murrain on Egyptian Beasts — vv. 1-7.

The fifth plague is the most terrible of all to this time. The frightful pestilence of murrain afflicts the cattle of Egypt, devastating the herds throughout the land. This is a terrible blow to Egyptian polytheism, for the cow, bull, heifer, and so forth, are objects of Egyptian worship. Hathor, the mother goddess of Egypt, represented with a human body and a cow's head, is humiliated. Apis, worshipped in the form of a bull, one of the triune resurrection gods, and thus the symbol of life, is laid low before the might of Yahweh. The mortality among the Egyptian cattle is frightful; yet the cattle of the Hebrews remain remarkably immune from the trouble.

**VERSE 1**

“Then Yahweh said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith Yahweh God of the Hebrews” — The covenant Name is significantly employed (see also, ch. 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:13; 10:3). A “Hebrew” was a “crosser-

over,” and thus the title is appropriated to a people which would be drawn out from Egypt, and “cross over” into the land promised to their father Abraham.

“Let My people go, that they may serve Me” — By now, Pharaoh must have dreaded the appearance of Moses in his palace, and yet he evidently feared to put him to death.

VERSE 2

“For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still” — The AV abruptly completes a verse at this point. One can imagine Pharaoh, tense and holding his breath, as he awaits the following words of Moses, which might well threaten some other area of Egypt's environment.

VERSE 3

“Behold, the hand of Yahweh is upon thy cattle which is in the field” — Cattle were worshipped in Egypt. One of the chief forms of worship was that of the “cow-goddess.” She was thought to be manifested in the cow, and was often displayed with a cow's head on a human body, or with a human head and the spreading horns of a cow, above which was represented the solar disk.

The *Book of the Dead* claims that *Hathor* provided nourishment for the soul

in the "other-world," and as such was supreme over most other gods.

In smiting the cattle, Yahweh struck a terrible blow at the theology in which Pharaoh placed confidence. The previous blows were nothing to this one. It constituted the beginning of the end of the conflict. If the all-powerful *Hathor* could not protect her faithful people from the power of Yahweh, who could? And what of *Apis*, the sacred bull, whose power was considered great, and whose temples were dotted over the land? On the forehead of *Apis* appeared the sacred triangle of eternity. The living worshipped him that they might live again in the world to come; and the dead were represented as worshipping him because he would make them to live again. This fifth plague, however, demonstrated that this supposedly all-powerful god was helpless to assist his followers against the might of Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews.

"Upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep" — Such animals were required for service, and for food. Their particular selection indicates the crisis that would develop from the affliction.

"There shall be a very grievous murrain" — The Hebrew *deber* signifies a "destroying pestilence." The *Septuagint* renders it as "death." It is a term frequently used for pestilence in general, but is here used specifically of a cattle disease. However, we have no means of knowing what was the actual epidemic. Some suggest that it was anthrax; others, splenic fever.

Murrain itself is a contagious disease among cattle, the symptoms of which are: the hanging down and swelling of the head, abundance of gum in the eyes, rattling in the throat, difficulty of breathing, palpitation of the heart, staggering, hot breath, shining tongue, all of which are indicative of general inflammation. We can imagine the dismay of the Egyptians as some disease, such as this, began to afflict their herds and animals.

VERSE 4

"And Yahweh shall sever between

the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt; and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel" — To emphasize the power of Yahweh over the gods of Egypt, the plague would stop at the borders of Goshen! The Hebrews would be protected from the distress that would overshadow Egypt.



VERSE 5

"And Yahweh appointed a set time, saying, To morrow Yahweh shall do this thing in the land" — Mercy was thus blended with judgment. The plague was to affect animals that were "in the field" (v. 3). This gave opportunity for any Egyptians who had learned to respect Moses' words, to bring their animals from out of the field, and so escape the threatened epidemic.

VERSE 6

"And Yahweh did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died" — That is, all the cattle belonging to those who chose to ignore the warning of Moses. Death stalked the fields of Egypt as the mysterious disease afflicted the animals. Their heads hung down miserably, their eyes glazed over, they tottered on their legs, and rolled over dead. Though the cattle were under the protection of some of the most powerful gods of Egyptian mythology they succumbed to the pestilence, demonstrating to any who might believe in the gods that they were no match for Yahweh's power.

"But of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one" — Revealing the ability of Yahweh to protect His own. Egypt was thereby taught that protection was to be found only within "the hope of Israel."

VERSE 7

"And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead" — Perturbed with the

devastating effect of this plague on his people, the king made special enquiry as to whether those of the Israelites were likewise affected. But not one of them was! The God of the Hebrews had apparently protected His people, although the many gods of Egypt were unable to do so for their worshippers!

As the cattle of the Egypt died by the thousands before the bewildered gaze of their Egyptian owners, Pharaoh was again forced to concede that the exemption of the Israelites from the plague was surely evidence of Yahweh's existence and power.

“And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go” — The pestilence expended itself, and though the animals of Egypt were sadly depleted, Pharaoh remained foolishly stubborn.

Sixth Plague: Ashes Into Boils And Blains — vv. 8-12.

Having struck at the most powerful gods of Egypt, and the king remaining stubborn, Yahweh now strikes at the priesthood. They are those appointed to mediate on behalf of the people towards heaven. But now Moses is told to sprinkle dust towards heaven. He does so, and a plague of boils afflicts both man and beast producing painful ulcers, and blisters. Even the priestly magicians of Egypt are plagued, and withdraw from the contest. Two gods in particular are shown to be ineffective by this plague: Imhotep the god of healing, and Sekhmet, a lion-headed goddess, which was supposed to have the power of both creating and finishing epidemics. A special priesthood ministered on her behalf, and special charms were employed by Egyptians to ward off evil in their lives. These prove useless in the face of Yahweh's power to inflict evil.

VERSE 8

“And Yahweh said unto Moses and unto Aaron” — There is no special warning given to Pharaoh of this plague.

“Take you handfuls of ashes of the furnace” — Perhaps the “furnace” related

to one of the brick-kilns in which Israelites labored. This would be appropriate, as such a furnace would be representative of the oppressions they suffered.

“And let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh” — This was a symbolic gesture to represent the mute appeal of afflicted Israelites towards heaven. Heaven's answer was revealed in the infliction of painful boils on Egyptians. It was done in Pharaoh's sight because he was responsible for the oppression.

The *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* comments: “This was a significant command; not only referring to the fiery furnace, which was a type of the slavery of the Israelites, but to a cruel rite common among the Egyptians. They had several cities styled *Typhonian*, in which at particular seasons they sacrificed men who were burnt alive; and the ashes of the victim were scattered upwards in the air, with the view, probably, that where any atom of dust was carried, a blessing entailed. The like, therefore, was done by Moses, though with a different intention, and more certain effect.”

Certainly no blessing on Egyptians followed Moses' action!

VERSE 9

“And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt” — The literal Hebrew is “it shall be as dust.” As such, it was spread by the breeze throughout the land of Egypt.

“And shall be a boil breaking forth with blains” — This can be literally rendered an “inflammation begetting pustules.” The word for “boil” is *shechin* and denotes “burning, an inflammation,” and therefore an ulcer.

The same word is used to describe Job's affliction (Job 2:7), and is rendered “botch” in Deu. 28:27, 35 where it is described as “the botch of Egypt.”

The word “blains” is from the Hebrew *ababuoth*, “to belch forth,” and describes an inflammatory pustule. The plague, therefore, was a severe, cutaneous disease, accompanied by pustulous ulcers, strongly

suggestive of Elephantiasis or the Black Leprosy such as Job suffered. This would certainly plunge the whole of Egypt into mourning, and, perhaps, was the worst of the plagues to be felt personally.

Reference seems to be made to it in the assurance given by Yahweh to His people in Ex. 15:26, where, in the name of *Yahweh Ropheka* (Yahweh the Physician), they are told that if they obey Him, He would put "none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians."

"Upon man, and upon beast throughout all the land of Egypt" — Those animals that remained after the devastation of the last plague suffered from this one. Egypt became a nation of mourning lepers.

VERSE 10

"And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast" — The word "furnace" is from the Hebrew *kibshon*, brick-kiln, though bricks were not often baked in Egypt. They may have been so done at this time, in order to supply the vast number of bricks required. The ashes thus represented the result of producing the bricks, and thrown into the air, affected the whole community.

VERSE 11

"And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians" — This is the last we hear of the magicians. The plague demonstrated, once and for all, their powerlessness to stand before Yahweh, in spite of their pretensions. Egyptian magicians were drawn from the priestly caste of Egypt, but with the "botch of Egypt" erupting all over them, who would want the ministrations of leprous priests! So once again, the religion of Egypt was discredited in the face of Yahweh's power.

Concerning the magicians, Wallis Budge, in *The Dwellers On The Nile*,

writes: "The art of dealing with spirits of all kinds, i.e. magic, was carefully studied by the priests, who were to all intents and purposes in the earliest times, magicians pure and simple. The Egyptians of all classes esteemed magic highly, and King Khati stated in the work that he wrote for his son, that *Heka*, i.e. *Magic* was invented by *Ra* himself. *Ra* apparently did not care to trouble himself about mortal affairs, and therefore gave to man the gift of *Heka*, so that he might be able to control the invisible and supernatural powers, both good and bad, for himself. The men who became professional magicians, no doubt, possessed psychological powers above the ordinary, and were persons of ability and great shrewdness. They were skilled in all the learning of their times, and wrote spells and incantations and charms which they used; their assistants performed the rites and ceremonies that were the necessary accompaniments of the spells. The chief instrument of the magician was the spell. To use this effectively he had to be a properly qualified person, and to wear the garb and bear the equipment of such. He had to recite the magical formula in a certain tone of voice, clearly and correctly, for if he forgot any part of it, or garbled it, the spell was inoperative. And the rites and ceremonies had to be performed with scrupulous care. *Ceremonial purity of both person and place was absolutely necessary.*

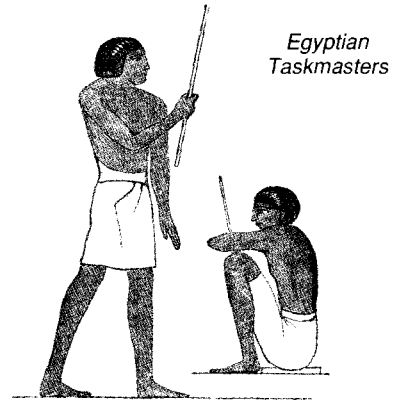
The magician wrote amulets for his clients on papyrus, leather, wood and stone plaques, and figures made of wax, wood, and stone, using names of power, magical diagrams, etc., and strings of meaningless syllables of somewhat similar sounds. The most curious of all the monuments left by the Egyptian magicians are probably the little tablets, rounded at one end, that were placed in the walls of houses and under the floors to protect their owners from the attack of evil spirits, fiends, demons, hobgoblins, and every kind of baleful influence that the Egyptians could imagine. Such a tablet is commonly called a *Cippus*, i.e. (pillar) of *Horus*, and the finest example known is

that which was published by Golenisheff (*Metternich-stele*, Leipzig, 1877). On this monument are sculptured nearly 300 figures of the gods of heaven, earth, and the *Tuat*, the underworld. On the sides and reverse are cut a series of magical legends in hieroglyphs... This Cippus originally stood in a prominent place in some building, probably a temple, and was intended to protect it, and those who were in it, every moment of the day and night. On it are figures of all the gods and goddesses of the cults of Ra and Osiris, and the gods of the seasons of the year, the months, the weeks, the days of the week, the hours, the planets, the Signs of the Zodiac, the Dekans, etc. It was believed to protect Psemthek-Ankh, who had it made from the attacks of *Set*, *Apep* and other gods of evil, and from every injury that noxious reptiles and Typhonic animals had the power to inflict upon man." This pillar of Horus is figured on page 129.

With the infliction of the present plague, however, it was perfectly obvious to Pharaoh and the whole world, that no magical incantation, no god or goddess of the thousands worshipped in Egypt, no supposed contact with the invisible world, had saved these magicians from the pollution of leprosy, and as "ceremonial purity of both person and place was absolutely necessary" for them to minister, they could no longer do so, nor remain in palace or temple because of the ceremonial uncleanness of their present affliction.

Possibly they had imagined that the sacrilegious action of Moses (as they would have considered it) in casting dust towards heaven would bring about his own downfall. To them his action must have constituted a bold challenge to the goddess *Neit*, called "the great Mother of the highest heaven." It seemed a challenge to the scattering of the ashes of human victims by magicians (see above note), which was done to the honor of the god *Sutekh*, or *Python*, to avert evil.

Possibly, at first, the magicians stood before Moses, awaiting the outpouring of the wrath of their gods upon him, until, to their horror, they found leprosy sores



bursting out all over their bodies, and fled the palace as defiled. No more could Pharaoh call upon their aid!

VERSE 12

"And Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them" — A repetition of the sad attitude of this stubborn and foolish monarch. See comment, Ex. 4:21.

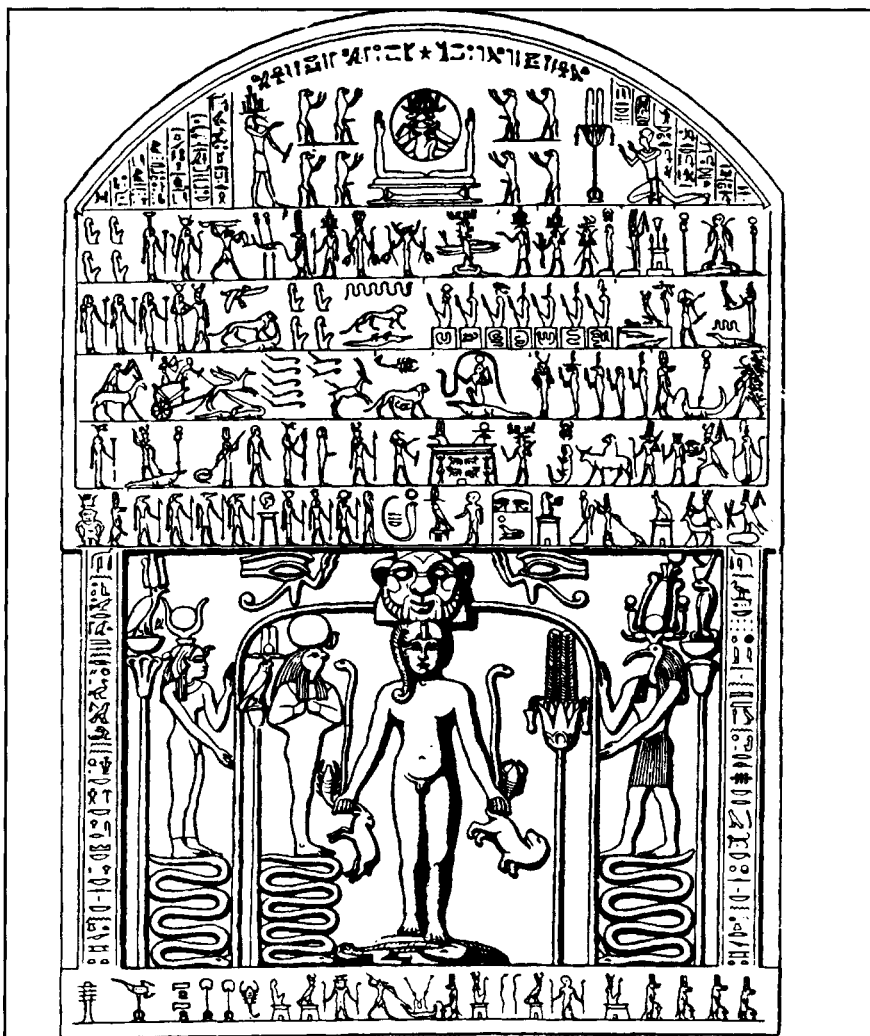
Pharaoh Warned Of The Next Plague — vv. 13-21.

Moses now receives a special commission from God, to arise early and again approach Pharaoh. He is to warn him that the time for 'minor' plagues is at an end, and Yahweh is about to vindicate Himself in judgments of such severity that all the world will be made conscious of His great power. Moses is to outline the next plague for Pharaoh, and urge upon him to either submit to Yahweh's will and let His people go, or make preparation against the devastation that shall sweep the land.

Some of Pharaoh's ministers, hearing the warning of Moses, take guard against the threatened judgment. They, at least, acknowledge Yahweh's power.

VERSE 13

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him" — Moses was to diligently apply himself to



Inscriptions used by the magicians of ancient Egypt. The pillar depicts Harpokrates (child of Isis), wearing the lock of youth and standing on crocodiles within a canopy made of the body of the serpent Mehen, and held in position by Isis and Thoth. Above him is the head of the Aged Sun-god. His mastery over noxious animals is shown by his holding scorpions and serpents and savage animals in his grasp. The reverse side depicts Ra, the Sun-god, as comprising in his own person all the powers, attributes and forms of every kind of living creature. The text contains a series of spells which were intended to break the power of the Seba fiends, and of the crocodiles and other evil reptiles. The magicians were completely discredited before Moses (see 2Tim. 3:8-9).

the divine instructions, rising early to perform his responsibilities.

“Thus saith Yahweh God of the Hebrews, Let My people go, that they may serve me” — Compare with Ex. 7:5.

VERSE 14

“For I will at this time send all My plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people” — Moses was instructed to warn Pharaoh that the time for ‘mild’ rebukes and ‘minor’ plagues was at an end. Now, even worst forms fell upon the nation in rapid succession, and which were designed to soften even “Pharaoh’s heart.” That “heart” was hard and obstinate, and, like metal, needed beating to make it pliable and to bring it into subjection to the divine will. Yahweh now intended to do that!

One would imagine that with such a warning in his ears, and with the experience of the previous plagues in mind, Pharaoh would instantly submit. But his training from youth, his status as god-king, his own deep-seated religious beliefs, his natural stubbornness, as well as the very foundation of the empire he ruled, prevented him doing so. He was a man raised up for the purpose of illustrating the mercy Yahweh had in view, and his natural disposition assisted to that end.

“That thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth” — Pharaoh’s very obstinacy would demonstrate Yahweh’s unique power, and acknowledgment of this is a necessary corollary to proper worship. Yahweh’s uniqueness would not only be demonstrated to Pharaoh and Egypt, but also to the Hebrews. They had to be educated in the Truth, weaned from every element of idolatry, and made to realise that the God they were called upon to worship is the one, living, true God, and that they must not have “any gods before Him.”

The plagues demonstrated God’s power, and therefore were an element in the salvation of the children of Israel, as well as that of any Egyptians who had the wisdom to heed. And some did, for a “mixed multitude” of people left with the

Israelites when they finally departed the land (ch. 12:38).

The same mighty, unique power is revealed for all who have “eyes to see” and “ears to hear,” in the amazing revival of modern Israel, and other remarkable signs of the times.

Similar words to those that Moses addressed to Pharaoh, were uttered by David to Goliath, the great representative of the power of flesh in later times (1Sam. 17:46-47). Ezekiel declared that the revival of Israel in the latter days would bring home to Gentiles the reality of Yahweh’s power (Eze. 36:23), as it ultimately will do so. Meanwhile, the obstinate, stubborn world of today continues to resist Yahweh’s will, as did Pharaoh formerly, and suffers from the plagues that are poured out upon it (Rev. 15:1-2).



VERSE 15

“For now I will stretch out My hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth” — These words suggest that Pharaoh would be personally destroyed in this plague, which, in fact, did not occur. However, they are more literally rendered: “For now might I have stretched out My hand and smitten thee... and then thou hadst been cut off from the earth.” Moses warned the stubborn, foolish king that Yahweh was “long-suffering” toward sinners (see 1Pet. 3:20; 2Pet. 3:15). In commenting upon this very incident, Paul reveals that goodness and severity were combined in the outpouring of the plagues and the longsuffering of Yahweh toward Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17-18; 11:22).

VERSE 16

“And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in

thee My power” — These vitally important words are cited by Paul in Rom. 9:17. They express clearly the purpose of Yahweh in tolerating Pharaoh’s obstinate refusal to perform His will. In fact, his obduracy brought the amazing deliverance of Israel prominently before the attention of men everywhere, by which Yahweh’s Name was declared, or “advertised” throughout the earth.

So effectively did the stubbornness of Pharaoh contribute toward this end, that it resulted in the conversion of Rahab forty years later (Josh. 2:9-11), and through Rahab came the line of descent to David and to Christ (Mat. 1). This was therefore a most important development in the divine purpose.

Today, when Yahweh is extending His hand “the second time” (Isa. 11:11) to recover His people, the stubborn opposition of Gentiles is again bringing His “witnesses” prominently before “all the nations” (Isa. 43:9-10; Jer. 32:20; Psa. 102:13-18; Rom. 11:15).

“And that My Name may be declared throughout all the earth” — The word “declared” is from *caphtar*, “to score, inscribe, recount,” and therefore, to proclaim abroad, to advertise. The opposition of Pharaoh, and the amazing miracles poured out upon Egypt in the form of plagues, effectively did this, as God intended it should (see Psa. 64:7-10; Isa. 63:12-14).

This, likewise, is His purpose today, in the remarkable developments He has brought about in Israel (Psa. 83:17-18). The *Name of Yahweh* proclaims His salvation, and this, too, was brought to the attention of all.

VERSE 17

“As yet exaltest thou thyself against My people, that thou wilt not let them go?” — The verb rendered “exaltest” denotes “to oppose.” It is from a root signifying “to raise a mound” as in a siege, and therefore to obstruct.

VERSE 18

“Behold, tomorrow about this time I

will cause it to rain” — To an Egyptian this was an incredible prediction. The average annual rainfall in the region of Cairo is about 50mm (two inches), while south of this area, rain is a rare occurrence, the land depending upon dew or the overflowing of the Nile for its irrigation.

Notice, also, that Moses predicted, not only the day, but *the very hour* when the miracle would occur: “about this time.”

“A very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt” — A storm of unprecedented extent and power would sweep the land.

“Since the foundation thereof even until now” — That is, since Egypt was established as a nation (v. 24).

VERSE 19

“Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die” — One might wonder as to where the cattle would come from, since they had been described as “destroyed” in the previous plague (v. 6)!

But several explanations are possible. If some of the Egyptians heeded the warning of Moses, and brought their cattle in from the field (v. 3); or they replenished their herds at the expense of the Israelites whose cattle were not affected, perhaps new herds were brought in from other countries.

Certain *Inscriptions* depict entire herds being driven into Egypt from the south and from Libya, and this might have been the case on that occasion.

VERSE 20

“He that feared the word of Yahweh among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses” — Some among Pharaoh’s servants were moved by the warning of Moses. Cp. Phl. 2:13; Pro. 16:16; 22:3, 23.

VERSE 21

“And he that regarded not the word

of Yahweh left his servants and his cattle in the field” — Egypt was divided among those who heeded Yahweh’s Word, and those who rejected it. As Lot “seemed like one who mocked unto his sons-in-law,” so the words of Moses must have seemed to many in Egypt as rather unreasonable. A hailstorm that would endanger life was beyond the experience of Egyptians, and must have seemed utterly impossible.

The warning was rejected by such, as the warning of Christ’s second coming is rejected by most today, even though it provides the only real solution for the world’s troubles. The Word of Yahweh is powerful, and men are judged by what they do with it (John 12:48).

Seventh Plague: Hail And Storm — vv. 22-26.

Moses is called upon to stretch forth his rod, and a terrible storm of thunder, hail and lightning sweeps the land. It is of such extent and ferocity as to cause widespread damage and death. Nothing like this has ever happened before. It is a challenge to the gods of Egypt who are supposed to be in charge of the elements, and particularly to Shu, the god of light, heat, air and dryness. His worshippers crouch in fear in the face of Yahweh’s fury. But, miraculously, the land of Goshen is again exempt.

VERSE 22

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand towards heaven” — An acknowledgement that the judgment would be a manifestation of divine power.

“That there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt” — This seventh plague commenced those of greater severity as Moses had warned. In addition, they came as a result of Moses stretching forth his hand, rather than Aaron, as previously.

VERSE 23

“And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven” — Moses is now the agent for the divine judgments on Egypt. See Ex. 10:13, 22.

“And Yahweh sent thunder, and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground” — The crash and roar of thunder, the rhythmic beat of huge hailstones upon the roofs of buildings, the fierce flash of lightning which, striking down from heaven, sped along the ground like fireballs, would not only send everybody fleeing for shelter, but would cause them even there to crouch down in fear and trembling.

It will be matched by the thunder, lightning and hail that are yet to be poured out upon the world at large (Rev. 16:18, 21).

“And Yahweh rained hail upon the land of Egypt” — This repetition serves to emphasize the unusual nature of the phenomenon.

VERSE 24

“So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous” — The word “mingled” is literally “unfolding.” This description is repeated by Ezekiel in describing the fire manifested in his vision of the cherubim (Eze. 1:4), suggesting cherubic manifestation in Egypt at this time. It suggests a fire that was not a mere flash, but which continued for some time.

“Such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation” — Originally Egypt was two nations, but had been united into one.

VERSE 25

“And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field” — See v. 31. The hail broke the limbs of trees, so ruining the prospects of fruit. The people were not only to suffer the loss of their orchards, but also the harvests that would have resulted from the expected fruit.

VERSE 26

“Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail” — For the Israelites there was peace in the midst of the storm. As miraculous as the storm was, the peace was even more so. This is the situation of true disciples of Christ, who can rest confidently in his “peace” notwithstanding the troubles in the world (John 14:27). This will again be experienced as the divine judgments are poured out upon a wicked world (Isa. 26:20).

Moses Intercedes For Pharaoh
— vv. 27-35.

Unfortunately for Egypt, the storm does not blow itself out. It continues without intermission, bringing to a halt all activity, and sending the people mad with fear. No mention is now made of Egypt's magicians, wise men or priests. The arrogant king realises that Moses and Aaron alone have the means of stilling the storm. He is distressed by its ferocity, and is now prepared to concede what he previously resisted. Humbly he acknowledges his faults, and pleads for help, promising to grant the request of Yahweh to let the Israelites go. Moses agrees to intercede for him, but also predicts that, again, Pharaoh would not remain true to his word. So the hands of Moses are stretched towards heaven, and suddenly there is a calm. The peace that ensues again brings characteristic stubbornness to Pharaoh's heart. In the presence of his servants he refuses to capitulate his authority by letting the people go.

VERSE 27

“And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron” — The severity of the plague impressed even Pharaoh. For the first time, deaths were reported among the people (vv. 19, 25), by which he recognised the urgency of the situation, and realised that only Moses and Aaron could solve it.

“And said unto them, I have sinned this time” — Pharaoh had sinned throughout the transactions with Moses,

and not only “this time.” Nevertheless, this was a great acknowledgement on the part of the arrogant king. It revealed that his spiritual perspective had considerably improved. Previously he had been forced to acknowledge the existence of Yahweh (Ex. 8:8); now he is compelled to recognise the existence of His laws. However, this confession had been wrung from his lips by adversity, not out of true respect or love of Yahweh. It did not manifest a genuine attitude on his part, as Moses bluntly told him (v. 30).

“Yahweh is righteous, and I and my people are wicked” — This was a remarkable confession, and illustrated to Moses the significance of Yahweh's Word to him as stated in v. 14. Pharaoh's heart was being softened by the repeated blows from Yahweh, forcing the king to recognise the true status of the God of Israel. The word *hatzadik* (“righteous”) signifies “The Just One,” so that Pharaoh, who had originally contemptuously asked: “Who is Yahweh?” (Ex. 5:2), was now brought to confess before the hated Hebrew: “Yahweh is the Just One.”

The word translated “wicked” is *harasha-im*, plural as “the wicked ones.” For use of the word see comment at Gen. 13:13.

VERSE 28

“Intreat Yahweh (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer” — In asking Moses to mediate on his behalf, the king conceded that Yahweh was stronger than the gods of Egypt. In saying, “it is enough,” he meant, “there is no need of any further plagues, I will submit.”

In the Hebrew, “mighty thunderings” is literally “thunderings of Elohim.” Pharaoh recognised, by word at least, the Elohist manipulation of the plagues (cp. Heb. 1:14).

VERSE 29

“And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto Yahweh”

— This implies that Moses did not reside in the city, but probably lived in Goshen with the other Israelites.

“And the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is Yahweh’s” — Yahweh’s control of the forces of nature throughout Egypt demonstrated that the whole earth is His (Psa. 24:1; 1Cor. 10:26, 28). He can cause prosperity or adversity.

VERSE 30

“But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord Yahweh” — The word “fear” refers to the reverential fear of God revealed in keeping His commandments (Ecc. 12:13).

In answering Pharaoh in this manner, Moses showed growing confidence in Yahweh’s manifestations of power, and his own ability.

VERSE 31

“And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled” — Rotherham renders “bolled” as “in flower.” This takes place towards the end of January and beginning of February, at which time the barley also comes into ear. For the first time in the record we have some indication of time periods in relation to the plagues. Some time must have elapsed between each plague for Pharaoh to relapse into hardness, and refuse to permit what he had earlier agreed to do.

VERSE 32

“But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they were not grown up” — Rotherham renders the last statement as “ripe.”

But what is meant by “rye”? Rye is not grown in Egypt, and the RV has “spelt” instead. The Hebrew word is *cussemeth*, from *casam*, to have long hair. It seems as though some bearded grain is meant, such as spelt, which is an inferior kind of wheat. *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* identifies it with the *kirsenneh*, a leguminous plant universally cultivated in the East. The

wheat harvest ripens about a month after barley, so, although it was not ripe, the crop would have grown, being ready for ripening. The crops would have taken a terrible battering from such a storm, but no more than the worship of Egypt! For, what of *Nut* the sky-goddess, from whence such evil came! What of *Isis* and *Seth* who were supposed to overlook crops and see to their welfare! Pharaoh could place no confidence in any of those; they would provide him no solution to the problem facing the land; he had to turn to Moses for relief from the plague.

VERSE 33

“And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto Yahweh” — Again figuratively acknowledging the divine power that would conclude the plague, as it had commenced it (v. 22).

The city would have been Memphis, the residence of royalty at the time, and much nearer to Goshen than Thebes to the south, which later became the capital.

“And the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth” — Outside the city, and probably back in Goshen, Moses prayed to Yahweh, and the storm ceased (James 5:16-18). What a relief to the people when the ear-splitting crash of thunder and the deafening clatter of millions of hailstones on the roofs of houses suddenly stopped, and the steady pattering of heavy rain abruptly ended.

For a moment there would have been an uneasy silence, with people looking at one another hopefully. Had it stopped for good? A tentative look outside, seeing the clouds rolling away and the sun shining again, brought a feeling of relief, followed by a distressing discovery of the damage. Devastation everywhere! Barley crops ruined; half-grown wheat beaten into the ground; houses damaged; cattle and men lying dead in the fields, the beasts and the servants of those who ignored the Word of Yahweh!

But in the palace, Pharaoh remained in sulky, stupid stubbornness.

VERSE 34

“And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants” — What Pharaoh probably did was to prevaricate — putting off the fatal decision day after day, until he so steeled his heart as to resist altogether. He was supported in this by his servants. Perhaps some of them had experienced the death of slaves, the loss of cattle and crops, and out of frustrated anger, desired vengeance upon the Israelites. They would feel even greater hatred toward the Hebrews when it became known that the land of Goshen, had been miraculously exempt from the storm that expended itself upon the Egyptians with such fury.



Above: Ruins of Ancient Memphis.

VERSE 35

“And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as Yahweh had spoken by Moses” — Moses’ words to the king were thus vindicated.



Right: The Modern Village

CHAPTER TEN

THE FINAL INTERVIEW WITH PHARAOH

Once again Pharaoh hardens his heart, and Yahweh tolerates it for two reasons: [1] That He might reveal His signs before him and all the world; [2] That future generations of Israelites might recall His power and never forget the amazing deliverance thus effected. Moses and Aaron again warn of a further devastating plague — this time of locusts. They give notice that locusts will devour the remaining crops if the king does not submit. With growing confidence, Moses and Aaron deliver the ultimatum, and without awaiting Pharaoh’s reply, abruptly leave his presence.

Appalled at the devastating effect of the plagues, Pharaoh’s servants begin to remonstrate with him. Moses and Aaron are recalled, and a proposition of compromise is offered diplomatically to them. They reject it, and are driven from the palace of the king. Soon afterwards a cloud of locusts darkens the land, and the worst

locust plague in history devastates what crops have remained after the storm. Again Moses and Aaron are hastily recalled. Their help is sought, and through their mediation the locusts are driven from Egypt.

Again, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and the ninth frightening plague follows. The sun is blotted out, and complete darkness follows, so gloomy that it could be felt. Pharaoh suggests a further compromise which is rejected. In anger, his temper asserts itself, and he orders Moses and Aaron from his presence, warning them that should they appear before him again, they would die. Moses accepts the decision, and leaves, to prepare his people for the last contest with Egypt.

Pharaoh Warned but His Servants Plead in Vain — vv. 1-11.

The hardened heart of Pharaoh is used by Yahweh to demonstrate both to Egypt and to His people the remarkable deliverance He is about to effect. Pharaoh is warned of the severity of the plague of locusts that will devastate the land if he persists in his folly. In terror, the servants of Pharaoh hear the threat of further trouble to come, and urge the king to capitulate to the demands of the Hebrews. Moses and Aaron are recalled to the presence of Pharaoh, who suggests compromise. When this is rejected, the king erupts in anger, repeats the offer, and warns Moses and Aaron of the consequences of their refusal to accept what he places before them, ordering them out of his presence. In view of the punishment already inflicted on Egypt, Pharaoh's threat has but a hollow sound.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart” — The word for “hardened” is *kabed*, “to make dull; burdensome” It suggests the natural characteristic of Pharaoh, and because of his dullness, Moses was commanded to interview him once more.

“And the heart of his servants” — With the increasing severity of the plagues, and the wavering of the king's

determination, the influence of the court officials became more pronounced. Notice the emphasis given to them in Ex. 9:34; 10:7.

“That I might shew these My signs before him” — Had Pharaoh yielded earlier, the last and greatest plagues, including the slaying of the firstborn leading to the Passover, would not have been wrought. But in that case, some of the Egyptians would not have been convinced of Yahweh's power. Thus God prolonged the plagues because of the stubbornness of Pharaoh, so that all were made conscious of His glory (see Jer. 32:20-21). The circumstances illustrated important principles of redemption as Paul outlined in Rom. 9:17-23.

VERSE 2

“And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them” — The deliverance was dramatised in the Feast of Passover which also emphasized the spiritual lessons to be obtained thereby (Ex. 13:8-9, 14; Deu. 4:9; 6:20-22; Psa. 44:1). Thereafter, the mighty deeds of Yahweh in Egypt were constantly recalled (Psa. 78:4-6; 105:23-38; 106:6-16; 77:14-20; 81:5-6; 114:1-3; 135:8-9; 136:10-15). Those “in Christ” are also enjoined to “remember” the mighty

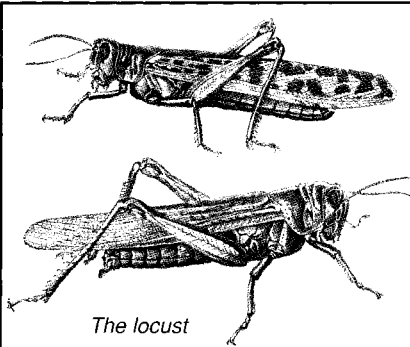
deliverance effected in their lives by the true Passover Lamb (Eph. 2:11-14).

“That ye may know how that I am Yahweh” — As the name *Yahweh* is prophetic of the purpose of Deity to manifest Himself in a people of His choice, the deliverance from Egypt provided signs indicative of this. The signs illustrated that Yahweh separates a people unto Himself, overshadows their lives for good, delivers them from the slavery of sin that leads to eternal death, provides them with a law, and brings them into covenant relationship with Himself. The fulness of His Name, therefore, was dramatised by such means.

The Name had been proclaimed before, but was not “known” experimentally until then, for it awaited the divine determination to be manifested in a family. This was to be seen in the separation of Israel from Egypt, and the constitution of the nation as the people of God.

The crossing of the Red Sea illustrated the dramatic separation between Egypt and the people of Yahweh, comprising a vindication of the Name (Ex. 15:3; Jer. 32:20; Isa. 63:12). Eight hundred years later, Yahweh declared through Ezekiel: “I wrought for My Name’s sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made Myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt” (Eze. 20:9, 14, 22).

Notice that the acknowledgement of the Name is associated with separation from the Gentiles, and compare this principle in 2Cor. 6:17-18.



The locust

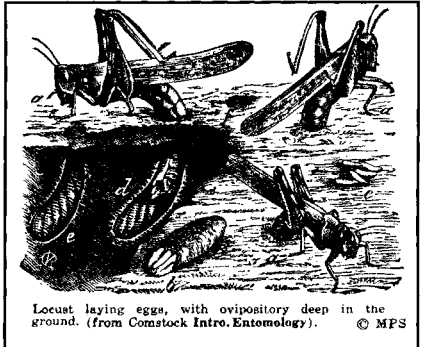
VERSE 3

“And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith Yahweh God of the Hebrews” — See note on this significant divine title at ch. 3:15, 18.

“How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me” — This was a very imperious demand to be made by the leaders of slaves to the world’s most powerful monarch, but, of course, Moses and Aaron did not only represent the people, but Yahweh, the “great King” of the heavens, who is above all the Elohim (Psa. 95:3), and their words were dictated in His Name. This was the seventh, and final demand made to Pharaoh, to let the people go (see Ex. 5:1; 7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,33; 11:1); an appropriate number, seven (Heb. *sheva*) being the number of the covenant or completeness.

VERSE 4

“Else, if thou refuse to let My people



Locust laying eggs, with ovipository deep in the ground. (from Comstock Intro. Entomology). © MPS

go, behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast" — The locust was so dreaded in Egypt, that peasants regularly prayed to the locust god *Serapis*, who was supposed to protect the land from their destructive activities.

The word "locust" is from the Hebrew *arbeh*, derived from a root signifying "to increase." The name is indicative of rapid multiplication. Locusts are said to multiply quicker than most other insects. It is estimated that a square mile of a swarm will contain from 100 million to 200 million of the creatures; and swarms covering more than 400 square miles have been recorded. Flying locusts are regarded as marvels of stamina; they are able to flap their wings continuously for seventeen hours, and to fly at a cruising air speed of twelve to fifteen kilometres an hour for twenty hours or more. In *Moses And The Gods Of Egypt*, the author explains: "No one who has ever seen the locust at work accuses the Bible account of hyperbole. In 1926 and 1927, small swarms of the African migratory locusts were spotted in an area 50 by 120 miles on the plain of the river Niger near Timbuktu. The next year swarms invaded Senegal and Sierra Leone. By 1930 the whole of West Africa was flailing away at the pests with everything movable. But the locusts didn't seem to notice; swarms reached Khartoum, more than 2,000 miles to the east of Timbuktu, then turned south, spreading across Ethiopia, Kenya, the Belgian Congo, and in 1932, striking into the lush land of Angola and Rhodesia. Before the plague finally sputtered out, fourteen years after it began, it affected five million square miles of Africa, an area nearly double the size of the United States."

Moses' threat to Pharaoh, therefore, was a very real one, and calculated to cause him a chill of fear.

VERSE 5

"And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth" — Locusts are known to achieve a depth of 30 centimetres. The expression indicates the extreme conditions that

would afflict the land.

"And they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field" — The Egyptians already had suffered considerable loss as the result of the previous plague. It would have been difficult to save the wheat after the battering it received. Now the information is given that even what remained would be destroyed. Locusts eat every appearance of verdure in the district attacked by them. In an incredibly short time, trees are stripped bare, crops are devoured and the previously green and smiling field is turned into a brown desert. A locust is capable of eating its own body-weight daily.

VERSE 6

"And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day" — This describes impossible living conditions, with locusts carpeting the floors several inches thick, leaping upon the tables, upon the beds, devouring the food, making life miserable.

The plague was to be unprecedented in the history of man. In describing one experience, Burckhardt commented: "They penetrate by thousands into the private dwellings, and devour whatever they can find, even the leather of the water vessels."

"And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh" — Moses did not wait for any answer from Pharaoh. In the name of Yahweh, he had issued an ultimatum, and now actions, not words, were required.

VERSE 7

"And Pharaoh's servants said unto him" — Under the hardships they experienced, Pharaoh's servants and ministers were becoming more vocal (cp. Ex. 9:34; 10:1). The magicians already had acknow-

ledged the hand of God (Ex. 8:19).

“How long shall this man be a snare unto us?” — The word denotes a noose or trap to catch animals, and thus signifies *to endanger*.

“Let the men go, that they may serve Yahweh their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” — The word for “men” is *enoshim* and denotes mortals, whether male or female (ct. v. 11), with particular reference to weakness of mankind.

VERSE 8

“And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh” — This evidently was instigated by Pharaoh’s courtiers, and not by the king himself, who, however, sulkily agreed to the interview. He could sense a feeling of revolt among his own subjects.

“And he said unto them, Go serve Yahweh your God: but who are they that shall go?” — Pharaoh commenced to bargain with Moses and Aaron, in a sad attempt to retain the dignity of his status.

VERSE 9

“And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters” — This was a reasonable request which Egyptians would have appreciated, for it was usual, according to Herodotus (*Book 2:60*) for Egyptian children to attend religious festivals with their parents. It is a principle with the Father that children accompany their parents in worship, so that the family is not separated (cp. *Psa. 148:12*). See the antitype in *Isa. 65:23*. It is a sad commentary on current trends that young people are encouraged to separate from the older, and distinctions are made in ecclesial activities. A stronger ecclesia, and a more fervent worship, is developed when all members of the spiritual family are encouraged to joint participation in its exercises.

“With our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto Yahweh” — The flocks and herds were required for sacrifice. However, this part

of the demand must have surely rubbed salt into Pharaoh’s wounds, as he contemplated that his own flocks and herds had been destroyed!

VERSE 10

“And he said unto them, Let Yahweh be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you” — These words appear clumsily in the AV, and read as though Pharaoh granted permission for Israel to leave. The RSV amends it as follows: “Yahweh be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go. Look, you have some evil purpose in mind.” The *Berkeley Version* renders it: “He said, May Yahweh be with you if I intend to let you and your little ones go! Look out! You are plotting mischief.” It adds the comment that mockery, derision, arrogance and anger mark this insulting harangue. The king began to feel that he was beaten and he resented it. Notice also, that, for the first time, his refusal revealed one of the main reasons for his obstinacy. He feared that Moses was plotting to leave Egypt to join with some other enemy, and to return to conquer Egypt (see *Ex. 1:10*); he warned him that both spokesman and nation would suffer the consequences of such contemplated action if they persisted in their demands.

VERSE 11

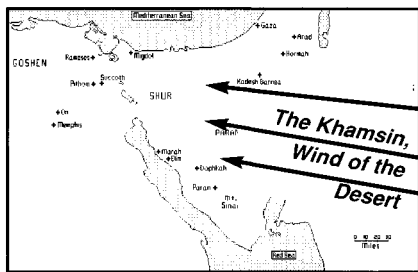
“Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve Yahweh; for that ye did desire” — The Hebrew for “men” is *ha giborim* and denotes adult men in the full vigour of physical power. Pharaoh was prepared to let such men go if they left their families behind, for he knew that, under such conditions, they would return. The condition, however, was unacceptable to Moses; he would not separate the adult members from the children.

“And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence” — The literal Hebrew is “he drove out them from the face of Pharaoh.” Pharaoh showed his displeasure, and Moses and Aaron were thrust out of his presence by an officious

attendant. This was an insult not previously suffered by the brothers. It was obvious from Moses' increasing firmness, and Pharaoh's mounting impatience, that the crisis was moving to a climax.

Eighth Plague: Locusts Darken the Earth — vv. 12-15.

Moses stretches forth his rod, and a strong east wind commences to blow, which continues without ceasing for a day and a night. On the following morning come the locusts. They come in such numbers as have never previously been seen, and darken the sky. What harvest is left is soon devoured; what trees have growth, are soon bared of all foliage, and even homes are invaded.



VERSE 12

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left” — See ch. 9:32.

VERSE 13

“And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and Yahweh brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night” — The east wind (*Qadim*) crosses sandy wastes before reaching Egypt. It blows with violence, and is the prevailing wind from February to June. Known as *The Khamsin*, or “Wind of the Desert,” it commonly visits Egypt about the time of the vernal equinox. It is accompanied by an awful and weird darkness, caused by the dense clouds of fine

sand that are whipped up by the wind, and which intercept the sun's rays, producing darkness. It usually blows for the space of about two, or at the most, three days.

“And when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts” — Locusts normally ride with the wind. An east wind would have brought them from northern Arabia, which is noted as the home of the insect. The Hebrew for “locust” (*arbeh*) can sound like “arab” (see Rev. 9:3).

VERSE 14

“And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt” — The area of Egypt is about 840 kilometres (520 mls) long by 32 km (20 mls) wide. Clouds of locusts, 800 km (500 mls) in length, are not uncommon.

“Very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such” — The Hebrew word rendered “grievous” signifies *to be heavy*, and its use indicates that the plague rested heavily upon the nation of Egypt. The plague was unique, not only in its extent, but because the remarkable locusts avoided the lush land of Goshen, and in that way went right against their natural instincts.

VERSE 15

“For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened” — They carpeted the whole of Egypt, so that the land could not be seen. People out walking had to crunch their way through locusts. The insects invaded the homes, leaping upon everything, making life a perfect misery (v. 6).

“And they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt” — Thus the original creative work by God in forming the garden of delight, with herbs and trees (Gen. 1:11) was reversed, because of the obstinacy of Egypt. Joel describes the effect of

locusts by stating: "The land is like the garden of Eden before them; and behind them a desolate wilderness" (Joel 2:3). Egypt was reduced to that state.

Moses Again Intercedes For Pharaoh — vv. 16-20.

With the effect of the plague heavy upon Egypt, and with locusts penetrating even the precincts of the palace, Pharaoh urgently calls for Moses and Aaron, and, acknowledging his fault, pleads with them to intercede with Yahweh on his behalf. In consequence, a strong west wind drives the plague of locusts into the Red Sea, and Egypt again has peace. But once again the stubbornness of Pharaoh asserts itself, and he does not grant permission to Israel to leave.

VERSE 16

"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste" — With what little crops that had remained, now destroyed, and the land laid bare, Pharaoh urgently sought the aid of Moses.

And he said, I have sinned against Yahweh your God, and against you — See Ex. 9:27. The confession and acknowledgement of a divine act was meaningless in the absence of action to remedy acknowledged failings.

VERSE 17

"Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat Yahweh your God, that He may take away from me this death only" — Pharaoh had been humbled enough to seek forgiveness, but it was academic only: a shallow mouth-confession that was not vindicated by action (see Pro. 28:13). It was merely designed only to gain relief from the plague, which was so severe as to threaten to destroy the nation. Pharaoh, as representative of the people of Egypt, sought help to avoid the death that threatened.

VERSE 18

"And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated Yahweh" — Once again

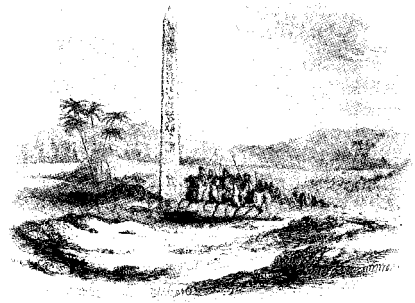
the power of prayer was demonstrated.

VERSE 19

"And Yahweh turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts" — The Hebrew words for "west wind" are *ruach yam*, "wind (or spirit) of the sea," i.e. the Mediterranean. The "wind from the sea" was powerful enough to sweep the locusts eastwards into the Red Sea.

"And cast them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt" — The Hebrew *yam suph* signifies "sea of reeds." Some claim that it was so called because of the abundance of algae or sea-weed found in it. However, there is little sea-weed to be found in the Red Sea! Perhaps the reference to reeds, or weeds, is figurative of sin (cp. Heb. 6:8). The Septuagint has "Red Sea," and this seems correct. Certainly a shallow lake of reeds, separate from the Red Sea itself, as some claim it to be, would scarcely be sufficient to destroy a plague of locusts of the magnitude of this one!

This is the first time in Scripture that reference is made to the *Red Sea*, a sea that subsequently played such a prominent part in the divine purpose. It is about 2,170 kms (1,350 mls) long and 400 kms



Sketch of Heliopolis in Egypt

(250 mls) wide at the mid-section, gradually diminishing towards the Suez Canal. It is divided into the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba. The territory of Edom extended down to the Red Sea, which suggests another reason why it received that name, *Edom* meaning “red” and standing for sin (see Gen. 25:25).

VERSE 20

“But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go” — Though the harvest was ruined, the locusts were gone, and food could be replenished from some other source. The respite Yahweh permitted, caused Pharaoh, in the stubbornness of his heart, to again foolishly resist the divine command and, perhaps, to barter as to who should go. Yahweh’s contribution to this hardening, was the removing of the plague: Pharaoh’s natural dullness did the rest.

Ninth Plague: Darkness Over the Land — vv. 21-23.

Without warning to Pharaoh, Moses, following the instructions of Yahweh, stretches his hand towards heaven, and suddenly the land of Egypt is plunged into total, gloomy darkness for three days, as the light of the sun is completely obscured. It is a supernatural, eerie darkness, such as can be felt. Even the moon and the stars are not shining. It is a darkness, so severe, that the people remain in their dwellings for three days, though, in Goshen there is light in the dwellings of the Hebrews. This plague therefore resulted in indignities being experienced by the highest of the Egyptian gods: Ra, the god of the sun, and Thoth, who is represented as setting the sun and moon in their places, and so giving light day and night — as well as others of the Egyptian pantheon.

VERSE 21

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt” — Such a darkness may have

been induced by an extremely severe *khamzin*, a very harsh wind of the desert, that normally afflicts Egypt. It has been known to blot out the light of the sun, and in doing so induces an awful and weird darkness, caused by dense clouds of fine sand. It drives people indoors and is extremely unpleasant. It generally lasts for two or three days.

On one visit to Egypt, we personally experienced this very condition when the *khamzin* began to blow. The morning had commenced pleasantly enough, but by 10 a.m. the light of the sun had been obscured. We had to catch a plane to Lebanon, and to brave the biting, cutting sand to do so. Our plane was the last to leave, after which the authorities were compelled to close down the air terminal until the *khamzin* blew itself out. From aloft, we were able to look down upon the blanket of dust that covered the land for hundreds of miles. If it were the *khamzin* that was used by Yahweh against Pharaoh, it was of supernatural severity.

Such a gloom is prophesied to figuratively cover the whole earth at the time of the Lord’s return. Isa. 60:2 speaks of a time when “darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.” This will repeat in the moral and political conditions of the earth in the latter days, what physically occurred in the land of Egypt in the times of Pharaoh.

VERSE 22

“And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days” — This plague struck at the very heart of Egyptian worship. *Ra*, the god of the sun, was among the chief of the gods. To the Egyptians, his unflinching faith in providing the light of the sun, day after day, was the subject of great rejoicing and confidence. The sun was worshipped through other gods also, such as *Horus* and *Atum*.

The headquarters of the worship of *Atum* was at Heliopolis, the city of the sun. It is given the name of *On* in Gen. 41:45 and was the city from whence came

Joseph's wife. *Aten* (or *Aton*), another god which was worshipped in the form of a deified sun disk, and whose headquarters were at Amarna, was very prominent in Egyptian theology. Indeed, when Pharaoh Akhenaton endeavoured to overthrow the polytheism of Egypt, and replace it by the worship of one god, he selected *Aten* for that purpose.

Even the Trinity had its form of worship in Egypt, and was associated with the sun. It was found in the triune worship of *Amon-Ra*, his wife *Mut*, and their son *Khons*. Other gods also deified the sun, moon and stars, all of which were blotted out by the thick darkness of this plague. Thus, whereas earlier plagues had brought about the destruction of property, personal discomfort, pain and even death, this one blotted out the gods themselves, and caused the total immobilisation of the nation. It also challenged the status of Pharaoh for he was considered a representative of *Ra*. See the significance of his name in the comments on Ex. 6:1.

The three days of darkness over Egypt are figurative of the three days during which the Lord Jesus resided in the darkness of the grave, awaiting the new day of resurrection. The leaders of Jewry, who acted as did Pharaoh in Egypt, refused to acknowledge the divine character of the Son of God, and to accept his teachings.

VERSE 23

"They saw not one another" — This indicates the extreme nature of the visitation, far worse than any normal *khamsin*. If it were the *khamsin* that caused darkness, the wind and the sand would quench any artificial light.

"Neither rose any from his place for three days" — This does not mean that they did not move about indoors, but that they did not venture outside. A similar expression is used in Ex. 16:29 indicating this situation. The air, thick with sand, made even artificial light difficult.

"But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." — This light was miraculously provided by Yahweh, concerning whom Israelites later sung:

"Yahweh is my Light and my Salvation" (Psa. 27:1. See also Psa. 112:4; 118:27; 119:105, 130). For the antitype consider 1Pet. 2:9; Phil. 2:15 — the Truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, is able to illuminate the lives of its believers, even though darkness surrounds the civilisation of the world (Isa. 60:2).

Pharaoh Pleads For Relief, But Remains Obstinate — vv. 24-29.

In desperation, Pharaoh again calls for Moses and bargains with him. He agrees to let Israel go, but the animals must remain behind. Moses rejects the compromise, and states as an ultimatum that there must be a complete withdrawal of Israelites and their flocks, herds and possessions. Pharaoh's stubbornness erupts in fierce anger and he orders Moses out of his presence, warning that if he returns he will be put to death. Moses accepts the challenge and retorts that he will not return. The crisis has reached a climax.

VERSE 24

"And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve Yahweh; only let your flocks and herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you" — Nearing the breaking point, Pharaoh concedes everything but the flocks and herds, convinced that this will act as a deterrent on Israel, requiring the people to return to Egypt. The term "your little ones" is "your families" in Hebrew.

VERSE 25

"And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto Yahweh our God" — To grant this request, Pharaoh would have to compromise with his religion, for he worshipped the very animals Israel would use in sacrifice! Moses leaves no doubt as to what he meant by his following words.

VERSE 26

"Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind;

for thereof must we take to serve Yahweh our God; and we know not with what we must serve Yahweh, until we come thither” — Moses absolutely refuses any thought of compromise. He plainly states that the Israelites must leave in their entirety, and with all their possessions. Their future movements would be governed by the instructions of Yahweh.

Similarly, when believers seek to worship Yahweh, they must separate completely from the environment of Egypt. It is impossible to properly worship Yahweh if we seek to continue our association with spiritual Egypt (cp. Lk. 9:62; 17:32-33).

VERSE 27

“But Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go” — See v. 20.

VERSE 28

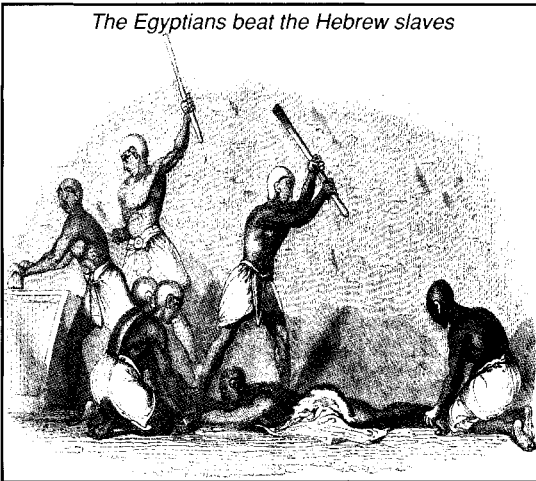
“And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die” — Pharaoh’s impotent stubbornness erupted in violent anger and fury. To concede what Moses demanded, required that he give up his worship, abdicate his position, deny his very status as a son of the gods. To his mind, he would be condoning a sin

of the greatest magnitude, if he granted permission to Moses to take from Goshen animals that were revered in Egypt in order to sacrifice them to an “unknown God.” Pharaoh would rather give up his life, and the life of Egypt, than abandon his worship. So rage took possession of him, and he ordered Moses from his presence. And anger begot anger, for Moses likewise turned to the King and bluntly issued an ultimatum, including words of personal warning to Pharaoh (see Ex. 11:8). The interview with Pharaoh is continued in Ex. 11:4-8.

VERSE 29

“And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more” — Thus all negotiations between the two men were now completely brought to an end.

Prior to leaving, however, Moses spoke the words recorded in Ex. 11:4-8, for the words of vv. 1-3 should be in parenthesis. They indicate that before Moses obeyed the command of Pharaoh to come into his presence, Yahweh had revealed to him. His future intentions in the outpouring of the last and most terrible plague that was to come upon Egypt, one that would finally bring all resistance to an end.



EXODUS: A PATTERN OF REDEMPTION

SECTION THREE INVITATION

CHAPTERS 11:1 to 12:28

This section of Exodus has presented a problem for commentators, inasmuch as the conclusion of chapter 10 seems to terminate the interview of Moses with Pharaoh, and yet, in the next chapter, the conversation between the two men continues.

Why such an arrangement? Because the divine plan of Exodus requires it. This is epitomised in Acts 15:14 as we have outlined in the Introduction (pp. 5-6), an epitome that is divisible into six parts as shown on pp. 23-24. In accordance with that plan, Exodus 10:29 completes the section we have headed "Visitation," and chapter 11 commences with that which is headed "Invitation" (see p. 25).

*Notice that each section of the book is divided into three stages of development: Proposed, Resisted, Accomplished. Therefore in the section now before us, Yahweh's gracious invitation was first **proposed**, when He called upon the people to make preparation to leave (ch. 11:2-3); it was **resisted** by Pharaoh in spite of the warning of Moses concerning the severity of the last terrible plague (ch. 11:8-9); it was **accomplished** when the people accepted the provision of the Passover Lamb (ch. 12:1-28).*

This section of Exodus records the circumstances in which the first Passover lamb was offered, and therefore is extremely significant, typifying the purpose of redemption in Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God provided for the sin of the world.

CHAPTER ELEVEN THE FINAL WARNING

A revelation is given to Moses that the time for the last plague is come, and that, following it, Pharaoh's resistance will be broken. It is the first intimation he has received of the duration of the contest, and he is instructed to prepare the people of Israel for their impending departure, as well as to warn Pharaoh of the consequences of his continued resistance. Many of the gods of Egypt having been humbled, this final

punishment was to strike at the worship of Pharaoh himself, in that it would be directed against the god-elect: his firstborn son, and so his representative in each Egyptian family. Nevertheless, Moses is told that Pharaoh would continue to resist the appeal: Let My people go! In spite of that, however, the children of Israel should make preparation to depart.

(1) INVITATION PROPOSED

Chapter 11:1-8

Portion of this section of the narrative is parenthetical, and reveals why Moses had been able to previously warn Pharaoh that he would not again appear in the court of the king (ch. 10:29). The information now recorded had been expressly revealed to Moses before he made his way to the palace; and he, doubtless, had already passed on the information to the people of Israel in Goshen.

Israel Borrows Of The Egyptians

— vv. 1-3.

Moses is advised that the time to leave Egypt is impending and that the people should make preparations accordingly by obtaining that which is due to them from the Egyptians.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh said unto Moses” —

This is a parenthetical statement of a revelation that had been earlier made to Moses, probably during the three days of darkness when Israel had light in their dwellings. (Ex. 10:21-23). His conversation with Pharaoh continues from ch. 11:4. It is treated in this way because a new section commences at this point. See *Introduction*.

“Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt” — This was the first intimation that Moses received as to the time period occupied by the plagues. Armed with this information, he was able to answer Pharaoh that he would see his face no more (ch. 10:29).

“Afterwards he will let you go hence” — Pharaoh’s resistance would ultimately break.

“When he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether” —

Rotherham renders this: “He will altogether drive you out from hence.” Moses was warned that once the time arrived, the

people of Israel would have to leave immediately; they would be forcibly driven out. Therefore, there would be no time for last-minute preparations; the people must be ready well beforehand in anticipation of the coming deliverance. The pre-warning allowed them to make necessary preparations both with regard to their families and flocks.

In similar manner, those who are awaiting the Lord’s return and deliverance from antitypical Egypt, comprising the modern-day environment, should be making preparation now. There will be no time once the Lord leaves his mediatorial position in heaven (Rev. 22:11-12).

VERSE 2

“Speak now in the ears of the people” — The information had to be passed to the people immediately, so that they would understand the urgency of the situation, and the preparation they needed to make.

“And let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour” — The word “borrow” is an unfortunate translation (see note Ex. 3:22). The Hebrew *shaal* should be translated “ask” as it is in the RV, Rotherham, etc. See further comment at ch. 12:35-36.

“Jewels of silver, and jewels of gold” — Rotherham renders “jewels” as “arti-

cles." It was not merely jewels, as we understand the term, for which they asked. The gold and silver thus acquired later found its place in the tabernacle, as the gold and silver of the Gentiles will be used by the Lord in beautifying the temple of the Age to come (Hag. 2:8-9; Isa. 60:5, 9, mg.).

VERSE 3

"And Yahweh gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians" — The Egyptians responded favourably to the request that they deliver up their articles of gold and silver to the Hebrews. Why should they do so? Because they feared the God of Israel, and recognised the justice of such a request. The Israelites had served as slaves in Egypt for a considerable time, and what they now asked for constituted only fair wages for the service they had rendered. See comment ch. 12:35-36.

"Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people" — The reputation of Moses was deservedly very high. The people of Egypt recognised that divine power was manifested through him, and therefore feared to oppose either him or the Israelites on whose behalf he acted.

The Firstborn Threatened With Death — vv. 4-8.

These verses continue Moses' conversation with the king. Pharaoh is warned of the consequences of remaining stubborn: the firstborn male in every home would die, plunging every family in Egypt into mourning; and the spirit of revolt, already simmering throughout the land, would erupt into complete defiance. Pharaoh's own servants would plead with Moses to lead his people away; and, moreover, he would surely depart. As Moses is stirred up by the senseless opposition he perceives in the king, so his own anger matches that of Pharaoh's. Therefore, having bluntly issued his ultimatum, he turns and abruptly leaves the palace. The last, and worst, of the plagues, again

struck at the worship of Egypt, for the firstborn of Egypt was considered as the son of Ra, and therefore the object of worship. Once again, and in the most terrible of ways, the gods of Egypt were humbled.

VERSE 4

"And Moses said, Thus saith Yahweh, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt" — Moses does not indicate on what day this would occur, only the hour. The time indicated is significant, and is taken up by the Lord in his parable of the virgins awaiting the approach of the bridegroom: "At midnight there was a cry made..." (Matt. 25:6). The expression, *I will go out* is also significant, for it is that used of the captain of an army (2Sam. 5:24; Psa. 60:10; Isa. 42:13). Yahweh's Elohist host would move in beligerent manifestation against the enemy. See also Isa. 55:4.

The time lapse between the first plague and the last is not revealed in Scripture, there being no indication as to the season when the first plague began, nor the interval between each. The seventh plague, consisting of violent storms and hail, occurred between the end of January to early February, as shown by the information concerning the state of the harvest supplied in Ex. 9:31-32. This final plague took place in the seventh month of the civil year, which afterwards was given the name *Abib*, and established as the beginning of the Jewish sacred year (Ex. 12:2). It may have been that all the plagues occurred within the period of one year, but of this we are not sure.

VERSE 5

"And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die" — By "firstborn" is meant, males. At the beginning of negotiations, Yahweh had claimed Israel as His firstborn among the nations and had warned Pharaoh that if he refused to release Israel, He would retaliate by moving against Egypt's firstborn (Ex. 4:22-23). As the law of primogeniture prevailed in Egypt, the monarchy was hereditary, and the eldest son was the Pharaoh-elect.

The crown prince, therefore, represented the Egypt of the future. Let Pharaoh dare hold back Yahweh's firstborn son, and vengeance would be taken on Egypt's future! Moreover, as Pharaoh's firstborn was considered a son of the supreme Egyptian deity, *Ra*, his death would be most humiliating to the worship of Egypt.

"From the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill" — From the highest in the land to the humblest servant. The *Berkeley Version* renders the latter phrase as "the slave girl behind the mill." The grinding of corn was work commonly assigned to captives (Jud. 16:21; Isa. 47:1-2). By smiting the firstborn throughout the land, Yahweh is represented as smiting at Egypt's strength. See Psa. 78:51; 135:8, 14; 136:10. His action, in so doing, illustrated that He expected obedience, and later became an object of warning to Israel themselves (Heb. 11:28; Amos 4:10; 5:18).

"And all the firstborn of beasts" — These beasts were objects of veneration by the Egyptians, being considered as under the special protection of the gods.

VERSE 6

"And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more" — The demonstrations of Eastern people at the incidence of death are much more emotional and conspicuous than is usually the case in Western civilization, so that literally the cry of mourning would echo from house to house throughout the land. It anticipated the mourning into which the whole world will be plunged at the time of the end, through its own folly in rejecting the mercy of Yahweh (see Rev. 1:7; Mat. 24:30). In Moses' day, the mourning was limited to Egypt, and for that country exceeded all other expressions of grief, both before and since; but that of the future will sweep all nations, plunging them into a "time of trouble such as never was" (Dan. 12:1). Jeremiah declares that the "slain of Yah-

weh shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth" (Jer. 25:33). The tragedy of such incidents is that they could be avoided by accepting the wisdom of God.

VERSE 7

"But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast" — The howling of dogs normally accompanies death. Whilst it would be heard throughout Egypt, strangely, the land of Goshen would be exempt.

"That ye may know how that Yahweh doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel" — This had already been manifested in the exemption from the plagues found in the land of Goshen (Ex. 8:22; 10:23; see note on ch. 8:23). The same fact is to be dramatically brought home to nations everywhere as a consequence of Armageddon and its aftermath (see Eze. 37:28; 39:23-29).

VERSE 8

"And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow themselves unto me, saying" — The word "come" is *yarad*, and literally signifies "to descend." The idea is that they would come humbly unto Moses, being thoroughly emptied of all pride and arrogance. This types the humble submission that the nations shall yet render to the Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of Moses (Rev. 15:3-4) in the Age to come. See Zech. 8:22-23; Isa. 45:14-17; 49:23, 26.

"Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee" — The Hebrew is as the margin: "that is at thy feet." The Egyptian lords looked upon Moses as the leader and shepherd of his people. In this, again, he typed the Lord Jesus. The leaders of Egypt would have to descend from their positions of eminence, get off their high horses, and humble themselves before Moses, and in so doing, they would defy the will of Pharaoh if necessary.

"And after that I will go out" — Moses issued this ultimatum to Pharaoh, declaring that nothing would prevent him

leaving, and implying that the king would be wise to submit. Despite this, however, Moses could observe continued defiance in the sullen, angry countenance of the foolish monarch.

“And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger” — The margin renders it as “heat of anger.” Moses’ anger was a righteous anger. Anger is sometimes justifi-

able, but in such cases, one must be on guard lest it lead to sin (see Eph. 4:26; Tit. 1:7). Actually, Moses was a very meek man (Num. 12:3), as was also the Lord Jesus (Mat. 11:29), but the hypocritical folly of Pharaoh moved him to anger, as also a similar action on the part of the Pharisees caused the Lord to view them in anger (Mark 3:5).

(2) INVITATION RESISTED

Chapter 11:9-10

Moses is warned by Yahweh that Pharaoh would remain stubborn, and continue to resist the appeal to let His people go. Moses was thus to recognise the obstinate nature of flesh, manifested in this monarch.

Pharaoh Remains Stubborn — vv. 9-10.

In the face of the grave warning issued by Moses, Pharaoh remains stubborn, and so the crisis moves on to its climax.

VERSE 9

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt” — This statement expresses the reason why Yahweh tolerated the stupid actions of the stubborn, foolish king. It helped to emphasise the divine power exercised by Moses in delivering the people, and revealed that God was with him.

There was mercy in this, for it impressed those who had the humility and wisdom to think and act according to the Truth manifested to them (cp. ch. 12:38).

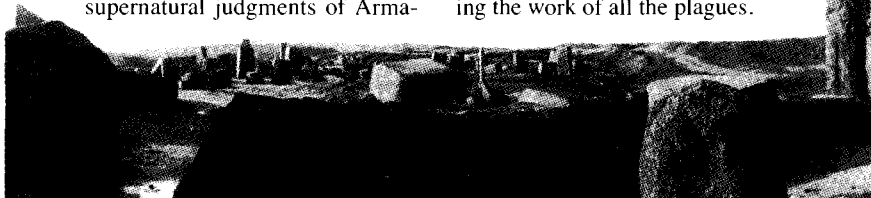
This, also, will be the result of the supernatural judgments of Arma-

geddon. They will demonstrate the fact of divine power, and reveal the divine authority that will rest upon the Lord Jesus Christ as king of the Jews.

An appeal shall be made to the nations to submit (Rev. 14:7; Psa. 2), and some, in wisdom, will do so (Isa. 60: 9). However, Babylon the Great will continue to resist (Rev. 14:9-12; 17:12-14) and face the outpouring of the final plague (Rev. 15:1). It is significant, that in *The Apocalypse*, Babylon the Great is spiritually aligned with Egypt (Rev. 11:8).

VERSE 10

“And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land” — This is a general statement summarising the work of all the plagues.



SUMMARY OF THE PLAGUES					
PLAGUES	Announced or not	Worker	Duration	Source	Effect
1. Water into blood (7:19-25)	Announced	Aaron	7 Days	Water	General annoyance
2. Frogs (8:1-7)	Announced	Aaron	unknown	Water	General annoyance
3. Gnats [lice] (8:16-19)	Not	Aaron	unknown	Earth	General annoyance
4. Beetles [flies] (8:24-27)	Announced	Yahweh	unknown	Air	General annoyance
5. Murrain (9:1-7)	Announced	Yahweh	unknown	Air	Death of beasts
6. Boils (9:8-12)	Not	Moses	unknown	Ashes	Leprosy on man & beast
7. Hail (9:16-23)	Announced	Moses	unknown	Air	Destruction of crops and herds
8. Locusts (10:13-15)	Announced	Moses	unknown	Wind	Destruction of growth
9. Darkness (10:21-23)	Not	Moses	3 days	Wind?	Sun blotted out
10. Death of Firstborn (12:29-30).	Announced	Yahweh	unknown	Divine intervention	Every home mourns

CHAPTER TWELVE

A NIGHT TO BE MUCH OBSERVED

No chapter of the Old Testament is of greater significance to Israelites than this one. Describing in detail the ordinances of the Passover, it lays the foundation, and provides a pattern for the scheme of redemption devised by Yahweh, through the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God for the sin of the world." In the delay that ensued between Moses' ultimatum to Pharaoh, and the death of the firstborn at midnight on the fourteenth day of Abib, careful instructions are given to Israel's leaders concerning the impending plague and what Hebrews must do to avoid it. The spiritual lessons involved are beneficial for God's people of all time.

Impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, the Israelites carry out the instructions delivered them by Moses, and at midnight the plague strikes throughout Egypt. Every family is plunged into mourning as the chill, dread hand of Death is extended toward it. A frightful cry of horror is heard throughout the land, as the worst of the plagues is felt. The whole nation, including Pharaoh, is brought to the breaking point. An

urgent message is sent to Moses and Aaron urging them to instantly arrange for the departure of the Children of Israel with their possessions, but, at the same time, making a plea for help in the form of some blessing. The people leave, burdened with possessions heaped upon them by the Egyptians who fear any further judgment. A mixed multitude throws in its lot with Israel, and also leaves Egypt; and the whole company marches out in triumph as the army of Yahweh on route to the Promised Land.

(3) INVITATION ACCOMPLISHED

Chapter 12:1-28

Yahweh outlines the terms of His invitation to the people to separate themselves as a people unto Himself. The year's beginning is changed to indicate a new commencement for Israel, and detailed instructions are given concerning the observance of the Passover by which the people will escape the death that threatens the Egyptians.

The Beginning Of The Year Changed — vv. 1-2.

As the deliverance from Egypt marks a new beginning for Israel, the time of the year's commencement is changed.

VERSE 1

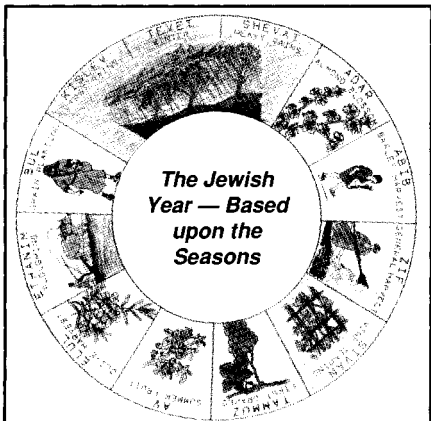
“And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying” — During the delay that ensued between the ultimatum delivered to Pharaoh, and the “set time” determined for the outpour-

ing of the tenth plague, Moses is instructed as to what the people should do in preparation.

VERSE 2

“This month” — The month is styled *Abib* (Ex. 13:4), a word that signifies *Green Ears of Corn*, and denotes the advent of spring, or the appearance of new life. As such, the month is appropriate to mark a new beginning for Israel. The word *abib* is rendered “in the ear” (Ex. 9:31), and “green ears of corn” (Lev. 2:14). See also Ex. 23:15; 34:18; Deu. 16:1.

“Shall be unto you the beginning of months” — The religious year thus was instituted for the Hebrews, denoting a new beginning. The Jewish civil year commences with the seventh month of the religious year, appropriately (for *seven* is the number of the covenant) marking a new political beginning. The festivals of Atonement, and of Tabernacles were appointed for celebration that month, and type the coming of Christ in judgment and the Millennium as a time of rejoicing — the commencement of a new civil beginning for humanity. The month of *Abib*, and the celebration of the Passover began the religious year for Israelites, appropri-



ately typifying the foundation principle upon which baptism is based: the new life in Christ.

“It shall be the first month of the year to you” — *Abib* (March/April) is the time of the spring equinox when nature springs forth in new growth. This suggests the resurrection, thus, a new beginning (see Rom. 6:4; 1Cor. 15:35-38, 42). The Hebrew civil year commences at the time of the autumnal equinox, approximately October (Ex. 23:16).

The Passover Instituted — vv. 3-10.

Moses instructs the people of Israel in the keeping of the Passover, the festival of deliverance. The spiritual lessons of this festival are applicable to all true Israelites. It foreshadows the redemption effected by the Lord “our Passover” (1Cor. 5:7).

VERSE 3

“Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel” — At least four different Hebrew words have been rendered “congregation,” and as each of them is of great significance to the context, it is valuable to indicate the particular Hebrew word used in each passage. Here it is *edah*, the feminine form of *ed* signifying “witness” or “testimony,” and therefore appropriate to Israel as the Bride of Yahweh (Isa. 54:5). In Eze. 16:6-14 the prophet describes Israel as the foundling girl in Egypt whom Yahweh took for His bride. As such she was called upon to witness or testify to His truth, and to honour His name.

“Saying, in the tenth day of this month” — In *The Hebrew Passover* (p. 143) J.B. Segal suggests that the Hebrews “regarded the first nine days of the spring and autumn months as days of uncertainty.

If the heliacal rising of a fixed star had not taken place before the tenth day, then it was necessary to intercalate a month. It was

only on the tenth day of the spring month — and not sooner — that it was known whether it was permissible to begin preparations for the Passover.”

This adjustment was necessary because the Jewish year was based upon lunar months of thirty days each making a total of 360 days for a year instead of 365 days. Hence to bring this method of yearly computation into line with the sun, an additional month was occasionally included, and before the time of a fixed calendar, this adjustment was made at Passover, and determined by the position of a fixed star in the heavens.

How significant this is! In the beginning, Yahweh appointed the heavenly bodies for “signs and for seasons” (Gen. 1:14-16). He compelled Balaam to prophesy that “there shall come a Star out of Jacob” (Num. 24:17), and the appearance of that heliacal, being the manifestation of that star’s light, heralded the approach of the antitypical Passover (Luke 1:78). All the time factors of Yahweh’s appointed festivals are highly significant. Consider the following:

“The beginning of months” — The spring equinox, pointing to a new life or resurrection, a new beginning (Rom. 6:4).

“The tenth day of the first month” — Two fives (five being the number of grace); thus it is a time of grace for Jew and Gentile as the Passover Lamb is selected.

“The fourteenth day of the first month”



— Two sevens: acceptance of the covenant (Heb. *sheva*, “seven”) as the Passover Lamb is slain.

“*The fifteenth day of the first month*”

— Three fives: grace completed through resurrection to newness of life (three being the number of such: Gen. 1:9-13). The Passover Lamb is eaten, and Israel leaves Egypt.

Compare the time factor of Passover when the harvest ripened, with the festival appointed when the harvest was gathered in the seventh month (Leviticus 23).

“*The seventh month*” — The autumn equinox. It commenced with the memorial blowing of trumpets to call the people together (Lev. 23:24), and marked the beginning of the political year.

“*The tenth day of the seventh month*”

— The Day of Atonement, answering to the examination of the passover lamb on the Day of Passover in the first month.

“*The fifteenth day of the seventh month*” — The harvest is brought in and the Festival of Tabernacles commences. The deliverance commemorated by Passover is thus brought to consummation in the complete in-gathering.

“**They shall take to them every man a lamb**” — By “man” is meant the head of the house. “Lamb” is *seh*, a kid old enough to “push out to graze.” Thus the lamb suggests an independent member of the flock, and could be either from the sheep or goats. Its age is limited to a year (v. 5), and though both sheep and goats are specified, only lambs are recorded as being used.

“**According to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house**” — Typically each household represented an individual ecclesia (John 14:1-2; Heb. 3:6), whilst the nation as a whole prefigured the “great number” of the redeemed (Rev. 7:9). Thus Psalm 22 compares “the congregation” of the apostles with the “great congregation” of all the saved (Psa. 22:22, 25).



VERSE 4

“**And if the household be too little**

for the lamb” — Too small in number to eat the lamb in one sitting. Subsequently, for convenience, the minimum number for a “household” was set at ten persons.

“**Let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls**” — This emphasises the value of co-operation in the work of the Truth. It is not good to reduce the size of ecclesias to the point where they become inefficient. There is great value in the harmonious companionship and activity in ecclesial activities for the good of each other.

“**Every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb**” — Rotherham includes a footnote at this place, rendering “eating” as “mouth.” Individual appetites were not to be taken into consideration, only individual persons.

VERSE 5

“**Your lamb shall be without blemish**” — It had to be physically sound (Lev. 22:19-20), or “perfect,” as the word *tamiym* can be rendered (see *The Interlinear Hebrew Greek English Bible*). This physical perfection of the selected lamb foreshadowed the perfection of character revealed in Christ the antitype (1Pet. 1:19; Heb. 9:14). To offer a lamb that was physically blemished was an affront to Yahweh (Lev. 22:20), and earned the rebuke of the prophet (Mal. 1:8,14). Christ’s perfection of character, assured his resurrection to life eternal, for “it was not possible that he should be holden of the bonds of death” (Acts 2:24). Divine justice demanded that a perfectly righteous character be brought again from the dead.

“**A male**” — As such the lamb represented the firstborn males of Israel who, if not identified with it, would have died like their Egyptian counterparts. The lamb, therefore, foreshadowed the Lord Jesus as the “firstborn of every creature” (Col. 1:15).

“**Of the first year**” — The animal passes the lamb stage at the age of twelve months. Until that time, the age

denotes the state of innocence, or perfect obedience. The literal Hebrew is "a son of a year" (*The Interlinear Hebrew Greek English Bible*), pointing forward to Yahweh's obedient Son. For the purpose of Passover, the Israelites selected lambs up to a year old.

"Ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats" — The word for "sheep" is *kebesim* and signifies "to dominate," denoting rams old enough to butt; thus to be aggressive. The Passover lamb was separated from such.

The word for "goats" is *azim*, and signifies "strength," which, in goats, manifests itself in waywardness. The Passover kid, if taken from the goats, was separated from such before its natural stubbornness was fully developed. It represents the Lord Jesus who did not allow the influences of the flesh to be revealed in his life.

However, it should be carefully noted that it was not the animal, or the blood of the sacrifice, that saved the firstborn of Israel, but *faith* in the principles exhibited by them (Heb. 11:28). The rituals were external symbols designed to develop understanding and faith. Similarly, there is no real redemptive power in baptismal water; it is in the personal identification with the sacrifice of Christ that makes the ritual of value.

VERSE 6

"And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month" — Every detail of the original Passover was fulfilled to the letter by the antitypical Lamb of God. The animal was selected on the tenth day of the first month, and penned up until the fourteenth day when it was slain. This provided ample time for it to be carefully inspected in order to ensure that it was free from blemish. Significantly, in accord with this requirement, the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day of Abib for his final public witness to the people. Six days before Passover the Lord arrived at Bethany (John 12:1), and on the following day, he entered Jerusalem. The Passover lamb was slain on the fourteenth day of Abib, which is called the *Day of*

Preparation (John 19:14), and the festival was commemorated on the fifteenth which was celebrated as *sabbathon*, a holy convocation, when no servile work was to be done (Lev. 23:3; John 19:31). Hence the tenth day of Abib was five days (days of grace) before Passover proper. On that day, the Lord made his way from Bethany to Jerusalem for his last public appearance before the leaders of the nation, providing them with opportunity to carefully inspect him and to justify their repudiation of his claim to be the Messiah by convicting him of sin (John 8:46). They were unable to do so, and were silenced of their criticism. When, finally, they brought him before the high priest and Pilate, they were unable to vindicate the charges they laid against him, even though they employed false witnesses to do so. After closely and critically examining the Lamb of God for the very length of time provided in the original Passover, they could find no blemish in him. The Lord, therefore, fulfilled the type to the letter as far as the time periods of the Passover were concerned. It is also extremely significant, that he did so on the very days of the week upon which the first Passover fell — for though the dates of the feast remain the same, the actual days on which they fall differ from year to year.

The basis of computation provided in ch. 16:1 establishes that the first Passover lamb was offered on a Wednesday. The Israelites arrived at the wilderness of Sin on the fifteenth day of the second month, and the context of that chapter (cp. v.5) reveals that this was on a seventh day, for following the demands of the people for bread, they were given manna for six days (vv. 4-5). As Abib was a month of thirty days, the calendar is computed as shown in the panel on page 155.

The Lord declared that he would be in the grave "three days and three nights" (Mat. 12:40). This time period is completed only if he were crucified on a Wednesday, and rose at the dawning of the first day (being the conclusion of the Sabbath, at sunset on the Saturday). The "days" then are Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and the "nights" Wednesday,

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
Abib				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
Zif						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Thursday and Friday.

The Wednesday crucifixion also reconciles other anomalies. For example, Mark 16:1 claims that "after (according to the Greek text) the sabbath," the women bought spices to anoint the body of the Lord, whereas Luke 23:56 records that this was done "before" the sabbath. This would constitute an irreconcilable contradiction if the Lord were crucified on a Friday; but John adds his testimony, that following the crucifixion there was a "high day" sabbath (Jn. 19:31). Thus, Passover was followed by a special sabbath in addition to the weekly sabbath. Between the death and resurrection of the Lord, we must account for two sabbaths with a day between in which the women purchased and prepared the spices. Only a Wednesday crucifixion followed by a Thursday sabbath, provides this. It is not only most appropriate that the antitype should be offered on the same day of the week as the type, but it also fulfils the allusion of Daniel's prophecy that "in the midst of the week," the Lord's offering would cause the sacrifices of the Law to cease (Dan. 9:27). The phrase "in the midst" was fulfilled at the end of the three and a half years of the Lord's ministry. Thus prophecy, type and antitype conform to the very letter.

"And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel" — The term "assembly" is from the Hebrew *qahal*, the equivalent of the Greek word *ecclesia*, denoting those "called out" for a special purpose; while "congregation" is *edah*, the femi-

nine form of *ed* signifying "witness." Those who were to be identified with the Passover, therefore, constituted those "called out to witness" to this teaching, and not necessarily every Israelitish male and female. The feminine form of "witness" is used, because the ecclesia thus described constituted Yahweh's Bride (Isa. 54:5), and the association of Israel with the Passover, witnessed to that fact. The *Ecclesia of Witness* (see Acts 7:38) comprised particularly the male adult members of the nation (Ex 12:43-45,48). The "whole assembly," *kol qahal*, was divided into families or households, as the Ecclesia of Christ today is separated into groups.

While females participated in the Passover celebrations, it was obligatory for adult males, as constituting the *qahal*, to keep the festival (Ex. 23:17).

It will be found that the *qahal* was summoned for both military and religious duties, and that these duties were very closely intertwined. For *military duties*, see Num. 22:4 (rend. "company"), Jud. 20:2; 21:5-8; 1Sam. 17:47. For *religious duties* see Deu. 5:22; 9:10; 2Chr. 20:5; 30:25. The *qahal* ("assembly") was organised as a fighting unit, so that those recruited for war are said to comprise "the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel" (Num. 1:2).

Israel marched out of Egypt as an army in the month Abib (spring — Ex. 12:51), and springtime (Passover or deliverance) became the recognised "time of war" (2Sam. 11:1; 1Kgs. 20:22; 1Chr. 20:8). Thus all adult males had to keep the Passover, and also to register for war (Num. 1:2).

Similarly, like Israel of old, the ecclesia today has both religious and military responsibilities. It must "keep the Passover," and "fight the good fight of faith". Today, however, its obligations are not limited to adult males but involve all members (see Gal. 3:28).

"Shall kill it" — At the first Passover, the lamb was slain by the head of each house on behalf of its individual members. In doing so, he acted as priest on behalf of

the household. Later, however, as the result of the faithful action of Levites in a time of crisis recorded in Ex 32:26, the priesthood was limited to the tribe of Levi (Num. 3:6-13). Now in Christ, there has been revealed "a change of priesthood" (Heb. 7:11-15). The Aaronic has given place to the Melchizedec, under which order all believers are accounted as priests, able to officiate on behalf of the individual families through the high priest. Christ, therefore, has restored the conditions that appertained before priestly ministrations in Israel were limited to the tribe of Levi.

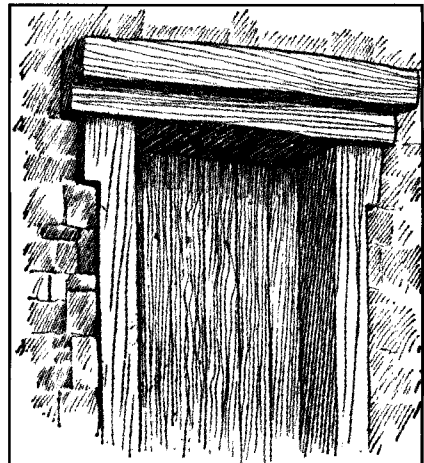
"In the evening" — The margin provides the literal Hebrew (see also *Interlinear Bible*): "between the evenings." This denotes late afternoon, and is usually identified as between 3pm and 6pm, at which time the day ended and the next day commenced. However, there is doubt as to the actual time thus indicated. Some claim that the Hebrew implies the decline of the sun, and therefore, the afternoon. Josephus claims that it was between the 9th and 11th hours (3pm and 5pm — see *Wars of the Jews*, 6:9:3). The chronology of the N.T. shows that the Lord died on the stake at the time appointed for the Passover lamb to die.

VERSE 7

"And they shall take of the blood"

— Sacrificial blood represents a life dedicated unto Yahweh (Lev. 17:11). The use of the blood in the way described indicated that the household understood its responsibilities to Yahweh.

"And strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it" — The RV renders "upper doorpost" as "lintel." The Hebrew is *mashqowph* from *shaqaph*, "to look out." It probably refers to the latticed window commonly placed over a doorway in Egyptian houses. It was possible to look out from such, but not to go out. The entrance of the dwellings where Israelites sheltered all that night (v. 22) were identified with the Passover lamb by the blood on the doorposts and lintel. Blood was not poured out on the ground,



Artist's impression of lintel and doorposts. However, the Hebrew suggests that the "lintel" was probably a lattice window over the door. Israelites could look out, but must not go out into the world. Believers in Christ should act similarly. Let them observe the signs of the times, but keep separate from the world of darkness outside.

for sacrificial blood was not used in that way (see Lev. 17:13). The reason for this is explained in Heb. 10:29 which warns of the consequence of "treading underfoot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing."

VERSE 8

"And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire" — Normally sacrificial meals were boiled (1Sam. 2:14-15; Lev. 8:31). Roasting is a quicker process of cooking, and emphasised the urgency of the circumstances. It is also suggestive of a burnt offering, coming in direct contact with fire. This was done by impaling the victim on a spit, so that in a sense the lamb was crucified. The Jews say that this was done with a piece of pomegranate tree, which is significant, for its fruit is typical of Christ.

The lamb was slain during the late afternoon of the 14th day, and eaten after sundown. According to the Jewish calen-

dar, the next day commenced at that time (cp. Gen. 1:5), so that whilst the Passover was slain on the fourteenth day of Abib, it was celebrated on the fifteenth day.

“And unleavened bread” — Leaven is a symbol of sin. In 1Cor. 5:8, in association with Christ our Passover, Paul aligns it with the “leaven of malice and wickedness,” which, he declares, must be purged out. It was the custom of Israelites to carefully search their homes for any trace of leaven which was removed therefrom before the Passover was celebrated. Because of this, and because leaven was excluded for the following week, the Passover is often styled the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* (Heb. *matstsah*). It taught the need of striving for sinlessness.

“And with bitter herbs they shall eat it” — This taught that the striving for sinlessness and association with the Lamb would be accomplished by trial. Actually “herbs” is not in the original (see *Interlinear Bible*). The Hebrew text has *merorim*, “bitternesses,” the plural of *maror*. Already Israel had tasted of the bitterness of Egyptian slavery. Now the people learned that their deliverance from such would be accompanied by further painful experiences. So it is also with those who feed upon Christ as the Passover Lamb. We need to remember that the bread and wine represents the crucifixion of the Lord, and whilst providing a way of redemption, also commemorate the hatred manifested by the world toward him, a bitterness which his disciples must also experience (John 15:18). The apostles taught that it is “through much tribulation” that believers will “enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). They, too, must eat their “bitter herbs.”

VERSE 9

“Eat not of it raw” — The Egyptians ate raw flesh in honour of the god Osiris. By this command, Yahweh sought to free His people in every conceivable way from all idolatrous practices. Moreover, whereas raw meat is indigestible and difficult to assimilate, the lamb was to be made easy to absorb.

“Nor sodden at all with water” — It was not to be boiled or stewed, requiring dismembership of its parts. Nothing extraneous was to enter into it.

“But roast with fire; his head with his legs” — It was to be roasted whole, including the head, heart, liver and kidneys, a symbol of the unity of the true Israel, of which the Lord was the ideal (Isa. 49:3). The antitype was fulfilled in accordance with this requirement (John 19:36).

“And with the purturance thereof” — The word *qereb* signifies the centre and therefore is better rendered as “inwards” (see *Interlinear Bible*). They included the heart, liver, kidneys, etc. which in other offerings were consumed on the altar (Exo. 29:13, 22; Lev. 1:9, 13). The same Hebrew word here rendered “purturance thereof” is elsewhere rendered as “inwards” (see Ex. 29:13, 17, 22, etc.).

VERSE 10

“And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning” — The flesh was to be entirely consumed in the way specified, so that none remained the next day. That day was a day of significance, for on it the Israelites left Egypt. Therefore it typically points forward to the coming “day of Yahweh” when the flesh of the redeemed will be changed to Spirit nature (Mal. 4:1-2; 1Cor. 15:45-50).

“And that which remaineth of it until the morning” — Any flesh adhering to the bones.

“Ye shall burn it with fire” — By these means all the flesh was consumed, and none was left to corrupt. In fulfilment of the type “neither did Christ’s flesh see corruption” (Acts 2:31).

VERSE 11

“And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded” — Loins girded signify a comprehension of the Truth (Eph. 6:14), as well as a readiness for action (Luke 12:35).

“Your shoes on your feet” — As a pilgrim, ready to instantly leave (cp. Eph. 6:15).

“And your staff in your hand” — Prepared for a long journey.

“And ye shall eat it in haste” — With a sense of urgency, as not knowing when the call to leave would come. See the antitype in Luke 12:34-40.

Later, the method of celebrating the Passover was changed. The rabbis mark four things required in the first Passover that were not practised later: (1) The selection of the lamb on the tenth day; (2) The eating of the lamb in the houses of the people; (3) The striking of blood on the door-posts and lintels; (4) The eating of it in haste (*Jewish Targum*, 6th century AD). In fact, there were seven items of the first Passover not observed in subsequent times:

1. Congregational killing of their own lamb (this was later performed by the priests).
2. Splashing blood on door-posts and lintels.
3. Having loins girded.
4. With shoes on feet.
5. Staff in hand for travel.
6. Eating in haste.
7. Refraining from going out of the door until morning.

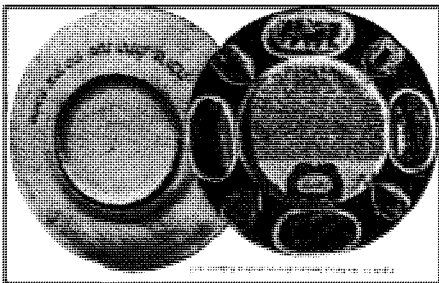
At the time of the Lord, the Jews reclined at the table to eat the Passover, instead of standing and eating it in haste as enjoined originally. The reason for this, as explained in the Jewish *Haggadah*, is to show that they celebrated it as free men, and not as those under bondage. It declares: “All Israel are equal, all Israel are free men, and all Israel should recline at the table as free men do.” This statement is significant in view of the claim of

the Jews to the Lord that they were “free” (John 8:32-33). They did not understand that they were still in bondage to sin, and needed deliverance from such, and that redemption could only be obtained through the true Lamb of God, and the Passover he would institute.

Since the dispersion, Jews no longer slay a lamb, but, instead, place a bone on the Passover tray. In the *Haggadah* the following explanation is given for this: “On the right-hand of the tray is placed a portion of the shankbone of a lamb, roasted. This is intended to commemorate the actual Paschal lamb which was sacrificed in the temple at the Passover: originally the essential feature of the observance, but now no more than a symbolical relic.”

On this custom, Brother Thomas comments in *Elpis Israel*: “I am informed by a Jew that when they eat the passover they

3 MAZZOT	
<i>Keter</i> — Crown	
<i>Hokhmah</i> — Wisdom	
<i>Binah</i> — Intelligence	
EGG	SHANKBONE
<i>Gevurah</i> — Power	<i>Hesed</i> — Love
MAROR	
<i>Tiferet</i> — Beauty	
KARPAS	HAROSET
<i>Hod</i> — Majesty	<i>Nezah</i> — Endurance
HAZERET	
<i>Yesod Olam</i> — Foundation of the world	
The plate itself represents	
<i>Maikhul</i> — Kingship	



The Passover Plate as traditionally set out. The “3 Mazzot” relate to the three pieces of unleavened bread, each of which has a symbolic meaning to the participant. Note the provision for the shankbone, and compare the extract from Elpis Israel quoted in the text of our commentary.

eat no lamb, but have a dry bone of one on a dish; and that all who celebrate take hold of the lip of the dish, and unitedly offer a petition. This is remarkable. They have slain the true Lamb, which believers of the gospel feed upon: while only a dry bone remains to them, strikingly illustrative of themselves. Faith in the Lamb of God supplies the absence of the lamb in the Lord's Supper" (p. 297-298).

"It is Yahweh's passover" — The Hebrew is *pesach*. It occurs in the Old Testament 56 times, forty-nine of which relate to the festival or offering of Passover, and therefore provides no indication of the proper significance of the word. It is generally thought that it relates to the action of the angel of death in *passing over* the houses of the Israelites with their blood-spattered door-posts and lintels. Therefore, it is usually related to verse 12, where Yahweh states: "for I will *pass through* the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn."

But the Hebrew verb of that verse bears no relationship to the noun before us. Its root is derived from the verb *pasach* rendered "pass over" in v. 13, but actually having the meaning of "to spare." It is rendered in the Septuagint as "protect," in the sense of overshadowing. The use of the word elsewhere in Scripture indicates that its true meaning is to "hover over, stay over, protect, abide over." Therefore, instead of "pass over," it would be more correct to render the words as "remain over."

In 1Kings 18:21 the word is rendered "halt" and in v. 26 as "leaped." The references are to the people of Israel who *halted, wavered, or hovered* between two opinions, and to the priests of Baal who *hovered* anxiously over their altar, not "leaped upon it," as rendered in the A.V. The word occurs again in 2Sam. 4:4 which records that Mephibosheth fell, "and became lame." In fact, he began to limp, and the swaying motion that followed his fall suggested the wavering of a bird over its young. Hence the use of *pasach* in this place.

In Isaiah 31:5 the word occurs in a

most interesting and significant way. The prophet declared: "As birds flying, so will Yahweh of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and *passing over* He will preserve it." But, in fact, Yahweh did not pass over Jerusalem; He *hovered over* it and so protected it, thus justifying the use of the word *protect* by the Septuagint in Ex. 12:13.

The use of the term by Isaiah is significant in view of the statement of the Lord on the eve of Passover, as recorded in Mat. 23:37-39: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The anxious hovering of the mother bird over her chickens is illustrative of the protection afforded by the first Passover.

If we use the term *hover over to protect* in place of "pass over," the real meaning to becomes apparent. Thus: "When I see the blood, I will *hover over* the door to protect you, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses" (Ex. 12:23). "Yahweh *hovered over to protect* the houses of the children of Israel" (v. 27).

The angel did not pass over the houses of the Israelites when he saw the blood, but *hovered over* to protect them. He remained there with them, whilst the angel of death passed over to destroy the first-born of Egypt. A.H. Broughton describes it as the *Feast of the Hover-over, or Abiding Presence*, and writes: "That is a true translation: the 'Feast of the Passover' is not. When God saw the blood on the door posts, He did not, as the English Bibles say, pass over the door, He *hovered over* it. The Feast itself is not that of a Pass-over, but that of a Hover-over."

The Passover as a festival, therefore, celebrated the invisible but real presence of Yahweh, hovering over His people at a time of extreme peril. It witnessed to the Abiding Presence of Yahweh as provided

in the lamb and all that it signified. It does so also in the provision of our Passover Lamb around which we gather in memorial (1Cor. 11:24-25). The Abiding Presence of Yahweh and His Son hovers over the celebration of the Memorials, and though unseen their presence is nevertheless real and powerful to save.

VERSE 12

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night” — The verb is from the Hebrew *abar*, signifying “to go through,” and is so rendered in the R.V. He bears no relation to *pesach* (“passover”).

“And will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast” — None were to be exempted, for Egypt had refused to accept the appeal of Yahweh, and so was about to reap His judgment. The world today repeats the spirit of Egypt, and shall reap the judgment of Armageddon. As in Egypt, Yahweh’s power induced fear and terror, and His justice produced awe and veneration, so shall be the effect throughout the world in the future.

“And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment” — In smiting the firstborn of all living beings, man and beast, Yahweh executed judgment upon objects of Egyptian worship. Every deity of Egypt was represented by some beast. Even Pharaoh himself was worshipped as a god, so that the death of his firstborn son constituted the death of the god-elect. This statement sums up the purpose of all the plagues: to illustrate how ineffectual was the pagan worship of Egypt. See Num. 33:4.

“I am Yahweh” — This statement declares Yahweh’s power to perform His intentions, in contrast with the inability of Egypt’s gods. The God of the Hebrews is the One whose purpose will be fulfilled, as indicated in His Name which signifies: *He Who Will Be* (manifested).

VERSE 13

“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are” — The literal Hebrew is “for you,” not “to

you” (See *The Hebrew Greek English Bible* and *Rotherham*). The blood would serve as a token or a sign in the mercy of Yahweh toward them. Thus it would be for them and not to them. It would be for them a sign of mercy to strengthen them at a time of judgment, when death impended.

“And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” — The words “pass over” here is from *pasach*, the root of *pesach*. It denotes “to spare,” and is rendered by the Septuagint as *kai skepazo umas*, “and I will protect you.” But the Greek *skepazo* signifies “to cover, shelter, clothe or screen” (see Vine). At the time when the judgment of death would sweep Egypt, Yahweh promised to protect, cover, and clothe His people. Antitypically, believers are “covered” with Christ at baptism, but in the complete sense, they will be protected and covered at the day of Judgment when death shall sweep the earth (Isa. 26:20).

VERSE 14

“And this day shall be unto you for a memorial” — As a *memorial* the Passover was not designed merely to recall to mind the great deliverance effected in the exodus from Egypt, but to *awaken* the mind to the significance of what was done, and to its application to the generations following. That is true also of the celebration of the Lord’s death and resurrection. The statement “This do in remembrance of me” (1Cor. 11:24) is from the Greek *anamnesis*, a noun signifying “a calling against to mind,” thus to recall. However, Yahweh’s memorial is not designed merely to recall to mind, but to mentally reaffirm the principles of the atonement as expressed in the death and resurrection of the Lord.

Israel was called upon to observe a number of memorials “throughout all generations” (Psa. 135:13). Among them were the following: the Name of Yahweh (Ex. 3:15; Hos. 12:5); the Passover (Ex. 12:14); the deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 13:9); the destruction of Amalek (Ex. 17:14); Yah-

weh's covenant (Ex. 34:27); the ephod stones (Ex. 28:12); the breastplate of judgment (Ex. 28:29); the redemption money (Ex. 30:16); the blowing of trumpets (Lev. 23:24); the frankincense (Lev. 24:7); the offering of jealousy (Num. 5:15,18); the sounding of the silver trumpets (Num. 10:10); the brazen censers of the altar (Num. 16:40); the booty of war from the Midianites (Num. 31:54); the stones from Jordan (Josh. 4:7); the crowns of the righteous in the temple (Zech. 6:14). Each item, or incident selected as a memorial is most significant, especially in its antitypical application to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And ye shall keep it a feast to Yahweh throughout your generations” — It is obligatory upon true Israelites to keep the Passover. Today Jews do so with a bone upon the plate instead of a lamb; whereas the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) do so with true spiritual significance in the light of the Lamb of God offered for the sin of the world (1Cor. 5:7; Jn. 1:29).

The term “feast” is better rendered “festival.” It is from a Hebrew root signifying “to move in a circle,” and suggests rejoicing together, as well as indicating the circle or cycle of the year, implying a set time for its annual observance.

“Ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever” — The word “ordinance” is from the Hebrew *chuzzah*, and denotes an appointment. Persons of integrity will keep the appointments they make, and will allow nothing to interfere with such arrangements. Thus, the feast, whether in ancient times or in relation to Christ our Passover, is designed to be kept as an appointment which must not be broken.

The Feast Of Unleavened Bread

— vv. 15-17.

Associated with the Passover and instituted at the same time, is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Instructions for its keeping are now given to Moses.

VERSE 15

“Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread” — This is the first mention of the feast of unleavened bread. It began with

the Passover on the 15th day of the month (Lev. 23:6), and continued seven days, the first and seventh being holy convocations, or sabbathons (vv. 6-8).

“Even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses” — This is the first occurrence of leaven in the Bible. Out of all homes, every piece of leavened or fermented bread was to be removed during the feast (vv. 15-20; 13:3-7). Leaven is a general term for that which generates fermentation in dough, or that which corrupts morally and spiritually. Today, yeast is used for fermenting, but in ancient times various substances were known to possess this property. According to Pliny, the leaven then used was a piece of fully fermented dough retained for the purpose from the previous day's baking. Such a piece might either be broken down in water in a basin before the fresh flour was added, or it might be “hid” in flour (Mat. 13:33), and kneaded along with it. Bible leaven, then, is exclusively a piece of sour dough. This was especially used by the Jews, as the warm climate of the Middle East induces fermentation. It is said, that if flour is mixed with water, spontaneous fermentation will set in and be completed within twenty-four hours.

Leaven, therefore, is itself the offspring of corruption, and corrupts the mass of dough with which it has been mixed. It works silently but effectively. The Lord likened the imperceptible, yet progressive development of the kingdom in the Age to come, to the hidden but pervasive action of leaven in the midst of the dough (Mat. 13:33).

But, generally, leaven is used to denote moral corruption (1Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9), and false doctrine (Matt. 16:6-12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1). By forgiveness of their sins, true followers of Christ are already “unleavened” (1Cor. 5:7), and must therefore “keep the feast” by living the Christlike life “in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (v. 8). This was the lesson emphasised to the Israelites in Egypt. The deliverance effected by the Passover, and the protection it afforded, was not enough. The festival indicated a

new beginning, one that must be kept as free from the moral and doctrinal corruption of Egypt as possible. Hence the importance of the feast of unleavened bread.

Bread itself, was the main article of food in ancient times, and symbolised a life of activity. The *Feast of Unleavened Bread* reminded Israelites that they must strive to be free of the corrupting influence of Gentilism.

There was also a historical basis for the introduction of this feast. The Israelites had to leave the cultivated land of Egypt for the desolate desert, and because of the circumstances, haste was imperative. Food had to be made ready quickly, without previous preparation (see Ex. 12:33-34), and had to be of such a nature as to last much longer than usual. Hence the baking of unleavened bread (Hebrew, *mazzah*; plural, *mazzoith*).

The verse before us commands the Israelites not merely to prepare unleavened bread, but also to "put away leaven out of your houses." Accordingly, in celebrating the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, during later times, every corner of the house, however remote and difficult of access, was completely cleansed before the feast. The kitchen was scoured out, and the house thoroughly searched for any trace of leaven. The Jewish *Haggadah*, explaining the customs of Jews at such a time, states: "Spring cleaning acquired, in a word, a religious significance: so much so that the Jews may, perhaps, claim the credit of having introduced that hygienic practice."

As a spiritual practice, the followers of the Lord do well to carefully scrutinise their lives before partaking of their Passover feast, in order to exclude any corruption of "malice and wickedness" as enjoined by Paul (1Cor. 5:8). The Lord, himself, commanded that due preparation of a like kind should precede formal worship before God (Mat. 5:23-24).

Jewish instruction concerning unleavened bread, distinguishes between the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and *Pesach* or Passover which, strictly, is applied only to

the first night. It points out that the first principle taught by the bread is that of the need for haste:

"Fearing lest worse still might befall them, the Egyptians hurried the children of Israel away by night, so that they had to snatch up the bread which they were baking before it was leavened. At the same time, on account of its hardness and unpalatability, the *massah* was regarded as 'bread of affliction', serving as a reminder of the harshness of Egyptian bondage. In the Orient, moreover, bread made without leaven was a less expensive preparation, which it took a shorter time to prepare (it is repeatedly mentioned in the Bible as being given to an unexpected visitor). Hence it remained the poor man's fare, and was, therefore, considered 'bread of poverty,' a fitting token of the slavery which it commemorated. A symbolical value was also attached to the *massah*. Leaven was regarded as typifying the 'leaven of sinfulness,' the evil impulse in man's heart which turns him aside from the higher intent. Hence unleavened bread became the token of purity of the higher freedom which comes from obedience: 'heavenly bread,' as it is called in Jewish mystical literature" (from *Haggadah*).

In current celebrations of the *Pesach* it is the occasion when the Unleavened Bread is displayed upon the table, and for the youngest member of the family present, to commence asking the four formal questions based on Deu. 6:20.

"For whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel" — To be "cut off" does not necessarily mean put to death, but to be expelled, or excommunicated from the congregation, and so separated. The same discipline should be exercised by the ecclesia in the case of any who wilfully flout the specific instructions of God whether in doctrine or practice.

VERSE 16

"And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation" — The first day of

the feast was the fifteenth of Abib, for the previous day, when the Passover was killed, was "the day of preparation" (John 19:14). "Holy convocation" (Heb. *quodesh migra*, "a sacred, sanctified call out") signifies a separation and calling together of the people. This "holy convocation" was commemorative of the calling together of the people, in order to leave Egypt. It emphasised their separateness from Gentilism, and their dedication unto Yahweh.

"And in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you" — Both the first and seventh days were days of rest when holy convocations were held. This arrangement epitomises the purpose of Yahweh. At the beginning of creation sin was evident (Gen. 1:1), and God's purpose is that during the seventh millennium there shall be another such "day of rest" for believers (Heb. 4:9-10). Meanwhile, God has been calling men and women unto Himself (Acts 15:14). In the seventh "day," which prophetically points to the millennium (2Pet. 3:8), there shall be a "holy convocation," or gathering together of the Redeemed. They will constitute "a great number, which no man can number, out of all nations" (Rev. 7:9), as was Israel when they came "out of" Egypt. The redeemed are described as having "come out of great tribulation, and having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (v. 14) — expressions suggestive of Israel's experiences in Egypt and association with the Passover Lamb.

"No manner of work shall be done in them" — They were days entirely devoted to Yahweh.

"Save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you" — The people were to provide only for the absolute necessities of life. The spiritual lesson is that pronounced by the Lord: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take no [anxious — RV] thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Mat. 6:33-34).



VERSE 17

"And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread" — By "observing" it, Israelites were exhorted to consider the spiritual lessons implied in the keeping of it. The Hebrew *shamar*, signifies "to observe," and denotes to guard from being broken, to protect, to carefully scrutinise.

"For in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt" — This establishes the beginning of the festival as being on the fifteenth day of Abib, the day that the Israelites left Egypt. The Israelitish day commenced at sundown the night before, following the description of Gen. 1: "The evening and the morning were the first day." This enumeration is important in establishing the events of the last week of Christ's ministry (cp. John 12:1). The reference to the people as "armies" indicates their changed status. Previously they were an unorganised rabble of slaves in Egypt; but they left marshalled in armies, ready for the fight of faith.

"Therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever" — The observance of the Passover is still maintained by the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) in the partaking of the bread and wine as memorials of the true Lamb.

When The Feast Was To Be Kept — vv. 18-20.

Specific instructions are now given as to when and how the Festival is to be kept.

VERSE 18

"In the first month, on the four-

teenth day of the month at even” — The Hebrew day commences with the evening (Gen. 1:5) at sundown, and as the evening here defined was that at the close of the 14th Abib, the celebration actually commenced at the beginning of the 15th day, the day of Passover.

“Ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even” — Since the evening of the 21st was actually the commencement of 22nd Abib, the festival continued until then. The words “unleavened bread” are from the Hebrew *matstzah*.

VERSE 19

“Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses” — Leaven (Heb. *seor*, “yeast cake”) was excluded for the full period of seven days. As this represents the seven millennia of the divine plan of the ages, the prohibition points to the need of true Israelites to strive for perfection throughout their lives, and to anticipate the day of immortality, when the “leaven” of sin will be entirely removed.

On the fifteenth day, no leaven was to be found in the homes of Israelites, therefore, the fourteenth day was called the *Day of Preparation*, and all leaven was removed. It is significant that on that day Judas was excluded from the band of the apostles (John 13:30).

References to the *Day of Preparation* are found in Mat. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42, and all refer it to the 14th Abib.

“For whosoever eateth that which is leavened” — Here the Hebrew is *chametz*, “to ferment.”

“Even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel” — This is an important addition to the statement of v.15, for “the congregation of Israel” included proselytes who normally would not be included among Israelites. Moses was instructed, that, although Israel was to be separated from Egypt and was about to become a nation, entering upon its inheritance of exclusive privilege. There was also the opportunity for Gentiles to share in it by becoming incorporated into the

nation. In fact, a “mixed multitude” left Egypt with the Israelites, becoming proselytes of the faith, and considered as amongst the chosen nation, and subject to this law.

“Whether he be a stranger” — This word is *ger*, and signifies an alien, therefore a proselyte. This shows that Gentiles have never been entirely excluded from the covenants of promise. They have had opportunity to become incorporated therein by completely identifying themselves with the Israelitish hope, and submitting to circumcision. Throughout the law, provision is made for Gentiles to be included (Ex. 20:10; 23:12; Lev. 16:29; 17:10; 18:26; 20:2; 24:16; Num. 35:15; Deu. 5:14; 16:11-14; 24:17, 19; 27:19; 29:11 etc).

“Or born in the land” — The term denotes an Israelite by birth.

VERSE 20

“Ye shall eat nothing leavened” — This is not a mere repetition of v. 15, but an extension of the command there given, showing that the prohibition is not merely concerning bread, but includes all forms of food.

“In all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread” — This, again, is an extension of that expressed before. Even though not resident in the land, or if absent therefrom, a person was to uphold the same ordinance.

The Elders Instructed to Keep the Passover — vv. 21-28.

Having received specific instructions from Yahweh, Moses calls the elders together, to explain to them how to keep the festival. They agree to observe it and return to make preparations for it.

VERSE 21

“Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover” — They were instructed to draw out from the flock an animal for the purpose of the passover. The word “lamb” is *tsone* in Hebrew, and

denotes a flock generally, without specifying whether it be sheep or goats (See *Interlinear Bible*).

VERSE 22

“And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason” — The hyssop is a small bushy plant growing about 45 cms (1½ ft) high. The leaves have an aromatic smell and a pungent flavour. It was used for medicinal qualities; and in the sacrificial provisions for cleansing a leper (Lev. 14:4,6,49,52). It was also used in conjunction with the red heifer in cleansing the defilement of death (Num. 19:6,18). See also Psa. 51:7; John 19:29; Heb. 9:19.

The hyssop has been identified as a species of marjoram (see *All The Plants of the Bible* — W. Walker) of the mint family, a plant that is native to Egypt and is found also in Syria. Others identify it with the caper plant (See *Sinai & Palestine* — Stanley, p. 21) which abounds especially in the desert or in difficult circumstances, and is generally low and insignificant. The hyssop is also known for its tenacity and is described as “springing out of the wall” (1 Kings 4:33). Accordingly, it suggests humility and faith in action. In so doing, it symbolised that quality of worship that gave significance to the keeping of the Passover, and was effective in cleansing from sin (Psa. 51:7). Humility, tenacity of purpose, and faith in action, are still necessary for acceptable worship.

Dipping the hyssop in the blood, helped to keep it from congealing. Apparently some of it was caught in a basin, as the verse before us implies and as is generally thought. However, the Hebrew *saph* translated “bason,” may also be rendered *threshold* as in Judges 19:27. It is so rendered in the Septuagint, in the passage before us. But evidently some receptacle is meant, which probably was placed on the threshold for the purpose of holding the blood for sprinkling.

“And strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason” — See note v. 7

“And none of you shall go out at the

door of his house until the morning” —

They were not to leave the house unless divinely instructed to do so. This part of the command evidently related to subsequent celebrations of the Passover, for on the first keeping of it, the people actually left at night (see vv. 29-31; Deu. 16:1). The command is most significant to the “Israel of God” today; for the ecclesia constitutes the “house of God” (1 Tim. 3:15), and after entering it, enjoying the protection it affords, to then leave it before the morning of the coming day (Mal. 4:1-2) is to risk the death that afflicts those outside.



VERSE 23

“For Yahweh will pass through to smite the Egyptians” — See note v. 12. The word here is *abar*.

“And when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts” — Indicative of the obedient faith of those dwelling therein.

“Yahweh will pass over the door” — Here the word is *pasach*, and signifies not to pass over (AV), but to *hover over*, or to *protect* as the following words reveal.

“And will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you” — The *Destroyer* denotes the angel who had been appointed to administer judgment upon Egypt. Later, Israel was warned against acting in such a way as to incite the wrath of this angel (Ex. 23:20-23).

VERSE 24

“And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever” — In this verse, Moses changes from the plural, “you” (v. 21) to the singular, “thee.” In doing so, he emphasised the

individual and personal responsibility attached to keeping the Passover.

VERSE 25

“And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which Yahweh will give you, according as He hath promised, that ye shall keep this service” — Significantly, and beautifully, the same principle was expressed by the Lord in introducing his Passover, declaring that he would no more eat thereof until the kingdom of God shall come (Luke 22:15-16; Eze. 45:21-22).

VERSE 26

“And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?” — Instead of “children” read “sons” (See *Interlinear Bible*). It is still the custom, that in opening the Passover service, the unleavened bread is uncovered, and the youngest “son of the commandment” present asks the question posed in the next verse. Moses taught that it was the responsibility of fathers to instruct their children in divine principles and precepts. A Jewish commentator has stated: “Education in the home is thus as old as the Hebrew people: see Gen. 18:19.” This same responsibility

of personally educating their children in the things of God rests heavily upon the parents of the “Israel of God” today.

VERSE 27

“That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Yahweh’s passover” — The lamb was treated as a sacrifice, the altar being represented by the house itself upon which the blood was splashed.

“Who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses” — Here the verb is *pasach* as in v. 13, and again it is seen that the AV is inadequate. Yahweh did not “pass over” the children of Israel when He smote the Egyptians; He stayed over their houses to protect them.

“And the people bowed the head and worshipped” — They did so with greater fervency in view of the redemption and the future inheritance promised them.

VERSE 28

“And the children of Israel went away, and did as Yahweh had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they” — They went to select their lambs, and to make preparation for the Passover celebration.



EXODUS: A PATTERN OF REDEMPTION

SECTION FOUR SEPARATION

CHAPTER 12:29 to 15:21

Yahweh intended that the tremendous miracle of Israel's deliverance from Egypt should be remembered by them for all time. It was not accomplished without trouble and anguish to all concerned, for these happenings constituted the birth-pangs by which the nation was brought into existence.

Consider what the exodus meant for Israel. It marked the beginning of a new Life, a new Liberty, a new Fellowship, a new Service. In Egypt, Israel was under bondage to Pharaoh; the people wore themselves out by slave-labour that promised them nothing; they partook of a life that was limited to sin and death. On the other side of the Red Sea everything was changed. They were brought into a relationship to things that promised eternal life. They changed masters: from Pharaoh to Yahweh. They entered into a state that promised them freedom from Egyptian slavery, and set before them the hope of the Promised Land. Between the one state and the other was a barrier of water, called the Red Sea. It became the means of life to Israel, but of death to Pharaoh — even as earlier the Flood saved Noah, but destroyed the world of wickedness with which he was familiar.

All this has its counterpart in the Gospel of Christ. Luke records that when Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration they “spake of his decease [lit. ‘his exodus’] which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” The Lord is the Leader of an Exodus far greater than that under Moses. Baptism into him provides a new Life, a new Liberty, a new Fellowship, and a new Service for his followers, greater than that to which Moses led Israel of old.

*In this section now before us, this separation was first **Proposed** as the people were urged to leave Egypt; it was **Resisted** when Pharaoh endeavoured to prevent them crossing the Red Sea; it was **Accomplished** by the passage itself, culminating in the people singing the Song of Deliverance on the other side.*

(1)—SEPARATION PROPOSED**Chapter 12:29 to 14:4**

The frightful effect of the tenth plague which plunges all Egypt into mourning, results in Pharaoh granting approval to Israel to leave, and in the Egyptians doing all in their power to assist them to that end. As the Hebrews leave for Succoth, the spiritual significance of the Passover, its eternal importance as a religious ceremony, is impressed upon them. At the same time, Moses does not forget the message and request of Joseph, and arranges for his remains to be conveyed with them. Under the protection of Yahweh, the people move slowly, but steadily, towards Pihahiroth and the Red Sea.

Tenth Plague: The Firstborn Slain
— vv. 29–30.

Egypt is plunged into bitter mourning as the consequence of Pharaoh's folly is felt by every household, in the death of the firstborn. It is obvious that the gods of the land have been unable to protect their worshippers from the wrath of Yahweh.

VERSE 29

“And it came to pass, that at midnight” — It had been prophesied by Moses that the time of deliverance would be at midnight (ch. 11:4), though the day had not been fixed. Midnight is the time when most people are asleep, and therefore off guard for any crisis. So it will be at the coming of the Lord. The constant exhortation is that believers “should not sleep as do others” (1Thes. 5:6). “Behold, I come as a thief,” declared Christ, “Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they [the overshadowing angels] see his shame” (Rev. 16:15). The word “watch,” frequently used throughout the N.T. in a similar context, signifies to *keep awake*, and is an allusion to the night of Passover. For, whilst Egypt slept, the Hebrews were awake in their houses “watching;” so that Passover is given the title of *The Night Of Watching*. The Lord warned that he could come at midnight (Mark 13:35), and in his parable of the ten virgins, represented the approach of the bridegroom at such a time (Mat. 25:6).

“Yahweh smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle”

— See note v. 12. The judgment of this, the most terrible of the plagues, is aligned with the final defeat of the gods of Egypt (Num. 33:4), and is described as judgment against “the chief of Egypt’s strength” (Psa. 78:51). Every element of Egypt is included, from the highest to the lowest in the land, and the beasts of the field. Its counterpart in the future will be the judgment of Armageddon and its aftermath, when “the slain of Yahweh shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth” (Jer. 25:33).

Whilst death claimed all the firstborn of Egypt, those of Israel were protected by the hovering presence of Yahweh. Later, the tribe of Levi was constituted as the priestly tribe in Israel and was claimed of Yahweh as instead of the firstborn (Num. 8:16; 3:45). In Christ, the redeemed constitute “the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev. 14:4), and are thereby separated unto Him for His great purpose.

The word “cattle” in this verse is from the Hebrew *behemah* and denotes animals generally. There was no limitation of the plague to domestic animals: it affected all beasts, and as these were worshipped in Egypt, the death of such constituted judgment against the gods of the land.

VERSE 30

“And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians” — Pharaoh had been warned of the impending disaster, but had not heeded the warning. Now he learnt that God’s Word cannot be treated with contempt, and that his neglect involved all his people in the trouble.

“And there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead” — A frantic wail of agony was heard throughout the land. It is said that no people of antiquity were more emotional in mourning than the Egyptians. They whipped, beat, tore themselves, and howled and screamed in excessive grief!

The People are Urged To Leave

— vv. 31-36.

This final plague is the breaking point: The hardness of Pharaoh’s heart is revealed as Gentile folly. The king has brought his nation to the brink of destruction, and even his own position is insecure. That very night an urgent command is sent to Moses and Aaron to leave instantly with their people and possessions. No restrictions of any kind are imposed. Indeed, every assistance is offered them to go. Egypt has had enough.

VERSE 31

“And he called for Moses and Aaron by night” — The night was the 15th Abib, a Thursday according to our time, but which actually commenced on the evening of Wednesday, for the Jewish day begins at 6pm (thus: “the evening and the morning were the first day,” Gen. 1:5). Pharaoh evidently sent a royal messenger to Moses, instructing him to leave, and did not call for him to attend at the palace, as implied in the AV. From Ex 10:28-29; 11:8 it appears that the king had no further personal interviews with Moses after the latter had left the palace in anger. The *Inter-linear Bible* reads: “And he called Moses and Aaron by night.” He instructed them by the hand of an emissary.

“And said, Rise up, and get you

forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Yahweh, as ye have said” — Pharaoh’s resistance was at an end.

VERSE 32

“Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone” — This was a retraction of Pharaoh’s former prohibition (Ex. 10:24-26), and a complete capitulation to the requests of Moses.

“And bless me also” — An astonishing addition to the message, and one which indicates the complete humiliation of Pharaoh induced by his personal sorrow. His request for a blessing from Moses and Aaron was an acknowledgment that he now recognised the power and status of Yahweh. This was similarly the case with Nebuchadnezzar, following his experience of madness (Dan. 4:33-37). In the antitype the nations will be compelled to acknowledge that “God is in” those whom they previously opposed (Isa. 45:14).

VERSE 33

“And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste” — The people had suffered much and feared more. Without concern for Pharaoh or what he might have determined, the Egyptians, on their own account, urged the Israelites to leave the land.

“For they said, We be all dead men” — They feared that if there was any further hindrance to the Israelites in leaving Egypt, the incidence of death already experienced would become more widespread, and the whole nation might be wiped out.

VERSE 34

“And the people took their dough before it was leavened” — Hence the origin of the festival of unleavened bread was based on the separation of the people from the darkness of Egypt, and the urgency of their deliverance.

“Their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders” — It was customary for

nomads, in travelling, to bind their kneading troughs in their clothing so as to have them ready for use in travel. The troughs were small wooden bowls, or leather pouches, used for mixing flour and water to make bread or cakes. In taking these utensils, the Hebrews showed that they were leaving on a journey from which they would never return.

VERSE 35

“And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses” — He had instructed them to “borrow” of the Egyptians (Ex. 3:22; 11:2).

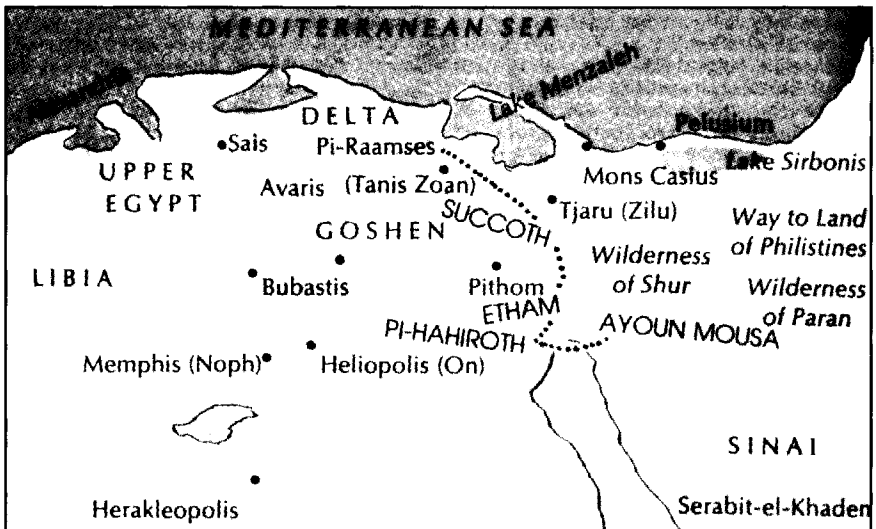
“And they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment” — The word “borrowed” should be rendered “asked,” not “borrowed” (see notes on Ex. 3:22; 11:2). In asking these things of the Egyptians, the Hebrews requested that they give them that which was their right to have, and which they did not intend to return. They had been unlawfully condemned to slavery, and had worked hard without adequate pay; now they requested payment for that which they had done. The jewels and raiment they received as a result were

later used to provide what was necessary for the tabernacle.

VERSE 36

“And Yahweh gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required” — Yahweh’s judgments caused a change of heart in the Egyptians, and made them more amenable to the requests of the Israelites. The latter part of the verse is better rendered by the RV, “They let them have what they asked.”

“And they spoiled the Egyptians” — The Hebrew *natsal* signifies “to snatch away,” and is better rendered “saved” rather than “spoiled.” The *Soncino Edition of The Pentateuch* states “spoiled” is an impossible rendering of the Hebrew text, and comments: “The root *natsal* occurs 212 times in Scripture, and in 210 instances its meaning is admitted by all to be *to snatch* (from danger), *to rescue* (from a wild beast), *to recover* (property)... Its direct object is never the person or thing from whom the saving, or the rescuing, or the snatching has taken place, but always the person or thing rescued. The usual translation, both here and in Ex.



3:22... is unwarranted, for two reasons. It takes the persons from whom the things are snatched as the direct object; and furthermore, it necessitates an entire reversal of the meaning of *natsal* from 'save' into 'despoil'. The same word is rendered "deliver" in Isaiah 19:20, and applied to modern Egypt. Thus, in the days of Moses the people recovered from the Egyptians what had been taken from them during their servitude, and by so responding, the Egyptians purchased themselves back into favour. The law therefore commanded: "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian" (Deu. 23:7).

In willingly acknowledging the right of the Hebrews to the jewels and raiment they heaped upon them, the Egyptians were spared from any further divine judgment. Indeed, the readiness with which they responded, illustrated that they did not now endorse the policy of Pharaoh and his courtiers, and this kept them from a disaster similar to that which overcame his army subsequently. If the people had continued to resist the Exodus, they would have suffered the punishment that they apprehended (v. 33).

The Hebrews Journey To Succoth

— vv. 37-39.

Together with a mixed multitude of Gentiles who identified with the saving work of God with His people, the children of Israel leave the land of Goshen and move on to Succoth.

VERSE 37

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth" — For Rameses, or Raamses as it is spelt in Ex. 1:11, see notes at that place.

"Succoth" signifies *booths* or *tabernacles*, and is so called because the Hebrews dwelt in temporary abiding places during the short time they remained there. This gave rise later to the Festival of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:43).

Succoth has been identified by some with Tell el-Maskhutah, on the eastern part of the Wadi Tumilat (see *Unger's Dictionary*), and is a little over 25 kilome-

tres (15 miles) distance from Goshen. The Hebrews arrived there late Thursday and encamped under whatever temporary shelter was available.

"About six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children" — The total number of those who left has been assessed as over two million. The word for "children" is *taph*, and signifies "families." This would include all the women, and those under twenty. Objections have been raised as to the difficulty of such a large company of people leaving Egypt. These have been considered at length in *The Exodus Of Israel* by T.R. Birks, and shown to be without real foundation.

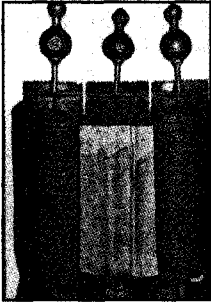
VERSE 38

"And a mixed multitude went up also with them and flocks and herds, even very much cattle" — Pharaoh's stubbornness caused discerning Gentiles to acknowledge the might of Israel's God, and so, at this time of crisis, to throw in their lot with them. Pharaoh's folly, and Yahweh's longsuffering, resulted in Gentiles embracing the way of life, as Paul observes (Rom. 9:22-24). Though Israel is the exclusive channel of divine grace and mercy, the opportunity has ever been for Gentiles to identify themselves therewith.

VERSE 39

"And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened" — Hence the significance of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, being celebrated after Passover. It is here repeated (see v. 34) to emphasise the urgency of their action, and the importance of preparing for their departure.

"Because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual" — The Festival of Unleavened Bread celebrates the separation from Egypt, and the urgency with which it took place. They were to place no dependence upon Egypt, and to make all haste to distance themselves from its association. Even the food



of Egypt was to be abhorred — although later the people turned again in faithlessness, remembering the pleasures of that land (Num. 11:5). The importance of separation from the ways and “foods” of the world cannot be overemphasised

to those who today seek deliverance from spiritual Egypt.

The Night Of Observations — vv. 40-42.

The narrative of the departure from Egypt is followed by a statement of the length of the sojourn, and the importance of the night that preceded the journey from the land of sin and death.

VERSE 40

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years” — The statement does not claim that the Hebrews were in Egypt for 430 years, but that the sojourning of the children of Israel who then dwelt in Egypt was for that period of time. In Gal. 3:16-17, Paul states that the figure given reaches back to the call of Abram, the progenitor of the Hebrews. That was thirty years longer than the 400 years given in Gen. 15:13, because it included the sojourning of Abram himself. Abram entered the land in the year 2083 after creation. Add to this the 430 years’ sojourn, and the Exodus took place in the year 2513. According to our chronology (see outline at the conclusion of Gen. 50 in *Expositor: Genesis*), Joseph died in the year 2369, and from this the following periods are established:

Death of Joseph	2369
Birth of Moses	64
	<u>2433</u>
Flight of Moses	40
	<u>2473</u>
Exodus from Egypt	40
	AC <u>2513</u>

According to our chronology at Gen. 50, Jacob entered the land of Egypt in the year AC2298 at the age of 130. This was exactly half the time period indicated, for 215 years later, in the year AC2513, Israel departed out of Egypt.

VERSE 41

“And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years” — This suggests that Abram began his sojourn on the 15th day of Abib, 430 years before the Exodus (cp. Gen. 12:6; Num. 33:3; Gal. 3:17). Thirty years later, according to Genesis 15:13, where it is stated that 400 years would elapse before the Exodus, the covenant was typically confirmed with Abraham.

“Even the selfsame day” — This statement significantly begins and concludes the wilderness wanderings (Deu. 27:9, 11; 32:48).

“It came to pass that all the hosts of Yahweh went out from the land of Egypt” — The word for “hosts” in the Hebrew is the same as that rendered “armies” in vv. 17, 51. The Hebrew *tsabaoth* is a feminine noun, and here has reference to Israel as the “Bride” of Yahweh (Isa. 54:5).

VERSE 42

“It is a night to be much observed unto Yahweh for bringing them out from the land of Egypt” — The margin renders this as *a night of observations*, or *a night of watchings*. Alternative ideas are those of *celebrations* and *vigilances*. The Hebrews were to be vigilant all that night, suggesting the words of Paul: “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” (1Thes. 5:4-6). The Gentile night must become a time of watching, of vigilance and of preparation, for true believers (Rev. 16:15). The watching should be “unto Yahweh,” with the mind concentrated on the things of faith.

“This is that night of Yahweh to be observed of all the children of Israel in

their generations” — The Hebrew for “observed” is *shimmur*, from the root *shamar* and denotes *observance* but with the object of *performance*. The root is used in Deu. 6:25, “If we *observe* to do.” See also ch. 12:17, 24.

Who Shall Eat The Passover?

— vv. 43-51.

Specific instructions are further given as to the observance of the Passover on future occasions.

VERSE 43

“And Yahweh said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover” — It was necessary to repeat the general principles of the Passover because of the presence of the mixed multitude (v. 38).

“There shall no stranger eat thereof” — In this verse, two different Hebrew words are used: *ben neker*, “the son of a foreigner” (see *Interlinear Bible*), in contrast to vv. 19, 48-49. This denotes an alien who remains as such, and does not endorse the Israelitish covenant (ct. v. 48).

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VERSE 44

“But every man’s servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him” — Endorsing the instructions given unto Abraham when the rite of circumcision was first introduced (See Gen. 17:12, 13, 23, 27). However, it is implied, though not directly expressed, that the slave should of his own freewill accept the faith, and not be forced to embrace it. The rabbis interpreted the ordinance this way.

“Then shall he eat thereof” — A foreigner who, as a bought servant, accepts the Israelitish faith and submits to circumcision, permanently enters the family circle, and becomes a full member of the nation. As such he must partake of the Passover. This principle is revealed in the case of Onesimus the slave, who, upon embracing the Truth, became a “brother beloved” (Phil. 10-16), partaker of the memorials of Christ, though remaining a

slave. The ordinance before us urges the responsibility of the Israelitish master to instruct his slaves in the principles of the faith, acknowledging his own former state of servitude in Egypt (Deu. 5:15).

VERSE 45

“A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof” — The word “foreigner” is *towshab* from *yashab* signifying “to sit down, to dwell,” and thus denotes a resident alien. The RV renders it, “a sojourner.” The “hired servant” is treated differently to the “slave,” who, as a proselyte to the faith, becomes a member of an Israelitish household.

VERSE 46

“In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house” — See comments on vv. 3-10.

“Neither shall ye break a bone thereof” — Representing the unity of those partaking of the Passover victim. These words were cited in regard to the Lord’s manner of death (see John 19:33-36). To interfere with this important provision by destroying the harmony of the Christ-body with devious doctrines and wrong practices is strictly forbidden.

VERSE 47

“All the congregation of Israel shall keep it” — For “congregation” see notes vv. 3, 6. The word “keep” is from the Hebrew *asah*, and signifies to keep or make, in the broadest sense. The margin has “do it,” the *Interlinear Bible* has “prepare it.” All three words can have application. There was a sharing in both the preparation and the participation of the Passover.

VERSE 48

“And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to Yahweh, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it” — The word for “stranger” is *ger*, as in v. 19. Circumcision is required of all, whether Israelite by birth or Gentile

proselyte, as a condition for eating the Passover. Symbolically, circumcision represents the denial of flesh, as a basis for the proper partaking of the Christ-Passover (see Rom. 2:29).

“And he shall be as one that is born in the land” — The foreigner, on becoming circumcised, was considered as a citizen of Israel, and to participate in its activities and worship.

It is significant that the same words are applied to a class of mortals in the midst of Israel in the Age to come (Eze. 47:22). The “strangers” referred to in this place are permitted to dwell in the midst of Israel, and possess portion of the land as an inheritance, at a time when the nation is restored in its fulness. To whom does the reference apply? It appears strongly to relate to the children of believers who have not reached the age of responsibility for accepting Christ before he returns. They will have the great benefit of guidance from immortal parents, and of being incorporated into Israel as though “born in the country.”

“For no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof” — Upon this ordinance, in regard to its application in Christ, Bro. Thomas comments in *Elpis Israel*, p. 250: “None but circumcised persons can inherit the promises. This may startle; but it is strictly true. It will, however, be remembered that true circumcision is of the heart. Circumcision of the flesh is but an outward sign of Abraham’s circumcision of heart; and every one who would inherit with faithful Abraham must be circumcised of heart likewise. When he was circumcised of heart his faith in God was imputed to him for remission of sins that were past. His former idolatry, etc., was forgiven, and the body of the sins of his flesh put off. Now, a man believing what Abraham believed, with the same effect on his disposition and life, is also circumcised of heart, when, *in putting on Christ*, he is ‘circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by the circumcision of Christ,’ performed on the eighth day according to the law. In putting on Christ, his faith is counted to him for righteous-

ness as Abraham’s was. The “body of the sins of his flesh,” is cut off. The foreskin of his heart is circumcised, and he is the subject of “circumcision in the spirit;” and his praise, though not of men, is pronounced of God (Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11-12).”

VERSE 49

“One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you” — The word “law” is *torah*, derived from *ayah*, and signifies, “to aim at, teach, point out, direct, lead, guide,” denoting instruction in righteousness (see also Lev. 24:22). This is the first mention of the word *Torah*, “law,” in the Bible, and it is a word, extremely important and prominent to the mind of a Jew. The Law provided a guide to right conduct, illustrated the reality of sin (Rom. 7:13), made manifest the weakness of flesh (Rom. 8:3), and demonstrated the need of a Redeemer, so leading the way to Christ (Gal. 3:24). The understanding of the Law, and all that it brought home to the Israelite, provides an important foundation to the manifestation of grace in Christ. Thus Paul describes it as holy, just and good.

The word “stranger” is *ger*, and from this, the true proselyte was given the title of *ger tzedek*, the “righteous proselyte.”

VERSE 50

“Thus did all children of Israel; as Yahweh commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they” — At their first Passover, the Israelites scrupulously observed all the ordinances of Yahweh. This response of the people is mentioned twice for emphasis, as the critical circumstances of the time caused them to seek Yahweh with the greatest fervency.

VERSE 51

“And it came to pass the selfsame day, that Yahweh did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt” — This statement reveals that the day the Israelites left Egypt was the Passover proper, the fifteenth of Abib, and not the

14th when the animal was slain.

“By their armies” — The word *tseba'ah* is in the feminine gender and signifies “to mass together.” From this comes the word *tsabaoth*, “troops.” The people massed together in armies, in order to leave. Passover, therefore, had both a reli-

gious and a military significance: a fusion of divine principles prominent throughout Scripture. For example, Paul exhorted: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called” (1Tim. 6:12). He combined military and religious duties.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

INSTRUCTED AND LED OF YAHWEH

In view of the mixed multitude that left with Israel, and as a reminder to Israelites as well, instructions are repeated concerning the status of the firstborn, the celebrating of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and the significance of various duties the people are called upon to perform. Portion of this chapter is given over to a speech by Moses (vv. 3-16) in which he recapitulates important matters of religious observance. Then, overshadowed by Yahweh, led by a pillar of cloud in the day and protected by a pillar of fire at night, the people make their way through the wilderness of the Red Sea, carrying with them the bones of Joseph.

The Firstborn In Israel To Be Sanctified — vv. 1-2.

The status of the firstborn in Israel is now revealed. It is an important principle, establishing the divine dominion over this people brought forth from Egypt, and providing the means for the true worship of Yahweh.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — The time, doubtless, when this revelation was given, was the day the Israelites left, as defined in ch. 12:51.

VERSE 2

“Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn” — By the Passover sacrifice, Yahweh purchased the firstborn of Israel as His own (Num. 8:17). They were consecrated to Him (Num. 3:45; 8:16; Luke 2:23), and, as such, the privileged position of family priest was vested in them (see note Gen. 49:3, *Expositor: Genesis*). Unfortunately, when Moses was in the mount, all Israel sinned, and, in consequence, as represent-

ing the families in Israel, the firstborn were deposed from their position of privilege and the Levites elevated in their place (Num. 3:45). Thus an organized priesthood, exclusive to the tribe of Levi, was established. In Christ, however, the privilege is restored, for believers are accounted as “firstborns” (Heb. 12:23; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4). The deposing of the firstborn taught the principle that the “flesh profiteth nothing” (John 6:63). Under the Law, the status of firstborn could be forfeited through misconduct or incompetency (see 1Chr. 5:1; 26:10). Both Isaac and Jacob took precedence over their older brothers; Reuben was deposed from his position of eminence (Gen. 49:3-4). Indeed, it was so easy for a more favoured younger son to be appointed firstborn over his older brother, that the Law guarded against its abuse (Deu. 21:17).

Why should Yahweh emphasise the position of *Firstborn* to Israel? Because it was His purpose to provide a Son who would assume that position over all other beings. Adam, the older son of God (Luke

3:38), had abused the position of trust committed to him, and through sin, brought tragedy upon the human race. God proclaimed His intention of supplying another Son, called the Seed of the Woman, who would more than restore that which had been lost in Adam, and of elevating him to the position of firstborn. He declared: "I will make him My firstborn" (Psa. 89:24-28). Hence Christ was appointed "firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15-19), not because he was before all, in the sense of time, but because he was so in position and status.

However, the title *Firstborn* applies not only to the Lord, but to all in him — those who have been purchased by the true Passover Lamb, and covered "in him." These in the Age to come, will act as priests on behalf of all humanity (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6), and inherit the other privileges associated with that exalted position. The firstborn received a threefold benefit: [1] a double portion of inheritance; [2] authority to rule; [3] to act as priest on behalf of the family. Christ inherited all three aspects, and by virtue of this, and because they are "joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), so will the Redeemed as they, in turn, reveal Christ to the nations.

The word for "firstborn" is *bekowr*, in the masculine gender. As the Passover served to remind Israelites of the great Redemption, so also did the sanctification of every male firstborn in the home. Firstborn Israelites keep the 14th Abib as a fast, in commemoration of the miracle wrought for their ancestors.

"Whatsoever, openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is Mine" — The instruction related to every case where a woman's first child was a male. If a sister had been born first, the second child was not offered (Luke 2:23). Antotypically, the Lord Jesus, being elevated to the firstborn, was the offering of Yahweh.

The Passover Memorial Explained

— vv. 3-4.

Moses delivers a speech unto the people, explaining again the significance

of the important festival they were celebrating, thus emphasising its spiritual lessons.

VERSE 3

"And Moses said unto the people"

— His speech continues to v. 16.

"Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage" — This address was delivered at the conclusion of the first day's journey at Succoth, constituting a general reminder of the solemnity of the day. The word "Egypt" signifies *Oppressors*, so that the name is appropriately related to the house of bondage from which the people had been delivered.

"For by strength of hand Yahweh brought you out from this place" — It was not through Israel's own strength or ability that they had escaped, but through the powerful protection afforded them by Yahweh.

"There shall no leavened bread be eaten" — The spiritual lesson is: Endeavour to live in righteousness before Him, avoiding acts of sin.

VERSE 4

"This day came ye out in the month Abib" — Abib signifies *green ears of corn*, and is suggestive of new life, a reminder to the people of what was expected from them. The barley harvest (the most humble of cereal plants) was ripening at this time (Lev. 23:10).

How To Keep The Passover In The Land — vv. 5-7.

Israel is instructed that they had escaped from Egypt in order to find joyous residence in the Land of Promise, and therefore there was a continuing need to be reminded of their dependence upon Yahweh. For this reason, the Passover was to be kept when in the Land. This instruction is therefore also a prophecy that Yahweh would accomplish His purpose in their deliverance.

VERSE 5

"And it shall be when Yahweh shall

bring thee” — A prophetic statement, that Yahweh intended to fulfil His purpose in delivering Israel from Egypt: that the people might reflect His wisdom and goodness to the nations about them. It was, “that they might be unto Me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory” (Jer. 13:11). For the same reason, since Israel failed to honour their calling, the divine invitation is extended to all peoples through the work of Christ (Acts 15:14).

“Into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which He swore unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month” — For the significance of the nations enumerated, see comments on Gen. 15:19-21 in *Expositor: Genesis*.

For the description of the land itself, see Exo. 3:8. Notice that the people were commanded to keep the Passover when “in the land,” and not during the wilderness wanderings. At Sinai, they were specifically ordered to keep it (Num. 9:2-4), but as it was anticipated that they would be in the Land for the next Passover (Deu. 1:2), to keep it in the place not yet revealed (ch. 16:5-6), no instruction was given to celebrate it in the wilderness. It was not kept by the doomed generation during their wanderings. After Sinai, the next occasion that the Passover was held, was at Jericho (Josh. 5:10-11).

The Jews do not keep the true Passover today, but will do so in the future when the temple is restored (Eze. 45:21).

VERSE 6

“Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to Yahweh” — The festival continued for seven days, but the first and last days were to be kept especially holy (Exo. 12:16).

VERSE 7

“Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days” — The repetition of these injunctions was to emphasise the principle

of purity from transgression, and to encourage the people to more deeply reflect upon the divine truths.

“And there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters” — See notes ch. 12:19.



Children To Be Taught Its Significance — vv. 8-10.

The whole family was to be taught concerning the divine laws, so that each member might co-operate in upholding the principles of God. This was to commence with the eldest son, typical of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 8

“And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which Yahweh did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt” — See comments ch. 12:26-27. The rabbis derived from this verse the law, that every father should relate to his children on the evening of Passover, the story of the deliverance of the people from the land of Egyptian darkness.

VERSE 9

“And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes” — The Exodus was to be more than a mere annual celebration of joy because of the nation’s deliverance from Egypt. The eternal lessons and spiritual teachings discerned in the memorial were to be ever be before the mind of the Israelite. His *labour* (hands) and his *thoughts* (forehead) were to be constantly governed by its principles (Pro. 3:3; 6:21; 7:3).

From this verse Jews derive the custom of placing an external “sign” upon the hand, and a similar “memento” between the eyes. The reminders on arm and forehead are called *tephillin*, signifying

“prayers.” They are the “phylacteries” of the N.T. Four sections of the Law (Exo. 13:1-10; vv. 11-16; Deu. 6:4-9; 11:13-21) are in the *tephillin*; and it is claimed that these four sections have been chosen in preference to all other passages of the Law because they embrace the acceptance of the kingdom of God, the unity of the Creator, and the Exodus from Egypt. While there is nothing wrong with such reminders as aids to keeping prominently in view one’s responsibilities toward God (in fact, Israelites were commanded to place a ribband of blue on their garments — Deu. 22:12 — and to inscribe their doors with portions of the Law — ch. 6:9 — for the same purpose), the ostentatious display, but lack of performance by the Jews of his day was condemned by the Lord (Mat. 23:5).

“That Yahweh’s law may be in thy mouth” — The things of God should be the constant topic of conversation (Deu. 6:6-7).

“For with a strong hand hath Yahweh brought thee out of Egypt” — In recalling the past, true Israelites should recognise the strength of Yahweh to help in the present (cp. Phil. 4:13).

VERSE 10

“Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year” — The word “season” is *mowade*, and signifies “appointed time.” It was to be a regular feature of the Hebrew life.

The Firstborn To Be Set Apart — vv. 11-16.

Further instructions are given concerning the firstborn, emphasising how important is the provision of Yahweh’s Firstborn (the Lord Jesus Christ — Col. 1:15) in the divine purpose with humanity.

VERSE 11

“And it shall be when Yahweh shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as He sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee” — There was no doubt of the nation entering the Land, though that particular generation

failed because of their infidelity at Kadesh Barnea. Yahweh’s purpose is greater than the individual, and He would ensure that the nation would ultimately be redeemed from the wilderness of probation.

VERSE 12

“That thou shalt set apart unto Yahweh all that openeth the matrix” — The Hebrew, as expressed in the margin, is “*Thou shalt cause to pass over to Yahweh...*” The firstborn in Israel were separated and, in effect, given to the priests, Yahweh’s representatives on earth (Num. 18:5-8), to uphold the divine principles in each family. The word “matrix” (Heb. *rechem*) relates to the womb, and describes the act of giving birth. It is derived from the word *racham*, meaning “to fondle; thus to love, be compassionate.” Therefore that which is the object of the parents’ love was to be offered to Yahweh as an act of uniting with Him.

“And every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be Yahweh’s” — The important law of the firstborn embraced all forms of life, in order to impress Israelites of their own standing with Yahweh, as well as illustrating the redemption He had promised in providing the Seed of the Woman as His firstborn to conquer the ravages of sin and death.

VERSE 13

“And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb” — This commandment actually epitomised Yahweh’s scheme of redemption for Israel. The ass became identified with Israel. It was used by Abraham (Gen. 22:3, 5), by Moses (Exo. 4:20), by judges and kings as a symbol of rank (Jud. 5:10; 10:4; 12:14; 2Sam. 16:1-2; 1Kings 1:33, 38).

The humble ass, or mule, was despised by Egyptians. It is a patient, plodding, hard-working beast, whose very appearance suggests humble submission. It provides a contrast



to the horse which was introduced from Egypt, and invariably is used as a symbol of pride and power (Josh. 11:6; Psa. 33:17). But the ass can also be a cross-grained, stubborn creature, refusing to perform its owner's will, in spite of punishment.

The Hebrew word for "ass" is *chamowr*, and signifies "red," from a root *chamar*, "to boil, ferment, glow." This is appropriate to the ass as a symbol for Israel, describing it as a high-spirited beast, while its reddish colour is suggestive of sin nature (Isa. 1:18). Israel was so identified with the ass, that, according to Josephus, their enemies alleged that the nation worshipped an ass's head (*Against Apion*, 2:7). Moreover the ass was an unclean animal, apparently the only unclean animal used by the Jews at that time (Exo. 20:17), which again is significant, in view of it being a symbol of Israel. It shows that "the flesh profiteth nothing," and that in nature, Israel was as much in need of redemption as were the Gentiles.

In the case of the ass, it was redeemed "with a lamb," epitomising the purpose of Yahweh to redeem the nation through the Lamb of His providing. So, again, the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ was typically foreshadowed to the people of Israel for them to ponder.

As an unclean animal, the ass was useless for sacrifice. Therefore as Israel was represented by this beast, the Law revealed that it was beyond the nation to provide an acceptable sacrifice, and that it would have to await the Lamb provided of God.

The word "redeem" is *padah* and signifies "to sever, ransom, release, liberate." It is a different word from that used in Exo. 6:6.

"And if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck" — The scrupulous observance of the law of redemption in regard to this animal, would prevent the owner losing an ass. However, should it be for some reason that the redemption price could not be paid, the death appointed was breaking the neck of the ass. Why? Because Israel, as the anti-

typical ass, was not only naturally stiff-necked (Exo. 32:9; 33:3, 5; Deu. 9:6, 13; 10:16), but further "hardened the neck" instead of submitting to Yahweh's requirements (Deu. 31:27; 2Chr. 36:13; Neh. 9:29; Psa. 75:5). The very expressions, "stiffnecked" and "hardened the neck," suggest the stubbornness of an intractable animal. Yahweh, therefore, adjudged the nation as not being worthy of the Lamb He was prepared to provide. In consequence, the "neck" of national Israel was "broken" in the final judgment of AD70.

"And all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem" — They were redeemed, ransomed or purchased by the payment of the specified sum of five shekels (Num. 18:16), five being the number of grace.

VERSE 14

"And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him" — This question is incorporated into the regular Passover celebrations of the Jews. It will be superseded in the future by a more important question, expressed in Jer. 16:14-15.

"By strength of hand Yahweh brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage" — The set answer reaffirms Israel's status as "the ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38), for the nation was "called out" for Yahweh's purpose. Each year, in the Passover celebrations, there was a recalling of the nation's dependence upon the strength of Yahweh, and its position as having been separated from Gentilism. Likewise, the Passover in Christ, should call to mind the absolute dependence of believers on the divine strength, and their position being separated from the world as "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

VERSE 15

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go" — Rotherham renders this: "Pharaoh had shewed himself too hardened to let us go." At the last interview, Pharaoh had refused to let Israel

go with their cattle, and Moses had refused to leave without them (Exo. 10:24, 27).

“That Yahweh slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to Yahweh all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem” — The word “children” should be rendered “sons.” See *Interlinear Bible*. Redemption in Christ is exclusive to the spiritual “firstborns” (Rev. 14:4; Heb. 12:23, Diaglott).

VERSE 16

“And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes; for by strength of hand Yahweh brought us forth out of Egypt” — See note v. 9. “Frontlets” is *totofoth* from a root signifying *to go around*: the phylacteries of the New Testament, which were placed on the forehead and bound around the head.

Yahweh’s Careful Supervision of His People — vv. 17-18.

In recognition of the limitations of the people to effectively wage war, God leads them along a route that provides them with some immunity from attack.

VERSE 17

“And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near” — The Philistines were a strongly entrenched and warlike people, who might well cause fear to the unwarlike Israelites. Therefore, with thoughtful and merciful consideration, God led the people in a way that avoided such a people.

The word “led” is *nachah*, “to guide.” The method used is described in v. 21. The long slavery of Israel had so weakened the will of the people to resist, that by the wisdom of God, He enabled them to enable them to escape a military campaign at the very outset of leaving Egypt. The “way of the Philistines” was the

shortest route to the Promised Land. The highway ran north, parallel with the Mediterranean Sea, towards Gaza in Philistia, a distance of about 320 kms (200 miles), and could have been covered in about two weeks.

Notice, also, the change in the Deliverer, from the memorial Name of Yahweh, to the manifestation Name of *Elohim*, seen in the angel who led Israel from Egypt (see notes introducing ch. 14:19).

“For God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt” — The Hebrew for “repent” is *nacham*, “to sigh, to breathe strongly,” and therefore to manifest regret for an action taken, to become dispirited through the difficulties faced.

VERSE 18

“But God led the people about, through the way of the Red Sea” — The Hebrew “led” is a different word from that used in v. 17. Here it is *sobab*, “to cause to go around, to encompass.” The phrase can be rendered, “God took the people in a circuit.” He led them to the Land of Promise in a circuitous route, a long way around, through the wilderness of the Red Sea. The word “harnessed” is *chamushim* from *chomesh*, “five,” and therefore signifies in ranks of five (see margin). Five is the number of grace, and is appropriate to the marching, military order of the men as under divine direction they left Egypt.

They Take The Bones Of Joseph With Them — v. 19.

As requested by Joseph before his death (Gen. 50:25), Moses arranges for the remains of the patriarch to be conveyed with the people as they leave the land of Egypt.

VERSE 19

“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” — What a different attitude Moses revealed to that of the Jewish leaders in the time of the Lord! Whereas he did all in his power to bring out the remains of Joseph who so wonderfully typed the Lord, they, on this very day

after Passover, did all in their power to prevent the Lord leaving the tomb, even requesting Pilate to seal it up (Mat. 27:62-66).

In taking "the bones of Joseph" with him, Moses brought prominently before the notice of the Israelites the tokens of the death of Joseph, and his faith in the resurrection. They represented the tokens of the death and resurrection of the Lord which spiritual Israelites keep before them during their progress through the wilderness of life.

"For he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you" — Joseph's clear statement of hope is advanced by Paul as an outstanding instance of faith (Heb. 11:22). See also Josh. 24:32.

Yahweh's Protection Of Them

— vv. 20-22.

From Succoth the children of Israel move down through the land and encamp in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. They are led by Yahweh in the form of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. These symbols cause them to be ever conscious of His invisible presence, and of His guidance and protection.

VERSE 20

"And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness" — Etham, according to the Egyptian derivation of the word, signifies *Edge*. It was found, appropriately, at the edge of the wilderness. Though we are not specifically told, it would seem that they arrived at this spot on Friday evening.

VERSE 21

"And Yahweh went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light" — In doing this, He revealed Himself to be the Shepherd of Israel (Psa. 80:1; 78:52; 77:20) leading the people as a flock. See the following references: Exo. 14:19, 24; 40:38; Num. 9:15;

10:34; 14:14; Deu. 1:33; Neh. 9:12, 19; Psa. 78:14; 95:7; 105:39; 1Cor. 10:1. And for the future: Isa. 4:5.

"To go by day and night" — Rotherham renders this: "That they may journey day and night." See Num. 9:21 where again this is specifically stated. They were motivated by a sense of urgency to get away from Egypt; particularly in view of the stubbornness of Pharaoh. The people, therefore, would have covered longer distances than normally. The cloud not only guided them, but also provided a shelter or covering from the fierce heat of the Egyptian sun, and so protected them from undue exhaustion. See Psa. 105:39.

VERSE 22

"He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" — The people of Israel were thus subjected to divine guidance: direct, continuous, unmistakable, infallible. All plans, all routes, all camping, all marching were in accordance with "if the Lord will." It thus impressed the powerful lesson of dependence upon Yahweh, the lesson enforced by James 4:15. To watch the guiding pillar was all that they were required to do. On that guidance they were entirely dependent, and whilst they followed that guidance they were absolutely safe.

It is a powerful lesson for the Israel of God today, in their wanderings through the wilderness of life. They must discern the cloud by day and the fire by night as the divine guidance to be followed, seeking for it in the *Word* and by communion in *Prayer*. Their eyes must ever be toward His eyes which are constantly upon them (Psa. 32:8). The journeyings of the nation were "by the commandment of Yahweh" (Num. 33:2), and so also must be those of the Israel of God today. That is the lesson of the pillar of cloud and fire.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CROSSING THE RED SEA

The exact spot where the crossing of the Israelites took place cannot be established with certainty. What is sure, however, is that the sea in that place constituted a sufficient barrier to prevent them crossing, being deep enough to destroy the Egyptians who attempted to do so. When the Israelites had left, Pharaoh began to regret releasing his slaves. Once again his innate stubbornness gains the ascendancy, and he despatches a chosen chariot guard as well as all the chariots of Egypt, to attack the Israelites and to bring them again into captivity. With their escape cut off, the people are in mortal fear and turn on Moses with bitter criticism. Appealing to Yahweh, Moses is instructed to "stand still" and await the salvation that would come. The rod is outstretched, the sea opens, Israel is saved, whilst the pillar of fire guards their rear and forms a barrier between them and the Egyptians. When the barrier is lifted, and the Egyptians attempt to follow, they are destroyed. Tremendous lessons were learned by the Israelites that day. The believer can learn also, that he cannot go ahead in the strength of God until he has learned to stand still in his own helplessness. Then, when God moves, that which becomes the means of salvation to those who believe, often turns out to be the means of destruction to those who resist His will.

The Journey To Pi-hahiroth — vv. 1-4.

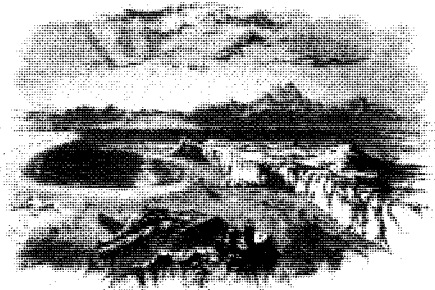
The Israelites are led to the place of crossing, and Moses is warned that Pharaoh, regretting his release of the slaves, will attempt to again bring them into bondage.

VERSE 1

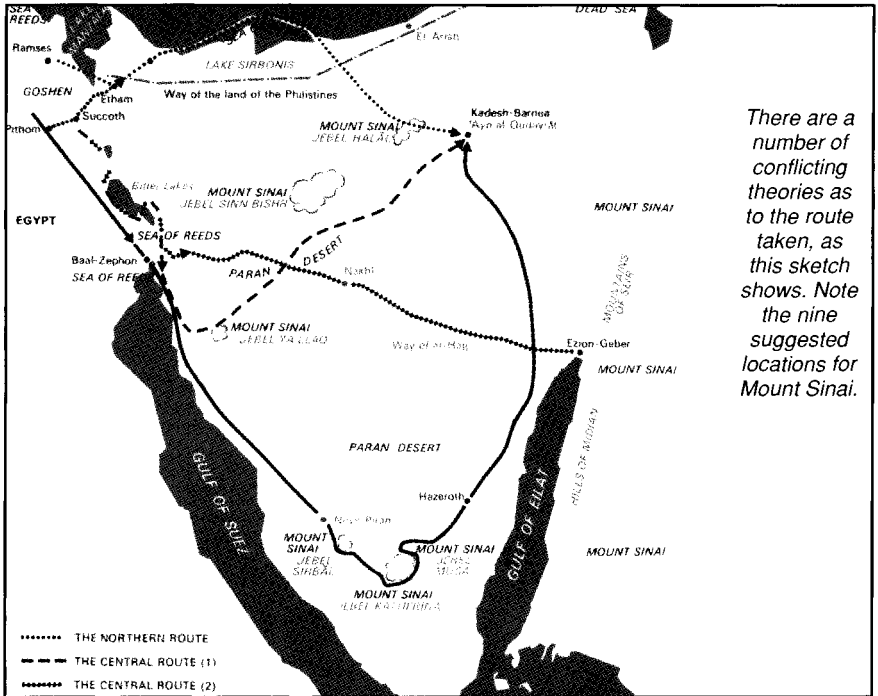
"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — An authoritative statement, often repeated. Cp. Num. 33:2.

VERSE 2

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn" — In attempting to establish the locality of the crossing, attention has been drawn to the word "turn," and it is claimed that this denotes that the Israelites were commanded to turn back. The RSV supports this by rendering the word as "turn back," and from this, some assume that the Hebrews turned back



towards the Mediterranean, and they locate the site of the crossing in that direction. But the Hebrew word merely means *to turn*, and not necessarily back. Indeed, the Septuagint has the Greek *apostrepho* in this place, which signifies "turn away," and not *anastrepho* which it would require to indicate "turn back." It would be rather useless, and indicative of lack of wisdom, to cause the nation to retrace its steps, as though Yahweh lacked the ability to anti-



There are a number of conflicting theories as to the route taken, as this sketch shows. Note the nine suggested locations for Mount Sinai.

ciate the moves of Pharaoh, and was governed by his whims.

Others locate the site of the crossing near Suez, where, prior to the construction of the Canal, the water was so shallow at ebb-tide that Arabs on camels could wade across it without difficulty. By selecting such a site for the crossing, these commentators attempt to remove the fact of the miracle that occurred. However, the very terms of the narrative demand a miracle of stupendous and supernatural proportions.

“And encamp before Pi-hahiroth”

— The site of this place cannot be established with certainty. According to A. Pick, the name signifies: *The passage through the mountains*, and according to J. Strong, *The mouth of the gorges*. This would suggest a mountainous area with a pass leading to the sea. It is important to remember this whilst trying to identify the route of the children of Israel.

In *Archaeology of the New Testament*,

M.F. Unger writes: “In tracing this itinerary on the map it is important first to observe that the translation of the Hebrew name *Yam Suph* by ‘Red Sea’ is plainly incorrect, for the word obviously means ‘Reed’ or ‘Marsh Sea.’ That this can scarcely denote the Red Sea or even its northwestern arm (the Gulf of Suez) is indicated by the fact that there are no reeds in the Red Sea and that the body of water they actually crossed formed a natural barrier between Egypt and the Sinai Wilderness, whereas the Israelites would have had to traverse a long expanse of desert to get to the Red Sea or its arm, the Gulf of Suez. On the contrary, however, the account unquestionably implies the proximity of the Reed Sea to Succoth, modern Tell el-Mashkutah some thirty-two miles south-eastward of their starting point from Rameses (Exo. 12:37).”

However, see our comments upon the Red Sea at Ex. 10:19. We point out also, that the Greek New Testament has “Red

Sea" and not "Reed Sea." Moreover, when Israel was turned back from Kadesh Barnea, and was condemned to wander for thirty-eight years in the wilderness, they were told to return into the wilderness, "by way of the Red Sea (*Yam Suph*)." These wanderings brought them to Eziongeber at the top of the Gulf of Eilat (Num. 33:36). Obviously this arm of the Red Sea was given the title of *Yam Suph*, showing that it cannot be limited to the reedy lakes north of Suez as stated by Unger above. Certainly the very terms in which the miracle of the Crossing is described in Scripture suggest something more dramatic than the fording of comparatively shallow waters caused by driving wind or ebbing tide, as suggested by some.

The Crossing demands an area of water sufficiently deep enough to "baptise" the Israelites (1Cor. 10:1), whilst drowning the Egyptians and their horses. This means that at some stage, and for considerable distance, the wall of water on either side must have been higher than the tallest person: for otherwise the term *baptism* would not apply, and it would be difficult for a person to drown with his head above water!

Moreover, the stretch of water must be wide enough to baptise all the Israelites at once, and then, to destroy the Egyptians as a group. There were six hundred chariots at least, and all were overwhelmed together. A stretch of deep water extending for some kilometres is required for both the national baptism of the Israelites, and the wholesale destruction of the Egyptians.

The Crossing was a miracle that cannot be explained in the terms of natural phenomena. As one writer has remarked: "It is evident that if the grand results were caused by the fortunate and conjunct action of wind and tide, then, as such a combination may have happened often both before and since, the alleged miracle turns out rather a poor and commonplace affair. The glorious Song of Moses, too, 'with its waters standing upright as a heap,' its depths congealed in the 'heart of the sea,' is, in the light of this theory (to

say it mildly), an exaggeration, which no plea of poetic licence can excuse or explain. And when we remember the language of the Psalms, that the Red Sea was rebuked, 'dried up,' 'that He turned the sea into *dry land*,' 'that they went through the flood on foot,' are we to put down all this as little more than a grand flight of poetry?"

The same writer, G. Sandie in *Horeb And Jerusalem* (published 1866) describes how he visited Egypt to ascertain among other things, the site of the crossing. He wrote: "We have the four boundaries of the encampment on the plain marked for us, and the minuteness of the description should help us to decide where it really was. The names of ancient Scripture localities are often found to linger with little change to the present day. And such seems to be the case with Pi-hahiroth and Migdol. Hahiroth corresponds to the modern Ajroud, and Migdol to Muktala; and since the names have thus continued, we may believe that in ancient times they are large and well-known districts: Migdol was the west, and the sea the east boundary; Pi-hahiroth the north, and Baal-Zephon the south. The question now is, Can we determine this last or southern boundary? It has been sought for in the plain near Suez, but it has not been found. No trace of the name has been hitherto discovered..."

The writer shows that the title *Baal* implies a high place or a mountain, as in the case of Baal-peor, and therefore we should look for a mountainous region, and not fix upon a plain adjacent to Suez or the reed lakes north thereof. Josephus also describes the area as mountainous. He writes: "They were shut up between the mountains and the sea — mountains that terminated at the sea, which were impassable by reason of their roughness, and obstructed their flight."

All the requirements of the narrative are supplied some 25kms (15mls) southwards of Suez, at a place called Ras Attakah. G. Sandie wrote: "Words will not easily convey to those familiar only with pastoral hilly country, an idea of its grim

and terrible aspect. It arises not so much from its sudden elevation, as from the precipitous chaos and endless confusion of the sand heaps that lie along its slopes... You cannot but think that the Israelites, looking to these hills, would feel that escape was as hopeless as resistance was vain. The ridge circles round to the north, and as the enemy came down upon them from that direction, they were fairly imprisoned — the Egyptian army on the north, the hills on the west and to the south, and the sea on the east. It was as though they were pent up for the slaughter; and at the only opening, the enemy was coming in to work his cruel will."

He points out that Ras Attakah signifies *The Mountain of Deliverance*, and on the opposite side of a 12km (7ml) stretch of water are the *Ayoun Mousa*, the wells of Moses. This point, mountainous on one side and with the water of wells to refresh on the other, seems the most appropriate site of the Crossing, when all the facts are called to mind.

"Between Migdol and the sea" — Migdol means *Watchtower*. According to the above writer, it was west of the sea. Perhaps from this point the Israelites saw the Egyptians approaching, and so gave it this name.

"Over against Baal-Zephon" — Baal-Zephon signifies *Lord of that which is dark or hidden*. It was evidently a height used for pagan worship, and was suggestive of that which is gloomy, dark and obscure. This is the suggested southern border of the pass.

"Before it shall ye encamp by the sea" — They were brought to a point where they faced the water which was to save them at the same time as it destroyed their enemies. Hemmed in by precipitous mountains, and with the ocean in the front of them, the Israelites could not extricate themselves from any attack launched against them by a determined and skilful foe.

VERSE 3

"For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the

land" — Instead of "for" read "and" as in the *Interlinear Bible*. The Israelites were not taken to this point "because" of Pharaoh's words; he spake and acted as he did because of reports he received of the route taken by the Israelites.

Having "turned back" from the obvious escape route, and drawn west of the Red Sea, Pharaoh imagined that they had lost their way and had become confused and perplexed. The word "entangled" signifies "perplexed." Pharaoh, evidently, kept track of the Israelites through his scouts.

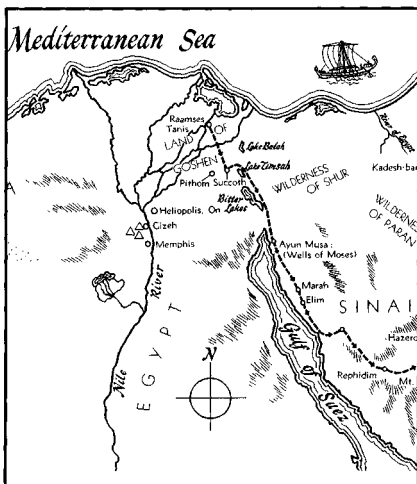
"The wilderness hath shut them in"

— Moving down the western side of the Gulf of Suez, the Israelites would be hemmed in by the wilderness and the sea, and if Pharaoh sent an army to cut off their retreat, they would be completely without hope.

VERSE 4

"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them" — See note ch. 4:21. Rotherham renders the phrase in this place as "I will let the heart of Pharaoh wax bold."

"And I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host" — This came to pass, for Yahweh "made Himself an everlasting name" through the deliver-



ance of His people (Isa. 63:12). By protecting the righteous and overthrowing the wicked, Yahweh was manifested as a God of justice and power.

“That the Egyptians may know that I am Yahweh” — By these experiences, the Egyptians, too, came to learn the principles of the Name, and the goodness and

severity it revealed (Exo. 34:6-7; Rom. 11:22). As a result, the nation was saved from the annihilation that otherwise would have taken place. See note, Exo. 12:36.

“And they did so” — The Israelites turned around from Etham to make their way south along the western side of the Red Sea.

(2) — SEPARATION RESISTED

Exodus 14:5–18

After an interval of some days, the king recovered from his panic, and his innate obstinacy once again asserting itself, violent anger takes the place of fear. He learns of the stupid mistake (as he views it) of the Israelites in turning south to the wilderness, and he views this as a propitious omen. His stubbornness again asserting itself, he determines to avenge the tragedy of Egypt. His blindness to the right of Israelites to their freedom becomes an obsession with him, driving him to destruction. He decides to resist it, and orders that a chosen contingent of charioteers overtake the Israelites, in order to carry them again into captivity. The appearance of the Egyptian army constitutes a challenge to Moses. Already dispirited by the journey, the people turn with anger on him. But he is encouraged by Yahweh who urges him to not to fear, and promises to complete the separation of the people from the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh Pursues The Israelites — vv. 5–9.

Pharaoh's obstinacy again asserting itself, he orders his charioteers to pursue the Israelites.



VERSE 5

“And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled” — He could

argue that he had only granted permission for the Israelites to go on a three days' journey into the wilderness, for this was all that Moses previously had requested (cp. Exo. 5:3). Now, however, it was obvious from reports received that they had no intentions of returning.

“And the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people” — As Pharaoh and his courtiers

recovered from the shock of the death of the firstborn, they were filled with hatred against Israel. Instead of “turned against” the Hebrew has “turned towards” (see *Interlinear Bible*). Their attention was focused on the Israelites, and they began to fabricate thoughts of vengeance.

“And they said, why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” — They saw the district of Goshen empty, the brickfields deserted, great works halted for want of labourers, and they regretted that they had allowed the Israelites to leave. Actually, there was reason enough for letting God's people go, if they had allowed their gaze to take in the cemeteries of Egypt, but now Pharaoh

was overcome with a blind, unreasonable hatred.

VERSE 6

“And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him” — The verb “made ready” is *‘acar* in Hebrew, and literally means *to hitch* or *to yoke*, and in this context, to yoke the chariots to the horses. The chariot was a light, speedy vehicle, open behind, with a semicircular standing board of wood from which rose in a graceful curve the front protection to the height of about 76 cms (2½ ft). The chariot had two wheels, and a pole in front to separate two horses which drew the vehicle. It contained two men only: the charioteer and the warrior. Pharaoh’s chariot was splendidly decorated with gold. The “people” he took with him comprised the Egyptian army. See similar expressions in Num. 21:23.

VERSE 7

“And he took six hundred chosen chariots” — This was probably the royal guard. The number 6 is significant in such a context, for it represents the number of flesh (Rev. 13:18); thus the company epitomised the pride and glory of the flesh which is opposed to the ways of God (1Jn. 2:16).

“And all the chariots of Egypt” — A considerable force was gathered together, suggesting that this was necessary because of the numerical size of the escaping Israelites.

“And captains over every one of them” — Rotherham, in agreement with Gesenius, renders: “with warriors in every one.”

VERSE 8

“And Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel” — Pharaoh’s heart was hardened because of the circumstances which Yahweh controlled, and hotly pursued the people to avert the removal of his influence over Israel and the destruction of his power. See note ch. 4:21.

“And the children of Israel went out with an high hand” — They left confidently and boldly — not as fugitives, but as men in the exercise of their just rights. They left, perhaps, with a measure of ostentatious assurance which needed to be humbled — as is evident also today in the pride of their national achievement (see Eze. 38:8; 39:26).

VERSE 9

“But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baalzephon” — The terms “horsemen” and “army” denote the charioteers and the infantry of Egypt.

The People Panic — vv. 10–12.

The attention of the fleeing people is attracted to the approaching Egyptians. Lacking faith, they complain to Yahweh and to Moses, accusing the latter of bringing them into the wilderness to perish.

VERSE 10

“And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid” — They became obsessed with the sight of their eyes, so that their spiritual vision was blurred. They forgot that Yahweh had manifested already such power as to cope with the full strength of the Egyptian army.

It was when Eve *saw* the tree, that she was drawn to partake of its fruit (Gen. 3:6); it was when Achan *saw* the goodly Babylonish garment that he was led to steal it (Josh. 7:21); it was when Peter took his eyes off the Lord, and *saw* the boisterous waves and stormy sea, that he began to sink (Mat. 14:30). The “sight of the eyes” can induce desire for evil things, or fear of man. The sight of Pharaoh’s chariots and infantry steadily marching towards them in efficient order induced the greatest fear in the Israelites. Note the

contempt with which Yahweh viewed the object of their sight (v. 13).

“And the children of Israel cried out unto Yahweh” — They cried out in fear but not in faith, seeking to avoid the challenge of sin, not relying on Yahweh for direction and protection. They were “of little faith” (Mat. 8:26).

VERSE 11

“And they said unto Moses” — Panic gripped them when they saw the Egyptians moving steadily nearer, their fear gave way to exasperation and they turned in unreasonable anger against Moses.

“Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?” — After all that had been done for the people, this was a faithless and cowardly accusation. They conveniently forgot that Egypt had been one vast grave for male Israelitish children. What of the decree of Pharaoh, that every Hebrew son born should be cast into the Nile? (ch. 1:22). Human memory is very short, and human nature very ungrateful. The attitude of the people at this time contrasted sharply with that of Joseph who declared that there was no grave for him in Egypt, and arranged for his remains to be taken out of the land when the Hebrews should leave (Gen. 50:24–26). His coffin was a mute reminder to the people who carried it, that Joseph’s faith was in Yahweh’s deliverance of His people from Egypt; thus, “though dead he yet speaketh”!

“Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt” — In this moment of crisis and fear, the people forgot their previous sorrow and sighing, their pleas for relief from a life of bitter bondage (ch. 2:23–24), and in a most unwarranted and cowardly accusation charged Moses with forcing them to leave Egypt against their will.

VERSE 12

“Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians” — The

reference was probably to that time of frustration and depression which followed the decree of Pharaoh that their labours were to be increased. They reproached Moses and Aaron (ch. 5:21), and refused their words of encouragement (ch. 6:9).

“For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness” — In speaking in this fashion, the Hebrews conveniently forgot the rigours of their labours, the pain of their persecution, and the sentence of death that had been decreed by Pharaoh against their male offspring. God had no intention of permitting them to die in the wilderness, but with their eyes fixed upon the advancing Egyptians, and lacking a vision of faith, death in the wilderness seemed the only destiny.

Moses’ Faith — vv. 13–14.

Once again, at a time of crisis, Moses proves himself equal to the task, and matches his faith and courage against the faithlessness and cowardice of the people.

VERSE 13

“And Moses said unto the people” — The quiet voice of faith and courage was a great contrast to the panic-stricken outbursts of the people.

“Fear ye not” — The reference is to “the fear of man that bringeth a snare” (Pro. 29:25). On the other hand, the “fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge” (Pro. 1:7). Between the two fears there is a great gulf. “Fear not” is the keynote of Deuteronomy, the last message of Moses (ch. 1:17, 21, 29; 31:6, 7, 8, 12, 13). This exhortation is repeated throughout the Word: Num. 14:9; Deu. 20:3; 2Kings 6:16; 2Chr. 20:15–17; Psa. 27:1, 2; 46:1, 3; Isa. 26:3; 30:15; 35:4; 41:10–14; Mat. 28:5. It is a good spiritual exercise to follow the use of such an exhortation throughout the Word by the aid of a Concordance.

“Stand still, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which He will shew to you to day” — In times of crisis it is very difficult to do this. Human nature *feels*

safer when it is doing something to alleviate its fear. But sometimes it is important to realise that human endeavour and skill cannot effect a deliverance, and one must rest upon God. This is the manifestation of patience and trust. But when a person is governed by the fear of man, he lacks the faith to quietly wait for Yahweh to move on his behalf. The Scriptures record at least five times (the number of grace) where the command to *stand still* is given:

1. "Stand still and see the salvation of Yahweh" (Exo. 14:13).
2. "Stand still and hear what Yahweh will command concerning you" (Num. 9:8).
3. "Stand still a while that I may show you the salvation of Yahweh with you" (2Chr. 20:17).
5. "Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God" (Job 37:14).

However it is not the attitude of merely "standing still" that Yahweh requires, but the concentration of the mind upon Him to the development of faith.

"For the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever" — At that moment, when the people saw the marching Egyptians converging upon them, the threat to their existence seemed very real: but that which they saw did not represent the reality, only the transient scene. Faith was needed to perceive the reality, but this they lacked. Yahweh had promised to deliver the nation, and the present threat was but a test of their belief in Him. The sight of the eyes is often deceptive. Note the contrast presented in v. 10. Compare their lack of faith with Paul's attitude as described in 2Cor. 4:15-18.

VERSE 14

"Yahweh shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" — At that moment, when the people were faced with a crisis beyond their ability to handle, they were exhorted to rely completely upon Yahweh in faith, and to wait for Him to move. The man of faith does not fight in his own strength. Cp. Deu. 1:20; 20:1-4; Josh. 5:14-15; 10:42; 1Sam. 17:45-46;

2Chr. 14:11-12; 32:8; Neh. 4:20; Rom. 9:29; 1Tim. 2:3-4.

Yahweh Answers Moses' Prayer

— vv. 15-18.

Somewhat discouraged by the unreasonable and faithless attitude of the people under stress, Moses beseeches the urgent help of Yahweh, and is instructed to commence the march towards the sea. He is also commanded to stretch forth his rod, and the waters will divide, revealing a passage of safety. The Egyptians, attempting to follow the Israelites, will be destroyed.

VERSE 15

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto Me?" —

This answers an unrecorded prayer that Moses directed to Yahweh in view of the national crisis. The word "criest" is *tsa'aq*, "to shriek." Faced with the spirit of revolt sweeping the people, Moses turned with earnest and urgent entreaty to Yahweh for help and encouragement.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" — This was Yahweh's challenge of faith to the people: Go forward! But where to? In front of them was the ocean!

It is one of the important lessons of life that when engaged upon the work of God, the urgent need is to go forward in spite of apparent obstacles. Faith will find a way. It opened the waters of the Red Sea (Heb. 11:29), and, later, destroyed the walls of Jericho (Heb. 11:30). It will help us in times of difficulty.

VERSE 16

"But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it" — Moses' rod that turned into a serpent is now to be used to divide the ocean, so that Israel would be baptised (1Cor. 10:1-2). Observe, that it was the rod extended in obedience to Yahweh, that divided the sea, and not merely the wind aided by the tide, as is sometimes alleged. Isaiah states that Moses with his rod extended in his right hand, led the people to where the waters divided before him

(Isa. 63:11-12).

“And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea” — This completely refutes the suggestion, frequently made, that they waded through the shallow waters adjacent to the Bitter Lakes during the period of the ebbing tide. The statement that the Hebrews passed through the sea on dry ground is made several times. See Exo. 15:19; Neh. 9:11; Psa. 66:6; Heb. 11:29.

VERSE 17

“And, I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them” — The Egyptians would be

emboldened to attempt the passage. This occurred when the fiery cloud was removed; and therefore it is said that Yahweh did it. See note Exo. 4:21.

“And I will get Me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen” — See note, v. 4.

VERSE 18

“And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have gotten Me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen” — See note, v. 4.

(3) — SEPARATION ACCOMPLISHED

Chapter 14:19 to 15:21.

The angel of Yahweh first severs the Israelites from the Egyptians by placing the fiery cloud between the two companies of people. With this effective barrier against attack, Moses' rod is extended and a path is driven through the midst of the sea. A strong east wind assists in doing this, and in drying the large passage that has appeared, permitting the Israelites to go across on dry land. When the fiery cloud is removed before the Egyptians, they discover that their quarry has escaped them. Undaunted by the miracle, the Egyptians pursue the Israelites along the path formed through the sea, but disaster overtakes them. A storm of rain causes the chariot wheels to bog. Then, as premonitions of tragedy sweep through the host, and soldiers endeavour to flee on foot, Moses' rod is again extended, and the waters roll back upon the Egyptians, to destroy them. Once again Israel has evidence of the mighty power of Yahweh to save. On the other side of the Red Sea they rejoice before Yahweh, as they sing the Song of Moses. The nation has reached a climax in spiritual experience.

Israel Go Through The Red Sea

— vv. 19-22.

First the cloud protects the Israelites from the Egyptians; then the rod is extended to form a path wide enough for the people to move through the Red Sea. This is helped by a strong east wind which assists to dry and harden the ground sufficiently to hold. Along the way of salvation thus revealed, overshadowed by the waters of the ocean, that now “stand

up as an heap,” the people move through to the safety of the other side. In doing so, they are “baptised into Moses” (1Cor. 10:2).

VERSE 19

“And the angel of God which went before the camp of Israel” — This angel is described by Isaiah as the “angel of His presence” (Isa. 63:9). The angel is identified with Yahweh (Exo. 13:21)

because "His name was in him" (Exo. 23:20-21). See also Exo. 32:34; Num. 20:16; Psa. 77:20. The angels are still active on the behalf of Yahweh's "little ones" (Mat. 18:10), so that they are represented as "encamping around about them that fear Yahweh" (Psa. 34:7).

We need to remember that God's power to help and to save is just as great today as it was in the days of Moses. Nevertheless, faith teaches us to recognize that He alone has the wisdom to determine when it should be manifested.

Let us also remember, that few, if any, would have seen the angel move to the rear of Israel on that evening of fear and tempest, with the people crouching before the roar of the hurricane, in the night of darkness lit up by the mysterious light of the fiery cloud that formed a barrier behind them. But the angel was actively engaged in working on behalf of the people, and out of those terrifying circumstances they were delivered to discover a new relationship with their God.

"Removed and went behind them"

— The angel acted as a rearguard to Israel. This experience will be repeated during the course of the second exodus in the age to come (Isa. 52:12; 58:8), the only difference being, that the Elohim of the future, will comprise Christ and the saints, then made "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36).

"And the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them"

— The pillar of cloud was the visible presence of Yahweh among them. Normally this preceded the camp (Exo. 13:21; Psa. 78:14), but now, in order to provide for the defence of Israel, it formed a barrier between the Hebrews and the Egyptians. The Word of God today has the same purpose as the cloud, and can both lead and defend, dividing between that which is soulish (fleshly) and that which is spiritual (Heb. 4:12).

VERSE 20

"And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel"

— It completely divided the two camps, as the Truth divides the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) from spiritual Egypt (Rev. 11:8) today. The Truth requires complete separation for the purpose of God manifestation, for we simply cannot be in Christ and of the world at the same time (John 17:6, 16). Indeed, true sonship with God is predicated upon separation unto Him from the world: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2Cor. 6:17-18). Separation from the world is the condition of sonship in Christ.

"And it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these"

— This is the effect of God's presence in His Word, to this day. The Egyptians could not see the path of salvation that stretched out before the Israelites, but the light of the cloud permitted the latter to discern it clearly. So with the understanding of the Truth. To the world it is evidence of superstitious ignorance and darkness; to the initiated it shines as light.

The wise man declared: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble" (Pro. 4:18-19).

The army of Egypt and the escaping refugees of Israel, divided by a barrier that enshrouded the former in darkness, but gave light to the latter, is illustrative of the proverb. The Truth effectively divides the world into two categories: to one Christ is "the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life" (2Cor. 2:15-16).

"So that the one came not near the other all the night"

— The separation was effective, as it should be also in the Truth. Those bound to the latter have no affinity with the forces of darkness, "but rather prove them" (Eph. 5:11). Christ likened the time of his absence from the earth as the time of Gentile "night" (John 9:4-5), and whilst the light of truth

illuminates the darkness, the unfortunate fact is that though "light is come into the world, men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil" (John 3:19). Meanwhile, on the shores of the Red Sea, the separation designed of Yahweh for His children was made effective by the barrier of darkness and light that divided the groups.

VERSE 21

"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea" — This was to divide the waters (v. 16), a fact commemorated in the annals of Israelitish history and poetry: Neh. 9:11; Psa. 74:13; 78:13; 106:9; 114:3; Isa. 63:12.

"And Yahweh caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night" — This statement has led many to conclude that the miracle was but a minor incident, and that the passage of the sea was effected by normal natural forces.

For example, G. Rawlinson writes: "If we suppose the Bitter Lakes to have been joined to the Red Sea by a narrow and shallow channel, the action of a southeast wind, by driving the water of the Lakes northward, may have *easily* produced the effect described in the text. A simultaneous ebb of the lower gulf would have further facilitated the passage."

Others have pointed out that before the Suez Canal was constructed, it was frequently possible, through the ebbing tide, for Arab-ridden camels to wade across. A Jewish commentator states: "A strong east wind, blowing all night and acting with the ebbing tide, may have laid bare the neck of water joining the Bitter Lakes to the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to cross in safety."

But such a hypothesis does not accord with the language of Scripture, that speaks of it as a miracle of such an extent, as to be commemorated in the Psalms of Israel centuries afterwards.

As noted above, if the grand results were caused by the fortunate and conjunct action of wind and tide, then, with such a combination happening frequently, the alleged miracle would be a rather poor and

commonplace affair.

We have given reasons to conclude that the crossing was at the top of the gulf, and not at the shallow channel of water close to the Bitter Lakes, and we believe that the language of Scripture demands this. But faith is necessary to believe the account, and as a challenge to flesh, there is always provided sufficient of natural phenomena to permit the rationalist to reason himself out of such a conclusion. Indeed Pharaoh did so, as soon as the cloud that obscured his vision was removed. Many commentators view the miracle as did Pharaoh: as something normal and not necessarily requiring the miraculous hand of God!

It was Moses' control of the serpent rod, and the stretching of his hand over the sea, indicative of the power granted him over it, that caused the ocean to part for the Israelites. In consequence, they were baptised into Moses (1Cor. 10:2). In the case of believers, it was the Lord's conquest over the serpent power of sin in himself (Heb. 2:14), and the power of his resurrection from the grave, that opened the way to salvation for believers who are "baptised into his death" (Rom. 6:3).

The "strong east wind" was an element in the performance of this miracle. It helped keep the waters apart, and dried up the ground, hardening it sufficiently for the passage of the Israelites. The word for "wind" is *ruach*, a word frequently used for "spirit." The word for "east" is *qadim*. It is mentioned also in regard to the eighth plague (Exo. 10:13), as bringing the locusts over the land. The east wind crosses the sandy wastes of Arabia Deserta before reaching the land of Israel. It is the prevailing wind from February to June, and sometimes blows with violence. The *Khamsin* or "wind of the desert" commonly visits Egypt about the time of the vernal equinox, and is accompanied by an awful and weird darkness. This is caused by the dense clouds of fine sand whipped up by the wind which intercept the sun's rays and produce darkness. It usually blows for the space of about two, or at the most,

three days.

“And made the sea dry land” — Cp. Psa. 66:6.

“And the waters were divided” — See supporting references quoted above.

VERSE 22

“And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground” — The sea is about eleven kms (7mils) wide at the suggested place of crossing.

“The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left” — They stood up as an heap (Psa. 78:13), as being congealed or frozen (Exo. 15:8). These expressions would be incongruous if the “miracle” consisted merely of the effect of the ebbing tide, supported by the strong wind. They imply a miracle of the greatest magnitude.

The waters arose as a wall of defence to the children of Israel. The Hebrew word used signifies a *wall of protection*. Pharaoh could not attack them on either flank, on account of the two bodies of water between which their path lay. He could only come at them by following after them. The description demands that the waters appear as solidified walls of protection to the escaping Israelites.

The Egyptians Destroyed In The Red Sea — vv. 23–31.

With the Israelites safely across to the other side, the barrier of fiery cloud is removed, and the Egyptians are ordered to the attack. Pharaoh’s charioteers make the assault, but are instantly troubled by lightning and storm. The dry seabed becomes clogged with mud, grinding the charge to a halt. Panic sweeps the Egyptian army. The soldiers alight from the bogged vehicles in fear, intent upon escape. But Moses is commanded to again stretch forth his rod, and as he does so, Yahweh reverses His action so that the waters return to their former place. The same waters that were a wall of defence and a means of salvation to Israel become the weapon of destruction for the Egyptians. As the sea calms, the dead

bodies of Egyptians clutter the shore of the Red Sea.

VERSE 23

“And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea” — The cloud of darkness that separated the Egyptians from the Israelites had hidden the miracle from them. When it lifted, the amazing passage through the sea was revealed, and being commanded to advance, they did so.

“Even all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen” — It is significant that Pharaoh himself is not said to taken part in the pursuit. It is claimed that, generally Merneptah avoided placing himself in a position of personal danger. Nor is any of the infantry said to have entered the passage of the sea. Both king and foot soldiers remained as witnesses of the power of Yahweh in miracle. Merneptah returned to Egypt to boast that Israel had been destroyed! He recorded this on an inscription that has been discovered, and is today located in the Cairo Museum. It claims that “Israel is desolated, her seed is not.”

VERSE 24

“And it came to pass, that in the morning watch” — Early morning, between 3am and 6am, when the light of the rising sun would appear, suggesting the new day, symbolic of the approach of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2).

“Yahweh looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians” — The expression is metaphorical for lightning (see Amos 7:4; Psa. 104:32 and cp. Rev. 1:14). Certainly, but one glance of Yahweh’s eye is sufficient to throw the enemies of His redeemed firstborn into hopeless confusion. Israel was safely across, the Egyptians perhaps half way (it would not take the light, speedy chariots long to traverse the eleven kms crossing), when, suddenly, a fierce storm broke. Thunder roared and crashed in the heavens above; lightning streaked down like angry

fingers; the earth shook; rain poured down (Psa. 77:12-20).

VERSE 25

“And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily” — The Septuagint renders this as “clogged the axles of their chariots,” which certainly would bring their progress to a halt. The pouring rain, referred to by the Psalmist, would soon turn the seabed into a quagmire, causing the chariots to become hopelessly bogged. However, the Hebrew text (similar to the AV), suggests that the terrified horses, in stampeding, smashed the chariots, forcing the charioteers to attempt to escape on foot.

“So that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for Yahweh fighteth for them against the Egyptians”

— The words of the Egyptians confirmed the promise of Moses (v. 14). The Egyptians were convinced by the succession of obstacles they encountered that once again the finger of God was in evidence. In this way they showed more wisdom than do modern commentators who claim that the crossing was but the manifestation of the natural phenomena of wind and tide.

VERSE 26

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen” — The Scriptures claim that the “depths were congealed” (Exo. 15:8). The expression suggests that they were frozen like ice! If so, the miracle was all the more amazing. The Psalmist also speaks of earthquake that took place at this time (Psa. 77:18).

Perhaps the effect of Moses’s rod was to cause earthquake which cracked the ice and permitted the water pour in upon the trapped Egyptians.

VERSE 27

“And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning

appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it” — As the sun was seen rising in the east, the rod was outstretched, there was a great earthquake, and the enemies of Israel were overwhelmed. All this is typical of the future, when the Sun of righteousness will arise (Mal. 4:2), and “a great earthquake” occur (Rev. 16:18).

By describing the sea as “returning to its strength,” Moses means that it began to flow as usual, implying that the miracle required the suspension of the normal forces of nature, which now again were seen.

“And Yahweh overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea” —

The Hebrew *na’ar*, rendered “overthrew” signifies *to tumble about*, but also includes the noise that accompanies such action; in this case, the roar of the ocean as it crashed down upon the Egyptians.

Paul likens the Red Sea crossing to “baptism” in which the sins of the past are blotted out, and a new beginning commences for the believer. In Romans 6, he speaks of the effect of baptism as of being delivered, through water, from the domination of King Sin, and recruited for service under King Jesus (vv. 11-12); and of being purchased from the slave owner Sin to become a slave to God (vv. 17-22). This was prefigured in Yahweh’s remarkable deliverance of the people from the bondage to which they had previously been subjected. As the Egyptians were violently overthrown in the midst of the sea, so baptism is the token of crucifixion of the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:3).

VERSE 28

“And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them” —

This national baptism (1Cor. 10:1-2) depicted the destruction of sin’s forces, as there is the forgiveness of sins in personal baptism in Christ. In referring to this incident, the Psalmist graphically outlines the effect of the miracle: “He saved them from the

hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left. Then believed they His words; they sang His praise" (Psa. 106:10-12). The baptism of Israel became the basis for their national redemption. In the miracle of the sea, the power of Pharaoh and his host over Israel was destroyed (Psa. 136:15), though Pharaoh himself apparently escaped the destruction; and Egypt remained to tempt the children of Israel. So with personal baptism. Past sins are forgiven, and the believer comes into a new relationship with God. But the very nature that led to sin retains its power to conquer again. The subsequent history of Israel revealed that fact.

VERSE 29

"But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left" — This repetition of the events emphasises the extent of the miracle performed.

VERSE 30

"Thus Yahweh saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians" — Notice it was the nation that was saved, but not the individuals who made up the nation, for they later perished in the wilderness.

Christ's sacrifice has placed beyond all doubt that his people will be saved, but individuals must make "their calling and election sure" by their personal application of the principles required. This fact reminds us that Israel was delivered for the purpose of God manifestation, not individual salvation. The latter is conditional upon the former.

The Psalmist observes that God "saved them for *His name's sake*, that He might make *His mighty power* to be known." In saving them for "His name's sake," it was for the purpose that they were to become the channel of the manifestation of His name to the world at large. This required that they manifest the qualities of the

Name. It is for this same purpose that Gentiles are invited into the scope of divine salvation (Acts 15:14).

"And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore" — Some of the bodies of the Egyptians were flung onto the shore by the violence of the waves, so that it became strewn with the wreckage of Pharaoh's host. Josephus claims that Moses armed the Israelites with weapons found in the flotsam.

The storm of wind subsided with the coming of the morning (v. 21), and a calm ensued. With the Red Sea now "as glass," though strewn with the debris of the destroyed Egyptian forces, Moses led the people in singing the *Song* recorded in chapter 15. The occasion provides the historical basis for the symbolism of Rev. 15: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast... stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."

The anxiety, trouble, and amazing miracle that resulted in the establishment of Israel as a nation, will be exceeded by the "time of trouble" (Dan. 12:1-2) and miracle that will accompany the re-establishment of the kingdom of God upon the ruins of all other nations, at the coming of the Lord. The events recorded in Exodus foreshadow the thrilling events of the future.

VERSE 31

"And Israel saw that great work which Yahweh did upon the Egyptians" — They had visible evidence of His mighty power, as will also the Redeemed in the future. Meanwhile, they must walk in faith.

"And the people feared Yahweh, and believed Yahweh, and His servant Moses" — The "fear of Yahweh" is the beginning of wisdom (Pro. 1:7). Wisdom is manifested in moral conviction of religious truth, and with such evidence before them, the people could not help but believe.

Note the title given Moses. He is described as a bondservant. This title is contrasted by Paul in Heb. 3:5 with Christ's status as a Son: "Moses was faithful in all His [God's] house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ

as a Son over His [God's] house." The "house" spoken of by Paul refers to God's house in all cases, in which Moses was a servant and Christ was a son. Paul then reasons that if Moses was to be believed and heeded, how much more should men attend the words of Christ.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

In this chapter the sighs of Israel are turned into song. What is more pleasing than singing songs of praise when God has wrought a great deliverance? After a time of dark depression, plunging one into the abyss of despair, what joy when relief comes to draw us out of the previous gloom. Israel now experiences this. The people rejoice on the other side of the Red Sea in the realisation that victory had been won. Moses leads them in singing, and the people enthusiastically respond in recognition of the goodness of Yahweh to them.

The song, however, is not merely an expression of joy; it is prophetic in its teaching. It sweeps the reader forward to a greater victory, a greater deliverance of the future, when the types and shadows of the past will merge into the glorious triumph of the Redeemed.

This song of Moses forms the basis of many psalms and prophetic visions of future glory. It is cited time and again throughout Scripture. Deborah used it to express her joy at the triumph of Israel over their enemies (Judges 5:1); Hannah borrowed from it to express her joy when her time of sighing was turned into singing (1Sam. 2:1); David quoted from it as he sang of the future glory of the Messiah (Psalm 68); Mary turned to it as expressive of the victory to be accomplished through her son (Luke 1:46-55); the Redeemed are yet to sing it when they stand victorious and triumphant in the presence of the Lord (Rev. 15:3).

In commenting upon it, John Thomas wrote: "Such is the song of Moses, admirable for the boldness of its imagery, the sublimity of its sentiments, and the dignity of its style, which was sung by the Hebrew people standing upon the shore of Edom's sea. They were now a people saved by Yahweh: a national salvation coeval with the signal overthrow of their enemies, and the destruction of their power. They had just put on Moses, having been all baptised in him in the cloud and in the sea (1Cor. 10:2).

"They are constituted the one body of Moses, and the Firstborn son of Yahweh (Exo. 4:22; Zech. 3:2; Jude 9), and when they arrived at Sinai, fifty days after the institution of the Passover, they became the Kingdom of the Deity (Exo. 19:5, 6, 8).

"It is a memorial of the nation's deliverance from the Egyptians, and

prophetic of its future salvation under the lead of the prophet like unto Moses, and the saints” (Eureka, vol. 5, p. 87).

Moses’ Song Of Deliverance — vv. 1-21

Consider first the Time. It is sung on the equivalent of a Sunday morning, the morning in which the apostles had cause to rejoice because they saw the risen Christ (Mat. 28). The Passover was slain on Wednesday (see note Exo. 12:8); on Thursday the Israelites left Egypt for Succoth (Exo. 12:37); on Friday they moved on to Etham (ch. 13:20); on Saturday they arrived at Pi-hahiroth (ch. 14:1); on Sunday they moved across the Red Sea to the scene of rejoicing on the other side (ch. 14:24).

Consider next the Circumstances. The song is closely connected with the passover, thus impressing the lesson of deliverance; but also emphasising the significance of baptism. This, together with the slaughter of Pharaoh’s host, foreshadowed the salvation through water and blood effected by the Lord Jesus Christ (1John 5:6-8).

Consider then the Prophecy. The song is prophetic of the redemption in Christ, and of the ultimate and complete deliverance he will accomplish through war against the enemy of Sin. It sets out the background of the triumph of the Apocalypse: The sea of glass (the calmed Red Sea); mingled with fire (the bodies of the destroyed Egyptian host on the shore); the harps of God (the timbrels of the women); victory over the beast (the triumph over Egypt). The setting of the psalm in the past, will be represented when it is again sung in the future (Rev. 15:3).

Meanwhile, Moses leads the people in praise, and Miriam “the prophetess,” leads them in dancing. The song begins with redemption, and ends in glory. The tragedy, however, is this that those who sung it, with few exceptions, never entered the Land, so “let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1Cor. 10:12).

VERSE 1

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Yahweh, and

spake, saying” — There had been no singing in Egypt; only sighing and groaning (cp. ch. 2:23-24). But a change was wrought by the mighty deliverance effected.

“I will sing unto Yahweh” — This *Song of Moses* anticipates the “new song” (or song with new meaning, as the phrase signifies) to be sung in the future when the full prophetic significance of it is manifested in the earth. Note the prophetic power of these “new songs” of Zion (Psa. 33:3,7; 95:1; 96:1; 98:1-2; 149:1; Rev. 14:3; 15:2).

“For He hath triumphed gloriously” — These words express the theme or refrain of the song. It commemorates the deliverance of Israel from the slavery that had been experienced in Egypt. In Scripture, a visit to Egypt is always referred to as “going down” implying a decline (Gen. 12:9-10; Isa. 30:2; 31:1). Now Israel had come up out of it. The final snapping of the Egyptian chains of slavery was effected by their national baptism, and a remarkable outpouring of power that foreshadowed the victory of Christ as expressed in Heb. 2:14; Rom. 15:2. Thus all who are called to the Truth can thrill to the wonder of that triumph. The song, therefore, lives on throughout the ages, and its terms are reproduced in the utterances of the prophets in relation to the impending second Exodus (cp. Isa. 11:11; e.g. Isa. 12:2; etc.). In Moses’ day, the whole world was startled by the amazing manifestation of power at the defeat of Pharaoh (Josh. 2:9-10; Jer. 32:20), which also revealed the twofold aspect of Yahweh: His goodness and severity (Rom. 11:22; Exo. 34:5-7).

The words “triumphed gloriously” are expressed in Hebrew by the repetition of the word *goah*, thus *goah goah*. The word signifies “to mount up, rise, be exalted.” The play upon words indicated by the repetition is rendered by some “exceedingly exalted,” by others “gloriously glorified.” The emphasis denotes that Yahweh is elevated in majestic exaltation by one of the most

complete victories of all time: a manifestation of divine power that brought salvation to Israel, that purchased the redeemed from the thralldom of sin and death they experienced in Egypt; and foreshadowed a grander triumph by the Greater than Moses, to the rejoicing of all who benefit thereby.

“The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea” — In Scripture the term “horse and his rider” are used to symbolise those in control of Gentile powers (Rev. 6:5 etc.). The horse was only used for war (Job 39:18-25), and was identified with Egypt (1Kings 10:28-29). It was used also as a symbol of fleshly pride (Psa. 147:10). Consequently, the kings of Israel were warned against placing their trust upon horses (Deu. 17:16; cp. Josh. 11:6). Through Jeremiah, Yahweh instructed Israel that He would use the nation to “break in pieces the horse and his rider” of the nations (Jer. 51:21). In describing the triumph of Israel in the future, Zechariah drew upon the imagery of this section of the song (Zech. 10:5).

The Egyptian chariots were overthrown in the sea, for they typed the strength of sin’s dominion. Baptism into Christ is the appointed way for deliverance from the shackles of sin today (Rom. 6:12, 14), and the imagery of Moses’ song is used by Micah to describe the salvation of Israel in the future: “He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19).

VERSE 2

“Yah is my strength and song” — The Hebrew word for “strength” in this place is *’oz*, which represents the security and confidence that stems from the manifestation of strength. The believer whose confidence stems from Yahweh will have Him for his song (see Isa. 51:11; Psa. 118:6, 14, 21, and note that the expressions of Moses’ song have been incorporated into these other parts of Scripture).

“And He is become my salvation” — The verb is *havah*, as in Exo. 3:14, the

root of the name Yahweh. “Salvation” is *yeshuwayh*, the feminine, passive, participle of *yasha*, “salvation.” The use of the term denotes something done for the Bride of Yahweh, of which she was the passive beneficiary (note the comments of Eze. 16:5 and Isa. 54:5), and by means of which *Yah* becomes *Yahshua*, the masculine form of “Salvation,” a word familiar by its rendition of “Jesus.” Rotherham expresses the phrase as: “He became mine by salvation.” So, through the words of Moses, the Bride acknowledged her union with Yahweh (cp. Eph. 5:25-27).

“He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation” — “God” is *El*, a Hebrew title affirming strength and might in bold relief. Moses disclaimed any personal ability or power, and relied exclusively upon the strength of *El*.

The rest of the line is rendered by Rotherham: “I will glorify Him.” The RV has “praise Him.” To glorify Yahweh is to rightly acclaim Him, and in doing so, revealing that the one praising is worthy of the salvation wrought on his behalf. Isaiah declares: “Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified” (Isa. 60:21).

“My father’s God, and I will exalt Him” — The title “God” is *Elohim*, a plural word, translated “angels” in Psa. 8:5, and expressive of the multitudinous manifestation of Yahweh’s power (*el*). Yahweh is the “God of the fathers of Israel,” the “God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Exo. 3:6, 15), for, as Paul comments, He is not “ashamed to be surnamed their God” (Heb. 11:16).

VERSE 3

“Yahweh is a man of war” — The Hebrew reads: *Yahweh ish milkamah*, the military title of the Deity, found only here and in Isa. 42:13: *He who shall be [is] a [great] man of war.*

The word for “man” is *ish*, not *adam*. *Ish* is always used to describe an exalted, or upright, man. Yahweh manifested Himself as “a man of war” by over-

throwing the might of Egypt; He shall do so again by manifesting Himself belligerently against the powers that be through the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints (Psa. 149). In doing so, He will reveal Himself as "mighty in battle" (Psa. 24:8).

"Yahweh is His name" — The divine name, though pronounced at the bush, was not properly understood until vindicated in the amazing victory of Pharaoh. It will be even more so, in the impending conquest of Gentile power headed by Gog (see Psa. 83:18; Jer. 16:21). This line of the song implies that, for the first time, the full significance of the Name was revealed in the amazing deliverance of Israel. Certainly it dramatised the two aspects of the Name: its goodness and severity (Rom. 11:22). For Israel there was "goodness" in the mercy, grace, and longsuffering extended to the people (Exo. 34:6). For Pharaoh and for Egypt there was "severity," in that God would "by no means clear the guilty" (v. 7).

The Name itself proclaimed the purpose of Yahweh to manifest Himself in those whom He would call out for that object. The manner in which this was to be achieved was dramatised by the deliverance granted Israel. It was by endorsement of the Truth, by submitting to the leadership of God's appointed servant, by repudiating Egypt and all that it stood for, and by following their leader through the waters of baptism on to the Law and the Kingdom.

This was graphically brought home to the people on the other side of the Red Sea. In the Egyptian corpses that littered its shores, there was represented what should be done to sin's flesh: "the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

In the amazing deliverance, the people were shown the vindication of the Name of Yahweh. Isaiah declared that "He led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the waters before them, to make Himself an *everlasting name*" (Isa. 63:12 — see also Jer. 32:20; Eze. 20:9, 14, 22).

VERSE 4

"Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea" — Pharaoh's chariots and army represented the strength of the nation of sin. This was destroyed in the sea, as the power of sin is overthrown in the waters of baptism. The word "cast" (Heb. *yarah*, "to flow forth") expresses the violence by which this was done, and, perhaps, is better rendered as "hurled into the sea." It speaks of the ruthlessness by which sin is to be cut off in baptism: the believer is called upon to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24). This was dramatically illustrated by the violence with which the forces of Pharaoh were overwhelmed on this occasion.

"His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea" — The choicest nobility of Egypt, its most skilful warriors, the flower of its strength, were involved in the disaster, to the wonder of the ancient world, as Rahab testified forty years later (Josh. 2:9-10; see also Jer. 32:20).

The site of the destruction was in the "Red Sea," or *Yam Suph*, "Sea of weeds." This expression puzzles commentators who look for literal weeds, and claim that they do not grow profusely in the Red Sea. But weeds are used symbolically in Scripture for the sins of humanity (Heb. 6:8), and it could be because of this that the sea was given this name in Scripture.

VERSE 5

"The depths have covered them" — Rotherham renders the lines:

*Roaring deeps covered them,
They went down in the raging depths
as a stone.*

"The depths covering them" is appropriate to the bodily immersion in water that true baptism requires. The present tense indicated in the Hebrew (see *Interlinear Bible*), is if the people were actually witnessing the scene taking place before their eyes.

"They sank into the bottom as a stone" — The Egyptian armour, designed to destroy Israel, and typical of the strength of sin's flesh, proved the undoing of the Egyptian soldiers. Weighted down

by it, they had no hope of escape from the onslaught of the water. It is typical of those who imitate the Egyptian spirit by embracing "sin which does so easily beset" (Heb. 12:1), but which the man of faith will "lay aside" in his race for life.

VERSE 6

"Thy right hand O Yahweh, is become glorious in power" — In those days, Moses acted as the "right hand" of Yahweh (Isa. 63:11-14; Exo. 14:16, 26). At present, Christ is at His right hand (Psa. 80:17; Psa. 110:5; Acts 2:33). Soon he will be manifested as such, in power on earth, when he returns to consummate the divine purpose (Acts 3:19-21).

"Thy right hand, O Yahweh, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" — The "right hand" is the place of power and authority (cp. ch. 15:12; 29:20; see also ch. 14:27).

VERSE 7

"And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee" — Rotherham gives "excellency" as "exaltation." The expression also shows that in attacking Israel, Pharaoh attacked Yahweh.

"Thou sentest forth Thy wrath which consumed them as stubble" — Stubble represents the inflammable nature of dried grass, to be destroyed in an instant (cp. 1Cor. 3:12). Malachi uses the same expression in describing the effect of Christ's judgments in the earth (Mal. 4:1).

VERSE 8

"And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together" — The word "blast" is *ruach*, a word frequently rendered "spirit." The nations are likened to a troubled sea (Isa. 57:20), and are destined to be "gathered together" (Zech. 14:2) by the storm of Armageddon.

"The floods stood upright as an heap" — The wind drove them into this position, and they remained like it.

"And the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea" — "Congeal" is from *qapha*, "to thicken, freeze, congeal."

The use of this word suggests that the water solidified in some way, perhaps by being turned to ice. Only Yahweh is capable to perform this, which makes the miracle unique.



VERSE 9

"The enemy said" — This verse expresses the uncontrollable hate and rage of the Egyptians. The language is very abrupt, the broken speech, the short, staccato statements, imitate the utterances of one at once eager for destruction, and panting with the exertion of pursuing and proclaiming at the same time.

Hatred for Israel had developed in Egypt with the outpouring of the plagues, and especially with the final one — the slaying of the firstborn. Now the Egyptians express an insane obsession to destroy Israel. For the antitype see Jer. 30:14-16; Eze. 38:16.

"I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil" — The "spoil" to which the song makes reference, had been acquired in Egypt from Egyptians (Exo. 12:35-36).

"My lust shall be satisfied upon them" — The word "lust" is *nephesh* in Hebrew, elsewhere rendered "soul." It represents the emotion and intent of Pharaoh: the very desire of his "life."

"I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them" — The margin renders "destroy" as "repossess," as in the Septuagint version. The Hebrew *yarash* has the idea of "to occupy, to seize, by expelling its previous tenants" (see AV mg.)

VERSE 10

"Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them" — "Wind" is *ruach*, as in other parts of the song. The latter part of the line is literally "are covering them," the imperfect tense graphically describing the event as though it was taking place before the eyes of the singers.

"They sank as lead in the mighty

waters” — The armour and weapons of the soldiers assisting to that end.

VERSE 11

“Who is like unto Thee, O Yahweh, among the gods?” — This expresses the continued praise of the Redeemed as they viewed the goodness and the purpose of Yahweh.

Moses gave expression to it as he contemplated the future in the light of God’s purpose (Deu. 33:26-27); Hannah did so in her triumph (1Sam. 2:2); David when given the covenant (2Sam. 7:22); Solomon at the dedication of the temple (1Kings 8:23); the Psalmist in view of the experiences of everyday life (Psa. 35:10) in the light of the future purposes of Yahweh (Psa. 86:8), and because of His manifestation of power (Psa. 89:6), when He condescends to help man in his need (Psa. 113:5); Jeremiah did so when comparing Yahweh’s might with the powerless idols of the heathen (Jer. 10:6).

The victory at the Red Sea was the crowning point of Yahweh’s controversy with Egypt; revealing that He, alone, has the power to save (Eze. 7:4-5; 14:4, 8). The same salutary lesson shall be brought prominently before the notice of all mankind in the future (Eze. 38:23).

“Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness” — In this song, Moses elevates Yahweh on three main counts: [1] The praise due to His name (the section of the verse already considered); [2] His status of holiness (the present line), which is the basic theme of Leviticus (see Lev. 19:2); [3] His mighty power in performing wondrous works (the next line of the song).

“Fearful in praises, doing wonders?” — God is to be revered in the praises offered Him, and not reduced to a common familiarity. Flesh needs to exercise restraint in its approaches to Him, and in praising Him, we must ever elevate and respect Him. The wonders He performs, and of which Israel had received visible evidence that day, provide concrete evidence of His power. See also Psa. 77:14.

VERSE 12

“Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand” — The “right hand” is the hand of strength and occurs three times in the song (see v. 6). It is a phrase used to describe Moses on this occasion, and Christ in the future.

“The earth swallowed them” — An earthquake broke forth, evidently swallowing up many Egyptians, though sufficient bodies remained to be cast up onto the shore (Exo. 14:31). The Psalmist also speaks of earthquakes when referring to the upheavals that took place at this time (Psa. 77:14-20). There was earthquake at the burial and resurrection of Christ (Mat. 27:52-53; 28:2), and there will be earthquake again at the second coming of the Lord (Eze. 38:19; Zech. 14:4), when once again, “Yahweh shall arise to shake terribly the earth” (Isa. 2:21).

VERSE 13

“Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed”

— Yahweh did this as the “Great Shepherd of Israel” (Psa. 77:20; 78:53; 80:1; Isa. 63:11-14). In doing so, He manifested lovingkindness or grace toward Israel (which is what is meant by “mercy”), at the same time as He revealed wrath and punishment toward Egypt. Thus the twofold manifestation of Yahweh was apparent in that He manifested *goodness* to Israel, but *severity* to Egypt (Rom. 11:22). Moses’ words show that Israel was led forth in mercy, redeemed in grace, and guided by strength.

The word “redeemed” signifies “purchased” (see Exo. 6:6; Psa. 77:15; Isa. 51:11). The price paid was the humiliation of Egypt, and the death of its firstborn and its warriors. At this point of the song, having praised Yahweh for all that He had done, Moses’ words become prophetic of the future of the nation.

“Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation” —

This refers to the “people” of the previous verse. The Hebrew is ‘*am* in the singular, and as such relates to the nation. With prophetic insight Moses anticipated the

nation entering the land, established in its tribal territory, and worshipping in the temple yet to be built. See Deu. 12:5, 11, 14; 14:23, 24; 16:6, 11; 26:2; Cp. Psa. 132:13-14. The nation was established in the Land in fulfillment of Moses' song, though most of those who sang the song that day did not enter therein, because of lack of faith (Heb. 3:18).

It is important to notice, therefore, that the song moves on from recalling the deliverance of the past, to embrace the future. Significantly, the occupation of Canaan by the Israelites under Joshua, prophetically described by Moses, is typical of the future when Christ, instead of Moses, and the glorified Redeemed instead of natural Israel, will fulfil the prophecy, and bring the purpose of Yahweh to its glorious consummation through deliverance by water.

VERSE 14

"The people shall hear and be afraid" — The Hebrew word for "people" is the plural form of the word used in verse 13, and as such invariably relates to the Gentiles, and not to "the one people of Israel." The word is rendered "peoples" in the RV. Gentile nations heard of the destruction of Pharaoh's host, and feared accordingly, as Rahab declared (Josh. 2:9-10, 24). The Gentile powers of the latter days will have even more cause to fear the judgments of Armageddon.

"Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina" — The word is *phelasheth* in Hebrew, denoting the land of *Wanderers* or *Shepherds*, from a common root with the title of "Philistines." This is the first time that Palestina occurs in Scripture, but it is also found in Isa. 14:29, 31; Joel 3:4. In the prophetic sense, the term relates to Israel after the flesh, the *wanderers* returned to the Land. They will be caused to sorrow at the "time of Jacob's trouble" they are yet to experience (Jer. 30:7; Zech. 13:8), and to mourn their past blindness in relation to their Messiah (Zech. 12:10). These verses of the song show how completely the vision of the future, based upon the deliverance at the sea, took hold of Moses,

enabling him to predict the setting up of Yahweh's holy habitation in the city of His choice (v. 13), the regret of the people of the land at their past blindness (v. 14), the complete overthrow of Gentile powers (v. 15), and so forth. In like manner, the prophets used the imagery of the past, as in the Red Sea crossing, as the basis of their predictions of the future. For example, Isaiah recorded the words of Yahweh: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isa. 43:2).

VERSE 15

"Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed" — The word "amazed" is better rendered "terrified" (see *Interlinear Hebrew English Greek Bible*). The Hebrew *bahal* signifies "to tremble, to palpitate," thus to be in sudden fear. Edom will have good cause to tremble at the manifestation of Christ and the glorified Redeemed in the land, for Edom types the flesh in political manifestation, and as such is to be utterly destroyed (Obad. 10). At Christ's coming, Gog's confederation is representative of Edom, whose hosts will be terrified at the manifestations of divine power accompanying the appearance of Christ and the Redeemed at Armageddon (Eze. 38:18-23; Zech. 14:1-5). Their absolute terror will be justified, for the flesh in political manifestation is to be completely overwhelmed.

It is significant that the song should refer to the "dukes" of Edom. Dukes ruled in Edom before its kings were set up; today Russia has deposed its kings and instead set up its "dukes," its statesmen of power! (see *Expositor: Genesis*, on Gen. 36).

"The mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them" — The song divides Gentiles into two specific groups: Edom and Moab. Whereas the prophetic destiny of antitypical Edom is complete destruction, that of Moab is subjection at the hands of Christ, to be incorporated into his kingdom as mortals (Jer. 48:47). Balaam

spake of the Star of Jacob, "smiting the corners of Moab," at the time that he shall "destroy all the children of Sheth" (Num. 24:17). The prophecy seems to relate to the Western Powers. Certainly Brother Thomas viewed the latter-day prophetic Moab in that light (see *Elpis Israel*, p. 443).

The word "trembling" is a different word in Hebrew from that rendered "amazed" in the previous line of the song. Here it is *ra'ad*, to shudder, and indicates additional fear and anguish. So the former fear now gives way to continued agitation.

"All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away" — Historically, Edom and Moab opposed the approach of Israel under Moses to the promised Land. Their opposition proved ineffectual, and Israel marched forward and entered the land. Under Joshua, the Canaanites were brought into subjection, and the children of Israel received their inheritance.

Who are the latter-day "inhabitants of Canaan"? The reference is applicable to the Arabs, who will be removed from the Land of Promise, and given their inheritance in Arabia. This will permit Israel to occupy the whole of the territory promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Thus the type of Gen. 25:5-6, and the prophecy of Isa. 21:13-15, will be fulfilled. Isaiah reveals that the Arabs will be converted, and will bring their offerings from Arabia to Jerusalem, to be received upon the altar of Yahweh with acceptance (Isa. 60:6-7). Their territory in Arabia will then flourish as the rose. By that means, the two sons of Abraham will live in peace with each other.

For the meaning of the word "Canaan" see our notes on Gen. 12:6 in *Expositor: Genesis*. Bible prophecy reveals that whereas "the Canaanite dwelt in the land" when Abraham first entered it, this will not be the case when Abraham is brought again from the dead (Zech. 14:21). The word "Canaanite" signifies *a trader*, a term frequently applied to the Arabs today. Similarly all spiritual trading shall cease in the complete overthrow of Babylon the Great (Rev. 18:11-19).

VERSE 16

"Fear and dread shall fall upon them" — This occurred when the new generation of Israelites moved towards the Land of Promise (the previous generation having fallen in the wilderness), and fear swept the surrounding nations (Josh. 5:1). The unexpected appearance of the multitudinous Christ in belligerent manifestation in the future age shall cause even greater fear (Isa. 30:27-30).

"By the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone" — The "arm of Yahweh" is a title given to Christ by Isaiah (40:10). The effect of his power at his second coming will bring about a state of political paralysis (see the expression used in 1Sam. 25:37), so that the nations will be compelled to submit.

"Till Thy people pass over, O Yahweh" — The "people of Yahweh" are the Redeemed.

"Till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased" — In Isa. 51:9-11, the prophet describes the joyous Redeemed entering Zion in the future, in terms that align the circumstances to the crossing of the Red Sea. He prays that Yahweh shall "put on strength" as He did at the Crossing, and, in consequence, cause the Redeemed to enter Zion with singing. Thus, once again, the historic details provide the type for the future.

VERSE 17

"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them" — To plant a thing is to establish it deep in the soil with the object of it bringing forth fruit. Unfortunately, the generation that came out of Egypt was never "planted" in the Land; it perished in the wilderness. It is true that the next generation did enter therein, and that in so doing, Yahweh planted the "vine out of Egypt" in the field selected by Him (Psa. 80:8), but because of evil circumstances that arose, He permitted the wild beasts (Gentile nations) to ravage it (Psa. 80:12-13). David, however, was promised that the people would be "planted" in the land so securely that they would never be removed therefrom (2Sam. 7:10, see also Jer. 24:6; Amos 9:15). In Isa. 60:21, the

term is applied to the true Israel of God, the glorified Redeemed.

"In the mountain of Thine inheritance" — This statement shows that the vision of Moses took in the future. The place of planting is declared to be "the mountain of Thine inheritance." It is significant that although the site of God's future temple was not then declared (see Deu. 33:19) Moses was able to describe it as a "mountain," and speak of the Redeemed as being planted there. Later, it was revealed that Zion, Jerusalem, was the place selected (Psa. 132:13-14). In the age to come, that "mountain" shall be the site of Christ's glorious "house of prayer for all nations." The top of the mountain is to be the Most Holy (Eze. 43:12), and only the immortal Redeemed shall be permitted there. Thus, the question and answer supplied by the Psalmist, as to who shall "dwell in Yahweh's holy hill?" (Psa. 15:1).

Five hundred years before the building of Solomon's temple, Moses was privileged to see in vision, and so incorporate into this national anthem of Israel, reference to the "holy mountain" which Yahweh would select as His particular inheritance.

"In the place, O Yahweh, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in" — That place is Jerusalem (Psalm 132). Yahweh will "dwell" therein, not personally by descending from heaven, but in manifestation through the Redeemed (2Thes. 1:10). A similar expression is used in Exo. 29:46, relating to Yahweh "dwelling in Israel" in the past. Israel was called out of Egypt, and delivered from the wrath of Pharaoh, for the purpose of God manifestation (see Deu. 28:9-10). Unfortunately the nation failed, causing God to turn to the Gentiles in order "to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). Such a people must go through the same process as did Israel in Egypt, and by separation from their former associations, by the cutting off in baptism of the old way, and by dedication of the mind and person to the will of God, become the dwelling place of Yahweh (2Cor. 6:16). The process will not

be complete until such a people, physically as well as morally, manifest the divine characteristics, and associate with their Lord in Jerusalem.

"In the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" — According to *The Companion Bible*, the word "Lord" in this place should be "Yahweh;" it being "one of the 134 places where it was altered by the Sopherim to Adonai." It is difficult to know why the word should be altered in this place. Actually, *Adonai* makes good sense. It indicates that at the time to be fulfilled by this statement of the song, Yahweh will be manifested in a multitude of the Redeemed who shall be elevated as the lords and rulers of humanity. In speaking of the Sanctuary, Moses looked forward to the temple of the Age to come (Isa. 56:5-7), when the sons and daughters He will beget, are be given "the everlasting name" He got for Himself as the result of the Crossing (cp. Isa. 56:5; 63:12; Acts 15:14).

His hands "will establish" the temple of the future, as the tabernacle and temple of the past were constructed through human agency. In each case, the plans were supplied by Yahweh, first to Moses, then to David, and finally to Ezekiel; and from those plans, the sanctuaries of the past were established, as that of the future will be also. The temple in Jerusalem, in the Age to come, will provide the basis for a true and lasting peace among the nations (Zech. 6:12). To it they will ascend for worship and instruction (Zech. 14:17; Isa. 2:2-4), and there the true Israel of God shall be seen in glory.

VERSE 18

"Yahweh shall reign for ever and ever" — The Hebrew expressions are *olam* and *ad*, literally, according to Brother Thomas: "for the hidden period and beyond." The "hidden period," is the millennium whilst "beyond" relates to the epoch of absolute perfection that will follow it. Christ's kingdom will last "forever" (Luke 1:33), but it will be revealed in two stages: during the millennium when sin shall be restrained,

yet mortality continues; and afterwards, when the final enemy of death has been vanquished, and a perfected kingdom is delivered unto the Father (1Cor. 15:24-28). The prophetic vision of Moses took in that glorious consummation.

And, at that point, the song concludes.

The lines of poetry commenced from verse 1: "I will sing....," finish at the declaration that "Yahweh shall reign for ever."

The record now returns to prose. In our exposition, each line we have commented upon, and which is set out in **bold type** above, represents a line of poetry as shown in the RV. It is helpful to mark the individual lines in the Bible, perhaps by bracketing them in colour.

VERSE 19

"For" — The preposition which introduces this statement, shows that this verse is explanatory of the preceding song.

"The horse of Pharaoh went in" — Pharaoh's cavalry is here depicted. There is no direct statement that Pharaoh personally perished in the sea; in fact, the stele of Merneptah implies otherwise. See note Exo. 14:23.

The statement in Psa. 136:15 does not contradict our comments. The word there translated "overthrew" comes from a root signifying "to rustle, to shake," and hence the AV margin, "shaked off." In consequence the Psalm implies that Pharaoh's power to hurt Israel was finished at that point. The Red Sea "shaked off" the pursuit of the Egyptians.

"With his chariots and his horsemen into the sea" — Both cavalry and chariots plunged recklessly into the path driven through the sea.

"And Yahweh brought again the waters of the sea upon them" — The crossing of the Red Sea is represented by Paul as the national baptism of Israel "into Moses" (1Cor. 10:1-2). This would require that the entire nation be under the water and cloud at the same time, and, therefore, in view of the large numbers of Israelites, demands a considerable breadth and depth of water for that purpose. It also necessitates water deep enough to violently

overthrow and drown the Egyptian warriors on horseback or in chariots.

The ebb and flow of tidal waters adjacent to Bitter Lakes would be adequate for such purposes, in contrast to what is claimed by those who would rationalise the miracle. See our comments on ch. 14: 21.

As the miracle of baptism into Christ blots out past sins (cp. Acts 2:38), so the miracle of the crossing destroyed the hosts of Pharaoh, representative of the oppressor in the land of sin.

"But the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea" —

Once again the descriptive words of Moses are an embarrassment to those who would rationalise the miracle. The suggestion that the children of Israel merely waded through receding tidal waters cannot be described as "walking on dry land in the midst of the sea." The application of the miracle as a national baptism is appropriate to the description before us. The waters saved Israel, but destroyed Pharaoh's power; as the waters of the Flood saved Noah in the ark, whilst they destroyed the antediluvians. In the antitype, the waters of baptism render the "old man" powerless, whilst providing the means of salvation for the person himself (see Rom. 6:3-8).

VERSE 20

"And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron" — This is the first time reference is made to the name *Miriam*. Previously, in ch. 2:7 it is to Moses' "sister," and as no other sister is referred to in Scripture, it is presumed that this also was Miriam.

Both name and title are significant. It is normal to derive "Miriam" (Gr. *Mary*, from *marah*, signifying *bitterness*, which Miriam had experienced during the period of the oppression), or *Rebellion* (which she later manifested toward Moses — see Num. 12:1). The waters of bitterness were called *Marah* (Exo. 15:23), and Naomi changed her name to *Mara* when she returned to Bethlehem bereft of her husband and sons (Ruth 1:20). Others derive the name from *mar* signifying "a

drop" as in Isaiah 40:15, and *yam*, the "sea." This derivation gives her name as denoting *Those taken out of the sea of nations* (Isa. 57:20). This meaning of the name would be appropriate to the circumstances of the deliverance of Israel, and suggests why Miriam's name was not disclosed before the incident now recorded. As Moses in the drama enacted upon the eastern shore of the Red Sea, typed the Lord, Miriam and the women with her, represented the Bride of Christ, the cloud of witnesses which will reflect the glory of the rainbow in the Age to come (Rev. 1:7). A cloud is formed of minute drops of water drawn into the heavens, appropriate to the suggested meaning of Miriam's name. Perhaps, by a play upon words, both meanings are implied, and this, too, is appropriate, for it is "through much tribulation" that those who make up the Bride of Christ "will enter the kingdom."

Miriam's title, "*the prophetess*," is equally significant. It is *hanebiyah* in Hebrew, the feminine form of *nabi* or "prophet." The word is derived from the verb *naba*, "to boil or bubble over." It is taken from the metaphor of a fountain bursting forth from the heart of a person into whom God has poured His spirit (2Pet. 1:21; Jer. 20:7-9). A prophet was one who *forth*-told as well as *fore*-told the will and purpose of Yahweh (see 1Cor. 14:3). That Miriam is given such a title suggests the status she held among the people, and implies that during the absence of Moses she had laboured among them in support of the true worship. Other women, mentioned in the Bible, who prophesied, or were given the title, are Rachel (Gen. 30:24), Deborah (Jud. 4:4), Huldah (2Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Neh. 6:14), Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3), Elizabeth (Luke 1:41-45), Mary (Luke 1:46-55), and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:9).

"Took a timbrel in her hand" — The Hebrew *toph* denotes a hand drum, a tom tom or a tambourine. It was an instrument used to accompany dancing in a time of rejoicing. It is translated *tabret* (see Gen. 31:27; 1Sam. 10:5; 18:6; 2Sam. 6:5; Isa. 5:12; 24:8; 30:32; Jer. 31:4; Eze.

28:13), as well as *timbrel* (Jud. 11:32; 2Sam. 6:5; 1Chr. 13:8; Job 21:12; Psa. 81:2; 149:3; 150:4).

"And all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances" — Typically, Miriam and the women of Israel represented the multitudinous Bride of Christ. They danced in excess of joy at the great deliverance and salvation effected. The Hebrew word *mecholoth* is the feminine form of *machowl*, "to twirl around," and hence a *round dance*. In a Psalm prophetic of the great joy that shall follow the resurrection (Psa. 30:3), the Psalmist wrote: "Thou has turned for me my mourning into dancing" (v. 11). Again, speaking prophetically of the joy of the millennium, he wrote: "Praise Him with the timbrel and dance" (Psa. 150:4), repeating the action of Miriam and her associates when they commemorated the great deliverance from Egypt by timbrel and dance on the eastern shores of the Red Sea. The circumstances reveal the significance of the name of Yahweh, and the style of dancing (which should not be confused with modern forms of dancing) was designed to honour His name. Hence the Psalmist declared (Psa. 149:3).

*Let them praise His name in the dance;
Let them sing praises unto Him with
the timbrel and harp.*

VERSE 21

"And Miriam answered them" — The pronoun is in the masculine gender, indicating that it was the singing of Moses and the "sons of Israel" that Miriam and the women answered (cp. v.1). Rotherham renders "them" as "the men."

"Sing ye to Yahweh, for He hath triumphed gloriously" — See note, v. 1.

"The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea" — This is the refrain of the "song of Moses" (cp. v. 1). It may have been sung by Miriam and the women at appropriate pauses during the song by the men, during which time the women would have moved gracefully in a stately and solemn dance in tune with the instruments and the voices of the players and singers.

EXODUS: A PATTERN OF REDEMPTION

SECTION FIVE

CONSECRATION

CHAPTERS 15:22 to 24:18



Though delivered from the slavery of Egypt, the people are not free to please themselves. They must not confuse liberty for licence. In fact they have merely changed masters. The autocrats of Egypt had reduced them into a state of abject bondage which ended in death with little compensation for their hard work. Now their new Master, Yahweh, requires their obedience, though setting before them the promise of life. Thus their status on the eastern shore of the Red Sea foreshadowed the condition of believers in Christ. Prior to accepting him in baptism they were "slaves to sin," a metonym for the lusts of the flesh (Rom. 6:6) but, in Christ they are accounted as "dead to sin," but servants of God (Rom. 6:16-22). Delivered from Egypt, Israel now must be educated in principles of consecration, and, accordingly, they are brought under test and trial to that end. They are taught that faith is necessary to successfully encounter the problems that inevitably face the man or woman of God. They are shown, in a series of dramatic events, what is required of those who would please God, whilst they learn that He provides all the necessities of life. At the same time, they are taught that though He will supply all needs, He may deny them some wants.

The events narrated in this portion of Exodus, constitute an education through experience for the children of Israel. They set forth the principles of consecration in three parts, following the pattern of the other sub-sections of the book:

[1] **Proposed:** *in the typical significance of the incidents of the journey recorded in ch. 15:22-27.*

[2] **Resisted:** *by the faithlessness of the Israelites in their murmurings for food and the complaints they level against Moses, as well as the opposition they experience from the Amalekites on the way to Sinai (chs. 16:1 to 17:16).*

[3] **Accomplished:** *when the people were successfully brought to Horeb, and accepted the terms of the covenant set before them (ch. 18:1 to 24:18).*

[1] — SANCTIFICATION PROPOSED

Chapter 15:22-27

The principles of sanctification are set forth in type in the incidents that follow the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's hosts. Moving three days' journey into the wilderness of Shur, east of the Red Sea, the people lack water and find none. As supplies become ever more depleted, and they begin to feel the pangs of hunger and of thirst, their faith is put to the test. At last they arrive at Marah where there is water, but their high hopes of assuaging their thirst are disappointed as

they find the water bitter. They are not equal to the test thus imposed upon them. Made more impatient through disappointment, they commence to murmur against Moses. But they are taught the lesson of faith as Yahweh, through Moses, miraculously sweetens the water. The opportunity is used by God to teach Israel what He requires of them as a sanctified (separated) people. He establishes a statute and an ordinance, and proclaims Himself as Yahweh Ropheka, the Giver of health, who will care for them if they put their trust in Him. Israel is then led to Elim where further parabolic lessons are impressed upon them, pointing to the kingdom of the future.

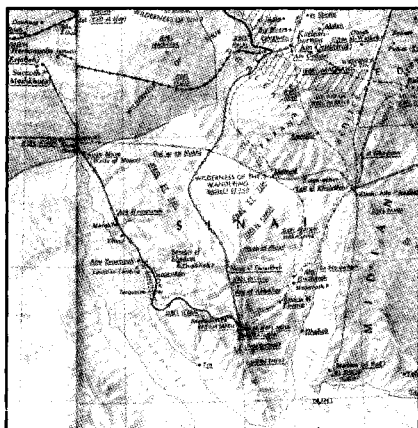
From The Red Sea To The Wilderness Of Shur — v. 22.

After the triumph there always comes the testing. From singing songs of victory and joy, and from praising Yahweh with timbrel and dance, the Israelites are brought into "a dry and thirsty land where no water is" (Psa. 63:1). Their faith is about to be tested again.

VERSE 22

"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur" — The word *Shur* signifies wall. It was the name given to a great line of forts that stretched from Migdol in the Delta along the Sinaitic Peninsula, designed as a bastion or wall to protect the border of Egypt. The site is also given the name of *The wilderness of Etham* (Num. 33:8), for Etham (signifying *Edge*) was situated on the edge of the wilderness. Previously, the Israelites had reached this spot, but had been turned south to the Red Sea (cp. Exo. 13:20).

"And they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water" — The Wilderness of Shur was described by Rawlinson as "treeless, waterless, and, except in the early spring, destitute of heritage. Today the Mitla Pass moves through this area, which remains a monotonous, sandy waste, calculated to test the endurance of any. Mile after mile of small sandhills or hummocks stretch into the distance; and though it was early spring when the Israelites passed through the land, the east winds that then can blow,



could drive the sand into their faces. Supplies began to run short, water had to be rationed, and the people became anxiously aware of this vital necessity of life.

The Bitter Waters of Marah Healed — vv. 23-26.

A profound parable is set forth in the next incident that takes place. The Children of Israel come to Marah where, to their relief, they discover ample water. But on drinking it, they find to their great disappointment, that it is bitter. This is too much. Already feeling the effects of thirst, unable to replenish their dwindling supplies, caught in a wilderness that offers no hope, they again begin to murmur. It is natural for them to do so. But by a remarkable miracle the bitter waters are made sweet, and the thirst of the people

assuaged. On the basis of that miracle, which reveals that faith should never give way to murmuring when Yahweh leads the way, a divine statute and ordinance are proclaimed, and a new name for God is set forth for the people to consider and heed.

VERSE 23

“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter” — Imagine the keen disappointment of a thirsty people finding water, only to learn that it is undrinkable.

“Therefore the name of it was called Marah” — “Marah” signifies *bitterness* (see margin, Ruth 1:20). An important lesson was being impressed upon the people. They were being taught that life’s journey to the kingdom is studded with moments of bitterness that Yahweh alone is capable of sweetening. Paul laid down the principle that it is “through much tribulation” that saints “will enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Let us bear this in mind when trials become our lot, and therefore learn to endure them patiently. Characters acceptable to God are formed under test and chastisement. Israel had to be hardened by such experiences in order to find sufficient strength and determination to wrest the Promised Land from the Canaanites. Hence it was “through much tribulation” that they were brought out of Egypt, a tribulation that many saints have had to endure throughout the ages. The Israelites experienced bitterness in Egypt (Exo. 1:14); Naomi did so when she wandered from the *House of Bread* (Ruth 1:20); Hannah endured it through the mocking of Peninnah (1Sam. 1:6-10); Job discovered its depths through personal disaster and suffering (Job 7:11; 9:18; 10:1); the Psalmist knew of it through the mocking voice of folly raised against him (Psa. 42:3); Mordecai discovered it as he was opposed by the extreme antisemitism of his enemy (Est. 4:1). In every age, through many circumstances, Yahweh tests His people by these means, “proves them” (Exo. 15:25), humbles them so as to

develop in them His strength through weakness (2Cor. 12:7). His children must learn that through faith, out of the bitter experiences of life, there can come great sweetness. So Paul testifies that he could “glory in tribulations also: *knowing that tribulation worketh patience (endurance)*” (Rom. 5:3).

VERSE 24

“And the people murmured against Moses” — This is the first time that the people are described as “murmuring” against Moses, but, unfortunately, it is not the last. In this verse, the word in the Hebrew is *liyn* and signifies *to stop*, thus to be *obstinate* (or, in words, *to complain*). The people evidently refused to proceed any further because of the tediousness of the way, so that Moses was faced with the threat of outright rebellion. In his distress he could only turn to Yahweh.

Murmuring is a negative capitulation to depressing circumstances. It accomplishes nothing, but can adversely affect others, causing them also to complain, and is condemned by the apostles (1Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14). Some ten cases of murmuring are recorded against the children of Israel: [1] For water (Exo. 15:24-26); [2] For food (ch. 16:2-8); [3] For water (ch. 17:3-7); [4] Out of jealousy, by Miriam and Aaron (Num. 12:1-5); [5] Through fear and cowardice, at the spies’ report (ch. 14:2-38); [6] Out of jealousy, against Moses by Korah (ch. 16:1-35); [7] Through bitterness (ch. 16:41-50); [8] Through jealousy, against Aaron (ch. 17:1-11); [9] For water (ch. 20:1-13); [10] Because of the monotony of food (ch. 21:4-9).

Half of the murmurings were for this world’s goods; three arose out of personal jealousy; two were prompted by bitterness, fear or cowardice. All of them stemmed from lack of faith. This analysis shows against what we should be on our guard, and what we should develop (i.e., faith) in order to overcome life’s problems. But, in considering this theme, let the extreme trials that Israel had to endure be ever brought to mind, in order that we

might consider them in the light of our comparatively easy circumstances. In modern days, trials are often induced through the ease and affluence of the age.

The murmuring of the people against Moses foreshadowed that of the leaders of the Jews against Christ, some 1,500 years later (John 6:41). They first flocked to him, but afterwards condemned him.

“Saying, What shall we drink?” — The people eagerly rushed the oasis to drink of its water, but when they found that it was bitter, they spat it out with disgust, crying: *“Marah! What shall we drink?”*

VERSE 25

“And he cried unto Yahweh” — Whereas the people, in their lack of faith, complained to Moses, he turned to Yahweh in prayer. The word “cried” indicates the urgency of his appeal. Rotherham renders it as “outcry!” The waterless desert, the rebellious nation, the murmuring Israelites, sent Moses hurrying to Yahweh, earnestly beseeching His help.

“And Yahweh shewed him a tree” — The same word is rendered “gallows” in Est. 5:14, where it types the “tree” upon which the Lord was crucified (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29). Here it also types the cross of Christ, which is capable of changing the bitterness of life into sweetness, if we identify ourselves with it.

“Which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet” — At first sight, the Mosaic Covenant had the appearance of the water of the oasis: refreshing and attractive in the wilderness of life. It was, declared Paul, “holy, just and good” (Rom. 7:12), but in its enactments, it demonstrated the reality of sin, and therefore became bitter with the curse (Rom. 7:9-13). The sacrifice of Christ, however, removed the curse, and made the water sweet and refreshing (John 4:14; Isa. 12:3).

“There He made for them a statute and an ordinance” — A statute (Heb. *chaq*) is a command or law; an ordinance (Heb. *mishpat*) is the verdict or sentence pronounced when it is broken.

“And there He proved them” — The purpose was to humble them, to teach them to place greater confidence in Him, and to reveal what was in their heart, so that they might recognise the enormity of their acts of faithlessness (Deu. 8:2,16).

VERSE 26

“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy God” — In the Hebrew, “diligently hearken” is the word *shama*, repeated. In itself it signifies to *hearken intelligently*. It is repeated for added emphasis, and therefore is rendered as in the A.V.

“And wilt do that which is right in His sight” — The full scope of the Law had not then been given, but the people knew sufficient to recognise that all that Yahweh might command would be in accordance with His righteous character.

“And wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes” — This requires the concentration of the mind on what He might command, and an endorsement of the statutes that He might set down (see note v. 25). The exhortation of this verse obviously was in preparation for the formal presentation of the Law to the people a few days later, and their acceptance of it.

“I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians” — At Marah, the Israelites found themselves threatened with one of the plagues of Egypt: undrinkable water. Yahweh delivered them from this, and so demonstrated His power to afflict or to save. If they proved obedient, He would protect them from the disease which had afflicted the Egyptians. But, if otherwise, they would suffer in kind (see Deu. 28:27, 60). The most dreaded disease of Egypt was leprosy; and every case of such recorded in Scripture was to either punish or teach a lesson. When Miriam rebelled against her brother, she was afflicted with leprosy (Num. 12:10); when Uzziah unlawfully forced his way into the temple, he was smitten with leprosy (2Chr. 26:21). Therefore, if an Israelite became a leper, he needed to consider the

cause, and seek a cure from Yahweh. When a suspected case of leprosy was discovered, the party concerned was to call for the priest, rather than the physician, to determine as to whether, in fact, it was a case of leprosy, and what should be done in the circumstances (see Lev. 13). He was thereby taught the religious principles involved.

“For I am Yahweh that healeth thee” — This is a new divine title, superimposed by the Creator upon Himself, to illustrate yet another aspect of divine grace. The Hebrew is *Yahweh Ropheka*, or *Yahweh thy Physician* as Rotherham renders it. The verb *rapha* signifies “to heal thoroughly, to repair, to stitch together, to mend by stitching.” It is similar in meaning to the word “religion,” which also denotes “a binding together.” This new title, now proclaimed to Israelites, identifies Yahweh as the *Restorer of the soul* (Psa. 23:3). In Psalm 103:3, forgiveness of sins is associated with the healing of disease:

*“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,
Who healeth all thy diseases.”*

Again: (Psa. 147:2-3):

*“Yahweh doth build up Jerusalem;
He gathereth together the outcasts of
Israel.*

*He healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up their wounds.”*

In conformity with this new title, Yahweh told Moses: “Ye shall serve Yahweh your God, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water: and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee” (Exo. 23:25). Yahweh’s ability to heal is expressed in Num. 12:13; Deu. 32:39; 2Kings 20:5-8; and Psa. 107:20. Examples of Him doing so are revealed in the cases of Abimelech (Gen. 20:17), Miriam (Num. 12:13), the Psalmist (Psa. 30:2), Hezekiah (2Kings 20:8); Jeremiah (Jer. 17:14). Promises to heal the wounds of nations, involving their forgiveness and restoration to favour, are proclaimed to Israel (Isa. 57:18-19); Ephraim (Hos. 11:3); Zion (Jer. 30:17); Egypt (Isa. 19:22). Even Babylon could have been healed (Jer. 51:8-9).

The healing work of *Yahweh Ropheka*

is manifested in various ways: in healing the land which has suffered drought through the sin of the nation (2Chr. 7:14; cp. also Psa. 60:2); in curing the unfaithfulness of the people (Hos. 14:4-5); in sweetening polluted springs (2Kings 2:19-22); even in restoring the waters of the Dead Sea (Eze. 47:8-9).

Yahweh Ropheka has promised to heal individual distresses or failings (Psa. 147:3). Even in circumstances when His people have turned from Him to the vain association with Gentiles, He has extended His healing power, when they have returned to Him (Hos. 5:13; Jer. 17:13-14).

The process of such healing is through His Word (Psa. 107:20), and by the stripes of the One appointed to endure them to that end (Isa. 53:5).

As the manifestation of Yahweh, the Lord Jesus is the medium by which the healing balm becomes truly effective. He demonstrated this ability as *He who would be the physician* by “healing the leper” (Luke 5:14), curing people of their diseases (Mat. 15:30), and raising the dead (Luke 7:14,16).

In the light of this divine title, a very significant statement is made in Lk. 5:17. Referring to the Pharisees and doctors of the law who had accosted the Lord in Galilee, Luke *the physician* records: “and the power of the Lord [*Yahweh*] was present to heal them.” The “them” relates to the leaders of the Jews and implies that they were spiritually sick (John 9:39-40; Luke 11:42, 52; Mark 2:17). Only through the stripes of *Yahweh Ropheka* in manifestation, could they be healed of such illness.

This indicates the significance of the new title of Yahweh, proclaimed by Him at that moment of crisis in the wilderness. *Yahweh Ropheka*, is not only capable of inflicting sickness, but can cure men of the dread disease of mortality, and grant them the heavenly health of eternal life.

The Wells of Elim — v. 27.

From Marah, the Israelites move on to Elim. Here they obtain renewed strength

and refreshment from twelve oases of water which are overshadowed by seventy palm trees. The experience suggests a parable of redemption. The sweetening of the bitter waters of Marah by sacrifice, as indicated by the felled tree, and the proclamation of the title of Yahweh Ropheka as the giver of perfect health, consummates in the camping of Israel by the twelve oases of Elim (which means Powers) under the shade of the seventy palm trees. The picture presented is symbolic of the future when the powerful ones of Israel will provide wells of salvation (Isa. 12:1-2) to the Gentiles, whose figurative number is seventy.

VERSE 27

“And they came to Elim” — The name “Elim” denotes *Powers* or *Powerful Ones*.

“Where there were twelve wells of waters” — The site provided a well for each of the twelve tribes, pointing to the water of life (John 4:14), identified with the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20), and revealed in Christ. Isaiah predicted of the millennium: “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isa. 12:3). The rejoicing that will then occur was typically enjoyed at Elim after deliverance from the oppression of Egypt.

“And threescore and ten palm trees” — Seventy palm trees, drawing their sustenance up from the twelve wells,

type the future, when under the universal rule of Christ and the saints as the powers (*Elim*) of the age to come, shall nourish the Gentiles with the hope of Israel.

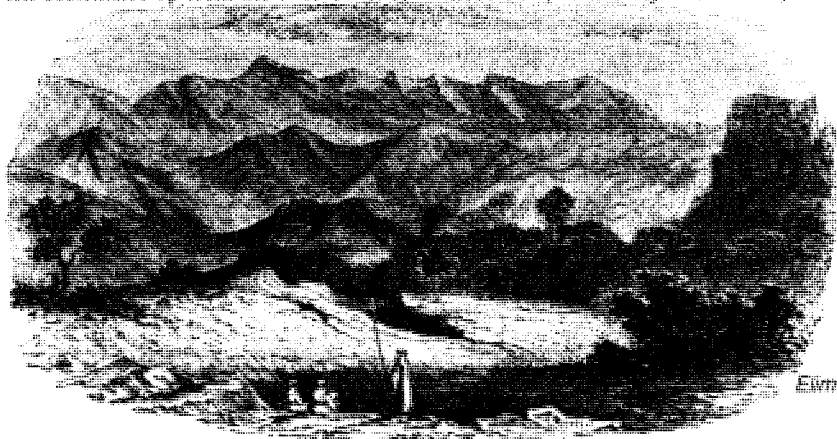
Seventy is a number associated with the Gentiles. In Gen. 10, the family of nations descended from Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth number seventy, and there were seventy people who went down into Egypt with Jacob (Deu. 10:22). Thus, Moses’ prophetic song of witness, identifies them with the Gentiles. He declared (Deu. 32:8):

*“When the Most High divided to
the nations their inheritance,
When He separated the sons of Adam,
He set the bounds of the people
According to the number of
the children of Israel.”*

At Elim, therefore, the children of Israel enacted a parable of the future when Gentiles will be nourished by their hope.

“And they encamped there by the waters” — The freedom from trouble and frustration, that the Israelites experienced at Elim, together with the ample supply of the necessities of life, foreshadowed the peace and prosperity of the kingdom Age.

It is said that, today, “only nine of the twelve wells remain, the missing ones having been filled with blown sands throughout the years; but the seventy palm trees have multiplied into more than two thousand” (*Duke’s Reference Bible*).



[2] CONSECRATION OBSTRUCTED

(By Faithlessness)

Chapter 16:1 to 17:16

At Elim, the Israelites are typically shown the peace and prosperity of the Kingdom, but their faith is not strong enough to lift them above the problems of everyday life. As they move into the barren, arid wilderness of Sin, their food supplies commence to dwindle without any outward evidence of replenishment. Yahweh permits this as a test of faith, but the people fail under test. They recall the comparative luxury of life in Egypt, and compare it with the restrictions now experienced in the wilderness. They overlook the fact that the God who had miraculously drawn them out of Egypt and saved them from the hand of Pharaoh, dividing the sea before them, would not do all this, only to let them perish in the wilderness. They should have realised that necessary food would be provided them. Instead they lift their voices in complaint. Moses also lifts his voice, but in prayer. In consequence of his faith and reliance on Yahweh, meat and manna are provided to relieve the anxiety and hunger of the people. Laws are laid down for the gathering and preparing of the manna which is to be their sustenance for the next forty years; and a pot of it, miraculously preserved for all generations, is stored up as a memorial before Yahweh. They next suffer the rigours of thirst; and Moses is directed to the rock in Rephidim, which, when smitten, provides them with water of life. The Amalekites also attack them, but Yahweh gives His people the victory, in consequence of which a new divine title is pronounced.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BREAD FROM HEAVEN

Leaving the refreshing water of the oases, and the protective shade of the palm trees at Elim, the Israelites travel into the wilderness of Sin, where the country is harsh and travelling is difficult. Food becomes scarce, and as the pangs of hunger are felt, the people turn upon Moses with yet a further complaint. Again, characteristically, he takes the problem to Yahweh in prayer; with the result that he is able to return to the people with promises of meat and bread. In addition, the people are told that they would see a manifestation of divine glory, as the bread from heaven is miraculously supplied them. At the time appointed, flesh is given the people in the form of quails, and manna falls upon the

ground for their daily sustenance. Specific instructions are given as to how it is to be gathered and kept, particularly in regard to its harvesting on the sixth day in preparation for the seventh. Some, however, ignore the instructions, and are rebuked for their sin. Finally, Moses is instructed to lay up an omer of manna which is miraculously preserved over the years, in contrast to that which perishes with the eating of it. Thus the circumstances of the times provide yet another parable of the purpose of Yahweh in Christ who manifested himself as the antitypical “bread from heaven” (John 6:32-38). Paul comments: “All these things happened unto them for ensamples [or types], and they are written for our admonition” (1Cor. 10:11).

Hunger At The Wilderness Of Sin

— vv. 1-3.

The Israelites arrive at the vast wilderness of Sin, which stretches across the whole of the Sinaitic Peninsula. But they find it devoid of food, and as their supplies begin to be depleted, they murmur against Moses, and lift up their voices in complaint of their lot.

VERSE 1

“And they took their journey from Elim” — Leaving Elim, they moved down the eastern coast of the Red Sea.

“And all the congregation of the children of Israel” — The Hebrew word for “congregation” is *edah*, the feminine form of *ed* (witness). See note ch. 12:3.

“Came unto the wilderness of Sin”

— After leaving Elim, the children of Israel encamped by the Red Sea, and afterwards moved into the wilderness of Sin.

The Red Sea encampment is not recorded in Exodus, though it is found in the enumeration of the journey in Numbers (ch. 33:10-11). It was most likely designed to give the people a final glimpse of the extent of ocean that lay between them and Egypt, should they desire to return to that land. It would demonstrate that the barrier between them and Egypt was so vast that there was no possibility of turning back, and there was but one thing to do: follow the cloud to Sinai, and enter into the covenant that Yahweh would reveal to them there. Therefore, after a



Sand dunes were part of the scenery encountered daily by the Israelites during their journeying in the wilderness of Sin.

brief encampment by the shore of the Red Sea they moved off into the wilderness of Sin. The Hebrew word *sin* is from a Hebrew word signifying "bush," and evidently is given this name because of the acacia bush that grows therein — the bush that Moses saw burning, without being consumed. The area is identified by some with the plain of El-Kaa, which commences at the mouth of the Wady Taiy-ibeh, and extends along the whole southwestern side of the peninsula. Some connect it with the plain el-Markhah on the coast. G. Sandie writes in *Horeb And Jerusalem*: "It is a wide, open plain, bounded on one side by the sea, and on the other by a lofty mountain ridge, exhibiting on a large scale the colours of the desert. The central mountain is very grand: a naked alp of red granite, rent by a wild and gloomy gorge, and high upon its slopes lie ridges of pure, white sandstone."

"The Wadi-Markhah extends along the seashore, until it merges into the great plain of El-Kaa. This leads to a magnificent pass, wild, narrow and winding; each turn revealing aspects of grandeur and desolation, strangely impressive. At the end of the ravine, a majestic dark mass of mountain rises as a haggard precipice from the plain; and across its scarred front are broad bands of brightest colours. The plain widens at this part into a recess on one side at its base, and here are small pyramidal hills of the same dark colour, flanked by ridges of the white sandstone. These are so unique as to give the feeling that they have never previously been seen."

"The pass led into Wady Shellal, memorable for its inexpressible confusion of blasted hills of all shapes and colours. Ascending another pass, we looked back over a tumultuous sea of hills of all colours: red, white, green and black. The approach is along a defile shut in by high precipitous granite cliffs over one thousand feet high."

The Israelites would have found some supplies of water throughout this area, but as they toiled up the mountain pass towards Rephidim, they became "faint and weary" (Deu. 25:18), and their supplies

became more and more depleted.

"Which is between Elim and Sinai"

— The word *Sinai* is derived from the Hebrew *sin* or "bush," and denotes *Bush of Yahweh*. This is a significant name for such a site, emphasizing its relationship with the burning bush, the evidence of the law of Yahweh which sustains His people (cp. Deu. 33:16).

"On the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt" — As there were thirty calendar days for a Jewish month in ancient times, this means that they left Egypt on a Thursday, and that the first Passover was slain on a Wednesday. See note on ch. 12:6. Accordingly, they arrived at their encampment on Saturday, 15th Zif.

VERSE 2

"And the whole congregation" —

See note v. 1.

"Of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness" — See note ch. 15:24. It does not take much to cause the human heart to complain! The slightest restriction of water, food, clothing, or material possessions will test the faith and character of any individual. As a human being, he is naturally dominated by physical desires to such an extent that he becomes impatient at any inconvenience, and tends to forget "what manner of person ought he to be in all holy living and godliness" (2Pet. 3:11). This aspect of Israel's murmuring is constantly attested in the Scriptures (Ex. 15:24; 16:12; 17:3; Num. 14:2, 27, 29, 36; 16:11, 41; Num. 17:5, 10; Deu. 1:27; Josh. 9:18; Psa. 106:25).

VERSE 3

"And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt" — The people did not swear, "Would to God we had died," but "Would that we had died." It was a sigh rather than an oath. There is no word for "God" in the Hebrew. However, there is no exonerating the rest of the statement, which is a cow-

ardly moan, stemming from lack of faith, and quite divorced from reality. The Israelites had not wished to “die by the hand of Yahweh” when they were in Egypt, for then they had cried unto Him for help and relief. Now, the depressing circumstances of their lot, caused them to petulantly lift up their voices with such a complaint. It is dangerous, foolish and futile to use such language in moments of depression or difficulty. The death to which the Israelites referred, was that of the firstborn in Egypt; so they were led by adversity to despise the redemption of Yahweh! The people who, a few weeks earlier, had joyously praised Yahweh, now raised their voices in complaint. Let us exercise care that we are not induced by adverse circumstances to despise the spiritual heritage given to us (cp. 1Cor. 10:11).

“When we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full” — Cp. Num. 11:5. Both passages make it clear that whatever the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt, they had abundance of agreeable food.

“For ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger” — They now accused Moses and Aaron of leading them astray in the wilderness, and thus disclaimed that they had been led by Yahweh. Moses answered the accusation in v. 6. The word “assembly” is the Hebrew *qahal* from the verb signifying “to convoke or call out.” It is the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek *ecclesia*. See Acts 7:38.

Ample Flesh And Bread Are Promised — vv. 4-8.

There is no doubt that God was aware of the privations of the Israelites, and though He placed them under test, He had intended to feed them. They should have waited in patience for Him to act. Now they are advised that they would receive a certain ration of bread each day. However, even in this, they are placed under test by laws concerning how they were to gather it. He desires them to know that He who brought them out of Egypt is still with them. He declares that His glory

will be revealed unto them and they would be given flesh to the full, and bread sufficient for their needs.

VERSE 4

“Then said Yahweh unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you” — Many attempts have been made to prove that this “bread” was the product of some desert plant. But such could never be described as “bread from heaven,” or as in Psa. 78:25, “angels’ food,” i.e., food supplied by angels.

“And the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day” — The *Godspeed Bible* renders this: “A day’s ration each day.” The provision of manna emphasised the significance of the Lord’s prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread.” The Lord’s petition relates both to material as well as spiritual food. It emphasises the need of a regular daily supply of each. This truth was impressed upon the Israelites by the provision of their ration of food each day.

“That I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no” — There were certain laws that regulated the gathering of manna. They included the amount to be gathered each day, the double portion gathered each sixth day, the method of preparation, and so forth.

VERSE 5

“And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in” — The preparation of manna for eating was necessary, and typically, this pointed forward to “rightly dividing the Word of God” (2Tim. 2:15), our spiritual manna. Manna had to be measured (v. 18), then pounded or ground, and finally baked (Exo. 16:23; Num. 11:8). On the sixth day, preparation was to be made for two days’ supply of manna, to provide for the sabbath rest.

“And it shall be twice as much as they gather daily” — On the sixth day either twice as much was gathered, or else that which was gathered was miraculously increased like Elijah’s cruse of oil. The statement of v. 22 suggests the former.

VERSE 6

“And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that Yahweh hath brought you out from the land of Egypt” — This was in answer to their complaint recorded in v. 3: “Ye (Moses and Aaron) have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” In the supply of meat and manna, they would have proof of Yahweh’s hand working on their behalf, and receive a complete answer to their question.

VERSE 7

“And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of Yahweh” — The glory of Yahweh would be revealed in the manna provided each morning.

“For that He heareth your murmurings against Yahweh, and what are we that ye murmur against us?” — In these words, Moses taught that when the Israelites murmured against Yahweh’s accredited representatives who were setting forth His will, they murmured against God. In fact, Moses had no authority of his own: it stemmed from Yahweh. The same principle was stated by the Lord Jesus, who was God manifested in the flesh (John 5:23; 7:16-19; 8:54), therefore, when the Jews rejected the Lord, they “rejected Me,” declared Yahweh (Zech. 12:10; John 13:20).

VERSE 8

“And Moses said, *This shall be when Yahweh shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full*” — The words rendered in italics in the AV (“*This shall be*”) should be omitted to give the sense. Rotherham has: “And Moses said, In that Yahweh giveth you...”

“For that Yahweh heareth your murmuring, which ye murmur against Him” — Rotherham renders this: “In that Yahweh heareth...”

“And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against Yahweh” — Rotherham, more correctly, has: “What then are we...” A sin against Yah-

weh’s accredited agent is treated as a sin against Him (1Sam. 8:7; 1Cor. 8:12; Jn. 5:23; 7:16-19; 8:54; 13:10; Zech. 12:10).

The Glory Of Yahweh Manifested — vv. 9-12.

Moses promises the people that they will see the glory of Yahweh revealed prior to the miraculous supply of meat (quails) and bread (manna) on the following evening and morning respectively. Both quails and manna are typical of the manifestation of the glory of Yahweh in Christ, who was given for the needs of His people.

VERSE 9

“And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel” — For the significance of the word “congregation,” see notes on v. 1.

“Come near before Yahweh, for He hath heard your murmurings” — There was need for adequate preparation of the mind in readiness for the manifestation of the glory to be revealed, and the food about to be supplied. For that purpose, the people were gathered together, in order that “the glory” might appear before them. In the antitype, this was achieved by the preaching of John the Baptist. The people were drawn together by his ministry, in order that they might perceive in the Lord “the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

In the miraculous provision of quails and manna, the ministry of the Lord Jesus was foreshadowed in remarkable detail:

- [a] Aaron’s initial exhortation (v. 9), foreshadowed the preaching of John the Baptist (Luke 3:2-15).
- [b] The congregation was caused to look towards the wilderness (v. 10). See Mat. 3:1, 13.
- [c] The glory of Yahweh appeared (v. 10). See John 1:14; Luke 3:6.
- [d] Flesh was provided between the evenings (Exo. 12:6, mg.), that is, between 3 and 6 pm. See John 19:14.
- [e] In the morning dew was seen (v.

13). This is indicative of the resurrection (Isa. 26:19). See John 20:1; Rom. 1:4.

[f] When it ascended, manna remained (v. 14). See John 6:56-58.

[g] The Israelites continued to eat of it until they reached the Promised Land (v. 35). See John 6:53-58.

VERSE 10

“And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel” — His speech anticipated John Baptist’s message (Mat. 3:6, 13).

“That they looked toward the wilderness” — From whence also came John the Baptist (Mat. 3:1, 13).

“And, behold the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud” — The cloud that led them by day became exceedingly luminous (see Exo. 24:17; Lev. 9:6, 23; Num. 14:10, 21-22; 16:19, 42 etc.). Peter wrote concerning Christ, the antitype of the glory in the midst of Israel, “We were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” (2Pet. 1:16-17).

VERSE 11

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — As Moses proclaimed to Israel the Word of Yahweh delivered unto him, so did the Lord Jesus (John 7:16; 12:49).

VERSE 12

“I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel” — The generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt was dominated by lack of faith, rendered in Heb. 3:18-19 as “unbelief.” This was the cause of their murmurings.

“Speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh” — “Even” is literally “between the evenings” (see note ch. 12:6). This was the time of the day at which Christ died. Moreover, the appearance of the Lord at his first advent comprised the “evening” of Israel’s national

existence, for shortly afterwards it came to an end. It constituted the “last days” of Judah’s Commonwealth (Heb. 1:2; 9:26), the termination of the Mosaic epoch and covenant. Christ described the period of his absence from the earth as “night” (John 9:4-5). It was the time predicted by Micah: “Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them” (Mic. 3:6).

Prior to this epoch, Christ gave himself in sacrifice, that his disciples may “eat flesh at even.” To them, the Lord declared: “Truly I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:53-54).

In *Eureka* vol. 1, p. 311, Brother Thomas expounds upon this theme: “He that believes the written testimony of the Logos concerning Jesus, set forth in the prophets and apostles, and becomes the subject of repentance and remission of sins in his name, eats his flesh and drinks his blood, and ‘hath aion-life’ in the sense of Rev. 22:14, ‘blessed they doing God’s commandments, that they may have the right to the Wood of Life;’ and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:54). Thus, ‘he that eateth me, even he shall live by me,’ and none else.

“The Christ, then, or the Logos become flesh, is the ‘spiritual meat’ represented by the flesh and manna in the wilderness. Hence, the apocalyptic manna is representative of the last Adam, whom Paul styles ‘a life-imparting Spirit;’ and to eat from this manna, is to be the subject of incorruptibility of body and life, which together constitute ‘immortality,’ in the thousand years’ Aion; which deathlessness is imparted by the Spirit which raised up Jesus from among the dead.

“We may here recall the attention of the reader to the four points already before him. These were typical conditions, the antitypes of which may be stated thus in a

corresponding order:

"1. It was typically necessary that Israel see the Glory of Yahweh before they eat heaven's flesh at even, and eat from the manna in the morning;

"2. That they eat the flesh first;

"3. That they eat the bread afterwards;

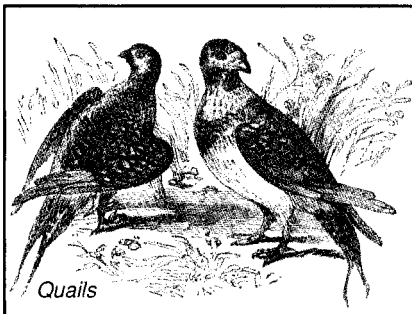
"4. That they eat both before they obtain Aion-possession of the land promised to Abraham and his Seed."

"And in the morning ye shall be filled with bread" — The morning typically points forward to the morning of the future age, the millennial day of Christ's rule (Mal. 4:2). In that day, those "who overcome" will be invited "to eat of the hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17), symbolising eternal life (see John 6:48-53).

"And ye shall know that I am Yahweh your God" — The miraculous supply of flesh and bread demonstrated the reality of Yahweh. In the antitype such knowledge forms a basis for the ultimate bestowal of life eternal (John 17:3).

Quails And Manna Supplied — vv. 13-14.

As promised, numbers of quails appear, flying low over the camp of the Israelites, and are caught by the waiting people. It is normal for these birds to migrate across the Sinaitic Peninsula at this time of the year, and, exhausted by their long flight, are easily caught near the ground. On this occasion, however, the flocks are greatly increased, so that there is adequate flesh for all. The following morning, the manna is seen on the ground.



VERSE 13

"And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp" — The Hebrew for "quail" is *selav*, derived from a root signifying "sluggishness," which is indicative of the slowness of the bird in flight, caused by its weight. As such it is a suitable type for the flesh, and typifies the Lord in the days of his flesh (Jn. 6:63). The quail is a migratory bird which moves up from Arabia to Israel in spring, appearing in immense numbers. Quails are easily caught, being without guile (cp. 1Pet. 2:22).

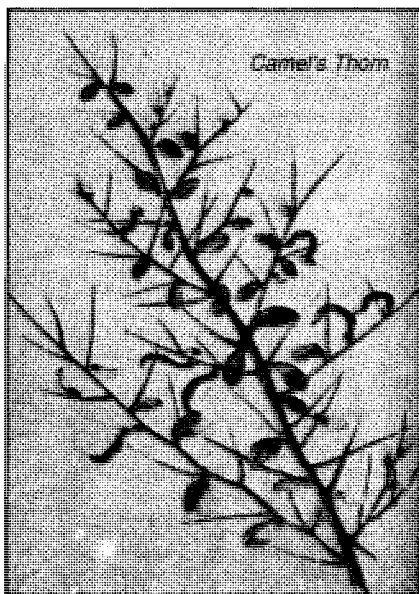
"And in the morning the dew lay round about the host" — The Hebrew word for "dew" is *tal*, and denotes "covering." The dew *covered* the manna, and reflected the glory of the early morning sun. Millions of gems would flash forth from the heavy fall of dew as the sun of a new day appeared over the horizon (Mal. 4:2). Speaking of the resurrection to life, Isaiah declared: "Thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19). The word for "herbs" is *lights* in Hebrew referring to the sparkling reflection of the sun's rays in the morning dew. In the morning of the new day, when the "Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams" (Mal. 4:2), the reflection of his glory shall be seen in those who arise out of the dust to a resurrection unto life. Brother Thomas comments: "They remain in this dew-state until the Sun of Righteousness acts upon them, and transforms them into manna; that is, makes them corporeally like himself — transforms the body that comes out of the grave into a like form to that with which he descends from heaven (Phil. 3:20). To be the subject of this transformation by the Spirit is 'to eat of the manna which has been concealed'." (*Eureka*, vol. 1, p. 313).

VERSE 14

"And when the dew that lay was gone up" — The antitype is seen in the ascension of the Lord (Acts 1:11). Though he ascended into heaven, the manna of his teaching remained to feed spiritual Israel;

and was revealed in its fulness for the first time (Rom. 1:3-4).

“Behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground” — “Hoar frost” is one word in the Hebrew: *kephor*, and denotes “cover.” Frost is white in colour, suggesting a covering of righteousness. Some, in an attempt to rationalise the miracle, suggest that the manna was the natural product of a desert plant, but surely it would constitute a greater miracle than that suggested in the Bible, if suddenly desert plants exuded sufficient gum to satisfy the hunger of two million people! There is a plant called *Alhagi camelorum* or *camel's thorn* which grows to a height of about



90cm (3 ft), and exudes a sweet gummy substance often called “manna.” If a small insect punctures the stem of the plant, the sugary liquid oozes out to harden into drops which are collected and gathered into baskets by the Arabs. The plant is common throughout the Middle East, and its gum is often called *Manna hebraica* and *Sinai manna*, though this should not

be confused with the manna sent from heaven to feed the Israelites. This manna was miraculously supplied. It was not known before or after (Deu. 8:3, 16; Josh. 5:12). It was rained down from heaven (Psa. 78:24; John 6:31-32), and appeared only on six days, and not on the seventh (Exo. 16:24-27). Both Jesus and Moses taught that the manna came from heaven, and not from human agency (Jn. 6:31-32; Exo. 16:6, 12-13, 15).

Instructions Regarding Manna

— vv. 15-21.

The “bread” supplied is something unique to Israel, which the people have never seen before. They do not know what to call it, hence the significance of the word “manna.” Moses explains that it is bread supplied from heaven, and he instructs the people as to how they are to gather and prepare it.

VERSE 15

“And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna; for they wist not what it was”

— This statement, as it appears in the A.V. is a contradiction in terms. However, the Hebrew *mahn hu* does not define an object, but asks a question. It should be rendered, “*What is this?*” (mg.). The Israelites did not know what it was they found on the ground, and, therefore, did not know what to call it. They were as mystified concerning it as the people were of the Lord Jesus Christ, the manna from heaven, some 1,500 years later (see John 3:3; 4:10; 8:25; 12:34, 38). It is clear, however, that the question they asked in the wilderness demonstrates that the supply of manna was no natural phenomenon, the product of a desert plant, as suggested by some who find the miracle an embarrassment. Moses was used to the area, having dwelt in Midian for forty years, but had no explanation for it, except that it was given of God. Though similar in some respects, the natural substances of the desert plants identified by some as manna, are not large in quantity, nor could they be a principal food. Also, they appear only

during a short season of the year. The manna of the Bible [1] was to be Israel's chief nourishment for forty years; [2] it was supplied in large quantities; [3] it was given throughout the whole year; [4] it appeared only on six out of the seven days of the week; and [5] it bred worms if kept two days, except on the sabbath. Clearly this manna was a miracle of Yahweh, and is a type of Christ who, like the manna, was a product of heaven by the Spirit (Luke 1:32-33; John 6:32-40).

The word "wist" in this verse, is Anglo-Saxon for *witan*, "to know;" thus, "they knew not what it was."

"And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which Yahweh hath given you to eat" — In Neh. 9:15 this is described as God "giving them bread from heaven," which words were cited by the Jews of Capernaum in their discussion with the Lord (John 6:31). The Lord took up the statement, and contrasted the manna then given with "the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32), and in explanation declared: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger." In his discussion, the Lord explained that he had come down from heaven in the same way as the manna had been supplied "from heaven." How was that done? Was sufficient of the desert bread manufactured in heaven, and wafted down through boundless space, from God's dwelling place to the earth beneath? Or did God send forth His spirit and manufacture it upon the earth for the use of His people? Undoubtedly the latter, for it is explained that it was done "by the hand of Moses Thy servant" (Neh. 9:14). In similar manner, Yahweh sent forth His spirit, and Jesus, the true bread from heaven was born. This is the statement of Gabriel to Mary, the mother of the Lord (Luke 1:35). In this way, therefore, though not corporeally, the Lord Jesus could claim that he "came down from heaven" (John 6:38).

VERSE 16

"This is the thing which Yahweh hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating" — The

word for "man" is *ish* denoting a principal man, the head of the family. Such were to be responsible for the gathering of the manna. The expression "according to his eating" does not relate to the personal appetite of such an one, but to the number of dependents in his household. The same expression is used in regard to the Passover (see ch. 12:4, and notes there).

"An omer for every man, according to the number of your persons" — For the measure, see note on ch. 16:36.

"Take ye every man for them which are in his tents" — A large family would require more manna than a smaller one.

VERSE 17

"And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less" — The Israelites obeyed Moses, and gathered what they supposed to be the specified amount; but, as a matter of course, some of them exceeded the amount, while others fell short of it. There was no wilful disobedience in this. Some had the strength, ability, dedication, or opportunity to gather more than others.

VERSE 18

"And when they did mete it with an omer" — On returning to their tents with the manna they had collected, the Israelites proceeded to measure it according to the instructions given.

"He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack" — Some had been able to gather more than their quota, whereas others were not so fortunate. Nevertheless, when it was all divided out, and a proper distribution made, it was found that there was adequate for all. This taught a powerful lesson which Paul proceeds to expound when citing this passage (2Cor. 8:15). He extracts the lesson that the privileged have a responsibility to help those not so fortunate. He calls upon the affluent brethren of Corinth to assist those who are not as well off, or in want, so that there might be established a sufficiency for such. This principle can be taken further, to illustrate that stronger communities of the faithful

have a responsibility to extend themselves to help those who are weaker. If that is done, there will be found a sufficiency for all. The providing of manna in the wilderness demonstrated that Yahweh is the “giver of every good and perfect gift,” that all such things come from Him, and therefore, His children are but custodians of those spiritual and material blessings that they receive of His bounty (1Tim. 6:16-18).

“They gathered every man according to his eating” — Every family, according to its size, received its proper measure of food.

VERSE 19

“And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning” — In following this instruction, the Israelites demonstrated their trust in Yahweh to supply them each day with their daily bread, so teaching the spiritual principles set forth in the following verses: Deu. 8:3; Mat. 6:33-34; Phil. 4:11; 1Tim. 6:8; Heb. 13:5. Similar instructions were given in relation to the Passover Lamb, suggesting that the principles expressed thereby should be applied from day to day (see Exo. 12:10).

VERSE 20

“Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses” — This refers to the people as a whole.

“But some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank” — Those referred to in this statement did not manifest full trust in Yahweh

to provide them with the necessities of life. Their prayer was not “Give us this day our daily bread,” and the result was that the accumulation of the food proved a hindrance rather than a help.

“And Moses was wroth with them” — Like the Lord (Mark 3:5), Moses, though the meekest of men, manifested anger at the disobedience of the people (Num. 12:3; cp. Eph. 4:26).

VERSE 21

“And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating” — Manna was collected in the freshness of the early morning. There is no better time of the day for gathering spiritual manna than when the golden rays of the sun have driven away the darkness of the night (see Psa. 63:1; 108:2), and the mind is rested. This is reflected in the Lord’s practice (Mark 1:35). As the Law instructed that the chief men of Israel should each gather food for his family, so it is the responsibility of the heads of families to see that sufficient spiritual manna is supplied to each member under their care.

“And when the sun waxed hot it melted” — Emphasizing the need to gather it early, at the first opportunity. The hoarfrost that covered it prior to this, provided a means of preservation through natural refrigeration. This warns us not to wait until faced by trial and difficulty (when the power of the “sun” of circumstances is felt), but to prepare early to obtain the needful spiritual food for later in the day of opportunity.

Instruction Regarding The Sabbath

— vv. 22-26.

The Israelites are instructed that manna will be supplied for six days, but not on the seventh. On that day the people are to rest, learning dependence upon the goodness of their Creator. This is the first instruction given concerning this practice, and the first mention in scripture of a sabbath law for man, though the Elohim rested on the seventh day of creation (Gen. 2:21).



The word "sabbath" is used 76 times in the singular, and 35 times in the plural in the O.T., and 60 times in the singular in the N.T. The Hebrew is "shabbat" meaning "rest," from a root denoting "to repose." Sabbaths are appointed for the seventh day (Exo. 20:10), some eighth of first days (Lev. 23:39), as well as movable days called "high days" (John 19:31). There were sabbaths of different lengths such as a day (Exo. 16:23-29), a year (Lev. 25:4), and even seventy years (2Chr. 36:21). During the wilderness wanderings, a miracle occurred every sabbath in that the manna, which on every other day went bad if kept, was preserved for that day. This pointed forward to the manna of eternal life, promised by the Lord, to be supplied on the seventh millennium from creation (Rev. 2:17).

VERSE 22

"And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses" — During the previous six days, the people had learned by experience, that it was of no benefit to keep any of the manna above the prescribed amount, as it went bad. But on the sixth day, it was supplied in such abundance that twice as much was gathered, and Moses was approached in order to determine what should be done with the additional omer.

VERSE 23

"And he said unto them, This is that which Yahweh hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto Yahweh" — If the translation were correct, the previous institution of the sabbath, and the knowledge of it by the Israelites, could be argued on the grounds that reference to "the rest of the holy sabbath" implies their familiarity with the practice. But there is no definite article in the Hebrew. It reads: "This *is* what spoke Yahweh: a festival of rest, a rest of holiness to Yahweh is tomorrow..." (*A New Old Testament Interlinear*). The appointment of the sabbath law

was something entirely new to the Israelites. This is obvious from the narrative that follows, for the people required special instructions as to how it was to be kept (vv. 29-30). Even Moses needed specific instruction as to what punishment should be meted out to those who deliberately broke the sabbath (Num. 15:29-36).

The institution of the sabbath, like that of the passover, preceded the rest of the Law, probably because both were governed by time — for the beginning of the year was changed when Israel left Egypt, to synchronise with the beginning of a new national life in separation from the land of bondage (Exo. 12:2; 13:3-5). Thus Israelites were taught that the sabbath was given by Moses (Neh. 9:14), again implying that it was not inherited from the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The patriarchs were aware of the seven days' division into weeks, but not of a peculiar observance of the seventh day as a day of rest.

The phrase, "the rest of the holy sabbath" is formed of the Hebrew words *shabbathoun* ("a festival of rest") *shabbath* ("rest"). The former defines the purpose of the day: to be devoted as a religious festival; and the latter denotes how the day was to be kept: to be given over to rest. Spiritually, it taught the need for a man to "rest from his own works," to rest from his own labour to satisfy the flesh, and to devote the time exclusively to Yahweh (see Isa. 58:13-14; Heb. 4:10). As a parable it anticipated the millennial rest of Christ's thousand years' reign on earth (Heb. 4:9; 2Pet. 3:8-9).

The Law, however, could not provide a complete *rest* from the works of flesh, or of sin, for it only emphasised the reality of man's failure to keep God's law (Rom. 7:7-10). This pointed forward to the invitation of Christ: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mat. 11:28). Thus life in Christ comprises the true sabbath rest. See further comments on Exo. 20:8-11.

"Bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to

be kept until the morning" — They were to do all their cooking, whether by roasting or boiling of the manna, on the sixth day, so as to be free of all such encumbrances of the seventh.

VERSE 24

"And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein" — According to *Dake's Commentary*, this miracle was performed on the 2080 sabbaths held during the wanderings of the children of Israel, which, with the daily provision of manna, comprised some 12,530 miracles performed in the forty years. Unfortunately, after the lapse of time, the daily provision of manna was taken for granted, much the same as the daily miracle of the rising of the sun, and the annual sending of rain on "just and unjust" alike, is taken for granted.

VERSE 25

"And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto Yahweh; to day ye shall not find it in the field" — Again it is obvious that the manna supplied was not the product of a desert bush, for such does not observe the sabbath rest, nor make decisions as on which day it would bloom!

VERSE 26

"Six days ye shall gather it; but on the the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none" — Israelites who heeded Moses' instruction would ensure that on the sixth day they made provision for the future.

Rebuke For Sabbath Breakers

— vv. 27-30.

Despite the explicit instructions of Moses, some persist in seeking for manna on the sabbath day. However, they find none, and earn the rebuke of their leader. They are like those who will lack oil in their lamps at the appearance of the bridegroom (Mat. 25:8-13).

VERSE 27

"And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none" — Lack of conviction, or faithlessness, characterised that generation of Israelites (Heb. 3:18-19). They did not go out because of lack of manna, for they had gathered twice as much on the sixth day, but because they doubted Moses' word that it would not breed worms if kept on the sabbath.

VERSE 28

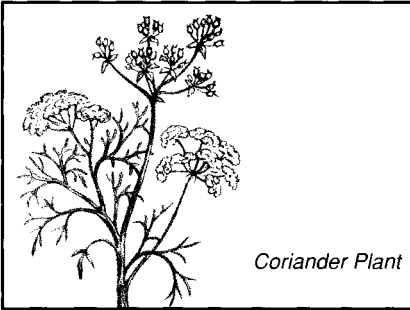
"And Yahweh said unto Moses, how long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?" — Though Moses had not personally sinned in the way indicated, as the representative of the people he was identified with the national sin. In like manner, Christ is identified with the sins of his people (Heb. 7:27).

VERSE 29

"See, for that Yahweh hath given you the sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" — Moses is ordered to observe a closer supervision of the people, so as to ensure that the sabbath is properly observed. The people should have recognised the solemn religious importance of the day, and honoured Yahweh by observing it properly. Jewish rabbinical tradition has deduced from this context the prohibition that no Israelite shall go further than 2,000 metres from his place of abode on the sabbath. This is called a "sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:12).

VERSE 30

"So the people rested on the seventh day" — The word "rested" is *shabbathoun* indicating that they observed a "festival of rest." This implies that the sabbath was not to be given over to idleness, but constituted a cessation of fleshly duties and thoughts, and the performance of Yahweh's will and pleasure, in the spirit of Isa. 58:13.



Coriander Plant

Manna Described — v. 31.

A summary of the appearance and flavour of manna is now supplied by Moses in his explanation of the divine law to the Israelites.

VERSE 31

“And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna” — The term “house of Israel” is an unusual expression, reserved for the nation when engaged in religious exercises (Exo. 40:38). This implies that they recognised the divine provision in what was given. They called it “*manna*” because it was something new and totally incomprehensible to them; as much as the Lord, the antitypical manna, was to the Jews of his day. His origins and his purpose were entirely misunderstood (Isa. 53:2).

“And it was like coriander seed” — The coriander plant grows wild in the Middle East, producing greyish white seeds, a little larger than hemp, with a pleasant, spicy flavour.

“White” — This suggests purity and righteousness. In Num. 11:7 it is described as *bdellium*, which Moffatt renders as “resembling pearls.” *Bdellium* (see Gen. 2:12) is an aromatic gum famous for its medicinal qualities. The word is from a root signifying “to separate,” and is rendered by some as “pearl.”

“And the taste was like wafers made with honey” — Honey is a laxative, soothing, and strengthening. It is related to the Word of God in Psa. 19:7-10 which is also calculated to expel poisons, soothe,

and strengthen. In Num. 11:8, the manna is described as having the “flavour of fresh oil.” It is said that the Egyptians were accustomed to making cakes of grain, honey and oil, so that the Israelites would be used to the flavour of manna.

The Memorial Pot of Manna

— vv. 32-36.

A further miracle is now described in that a pot containing an omer of manna is laid up before Yahweh, to be kept for future generations, so that these might know and ponder the kind of bread that sustained their forefathers throughout their wilderness wanderings. Paul refers to this “golden pot of manna” in the “holiest of all” (Heb. 9:3-4).

Whether the command was given to Moses at this time, or when the Ark of the Covenant was constructed, is not revealed. It can be assumed that Moses added this section to the Book of Exodus near the end of his life, for “The Testimony” (v. 34) refers to the Ten Commandments which were also deposited in the Ark of the Covenant. This section concludes with an explanation of the measurements used.

VERSE 32

“And Moses said, This is the thing which Yahweh commandeth” — Whenever this command was given, it was obviously carried out after the construction of the tabernacle. It is inserted here by Moses as appropriate to the narrative. See v. 34.

“Fill an omer of it to be kept for

your generations” — The golden pot of manna, referred to by Paul, was to remain as a memorial to the goodness of Yahweh as exhibited in the heavenly bread provided during the wilderness wanderings. What happened to it eventually?



Bdellium Plant

According to 2Macc. 2:8, the ark and the golden altar of incense were hidden in a cave which later could not be found. The same record declares that Jeremiah claimed that it "shall be unknown until the time that God gather His people again together, and receive them unto mercy," i.e., until the latter-day restoration.

"That they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt" — For the purpose to permanently impress upon them the spiritual lessons, as well as the literal, which were later repeated by the Lord when he instructed his disciples to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread."

VERSE 33

"And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before Yahweh, to be kept for your generations" — The manna stored in the pot was miraculously preserved throughout the years. It constituted the "hidden manna" of eternal life (Rev. 2:17). The lesson before the Israelites underlined the teaching of Paul that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is [the daily manna], and that which is to come [the preserved manna]" (1Tim. 4:8).

VERSE 34

"As Yahweh commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept" — The "Testimony" was not the ark, but the tables of the Law which were likewise placed in the ark with the pot of manna (Heb. 9:4).

VERSE 35

"And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years" — Though manna remained the main article of diet for the Israelites, it was occasionally supplemented by other food (cp. v. 12; Num. 9:2-14). Whatever flocks and



herds may have been brought from Egypt would have soon been depleted through supplying flesh for so many people. Already they had been travelling a month (Exo. 16:2), and although they had left with "very much cattle" (ch. 12:38), by now the herds would have been considerably reduced (ch. 17:3). The period of forty years here given, does not lead the narrative beyond the time of Moses, so that there is no reason why Moses could not have written this statement just prior to his death, and inserted it at this place.

"Until they came to a land inhabited" — Even when the Israelites travelled north through the more fertile region east of the Arabah, they continued to receive the daily ration of manna. The type points to the necessary "bread of life," the daily ration of which is essential until the kingdom is reached.

"They did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan" — The manna ceased when they reached the Land of Promise, and therefore continued one month less than forty years (Josh. 5:10-12).

VERSE 36

"Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah" — The word "omer" is rendered "sheaf" in Lev. 23:10, where it relates to the "wave offering" that also types the Lord. In itself, the word signifies "heap," and is reckoned at about 5.1 pints. The *ephah* was a measure well known to the people, but not the *omer*, which was not generally used as a measure, and the size of which must be now given.

The description, "the tenth part of an ephah" is significant, for this was the amount given back to Yahweh in sacrifice (Lev. 5:11; 6:20; Num. 5:15; 28:5), so that in sacrifice there was given back to God the amount He had given the people during their wanderings.

In Bible numerics, the tithe is representative of the whole; so there was a sufficiency for all.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

DIVINE PROTECTION IN SUPPLYING WATER AND IN WAR

The children of Israel make their way slowly up the Valley of Rephidim: a long, stony wadi that leads away from the coastal plain into the labyrinth of high granite mountains that cluster throughout the peninsula. The way is hard, seemingly ever onwards and upwards. It is arid, a sandy waste devoid of oases until well into the valley. Inevitably the Israelites experience an acute lack of water. This leads to further murmuring on their part, prayer on the part of Moses, and a supply of water (this time through a smitten rock) at a place afterwards called Massah and Meribah. At the same time, the Israelites are attacked by Amalek, but through the help of Yahweh, the enemy is defeated. Amalek represents the flesh in political manifestation, and at the conclusion of the skirmish, Yahweh proclaims a declaration of everlasting war against Amalekites. In commemoration of the victory achieved by Joshua and his army, and in anticipation of others yet to be won, Moses builds an altar, giving it the title of Yahweh-nissi. References to the miracle are found in Deu. 8:15; Neh. 9:15; Psa. 78:15-16, 20; 105:41; 114:8; Isa. 48:21; 1Cor. 10:4; Heb. 3. References to the attitude of the people are in Deu. 6:16; Psa. 95:8; Heb. 3:8. The chapter before us reveals [1] the need of the water of life — the Word of God (vv. 1-7), and [2] the power of the uplifted hands of prayer (vv. 8-16).

The People Complain Of Thirst — vv. 1-3.

The Israelites struggle up the long slope of the valley of Rephidim, arriving "faint and weary" (Deu. 25:18). Though there are external evidences of an oasis, they find no water. Angrily they turn upon Moses, accusing him of taking them out of Egypt only to let them perish in the wilderness.

VERSE 1

"And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin" — The word for "congregation" is *edah*, the feminine form of *ed*, "witness." The feminine form of the

word is appropriate, for the nation constituted Yahweh's Bride (Isa. 54:5; Eze. 16:8). For the significance of the word *Sin*, see note on ch. 16:1.

"After their journeys" — There were two intermediate stations not recorded in Exodus, namely Dophkah and Alush (cp. Num. 33:12-13).

"According to the commandment of Yahweh" — They were guided on their way by the Cloud of the divine presence in the wilderness.

"And pitched in Rephidim" — Rephidim signifies *The Places of Rest*. It is identified by some with the Wady Feiran, a wide, stony valley that leads from the coastal plain into the confusion

of granite mountains through which it twists and turns on its way to Sinai. The valley constantly ascends to the plateau on which the twin peaks of Horeb and Sinai are situated. The entrance to the wadi is exceedingly stony, and therefore difficult to traverse. It leads to the oasis of Rephidim.

“And there was no water for the people to drink” — Rephidim is noted for its clusters of palm trees which extend for several kilometres, and are fed by subterranean springs. Thus the Israelites would find every evidence of fertility, but no water, for it is hidden under the earth. Similarly the “living waters” are not discerned except by faith (Jn. 4:14).

VERSE 2

“Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink” — The word “chide” is rendered by Rotherham as “found fault.” Their demand was quite unreasonable, failing to turn to Yahweh for assistance; its cause was lack of faith in Him.

“And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt Yahweh?” — Moses pointed out that the complaint of the people was not against him, but against Yahweh. The Israelites tempted Yahweh by *limiting* His ability to provide them with their needs. (Psa. 78:17-20, 40-42). It was their persistence in so doing that resulted in that generation perishing in the wilderness (Psa. 95:8-10; Heb. 3:8; 1Cor. 10:9). The Law legislated against such limiting of God’s power (Deu. 6:16).

VERSE 3

“And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?” — See note on ch. 15:24 for the ten causes of murmuring against Moses. Compare the greater intensity of the accusation used on this occasion by the people, with their more moderate complaints on the two previous inci-

dents recorded (chs. 15:24; 16:3). Becoming increasingly vocal, they now reach the point of open rebellion.

Their words show that though their flocks and herds must have been seriously depleted, they still retained some animals. These were doubtless kept for their milk, for Bedouins have been known to exist on milk alone for weeks. As well, animals were required for the approaching Passover celebrations. According to Josephus (Book 3:2:4) the flocks and herds of the Israelites were supplemented by the defeat of the Amalekites described in this chapter.

Water From The Smitten Rock

— vv. 4-7.

Faced with the threat of rebellion on the part of the thirsty and despairing people, Moses again appeals to Yahweh, and is instructed to take his rod and smite a rock upon which the angel would stand, and sufficient water would be supplied. In consequence of the faithlessness of the people, the place is given the names of Massah and Meribah.

VERSE 4

“And Moses cried unto Yahweh, saying” — It was characteristic of Moses, in time of crisis, to instantly carry his problems to Yahweh (See Exo. 15:25; 32:30; Num. 11:2,11; 12:13; 14:13-19).

“What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me” — This is the first, recorded reference in Scripture to death by stoning.

VERSE 5

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel” — The miracle is identified by Paul as a type of the sacrifice of Christ (1Cor. 10:1-4). As such, each detail is significant. Moses is instructed to take some of the elders to act as witnesses, and leaving the people at Rephidim, continue to the region of Horeb.

The apostles of the Lord acted as his witnesses on behalf of the nation as a

whole (Acts 1:8) and ultimately extended his teaching throughout the world.

“And thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go” — This rod was that which turned into a serpent (ch. 7:15), and not Aaron’s rod which turned into a crocodile. It therefore can be typically identified with the serpent-flesh. The rod was used to turn the water of the Nile into blood, causing it to become undrinkable to the Egyptians (ch. 7:20-21); now in the hand of Moses the rod was about to supply water to satisfy the Israelites.

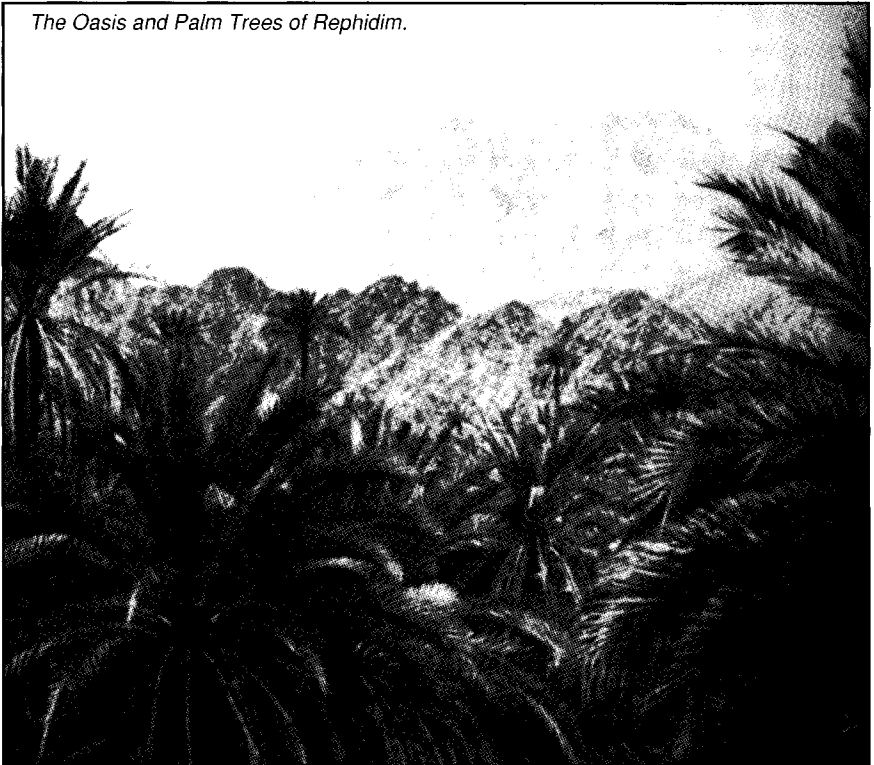
VERSE 6

“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb” — The angel who conversed with Moses was Yahweh’s representative (ch. 23:20-21;

Num. 12:8), and his appearance on the rock was an answer to the question of the people. “Is Yahweh among us or not?” (v. 7). Horeb is some kilometres distant from Rephidim, so that Moses was required to separate himself at a distance from the people. There is to this day a rock (*Tzur*) in the area which is traditionally identified with the rock of the miracle. It is a vast block of red granite, 5 metres (15 ft) long, 3 metres (10 ft) broad, and 4 metres (12 ft) high, west of Mt. Horeb. The rock is pitted with holes and channels which, it is claimed, could only have been formed by the bursting out and running of a considerable quantity of water (*The Treasury Of Scripture Knowledge*). We observed this rock during the course of one of the *Logos Tours of Bible Lands*.

“And thou shalt smite the rock, and

The Oasis and Palm Trees of Rephidim.



there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink” — It is described as gushing out in ample supply like a river (Psa. 78:15,20; 105:41; 114:8). The miracle is typical of the water of life supplied by the Lord when he was “smitten” by crucifixion (1Cor. 10:4; John 4:10-14; 7:38). He is the “spiritual rock” from which comes the “spiritual drink.” That “Rock” was smitten before the grace could flow forth to those whom God should call (Acts 15:14; Gal. 3:1).

“And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel” — They were witnesses who could report it to the people, and so encourage them to walk towards the place from whence it could be obtained; though it would continue to flow down to where they were encamped.

VERSE 7

“And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah” — Massah signifies *Proof* and Meribah signifies *Contention*. The names were given to the site because the people found fault and through contention presumed upon Yahweh to prove Himself. Both names commemorate the faithlessness of the Israelites in the incident recorded (see Deu. 6:16; 33:8; Psa. 81:7; Heb. 3:8). What expressive and beautiful names might have been given if the people, without fault-finding and faithlessness, had patiently awaited Yahweh’s time to work.

“Because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted Yahweh, saying, Is Yahweh among us, or not?” — As the Israelites under trial in the days of Moses questioned the fact of the divine providence, so they later rejected that the Lord Jesus was a manifestation of Yahweh, claiming that he uttered blasphemy when he acknowledged that he was the Christ, the Son of God (Mat. 26:63-64).

Victory Over Amalek — vv. 8-16.

About the same time as the miracle is performed at the Rock, the Amalekites strike at the children of Israel, attacking the “jeeble” in the rear while they are

faint and weary (Deu. 25:18). Since the attack takes place at Rephidim, it evidently first involves those who have not yet caught up with the main camp. Joshua is selected to organise Israel’s defence to protect the people, whilst Moses, accompanied by Aaron and Hur, and with the rod of God in his hand, ascends the nearby hill overlooking the scene. As Amalek prevails against the forces of Israel in the valley below, Aaron and Hur assist Moses to maintain his vigil, by placing a stone under him for a seat, and supporting his arms until the close of the day. In consequence, Amalek is defeated, and the victory is Yahweh’s. A declaration of total warfare is proclaimed by Yahweh against Amalek, and is written in a book to be read aloud to Joshua as a memorial. An altar is built commemorating the victory, and given the name of Yahweh-nissi, as a token of the oath of Yahweh to ultimately destroy Amalek completely from the earth.

VERSE 8

“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim” — According to some commentators, Amalek signifies *Warlike*. Others, such as *The Hebrew and English Bible Student’s Concordance* give its meaning as *A Strangler of the People*. Both have a formidable connotation. Amalek was a descendant of Esau (Gen. 36:16), and as such, is typically representative of the flesh in political manifestation (see Obadiah 16). According to Josephus, the army comprised a confederacy of powers. Balaam later described the tribe as “the first of the nations” (Num. 24:20) whose latter end “shall be that he perish for ever.” The king of Amalek is given the name of Agag (Num. 24:7), though this is thought by some to be a title, such as Pharaoh. It is rendered “Gog” in the Septuagint. If Josephus is to be accepted, Israel was attacked by a confederacy of nations headed by Gog, typifying the latter-day attack as described in Ezekiel 38. Rephidim, signifies *Places of Rest*, pointing forward to the “restful” state of the people in the land at that time

(Eze. 38:11). The cowardly Amalekites swooped down upon the stragglers of Israel as they moved up the valley "faint and weary" (Deu. 25:17-19).

VERSE 9

"And Moses said unto Joshua" —

This is the first mention of Joshua in the Bible. His name was originally Oshea, *Salvation* (Num. 13:16), but Moses called him Yahoshua (contracted in English to Joshua), meaning *Yahweh's Salvation*, or *He Who Will Be Salvation*. "Joshua" is the Hebrew form of "Jesus," and his name is so rendered in the N.T. (e.g. Heb. 4:8). Joshua is described as "the minister" of Moses (Exo. 24:13). He was the son of Nun (a name meaning *Perpetuity*) of the tribe of Ephraim. He had known slavery in Egypt, but is now elevated unto Commander-in-Chief of the Israelites, and in that capacity proved himself to be an outstanding soldier and strategist. Many a general has closely studied Joshua's conquest of Canaan and followed his strategy.

As a type of Christ's victory over sin (Heb. 2:24), Joshua's successful invasion of the Land of Promise made it possible for every man to obtain the heritage promised him, though it required individual initiative and effort to secure it (as it does in Christ — cp. Josh. 18:3; Phil. 2:12).

Joshua's victory over Amalek opened the door of further usefulness and responsibility to him. He is called the "servant of Moses" (Num. 11:28; Josh. 1:1), and as such manifested unswerving loyalty and devotion to Moses. Thus both Moses and Joshua together typify the ministry of the Lord Jesus at its first and second advents.

Joshua was chosen with eleven others, to search out the land of Canaan (Num. 13:4-16), and with Caleb presented a good and faithful report, in contrast to that of the other spies. The people rejected his report, and in consequence, were condemned to wander thirty-eight years in the wilderness without hope.

He is revealed as a saviour, leading the people into the land, and as a statesman, exercising patience and tact towards the

people. His ability marked him out as successor of Moses, and he was filled with the spirit of God (Deu. 34:9), and motivated by His word (Josh. 1:8). He stood as an example of integrity and faithfulness to the people (Josh. 24:15) which they followed, for the nation continued to serve Yahweh all the days of the elders that outlived him (Josh. 24:31). His death, at 110 years of age, was deeply mourned, and his outstanding service nationally acknowledged.

"Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek" — Joshua's army may have been armed with equipment from the drowned Egyptians (Exo. 14:30-31), but were untrained in military manoeuvres, being formerly a nation of slaves in Egypt. Therefore, under normal conditions, the Israelites would have been no match for the warlike Amalekites.

"To morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand" — The word for "hill" is *gibah*, "hillock." In ascending the hill, Moses would be able to overlook the fighting in the valley beneath.

Though Joshua's army may have had some weapons from the event at the Red Sea, the real weapon of victory was the rod in the hand of Moses which had already so devastatingly manifested Yahweh's power against the Egyptians (v. 5). Moses' use of the serpent rod represented the victory of prayer over the power of the serpent-nation of Amalek; so also through his sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ destroyed the sin-power in himself (see Heb. 2:14; 5:7-8).

VERSE 10

"So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill" — The presence of these three men in such a commanding position would have been encouraging to the warriors in the valley below. Their several names form an exhortation to faithful service, for they signify: *Drawn Out, Enlightened, Made White* or *Splendid*, expressing the purpose Yahweh had in view in bring-

ing His people out of Egypt; they were "drawn out" through the Red Sea, "enlightened" at Sinai, and would be "made glorious" in the Promised Land. The positions in the nation of the three men on the hill represented the Law, the Priesthood, and the Kingship: all of which are now vested in the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 11

"And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed"

— Moses' outstretched hand displayed the serpent-rod, that witnessed to his power over the flesh. The fact that Israel prevailed only at such times as the hand of Moses was extended, demonstrates the truth of such statements as Psa. 20:7; 33:16-18, and Rom. 9:29, and teaches that victory in the battle of life does not rely upon personal prowess or fleshly power, but on Yahweh.

Moses, with his hand outstretched on the hill above the warring hosts, presented a picture of their leader in prayer, pleading on their behalf to God in heaven. Prayer is needed when the enemy attacks: it becomes more powerful with the support of others (cp. Rom. 15:30), seen at this time in Aaron and Hur; and it can result in ultimate victory.

But prayer to be effective requires personal endeavour, and therefore there was a blend of co-operative action in the labours of Joshua to that end, whilst his beloved leader gave himself to prayer on the hill above. Joshua fought in faith, and the actions of faith (1John 5:4; 1Cor. 15:57), with the fervency of prayer (Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18; James 5:16-18) will ensure personal victory over worldly influences that would destroy us.

"And when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed" — Through weariness induced by weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3) in view of the passing of time in the battle, Moses' hand dropped. When this happened the superior prowess of Amalek in the art of war became evident, and it prevailed. Yahweh gave the Israelites strength, vigour and courage whilst Moses interceded, and left them to

themselves when the intercession ceased.

VERSE 12

"But Moses' hands were heavy" — Natural weariness got the better of Moses, and his hands began to droop. He probably held the rod alternately with one hand and the other, until both were so tired that he could hold them up no longer. Effective prayer needs effort, and the flesh tires. In that regard, the mediatorship of Moses (see Gal. 3:19) was not as effective as that of Christ. Like the apostles who fell asleep when set by their Lord to watch and pray, Moses' "spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak" (Mat. 26:41). We are exhorted to "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees" (Heb. 12:12).

"And they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon" — The word "stone" is *eben* which is from a common root with the Hebrew word for "son" (*ben*) and signifies *to build*, as into a family house. Reference to the "stone of Israel," the Lord Jesus Christ, is found in Gen. 49:24; Psa. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; Zech. 3:9 etc. Moses, great leader though he was, needed the support of such a stone: "for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God [did] sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). It was faith and prayer that saved Israel that day Amalek attacked, and Moses on the hilltop illustrated that the Law could only succeed through such.

"And Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side" — Hur was a prince of Judah. His name means *Whiteness* or *Splendour*. He was the son of a Caleb (not the man who later spied out the land with the twelve) by Ephratah, and therefore the great-grandfather of Beza-leel, the skilful artificer who supervised the building of the tabernacle. The trio on the hill, therefore, parabolised the purpose of God in Christ. They represented the priesthood and rulership of Israel supporting the Law which, through weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3), must rest upon the Stone.

“And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun” — Faith, prayer and action brought victory to Israel at the end of the day of warfare against the enemy. Similarly, the work of the greater mediator on behalf of his “warriors of faith” in the time of probation continues until the end.

VERSE 13

“And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people” — The Septuagint has “all his people,” which supports the note above, taken from Josephus, that Israel was attacked by a confederacy under Amalek.

“With the edge of the sword” — Similarly the “sword of the Spirit” (Heb. 4:12) is the equipment with which we faithfully combat the “sin which doth so easily beset us” (Heb. 12:2).

VERSE 14

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book” — The Hebrew has the definite article “the book.” Evidently a diary already existed, in which Moses entered events of interest. Now he is instructed to record in it the great victory of faith and prayer over Amalek, and the threat uttered against them. The record was to be for a memorial

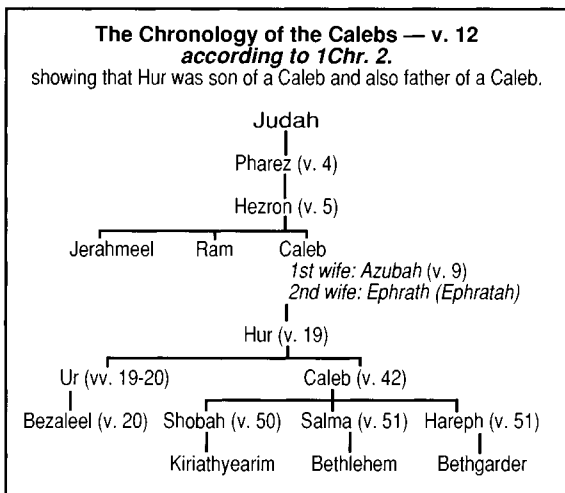
both as to available means of victory, as well as to the intention of Yahweh to blot out the name of Amalek. This latter work was entrusted to Saul, as Israel’s king, but who failed to carry out the will of Yahweh (1Sam. 15:3). It was, however, accomplished in the days of Hezekiah (1Chr. 4:41-43).

Amalek represents the flesh in political manifestation, and is antitypically fulfilled in Gog as its latter-day chief. It is Christ who will occasion its final destruction.

Memorials are recorded, to be kept in mind, “throughout all generations” (Psa. 135:13). They are exclusive to Israel, causing Nehemiah to reject the advances of the Samaritans on the grounds that they had “no memorial” in Jerusalem.

Things recorded as Memorials include: [1] The Name of Yahweh (Exo. 3:15; Hos. 12:5); [2] The Passover (Exo. 12:14); [3] The deliverance from Egypt (Exo. 13:9); [4] The destruction of Amalek (Exo. 17:14); [5] The ephod stones (Exo. 28:12); [6] The breastplate of judgment (Exo. 28:29); [7] The redemption money (Exo. 30:16); [8] Yahweh’s covenant (Exo. 34:27); [9] The blowing of trumpets (Lev. 23:24); [10] The offering of jealousy (Num. 5:15,18,24); [11] The frankincense on the shewbread (Lev. 24:7); [12] The silver trumpets (Num. 10:10); [13] The brazen censers (Num. 16:40); [14] The booty of war with the Midianites when Balaam was slain (Num. 31:54); [15] The stones of Jordan (Josh. 4:7); [16] The crowns of the righteous in the future temple (Zech. 6:14); [17] Greatest of all, the memorial of Christ’s offering (1Cor. 11:24-25).

All these memorials were designed to be kept in remembrance: each of them has an important lesson to convey. The word “remembrance” used in relation to the tokens of the bread and wine, is from the Greek



anamnesis, “memorial.” The word signifies not a mere recalling of the mind to an historic fact or incident, but the *awakening* of the mind to the significance of what that incident is intended to spiritually teach.

“**And rehearse it in the ears of Joshua**” — The Hebrew *siym* rendered “rehearse” signifies “to put or place.” It was to be impressed upon Joshua so that he should not forget; it was handed down to him as the successor of Moses, in order that there might be no agreement between Israel and Amalek.

There are many lessons to be learned from the attack of Amalek. It came suddenly and unexpectedly against the stragglers of the pilgrim-warriors in the wilderness. It was directed against an undefended rear of the nation, and launched against the feeble, the faint and weary (Deu. 25:15-18) who had become demoralised by murmuring (Exo. 17:1-5). True ecclesial shepherds will supervise their flocks, endeavouring to strengthen the feeble among them, protecting them from attack, educating them against complaining. Joshua needed to be reaffirmed concerning this, and reminded of these things, hence the reading of the Memorial to him.

“**For I will utterly put out**” — The divine expression conveys particularly emphasis. The sin-power of the flesh is to be destroyed in all His people as it was in the Lord by his sacrifice (Heb. 2:14). There is to be no compromise or allowance of the flesh in any respect (cp. Rom. 13:14).

“**the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven**” — The final defeat of Amalek was also predicted by Balaam (Num. 24:20), and was to be accomplished when Israel was in the land (Deu. 25:19). Though set the task, King Saul (as typical of Israel after the flesh) failed to accomplish it (1Sam. 15:3, 22-23). The Amalekites attacked David at Ziklag (1Sam. 30:1), and were defeated by him (v. 17). Later he conquered the nation of the Amalekites (2Sam. 8:12), and it was finally destroyed in the days

of Hezekiah (1Chr. 4:43). King Agag (Num. 24:7) returns in the antisemitic Haman (Est. 3:1), and in Gog of the latter days (Eze. 38). The Amalekites delighted in war, and therefore typify those whom Christ as “Prince of peace” will destroy (Psa. 68:30; Rev. 11:18) in order to establish his realm of righteousness, the precursor of peace throughout the earth.

VERSE 15

“**And Moses built an altar**” — Specific instructions were laid down for the building of altars (Exo. 20:24-25). If built of stone, as was usually the case, they must be constructed of unhewn stone, as representative of human nature shaped by God. This points forward to Christ our altar (Heb. 13:10). An altar, therefore, stood for God in sacrificial manifestation. The character of the Lord was divine, though his nature was human. Upon the Christ-altar, constructed by divine moulding out of the elements of flesh and atoned by sacrifice, we make our personal offerings of devotion for victories in life.

“**And called the name of it Yahweh-nissi**” — The name signifies *He Who Shall Be Mine Ensign*. Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation (the Lord Jesus Christ) is the “Ensign” to lead Israel to victory. Faced with the challenge of his own nature, Paul asked: “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” In effect, he replied “*Yahweh-nissi!*” — “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:24-25). Christ is set forth as a “leader and commander to the people” (Isa. 55:4). Only by drawing their strength from him can saints succeed in the battle of life. The power of the Word, supplemented by prayer, will strengthen and sustain them in their walk. Whereas the man of the world thinks to succeed against his enemies by his own strength, means or ingenuity, the man of the spirit puts no confidence in his own ability, but relies upon the Yahweh-nissi Altar which can bring him victory (Phil. 3:3; 4:13). It is under that Ensign he elects to fight.

The Yahweh-nissi altar is



also prophetic of the ultimate victory of the Spirit over the flesh in a national sense. As the confederacy under Agag was destroyed by divine means, so also will be that of the latter-day Gog. The antitypical Yahweh-nissi altar will destroy the power of flesh politically established, for it is a multitudinous altar comprising the Lord Jesus Christ and all in him. Thus Isaiah predicts: "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when He [Yahweh] lifteth up an ensign [Heb. nes] on the mountains... In that day there shall be a root of Jesse that shall stand for an ensign [nes] of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious" (Isa. 18:3; 11:10). That will be the day of Yahweh's triumph in the earth. The serpent-power will be dealt a blow that shall ultimately prove fatal. And it will be administered "Not by [fleshly] army, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith Yahweh Sabaoth" (Zech. 4:6). See also Zech 9:16.

The use of the word *nes* (the root of the Hebrew *nissi*), can be further traced in Num. 21:8-9; Psa. 60:4; Isa. 49:22; 62:10 etc.

VERSE 16

"For He said, Because Yahweh hath

sworn" — The literal Hebrew is "That a hand upon the throne of Yah" which Rotherham renders as "Because of a hand against the throne of Yah!" Gesenius gives it as "Surely the hand is on the banner of Yah," which the A.V. margin identifies as the "hand of Amalek." This suggests that in attacking Israel, Amalek had, as it were, lifted up his hand against the rule of God, against His throne destined to be established in Israel. The antisemitism of Gog will also vigorously oppose the reign of Christ on earth.

"That Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation"

— This statement records Yahweh's unceasing hostility to fleshly institutions that are established in opposition to His rule. From generation to generation, warfare has continued against antitypical Amalek. But the day of final victory is at hand. Flesh everywhere will be subjected to the rule of Christ, and the national institutions of mankind overthrown. Men, at last, shall look with faith toward the living Yahweh-nissi Altar, acknowledging the Truth they have resisted so long. Yahweh shall be elevated in the earth, and His victory established through His Son in the sight of all mankind (Jer. 3:17).

[3] — CONSECRATION ACCOMPLISHED

Chapters 18:1 to 24:18

The victory at Rephidim introduces a new phase to Israel. In the water of life supplied to the people from the smitten rock, and the power of the uplifted hands of prayer exhibited in the defeat of Amalek, they are shown the value of seeking Yahweh in truth. A parenthetical account of the visit of Jethro is inserted to illustrate the organisation of the tribes which have been brought to the Mount. Here Yahweh proclaims His covenant to Moses, and the people accept the terms. They are called to sanctify themselves, and then, through Moses the mediator, have certain laws set before them. At the conclusion of this instruction, Moses is called into the mount to formally receive the covenant at the hands of the angel.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

JETHRO VISITS MOSES

This chapter is parenthetical, and historically should be placed between Numbers 10:10-11 because: [1] Here, the Israelites were not yet camped at Horeb (Exo. 19:1-2), but when Jethro visited Moses they were already there (Exo. 18:5); [2] According to Moses' own account, he complained of the heaviness of the responsibilities imposed on him after he conversed with Jethro (Exo. 18:13-26; Num. 11:10-17) as the people were about to leave Horeb (Deu. 1:9-18); [3] Jethro's visit took place after the Law had been given to the people (Exo. 18:16,19-20), which was after the people had encamped at Horeb. Evidently Moses decided to record these details regarding his family relationships before setting forth the lengthy details of the law and tabernacle that follow in chapters 20-40. This chapter, therefore, records the visit of Jethro and the uniting of Moses to his family. In the course of the visit, Moses proclaims the gospel to his father-in-law, which Jethro accepts as a way of life. He observes the heavy duties imposed on his son-in-law and makes sensible suggestions for the relief of these, which are then endorsed by God. The whole chapter reveals that it is legitimate to exercise common sense in the work of the Truth, providing any decisions made do not violate the express commands of God.

Moses' Family Re-united — vv. 1-6.

Jethro, the priest of Midian, hearing by indirect means what Yahweh has done for Moses and for Israel, visits his son-in-law in company with Zipporah and her two sons.

VERSE 1

“When Jethro, the priest of Midian”

— This introductory statement does not disclose when the visit took place, and we have already outlined the reasons for believing that this was after the tribes had reached Horeb and the Law had been given. Jethro is first introduced to us under the name of Reuel in Exo. 2:18 (for which see notes). In *Antiquities*, 2:9, Josephus calls him “Raguel, a priest, and one thought worthy by the people of the country, of great honour.”

“Moses' father in law” — The word

chathan signifies “to give one's daughter in marriage,” “to join affinity,” also has the signification of circumcising. When Zipporah determined to circumcise her son (Exo. 4:25), she evidently recognised the significance of the act, and its connection with the affinity it established between herself and her husband.

“**Heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, and that Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt**” — The stubbornness of Pharaoh caused knowledge of the wonderful miracle of deliverance to be broadcast throughout the ancient world. Forty years later, Rahab recalled its significance (Josh. 2:10).

VERSE 2

“**Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he**

had sent her back” — The fact of her return is not specifically noted, but can be inferred from the record of ch. 4:26-27. She evidently returned to Midian when Moses set off for Egypt in company with Aaron.

VERSE 3

“And her two sons” — Stephen notes that Moses begat two sons when he was “a stranger in the land of Midian.” Midian signifies *Contention*, and in type, the two sons can represent the division of the Jewish nation between the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel. It is also significant that Christ has begotten two sons (Heb. 2:13) in the Jewish and Gentile ecclesias established in his name. The names of Moses’ two sons provide an index to his state as a stranger in Midian.

“Of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land” — Gershom signifies *A stranger there*.

VERSE 4

“And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh” — Eliezer signifies *My God is my help*.

The names of these two sons epitomise the condition of the twofold division of Israel during their dispersion. Though Jewry has dwelt as an alien in strange lands, God has continued to be their help (cp. Rom. 9:29).

This second son of Moses was evidently the one circumcised as recorded in ch. 4:25, at a time when Moses was sent to separate the people from the sword of Pharaoh. His descendants became a numerous people (1Chr. 23:15-17).

VERSE 5

“And Jethro, Moses’ father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God” — The reference to the “mount of God,” known as Horeb, implies that the events of this

chapter are parenthetical, for in the narrative of the previous chapter, Israel had not reached that point. See introductory note to the chapter (ch. 19:1-2).

VERSE 6

“And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her” — Jethro evidently encamped a short distance from the Israelites, and sent this information to Moses by messenger.

Moses Proclaims The Gospel to Jethro — vv. 7-12.

Moses extends a warm greeting to his father-in-law, and in explaining to him the miracle of Israel’s deliverance, and the divine purpose in regard to the future of the nation, set before him the hope of Israel, and, in effect, preached to him the gospel. In joining with Moses in the sacrifices that were offered, Jethro endorsed his acceptance of the “hope of Israel,” and of Yahweh as his God.

VERSE 7

“And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare” — With typical oriental politeness, and pleasing consideration for age and experience (Lev. 19:32; Pro. 16:31), Moses saluted his father-in-law warmly and with affection, as they both exchanged salutations.

“And they came into the tent” — Reference to the “encampment” of Moses at the mount of Horeb is indicated in v. 5.

VERSE 8

“And Moses told his father in law all that Yahweh had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel’s sake” — He would thus have told him of the Passover deliverance, the disastrous death of the firstborn suffered by Egypt, and the miracle of the national baptism in the Red Sea. In explaining that all this was done “for Israel’s sake,” he would expound to him the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Israel.

“And all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how Yahweh delivered them” — He thus disclosed the privileged status of Israel in the sight of the Almighty, by which the trauma of Egypt and the subsequent troubles that befell the nation were overcome.

VERSE 9

“And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which Yahweh had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians” — The term “goodness of Yahweh” is used in a special relationship in Scripture, as particularly applying to the gospel. Paul uses it in that light in Rom. 11:22, “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity: but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness.” To “continue in His goodness,” is to remain within the compass of the gospel call. The term is particularly expressive of God’s benevolence toward man, revealed in His call. Thus the “goodness of Yahweh” was presented to Jethro (Exo. 18:9); made known to Moses (Exo. 33:19); promised to Hobab (Num. 10:29); hoped for by David (Psa. 27:13); proclaimed as the heritage of the elect (Psa. 65:4); reserved for the poor in spirit (Psa. 68:10); is made the subject of song and praise (Psa. 145:7); is manifested particularly towards Israel (Isa. 63:7), who are ultimately to be drawn to it (Jer. 31:12). Moreover, the saints are to be satiated with it (Jer. 31:14); the whole world is yet to witness it (Jer. 33:9), and it is to become a feature of millennial songs of victory (Zech. 9:17).

Paul taught that “the goodness of God leadeth to repentance” (Rom. 2:4), and this, as we shall see, was the case with Jethro who was induced by Moses’ recital of these matters, to accept Yahweh as his God. For further information regarding this theme, see the article *The Goodness of God* by Brother Thomas in *Faith In The Last Days*.

VERSE 10

“And Jethro said, Blessed be Yah-

weh, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians” — The word *barak* translated “blessed,” primarily means to “bow the knee,” and thus to pay reverence. Jethro acknowledged that this should be done to Yahweh in view of His gracious benefits, and the very expressions he used witnessed that he accepted Moses’ account of God’s power. Jethro went even further in his subsequent statement (v. 11).

VERSE 11

“Now I know” — This implies a new knowledge for Jethro, causing him to convert to the Truth of Yahweh.

“That Yahweh is greater than all gods” — Thus endorsing the expression found in Moses’ song of victory as the people were delivered from Egypt through the Red Sea (Exo. 15:18).

“For in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them” — The phrase “he was above them” does not appear in the Hebrew, which reads “...indeed in the matter that they were insolent against them.” The “they” relates to the Egyptians. Jethro acknowledged that Yahweh had manifested Himself as greater than all the gods of the nations, and particularly in relation to the manner in which He repaid the insolent harshness which the Egyptians had shown towards the Israelites.

“And Jethro, Moses’ father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God” — In doing so, he endorsed Yahweh as his God, and applied himself to the sacrificial code of Yahweh.

“And Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses’ father in law before God” — Moses, Aaron and the elders of Israel, formally accepted Jethro as a worshipper of the true God, and entered into fellowship with him. Moses invited Jethro to throw in his lot completely with Israel, and go with the people to the Land of Promise (Num. 10:29-32).

Moses Profits From Jethro's Advice
— vv. 13-26.

During his stay with Moses, Jethro observes with astonishment the tremendous output of energy and work accomplished by his son-in-law. With his mind concentrated upon the great mission given into his care, lacking the time to search out officers to help, and perhaps doubtful of their ability to do so, Moses actually endangers the success of the work of Yahweh by becoming too cluttered with unnecessary detail. He is accustomed to personally judge all matters of dispute among the nation, and this threatens to wear him out with work, and to discourage the people with impatience because of the long delays that ensue in consequence. Using good common sense, Jethro urges Moses to delegate his authority and to distribute the work among other trustworthy men. He calls upon him to seek God's guidance in this matter. Moses recognises the value of the suggestion and acts upon it to the wellbeing of both himself and the people.

VERSE 13

"And it came to pass on the morrow" — See introductory notes to the chapter that suggest that this chapter is not in chronological sequence, but occurred after the Law had been given.

"That Moses sat to judge the people" — Therefore he would expound the law as a prophet (1Cor. 14:3) and bring unity and peace by wise judgment.

"And the people stood by Moses" — A crowd of complainants soon assembled, and kept Moses constantly employed in their matters.

"From the morning unto the evening" — This was not only wearing to Moses but also to the people, who had to manifest great patience for their case to be heard.

VERSE 15

"And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God" — The people desired a decision that was God-endorsed, to seek

His will in the practical issues of life, and Moses felt that such an important matter could be entrusted to nobody else.

VERSE 16

"When they have a matter, they come unto me" — This demanded certain qualifications. See Exo. 23:7; Deu. 17:8; 2Sam. 15:2-3.

"And I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and His laws" — Therefore the Law with all its enactments and ordinances had been already given to Moses, so that he desired to instruct the people in them.

VERSE 17

"And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good" — Because it was exhausting Moses and the people. It is a man's duty to have regard to his physical health, and not unnecessarily overtax his strength. Spiritual matters suffer when this is the case.

VERSE 18

"Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee" — Jethro's shrewd observation and advice were quite valid. Moses did feel the strain, and sought God's guidance to relieve it (Num. 11:14-17; Deu. 1:9,12).

"For this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone" — Common sense demanded that Moses seek some relief from the tiring and exacting labour, and the constant pressure from the people.

VERSE 19

"Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee" — Jethro is confident that God would endorse the advice he is about to give Moses.

"Be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God" — Jethro recognised the important duty of Moses in acting as mediator to the people, and recognised that such a duty could not be delegated:

therefore Moses should continue in that capacity.

VERSE 20

“And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do” — Jethro not only acknowledged that there are duties that cannot be delegated, he also recognised that no duty can be deputized unless the one to whom it is to be given has been thoroughly educated in what is required. Those to be selected for positions of responsibility must have the necessary qualifications (see 1Tim. 3:1-6). Moreover, they must be men who will carry out their duties, and not merely enjoy the status of authority without exercising it in a practical way.

The three words “they must do” are reduced to one word in Hebrew: *ya’asun*, from *asah* “to do.” The addition of the Hebrew letter *nun* at the end of the word is a letter of emphasis, indicating that they *must do* the work appointed them. That was a necessary factor in their appointment. They must work to make it a success. The statement took the obligation of “doing” from Moses, and placed it on those whom he would delegate for the work in hand, as much as to say, that they are the ones who should be doing, and Moses must insist upon them doing so. Jethro’s reform envisages three changes:

[1] Moses should conserve his strength, whilst continuing to act as mediator (vv. 18-20);

[2] The people be taught the Law so as to know what to do themselves (v. 20);

[3] Lower and higher courts be set up for the convenience of different cases.

VERSE 21

“Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men” — Jethro advised Moses to seek out men of ability. The word for “men” is *enosh* which usually relates to weak, mortal man. These “men of ability” are given the title of *enosh* because they are called to recognise the weakness of flesh and to seek the

strength of God. See Deu. 16:18; 2Chr. 19:5-10; Acts 6:3; 2Tim. 2:2. Note the qualifications governing the selection of overseers, including the provision “apt to teach” (1Tim. 3:2).

“Such as fear God” — Personal ability is not sufficient: it must be governed by reverence towards God. “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God” (2Sam. 23:3; 2Chr. 19:9).

“Men of truth” — The word is *emeth* and signifies stability, trustworthiness, thus men of faith upon whom one can lean with confidence for help.

“Hating covetousness” — The R.V. renders this as “unjust gain” (see Deu. 16:19; 1Tim. 3:3; 6:9-11; 2Pet. 2:14-15; Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:5). Such men would not be inclined to pervert judgment for personal gain.

“And place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens” — Jethro advocated the decimal system in the organisation of Israel. The men were to preside over higher and lower courts, each leader of a smaller group being responsible to the one above him. Persons not satisfied with a decision of the lower judge could then appeal to a higher. This meant that numerous decisions could be made without recourse to Moses. Whatever matter the decarch or ruler over ten could not decide, went to the pentecontarch or ruler over fifty, and thence, by degrees, to the hecatontarch, or ruler of one hundred, to the chiliarch, or ruler over one thousand — finally to Moses, and at length to Yahweh Himself.

Thus each magistrate had the care or inspection of only ten men; the decarch superintended ten private characters: the hecatontarch ten decarchs; and the chiliarch ten hecatontarchs. See also v. 24; Deu. 1:15; 1Sam. 8:12.

VERSE 22

“And let them judge the people at all seasons” — Apparently Moses had court days only occasionally, resulting in long, wearying hours when it did sit, and causing delays in cases being heard when

it was not officiating (cp. v. 13). Jethro advocated continuous sittings of the courts.

“And it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee” — Examples of this are recorded in Lev. 24:11; Num. 15:33; 27:2; 36:1. See Moses’ own instruction as to what should be done after his death (Deu. 17:8-9). Meanwhile, only important and difficult matters were to be submitted to him.

“But every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee” — Shared problems and burdens are always much easier to bear (Gal. 6:2).

VERSE 23

“If thou shalt do this thing” — Jethro was careful to recognise the authority of the man to whom he was speaking, and to leave the decision to Moses.

“And God command thee so” — Jethro also recognised the need of Yahweh to endorse such important arrangements. Such, indeed, was necessary in a theocracy such as Israel.

“Then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace” — The plan suggested would be beneficial to both Moses and the people; but without some such organisation there was danger of Moses collapsing under the strain.

VERSE 24

“So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said” — Moses put Jethro’s plan into operation only after conferring with Yahweh (Deu. 1:9-15) and instructing the people accordingly. Indeed, after leaving

Sinai further organisation was implemented (Num. 11:14). On that occasion, the people helped to select those so appointed, or agreed with their appointment (Deu. 1:13-16). The seventy thus selected were in addition to the gradations of office defined in the chapter before us (cp. Deu. 1:15).

VERSE 25

“And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens” — In Deu. 1:9-18, Moses recounted the appointment of these judges, giving them the titles of “captains” and “officers.”

VERSE 26

“And they judged the people at all seasons; the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves” — By means of delegation the onerous task of Moses was lessened, and justice administered more rapidly. People had access to the magistrates at all times.

Jethro Leaves Moses — v. 27.

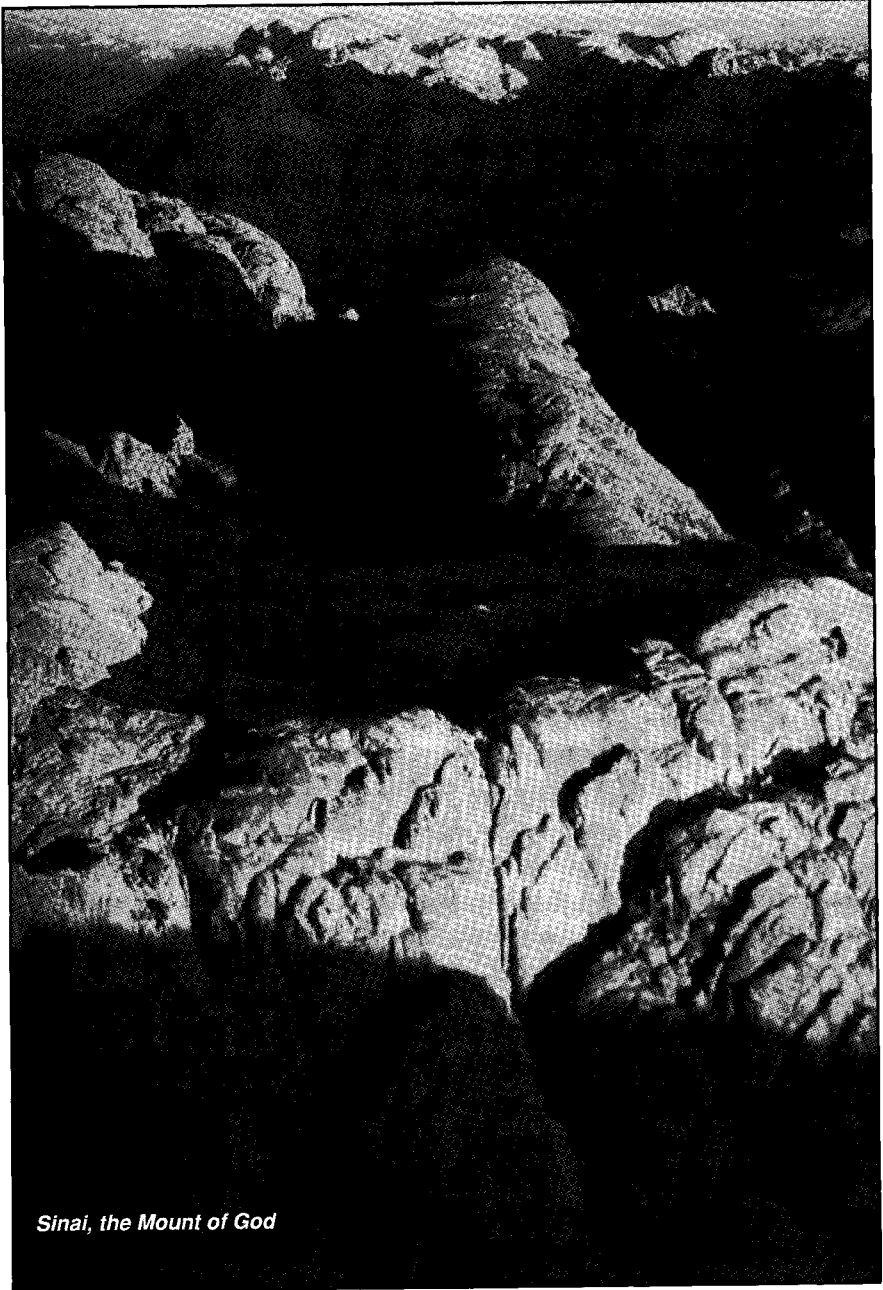
His mission completed, Jethro returns home.

VERSE 27

“And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land” — He returned home a changed man converted to the Truth and worshipping Yahweh. Further details of his family are recorded in Num. 10:29-32. The characteristics of this wise and helpful man, include the following:

He was religious (Exo. 2:16; 3:1; 18:10-11); hospitable (Exo. 2:20); a family man (Exo. 2:16; 3:1; 18:2); observant (Exo. 2:18; 18:14); successful in business (Exo. 3:1); co-operative (Exo. 2:21; 18:2-6); practical (Exo. 18:13-27); wise yet humble — he hearkened and accepted the gospel proclaimed to him by Moses (Exo. 18:8-9). These are attributes that all should attempt to emulate.





Sinai, the Mount of God

CHAPTER NINETEEN

BEFORE THE MOUNT OF GOD

The Children of Israel move from Rephidim to the wilderness of Sinai and encamp before Mount Horeb. They encamp in the Wadi er-Rahah before the cliff Sufsafeh (Horeb) which rises some three hundred metres (1000 ft) before the plain and fifteen hundred metres (5000 ft) above the sea level. The plain itself is broad, beautiful and unobstructed. It has been ascertained that it is sufficiently spacious to satisfy all the requirements of the Scripture narrative. It is not cut up by water courses as are others, but is remarkably level, sweeping in a grand breadth right onwards to the precipitous cliffs of the mountain, which arise with sheer abruptness, and under which they can assemble. From such a mountain the people can, as the narrative requires, remove "afar off" as they did in view of the frightening phenomena when the Voice ceased. The length of the plain is about three and a half kilometres (2 miles), and the multitude can well be imagined seeking for shelter from the immediate terrors of the scene, amid the rugged hollows and ravines at the far end. Whilst Moses ascends the mount, the people remain on the plain, and later are brought before Horeb. In the face of the awful theophany of darkness, smoke, thunder, lightning, earthquake, sounding trumpet and angelic voice, however, the people tremble in terrible fear. Again Moses ascends the mount to meet the angel of Yahweh. But he is instructed to return to the plain and set barriers against the mount lest the people in their curiosity break through to gaze upon it to their destruction.

Yahweh Proclaims His Covenant To Moses — vv. 1-6.

Arriving at Mount Horeb, Moses ascends the mount to receive the invitation of Yahweh to the nation to enter into covenant relationship with Him.

VERSE 1

"In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai" — It is conjectured that the Israelites moved towards Sinai by the two passes known as Wady Solaf and Wady es-Sheikh which converge on Wady er-Rahah. The month was Sivan, and the statement "the same day" is

literally "on that day," that is, the day the month began. This was forty-six days after leaving Egypt and the forty-third day after the first sabbath, and was a Sunday. The giving of the Law itself took place on the fiftieth day from Passover, and was afterwards called the Day of Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-16).

It is of great significance that at the same day of the year, the Holy Spirit was outpoured upon the apostles, and the Truth was publicly proclaimed in the name of Christ for the first time (Acts 2:1). The Law required that Israelites "count the days" (Lev. 23:15) to Pentecost, the idea being for them to recall the circumstances of those days leading to the giving of the

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Law: the divine miracle and providence, as compared with their faithlessness, complaining, and murmuring against Moses. By so doing, they could recognise their errors and resolve to overcome such failings in the future. The apostles, also, could do the same, bringing to mind their strivings in the upper room, their weakness in the Garden of Gethsemane, their lack of understanding as they fled the cross; their doubts when told that the Lord had risen from the dead, their great joy at the realisation of his triumph; their changed hearts in consequence of his instruction, and their determination to speak forth the Truth faithfully and fearlessly when directed so to do.

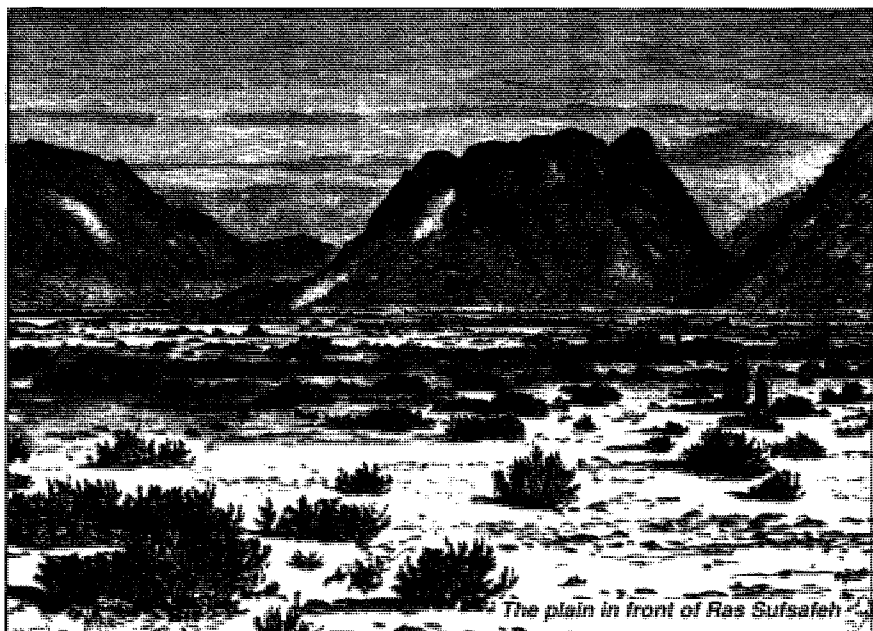
The children of Israel arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai on the New Moon, the first day of the month. This was the forty-third day since the seventh day of the week of Passover. On the second day after the arrival Moses ascended the mount to receive the invitation of Yahweh to the nation to enter into covenant relationship

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

with Him. On the third day he received the people's reply. On the fourth day he made his second ascent, and was commanded to institute a two day's preparation (v. 15), at the conclusion of which the revelation was given. This was the fiftieth day, the Day of Pentecost. Maimonides, the celebrated Jewish commentator writes: "We count the days that pass since the preceding festival, just as one who expects his most intimate friend on a certain day counts the days, and even the hours. This is the reason why we count the days between the anniversary of our departure from Egypt, and the anniversary of the law-giving. The latter was the aim and object of the exodus from Egypt."

VERSE 2

"For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount" — Stanley describes the large plain before the cliff known as Ras Suf-



The plain in front of Ras Sufsafeh

HOREB AND SINAI

The requirements of Scripture are [1] a "mount that might be touched;" [2] an elevation from whence might sound the voice of God proclaiming the ten commandments to the people; [3] a summit from whence Moses could neither see nor hear the revelries beneath when told by the angel that the people "had corrupted themselves" (Exo. 32:7); [4] a stream descending from the mount to the plain.

All are provided for at the area of modern Ras Sufsafeh and Jebel Musa.

The record of Exodus 32 is important in identifying the twin peaks of Horeb and Sinai. Moses had ascended Sinai, leaving Joshua at an adjoining point. When told by the angel to return, both men walked back discussing as to what the circumstances of the crisis might be, and it was only when "they came nigh unto the camp" (v. 19) that the scene of wickedness opened out to them. Now if they had merely ascended the precipitous cliff of Sufsafeh (identified by the Jews as Sinai), they could have seen what was taking place from the inception. It is only 500 metres (1600 ft) high above the plain, and commands an excellent view of it. It is evident, therefore, that a discrimination must be made between Horeb, from whence the people heard the voice of God, and Sinai up into which Moses ascended: and a careful reading of Scripture will reveal that they are two different peaks of a plateau, and, in fact, are about five kilometres (3 miles) distant one from the other.

SINAI

Here Moses received the Tables of Stone, and remained for forty days. It is defined as the "top of the mount" (Exo. 19:20; 24:16-17; 34:2). Sinai is about 5 kilometres distant from the plain where the Israelites were encamped, agreeing with the narrative that represents Moses and Joshua as hearing and seeing nothing of the revelry taking place until they came closer to the site (Exo. 32:1-20). On arrival at Sufsafeh the scene burst upon them, and in anger Moses descended on the camp and smashed the Tables of Stone at the foot of the mount (Exo. 32:19).

HOREB

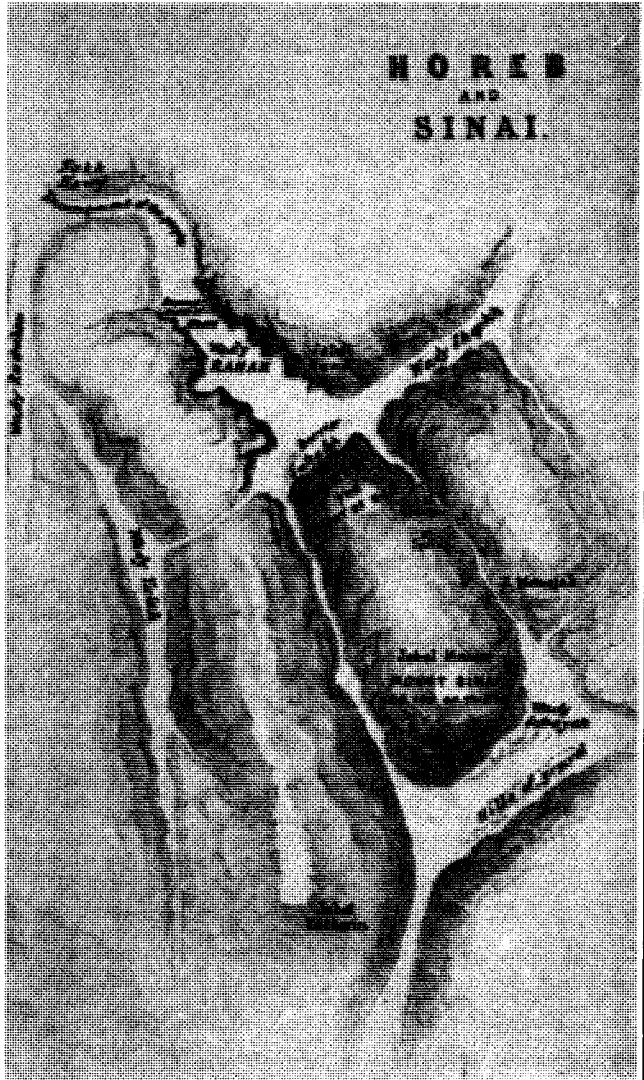
Horeb is called "the mount of God" (Exo. 4:27; 18:5; 24:13; 1Kings 19:8). It is always described as distinct from Sinai which is either given that name or called "the top of the mount" (both Horeb and Sinai are on a plateau). Horeb is close to the plain, at "the nether part of the mount" (Exo. 19:17), "before Yahweh under the mount" (Deu. 4:10-11), which expressions require a precipitous cliff, and not the more gradual slopes of Jebel Musa. Yahweh is represented as speaking "face to face" with the people (Deu. 5:4). He could not do that from Jebel Musa, but it is certainly appropriate to Ras Sufsafeh. This cliff rises abruptly from the plain and overhangs it, whereas Jebel Musa (the Mount of Moses) throws out from its base a number of spurs and rocky undulations far into the plain. Sufsafeh, therefore, answers to the description of "a mountain that might be touched" (Heb. 12:18), and such as required a barrier to prevent the people coming too near (Exo. 19:23).

YAHWEH SPOKE FROM HOREB

When Yahweh addressed the people it was from Horeb; when He spoke with Moses "face to face," it was from Sinai. In either case, it was not Yahweh personally, but His angelic manifestation that appeared. When He spoke with the people, they were gathered together before Horeb for that purpose (Deu. 4:10; 5:4,26). They heard and understood the words addressed to them (Deu. 4:12, 33, 36; 5:23; Exo. 20:22). This would hardly be possible if the voice thundered to them from a hidden eminence

five kilometres (3 miles) distance. Such utterance would be broken up with echoes, so that the words would not be distinguishable. Nor would there be need to "gather the people together," if it sounded for such a distance. Yet later when the people retired to their tents, they no longer heard the voice, suggesting the need to come close to the mount to do so (Exo. 20:21; Deu. 5:27-32). When Yahweh spake thus to the people, Moses was on the plain, not up on Sinai (Exo. 24:1-3).

The plain at the foot of Sinai does not answer to the description of the narrative, whereas that in front of Sufsafeh does. Unlike that in front of Horeb, it is a narrow, rugged, winding valley with spurs from the mount reaching far into it. Therefore, by gathering together all relevant details, we conclude that Horeb and Sinai are two peaks on a mountainous plateau. Reference to the former is usually described as the "Mount of God," or as Horeb; reference to the latter is either by the name of Sinai, "the top of the mount," or some such designation. Where reference is made merely to "the mount" as unnamed, it generally includes the entire range of which Horeb and Sinai are two peaks. Our notes will define each place as we move through the narrative.



safeh, or Mount Horeb: "That such a plain should exist at all in front of such a cliff is so remarkable a coincidence with the sacred narrative, as to furnish a strong internal argument, not merely of its identity with the scene, but of the scene itself having been described by an eye-witness. All the surroundings are such as exactly suit the narrative. The awful and lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, would have been the fittest preparation for the coming scene. The low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff exactly answers to the 'bounds' which were to keep the people off from 'touching the mount.' The plain itself is not broken and uneven and narrowly shut in, like almost all others in the range, but presents a long, retiring sweep, against which the people could 'remove and stand afar off.' The cliff, rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of 'the mount that might be touched,' and from which the voice of God might be heard far and wide over the plain below, widened at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the continuous valleys. Here, beyond all other parts of the peninsula, is the *adytum*, withdrawn as if in the end 'of the world' from all the stir and confusion of earthly things."

Another writer has observed: "No spot in the world can be pointed out, which combines in a more remarkable manner the conditions of a commanding height and of a plain in every part of which the sights and sounds described in Exodus would reach an assembled multitude of more than two million people."

There are disputes as to the identity of Mount Sinai, but in answering these it should be pointed out that the Bible is the only source of information concerning the site. The evidence of Scripture requires two peaks connected in some way with each other, one of which is Mount Horeb and the other Mount Sinai. What is known as Ras Sufsafeh and Jebel Musa, together with the remarkable plain in front of the

former, provide what is necessary to the narrative. The Jews point to Ras Sufsafeh as Mount Sinai, but, in fact, it is Mount Horeb, whereas Jebel Musa is Mount Sinai. The children of Israel were gathered before mount Horeb to receive the Law, whilst Moses, in turn, ascended both Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai. In camping before "the mount," the Israelites camped before Ras Sufsafeh or Horeb. The forepart of the plain would have been kept clear for the assembling of the people, and the tents of the Israelites would have stretched back in the approaching wadis.

VERSE 3

"And Moses went up unto God" — Moses had camped at the "mount of God" (Exo. 18:5), which elsewhere is defined as Horeb (Exo. 3:1) or *Ras Sufsafeh*, and it was this cliff that he now ascended (Deu. 5:2).

In all, Moses made seven ascents to either Horeb or Sinai as follows: [1] First ascent (Exo. 19:3-6), descent (vv. 7-8); [2] Second ascent (Exo. 19:8-12), descent (vv. 14-19); [3] Third ascent (Exo. 19:20-24), descent (v. 25); [4] Fourth ascent (Exo. 20:21), descent (Exo. 24:3); [5] Fifth ascent (Exo. 24:12-32:14), descent (Exo. 32:15-30); [6] Sixth ascent (Exo. 32:31-33), descent (Exo. 32:34-34:3); [7] Seventh ascent (Exo. 34:4-28), descent (vv. 29-35).

The giving of the ten commandments was after the third ascent (Exo. 20:1-24:8). The "ascent" of Exo. 24:9-11 was not up into the mount, but only "to" it, as the elders did not ascend the mount with Moses.

"And Yahweh called him out of the mountain, saying" — This was a theophany: Yahweh in manifestation, not in person. God did not personally leave His throne in the heavens. He spoke to Moses through His Elohim (cp. Exo. 20:1-2; 24:9-11). Moses only saw the angel upon whom was placed the Name of Yahweh (Exo. 23:20-23), described as "the similitude of Yahweh" (Num. 12:8). In consequence, Stephen declared that Moses

“received the law by the disposition of angels” (Acts 7:53).

“Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel” —

The use of both names, *Jacob* and *Israel* constitutes a reminder to the people that they can and should develop from one status to the other. From being *Supplanters* they can become *Princes with El*, being a kingdom of priests (v. 6).

VERSE 4

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians” — What Yahweh did to the Egyptians was a great contrast to His protective care of the children of Israel.

“And how I bare you on eagles’ wings” — Compare Deu. 32:11 where the metaphor is considerably expanded. The strength and might of Yahweh’s sustaining care, and His loving tenderness, are especially observed, particularly His oversight for their welfare in disciplining them. By testing them, He taught the lesson of endurance and faith, never trying them beyond what they were able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13).

The metaphor is drawn of the eagle, or vulture, which is said to stir the fledglings out of the nest to teach them to fly, but continues to hover nearby to bear them up if they fall. In every trial of Israel, whether threatened by the Egyptians, suffering the pangs of hunger and thirst, or challenged by the Amalekites, Yahweh was ever ready to help, and always responded to the prayer of faith uttered by Moses. The Israelites knew that, and therefore were in a position to respond to the appeal of His words.

“And brought you unto Myself” — To draw Israel to Himself had been the purpose of Yahweh from the beginning. They had been slaves in Egypt, unlawfully claimed by Pharaoh as his own. They had been snatched from the oppressor, and brought into the presence of God. Now the terms of the covenant by which a permanent relationship could be secured were about to be given them.

VERSE 5

“Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant” —

The fulfilment of Yahweh’s part of the covenant was conditional upon the obedience of the Israelites (see Psa. 81:13-16). At the same time, their acceptance of the covenant was a command obligatory upon them to obey: “a covenant which He *commanded* them to perform” (Deu. 4:13; 29:1; Psa. 105:8). Knowledge brings responsibility to obey; the alternative being death.

Some imagine that they have a choice in their destiny and that they can continue to defy God with impunity so long as they have not accepted the covenant in baptism. But that was not the case under the Mosaic covenant, and certainly is not so in relation to the Christ-covenant. What would have been the fate of Israel if they had defied the “commandment” to embrace the covenant? The nation would have been left to die. Notice that God does not address Israel as if the nation had any alternative but to obey: He does not set before them the choice as to whether they accept the covenant or not, but rather orders obedience to it.

The word “covenant” is the Hebrew *berith* which is from the root *barah*, meaning, to cut or carve, and so denotes a binding agreement established upon the slaying of a covenant-victim with the two parties passing through the divided pieces (Jer. 34:18-19). The antitype is seen in the Lord Jesus who is represented as the covenant-victim of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 9:15-17 — see *Diaglott*).

“Then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me” — The term *segullah* signifies “shut away, guarded.” It defines a precious possession to be esteemed highly and to be carefully guarded from all that might injure it (see Psa. 135:4). The same word is rendered “jewels” in Mal. 3:17, and there relates to the true Israel of God to be revealed at the Lord’s return.

Peter draws upon this promise in stating the privileged position to which believers attain in Christ, for Israel, having rejected their Messiah, the opportunity has

been opened for Gentiles to become part of the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), and hence His "peculiar people."

"Above all people" — *Amim*, and should be rendered in the plural "peoples," and as such it denotes the nations generally. The promise is that no other nation would attain unto the status that Israel would hold, or be equally precious in God's sight. The channel of divine grace and salvation is still through Israel (Eph. 2:11-12), even though the nation, temporarily, has been "cast off."

"For all the earth is Mine" — These words are cited in Psa. 24:1 and 1Cor. 10:26-28, to illustrate that as Possessor of heaven and earth, Yahweh controls all things. As all the earth is His, in a sense all nations belong to Him, and have a responsibility to render unto Him the obedience due to His name. But in a special sense, He has chosen Israel to be His people (Deu. 14:2), and therefore the people should set an example to others in regard to the obligation of all to obey.

VERSE 6

"And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests" — The *Septuagint* renders this as "a royal priesthood," constituting the Israelites as both "kings and priests." As a nation, Israel was designed to represent God to other nations: to both rule them and to draw them to truth and righteousness (see Deu. 4:6-8). But the people broke the covenant when Moses was in the mount, and the priesthood was given to Levi (Exo. 32:25-29), and, later, the government to Judah. In Christ, both will be restored as originally intended. All believers are called to be kings and priests (1Pet. 2:5, 9), and in the Age to come will constitute a royal priesthood (Rev. 5:9-10), acting as kings and priests with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4; 1:6. See also Heb. 5:1-3; 2Tim. 2:12; Mat. 19:28).

"And an holy nation" — "Holy" in this relationship means *separated*. Israel was designed to be different from all other peoples: a nation consecrated to the service of Yahweh, a people outwardly marked out as His by the symbol of cir-

cumcision, and demonstrating that they were truly His by the manner in which they clave to Him, and obeyed His laws. They were to reflect the characteristics of Yahweh: "Thou art an holy people unto Yahweh thy God" (Lev. 19:2; 20:26); "He hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deu. 7:6). Israel is yet to attain unto this state under Messiah (Isa. 62:12).

Meanwhile, believers "taken out of the Gentiles" to be "a people for the name" (Acts 15:14) are constituted the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), and are called to manifest holiness in Christ. Thus, He who said to Israel, "Be ye holy for I am holy" now sets the same ideal before Gentile believers (1Pet. 1:14-16). Separateness is absolutely essential to sonship in Christ. See 2Cor. 6:17-18.

"These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel"

— An elaborate exposition was not necessary: the question was a simple one: Were they prepared to obey, and so build into their individual lives and into the nation as a whole, the divine qualities of the God they worshipped?

The People Accept The Terms — vv. 7-9.

The issue is clear and simple: either accept Yahweh's terms or perish! The people are utterly dependent upon Him for food, drink and protection; to reject His covenant is to die in the wilderness. The people agree to the terms.

VERSE 7

"And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which Yahweh commanded him" — Moses descended the mount to the waiting people, called the elders together, and set before them the requirements of Yahweh. They, in turn submitted them to the people.

VERSE 8

"And all the people answered together, and said, All that Yahweh

hath spoken we will do” — The decision was unanimous, endorsed by the people as a whole not only on this occasion, but on subsequent occasions as well (Exo. 24:3,7; Deu. 5:27). After all, they had received clear and concrete evidence of the lovingkindness of Yahweh in the care that He had lavished upon them. Common gratitude demanded that they should obey His will.

“And Moses returned the words of the people unto Yahweh” — He ascended Mount Horeb for this purpose. This being the second ascent, it probably took place the following day: a Wednesday according to our calendar.

VERSE 9

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud” — The expression literally is, “in darkness of clouds.” The angel who bore the name of Yahweh (Exo. 23:21), and who displayed His glory, would veil himself in clouds, in order to speak directly to the people. The full shining forth of divine glory, even through created beings, would be too much for flesh (cp. Mat. 28:3-4). Yahweh dwells in unapproachable light” (1Tim. 6:16), and must veil Himself in His approach to man. It is an evidence of His goodness that He condescends to do so.

“That the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever” — Yahweh determined to speak directly to the people to convince them that Moses was divinely appointed and sent, and that he was not performing his miracles through sorcery or enchantment as did the magicians and priests of Egypt. Nevertheless, the effect upon the people was devastating. They preferred to treat with God through His appointed mediator, Moses (Exo. 19:18-22; 20:18-21; Deu. 4:11-13,36; 5:5,22-29; Heb. 12:18-21), witnessing that the way into the Holiest for individuals was not yet revealed (Heb. 10:18-20).

Meanwhile, the fact that Yahweh offered to speak to the people, implies that He must have done so from Mount Horeb, and not from Sinai which was five kilome-

tres (3 miles) distant from the plain upon which they stood. Nor did the divine voice reverberate among the valleys like a trumpet, for if it did, it would be so broken up by echoes that the words would be almost indistinguishable. On the contrary it was clear and comprehensible. It was more like the “still, small voice” that Elijah also heard at this spot, for when the people in fear withdrew from before the mount, they could no longer hear it, and had to depend upon Moses transmitting the instructions of Yahweh to them (Deu. 5:27-28). To hear the voice of God direct, was a great privilege, well calculated to impress the people with the divine mission of Moses (cp. Deu. 4:10, 33-39).

“And Moses told the words of the people unto Yahweh” — He again reiterated that the people were prepared to accept the terms of the covenant, and obey the voice of God.

Moses Instructed To Sanctify The People — vv. 10-13.

The people are now to be made ready for the greatest experience in human life: the hearing of God's voice. Three things are to happen: God shall appear veiled in cloud: the people shall hear when He speaks and Moses will be believed for ever after. Special preparations are required for this, such as will occupy two days. Moses is instructed to return to the people and prepare them for the occasion.

VERSE 10

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow” — The word “sanctify” is from the Hebrew *qadash* and signifies “to set apart, to make clean, to purify.” On this occasion, the cleansing was to be accomplished by ceremonial washing and abstinence. Thus the sanctification referred to, as in Gen. 2:3 and Exo. 13:2 does not, in itself, denote a moral cleansing, but a setting apart unto God. The sanctification before the mount occupied two days in preparation for the third day, and it made the people ready to hear-ken to God's voice, and to receive the Law

at His mouth (vv. 10-11, 14-15).

In addition, the mount was sanctified, or set apart (v. 23), showing that physical sanctification does not necessarily denote a moral change. In spiritual numerics, "3" has the significance of baptism and resurrection, for on the third day the earth appeared above the waters, and brought forth growth (Gen. 1:10-13), and on the third day the Lord was brought again from the grave. After two millennial days, the nation will be revived in accordance with Bible prophecy (cp. Hos. 6:2).

The two-day sanctification before the mount was to prepare the people for a new life before God.

"And let them wash their clothes"

— The people were directed to a ceremonial washing or cleansing as indicative of what was required morally. The priests separated themselves, or sanctified themselves from the people, for the same purpose (Exo. 19:22). Bathing the body always was associated with washing the clothes. Both were considered necessary in order to meet with Yahweh (Lev. 14:8-9; 15:5; 17:15-16; 22:6, etc.).

VERSE 11

"And be ready against the third day" — The Day of Pentecost when the Law was given. Notice the instruction of the Lord to his disciples likewise to be ready and "wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me" (Acts

1:4). On that day, they, too, received a new revelation, and proclaimed a new law in the name of Christ.

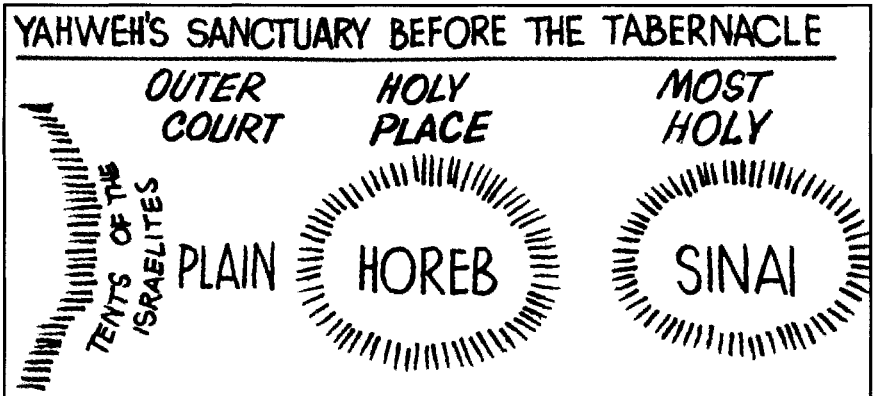
"For the third day Yahweh will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai" — This was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the Ten Commandments were proclaimed to the people as the basis of the Covenant. But as "3" is the number of resurrection (v. 10-11), we, today, await the prophetic fulfillment of the antitype when "all the people" will be gathered before Yahweh manifested in His Son. For the fulfillment of this promise, see v. 20.

VERSE 12

"And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about" — A barrier was to be erected at the foot of the mount before which they were gathered. This was Mount Horeb, today known as *Ras Suf-safeh*, at the foot of which there is a line of low alluvial mounds. These could have provided support for the artificial barrier, or fence, that was also erected at the instruction of Moses.

"Saying, Take heed to yourselves"

— A personal instruction to every individual. In similar manner, on the Day of Pentecost following the Lord's ascension into heaven, the apostles urged the people: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Earlier the Lord had impressed the apostles with the fact of per-



sonal responsibility by an exhortation that reaches down to our day: "Take heed to yourselves..." (Luke 21:34).

"That ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it" — The mount where God's glory was about to be revealed would, for the time being, be a sanctuary, endowed with the unapproachable sacredness of the ark or the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle to be built. In that relationship, Horeb and Sinai stand related to each other as the holy place and the most holy did in the tabernacle, whereas the plain before the mount was as the outer court where later the people assembled for worship.

"Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death" — These words are cited by the apostle in contrasting the Covenant of Law with the benefits of the Covenant of Grace (Heb. 12:20). The former brought home to the people a recognition of sin and the reality of death (Rom. 7:10-14); the latter offers life through the forgiveness of sins. The type of the former is Mount Sinai; that of the latter is Mount Zion (Heb. 12:18-24; Gal. 4:24-26). There was no prospect of eternal life in the Covenant of Law because it would be impossible for flesh in its weakness to completely fulfil all its requirements (Rom. 8:3), but in Christ, man is delivered from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13). Because of his very nature, man is utterly dependent upon the mercy of God, leading the apostle Paul to conclude: "Ye are come... to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:24). The blood of Abel cried out for justice and vengeance (as did the Law), but that of Christ proclaimed grace and mercy. The Old Covenant demonstrated the dire need of a Redeemer; the New Covenant provided the One promised, and so supplied that which was lacking in the Old.

In commanding the people to abstain from touching the mount, and threatening them with death if they did so, the Law demonstrated that all that the Old Covenant could offer in the face of disobe-

dience was death. This led Paul to conclude that "the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death" (Rom. 7:10). The Law emphasised the weakness of the flesh, and in doing so, highlighted the need of a Redeemer. Thus it acted as a schoolmaster to bring the people to Christ that they "might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24).

VERSE 13

"There shall not an hand touch it" — The pronoun should be "him" not "it." The reference is to the transgressor. The guilty party must not be seized by the hand, as that would cause a repetition of the offence. Guilt, or ceremonial uncleanness under the Law was transmittable from one person to the other. See the question and answer recorded in Hag. 2:13.

"But he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live" — The purpose of death by stoning or spear was to avoid contact with the guilty party, for to touch such was deemed as having identified oneself with the crime, and so to be accounted unclean. The law taught the basic truth that mankind easily succumbs to influences of sin and wickedness.

"When the trumpet soundeth long" — The word for "trumpet" is *yubale*, more commonly known as *jubilee*, and is rendered in the margin as "cornet." The instrument referred to is also called "the ram's horn," because it is shaped like one.

"They shall come up to the mount" — Permission was given the people to ascend to the mountain at the sounding of the trumpet. Though the verb *alah* signifies "to ascend," it does not always have that meaning (cp. Jos. 10:4, 6; Jud. 15:10, etc.). To "come up to the mount," can mean to advance up the slope to the foot of Horeb, and this is evidently what is meant by the invitation. Cp. v. 12.

The People Are Sanctified — vv. 14-15.

In accordance with the instructions given Moses, the people sanctify themselves for two days in preparation for the meeting with God on the third.

VERSE 14

“And Moses went down from the mount unto the people” — This constituted the second descent from Horeb.

“And sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes” — See note v. 10.

VERSE 15

“And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day” — They were to make mental preparation as well as engaging in ceremonial cleansing in preparation for the third day.

“Come not at your wives” — They were to avoid sexual intercourse, so as to give their undivided concentration to the revelation to be given. See 1Sam. 21:4-5; 1Cor. 7:5.

The Trembling People And Awe-Inspiring God — vv. 16-25.

All preparations having been made, the day of the theophany dawns amid thunders, lightnings, thick cloud, and earthquake (Psa. 77:18). The ear-splitting sound of the shophar trumpet reverberates throughout the valleys sounding louder and louder, causing the people to tremble in fear. Yahweh descends in fire on to the heights of Mount Sinai five kilometres distant, and smoke ascends far into the heavens, so that the people in their tents can see it. Moses, likewise moved with fear, nevertheless, in accordance with the instructions of Yahweh, leads the trembling people to the north-western side of the mountain plateau to meet with God.



*Shofar
Horn*

Meanwhile the trumpet sounds louder and louder, until its noise fills the valley causing even Moses to express his fears. He is ordered to leave the people and ascend to the top of the Sinai. After fulfilling this mission he is instructed to return to the people with further warnings against touching the mount. Despite his assurances that this has already been done, he is ordered back to the people with a message of warning to deliver to them.

VERSE 16

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning” — See note v. 11.

“That there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount” — In treating with this incident, the Psalmist implies that there was also a storm of rain (see Psa. 77:16-18; 97:2-5; Heb. 12:18-19, 26; Deu. 4:10-12). The mount also quaked (v. 18).

“And the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud” — Here the word for “trumpet” is *shophar*. The *shophar* sound is an ear-splitting, clear, sharp, cutting note that comes in short bursts, in contrast to the *yobale* (v. 13) which gives a long, continuous note. Evidently the noise was continuous: the shorter notes of the *shophar* gradually becoming longer until they merged into the *yobale* note.

In Lev. 25:9, both words are used in conjunction “the trumpet (*shophar*) of the jubilee (*yobale*) to sound.” The *shophar* trumpet is sometimes called the “ram’s horn” (Jos. 6:5). Its sharp commanding notes represented the voice of authority, and therefore were appropriate at Sinai, as well as on subsequent occasions when there were calls for action (Jos. 6:5; Jud. 3:27; 6:34; 7:16-18). The word is rendered “cornet” in 1Chr. 15:28; 2Chr. 15:14; Psa. 98:6; Hos. 5:8. Some see *shophar* as denoting “ram” or “ram’s horn” (see Gesenius and cp. Jos. 6:4, 6, 13).

The *shophar* was heard at Sinai (Exo. 19:16), on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:24), at the beginning of the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:9), to announce the new moon (Psa. 81:3). It gave warning of judgment and war (Jos. 6:5; Jud. 3:27; 6:34;

7:16-18). It was used when issuing commands and directions (1Sam. 13:3; 2Sam. 2:28); for proclaiming the accession of a king (1Kgs. 1:34), or to warn of approaching danger (Jer. 4:5; Eze. 33:3; Joel 2:1).

It was thus the *Voice of Authority*. It proclaimed the principles of divine justice and awful majesty in the staccato blasts at Sinai. But when the priest sounded the long, drawn-out jubilee note in the year of Jubilee, it announced His mercy and grace (Lev. 25:9). On the Day of Atonement, it called the people to humble themselves in contrition (Lev. 23:24); at Jericho and in the time of Gideon, it warned of impending and inevitable judgment on Israel's enemies.

The loud, harsh, staccato note of the trumpet, waxing louder and louder, instilled fear into the hearts of both people and leader on that day when they had to meet with their God.

The effect of the pre-emptory, strident, warning note of the shophar trumpet at Sinai is recalled on every Jewish New Year's Day which is set aside as "a memorial of blowing of trumpets" (Lev. 23:24 — the seventh month of Israel's religious year is the first month of its civil year). The significance of this memorial has been explained by the Jewish commentator Maimonides, as follows: "The sound of the shophar, consisting, as handed down by tradition, of three distinctive shophar notes (*tekiah, shavarim, teruah*) has been looked upon from time immemorial as a call of contrition and penitence, as a reminder of the shophar sound of Sinai; and the Day of Memorial, the beginning of the ten days of Repentance, which culminate in the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27), as a time of self-examination and humble petition for forgiveness. The scripture injunction of the shophar for the New Year's Day has a profound meaning. It says, 'Awake, ye sleepers; and ponder over your deeds; remember your Creator and go back to Him in penitence. Be not of those who miss realities in their pursuit of shadows, and waste their years in seeking after vain things which cannot profit or deliver. Look well to your souls and con-

sider your acts; forsake each of you his evil ways and thought, and return to God so that He may have mercy upon you."

At Sinai, Yahweh deliberately instilled fear into the people for a very good reason: not merely to frighten them, but to fill them with reverence, causing them to more clearly recognise their solemn obligations towards Him. "The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge" (Pro. 1:7 — the word "beginning" signifies "firstfruits" — see also Psa. 111:10; Pro. 2:5; 8:13), whereas "love is its completion" (Col. 3:14; 2Jn. 6). Fear was induced at the giving of the Old Covenant; love is manifested in the New. Both are necessary for true worship. The former prevents the latter from becoming too familiar; the latter prevents the former from deteriorating into mere servility. A blend of both fear and love elevates the respect and filial affection that is due to Yahweh, resulting in Him being obeyed as a *Master* and honoured as a *Father* (Mal. 1:6).

"So that all the people that was in the camp trembled" — Even Moses trembled (Heb. 12:21); a great contrast to Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant (see 1Jn. 4:18).

VERSE 17

"And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God" — This was in obedience to the command of v. 13. See also Deu. 4:10.

"And they stood at the nether part of the mount" — The word *tachtiy*, rendered "nether," signifies the *lowermost*. The people moved to the foot of the mount: the base of the precipitous cliff of Horeb (Deu. 4:10) where the barriers had been erected.

VERSE 18

"And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because Yahweh descended upon it in fire" — Mount Sinai is about five kilometres (8 miles) distant from the plain, so that the theophany was far removed from the people. However, as the smoke billowed up they were able to see it in the sky above.

“And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” — The smoke ascended up into the very heart of heaven (Deu. 4:11), blotting out the light of the sun, causing an unnatural darkness. As though that were not enough, the quaking of the earth added to the terror of the moment.

VERSE 19

“And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder” — The shorter notes of the shophar became longer and louder, echoing among the valleys until the people were encompassed with its earsplitting harsh noise.

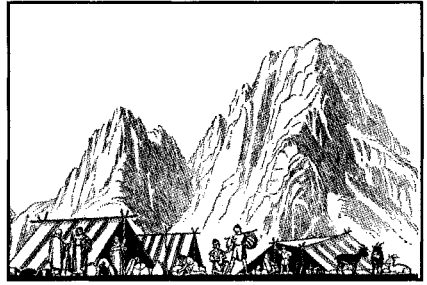
“Moses spake” — Moses does not record what he said, though, according to Paul, he was so overcome with the awful grandeur of the theophany that he declared: “I exceedingly fear and quake” (Heb. 12:21). In speaking thus he represented the feelings of his people.

“And God answered him by a voice” — No message is recorded; yet the fact that Moses was invited to ascend the mount was encouragement and reassurance to him not to fear the consequences of the divine manifestation.

VERSE 20

“And Yahweh came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount” — See previous notes on Sinai. In the sanctuary of the mount, Sinai represented the Most Holy, while Horeb stood for the Holy Place. Though, from where the people were standing on the plain of Er-Rahah at the foot of Horeb, they could not see Sinai, they could see the smoke and other evidences of the presence of Yahweh in manifestation. In that way, therefore, He came down upon mount Sinai “in the sight of all the people” (v. 11).

“And Yahweh called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up” — He ascended to the height of Sinai some five kilometres (8 miles) distant. We can imagine the trepidation with which Moses would make his way up the steep



slopes of Sinai into the midst of such terrifying manifestations of divine power and glory. But though among the meekest of men, Moses possessed great faith and courage. He not only feared, but also loved Yahweh, and had implicit trust and confidence in Him.

VERSE 21

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto Yahweh to gaze, and many of them perish” — Irreverent gazing on holy things was forbidden by the Law (Num. 4:20). In view of the fear that dominated the Israelites at the foot of the mount, one would imagine that there was little need to warn them to keep back, and this is how Moses reasoned when requested to return with such a message. But there is no plumbing the desperate wickedness of the human heart, and some may have attempted to look out of mere bravado, in order to gain reputation from others. The great God, who knows the wilfulness and presumption of flesh, thought good to return Moses with this message.

VERSE 22

“And let the priests also, which come near to Yahweh, sanctify themselves, lest Yahweh break forth upon them” — Prior to the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, the legal firstborn of a family acted as a priest. Subsequently, because of national transgression, such priests were superseded by the Levites (Num. 3:45; 8:16).

At this point, however, the legal firstborn, as priests, are ordered to sanctify

themselves, by separating themselves from the main body of the people.

VERSE 23

“And Moses said unto Yahweh, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for Thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it” — Moses placed more confidence in the man-made barriers and in people than did God! This is typical of flesh.

VERSE 24

“And Yahweh said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee” — Moses is ordered to return to the people, in order to supervise them. This is very necessary as far as flesh is concerned. It soon forgets fear and becomes defiant.

Yahweh’s further instruction to Moses to come “up to the mount” with Aaron,

does not mean that they were to ascend it, but that they were to leave the body of the people and come closer to its foot. Moses was with the people when the Ten Commandments were given and did not again ascend until instructed to do so (see Exo. 24:1).

“But let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto Yahweh, lest He break forth upon them” — From these instructions it would appear that the Israelites were divided into three groups: [1] the body of the people [2] the priests: [3] Moses and Aaron.

VERSE 25

“So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them” — He solemnly instructed them as he was commanded to do, and was with them when God proclaimed the Ten Commandments as the basis of the Covenant.

CHAPTER TWENTY

TEN COMMANDMENTS PROCLAIMED
TO THE PEOPLE AT HOREB

A holy and righteous God has holy and righteous standards. These are set before the people in the form of ten commandments that provide the basis of Yahweh’s covenant through Moses. Meanwhile, the awful manifestation of divine majesty based upon Law causes the people in fear to withdraw themselves. They plead with Moses to

intercede for them. Accordingly, on their behalf, he draws near to the mount and is instructed as to the basic requirements that worshippers should observe in approaching Yahweh.

The Ten Commandments — vv. 1-17.

The Ten Commandments form the basis of the Mosaic Covenant (Exo. 34:28), so that the tables of stone upon

which they were subsequently inscribed were called “the tables of the covenant” (Heb. 9:4).

These commandments, which Yahweh

was about to give to Israel were not the first issued, for divine laws have always existed (Gen. 26:5). In fact, they are necessary to proper human conduct. If moral law were an element in the nature of things like the law of gravitation, or of eating and drinking, it would assert itself naturally. Mankind's universal lawlessness, however, demonstrates that this is not the case, and makes moral law a necessity. Moreover there are laws of varying importance.

Notice that in the ten commandments, the first four relate to Yahweh, the fifth to parents, and the last four to the individual's relations with his fellowmen. This establishes the relative importance in the affairs of life: God first, home obligations next, then toward fellow-man, self last.

VERSE 1

"And God spake all these words, saying" — Moses and Aaron had drawn "unto" the mount, and now stood in front of the priests and people, between them and the mount. They had not ascended into the mount itself (see Exo. 24:1). Meanwhile, the divine glory had moved from Sinai to Horeb (Exo. 19:18; Deu. 4:11), which mount was now enveloped in cloud, fire and lightning (Deu. 4:11). Yahweh then spake directly to the people (Deu. 4:10), proclaiming the Ten Commandments.

The people were evidently drawn up in a body before Horeb, with the priests in front (Exo. 19:22), and Moses and Aaron before them (Exo. 19:24; Deu. 5:4-5). The people heard the Voice out of the fire (Deu. 4:12), and understood what was spoken unto them (Deu. 4:12, 33, 36; 5:23; Exo. 20:22). This could hardly have been the case if the Voice had thundered from the hidden eminence of Sinai, five kilometres (8 miles) distant from where they were assembled. In that case, the Voice would have been broken up by echoes prominent around the mounts. Nor would there have been need to "gather the people together," for it would have thundered along the valleys where they had encamped. Later, however, when the peo-

ple returned to their tents, they no longer heard the Voice, suggesting their need to come close to the mount to hear it (Exo. 20:21; Deu. 5:27-31). All this suggests that when the Voice was heard, it was similar to the "still, small voice" heard by Elijah when he was at Horeb, and witnessed a similar theophany in storm and thunder. The still, small Voice of God, penetrating beyond the roar of thunder, would have been singularly impressive as it solemnly enunciated the Ten Commandments.

The word for "God" is *Elohim*, a term frequently used for the angels, and which is translated "angels" in Psa. 8:5. The Law was given by angels (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2) as "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14), speaking the words of Yahweh.

VERSE 2

"I am Yahweh thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt"

— The prelude proclaims the benefits received by the people from Yahweh, and implies that such should be repaid by loving obedience.

The Hebrew form of "Egypt" is *Mitzraim* signifying *Oppressors*.

"Out of the house of bondage" — The people of Israel had been called out of a servitude that offered them nothing but toil, sadness and death. The same principle is observed by Paul when he outlines the privileges obtained in Christ (see Rom. 6:13). At the foot of Horeb, the people learned that, in spite of the awful manifestation of cloud, thunder, lightning, earthquake and fire that accompanied the divine theophany, the goodness of Yahweh also was in evidence: so that both "goodness and severity" were blended together (Rom. 11:22). God had delivered the people from a hopeless state of servitude and death, and the enunciation of what He had done for them taught them that He desired to be obeyed through love and not fear. Fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge (Pro. 1:7), but love is its development (Col. 3:14).

VERSE 3

"Thou shalt have no other gods"

before Me” — To honour Yahweh is the first and greatest of all commandments, and was endorsed by the Lord as such (Mat. 22:31-38; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27-28). The responsibility to do this is a *personal* one, hence the commandment is directed to individuals as such.

“Thou” is in the singular number, emphasising the need of each one, on his own account, to obey Yahweh. Man is so constituted that he must worship someone or something, and this first commandment directs the channel of such inherent desire towards Yahweh. However, a person does not have to be guilty of bowing down to a pagan deity in order to break this command. He can be found worshipping self, his family, home, or business instead of God. Paul rates covetousness as idolatry (Col. 3:5), and in this materialistic age there is, perhaps, more widespread worship of that god than any other.

The time is approaching, however, when the fallacy of this form of worship will be brought prominently before all, and men will seek to unload themselves of their burdens of gold and silver (Isa. 2:20). In the revelation of Truth at Christ’s coming, mankind will be moved to confess: “Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know Mine hand and My might; and they shall know that My name is Yahweh” (Jer. 16:19-21). Thus this first commandment advocates the inward worship of God in love, desire, joy, hope, and admiration, for only when He is thus approached do we offer Him the first place in our considerations.

“Before Me” is literally “before My faces.” This can be rendered idiomatically as “in My sight,” or, doctrinally, as relating to the Elohist faces of Yahweh: the angels who supervise worshippers (Heb. 1:14; Mat. 18:10), and record their actions for the purpose of future judgment. Enoch “walked with God” (Gen. 5:22, 24), as did Noah (6:9). Abram was commanded to “walk before God” (17:1), that is, to walk

in the continuing presence of God. Let us seek also so to walk.

VERSE 4

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” — This second commandment forbids the worship of even the true God by images (cp. Isa. 40:18, 25). This was in contrast to the practice of the Egyptians who made “images of creation,” and sought to worship the gods thereby. See the prohibition also enforced by the apostles (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; Rom. 1:18-32; 2:22; 1Cor. 10:7, 14; Gal. 5:20; Col. 3:5), which related to the making of images for the purpose of worship.

Moses made the brazen serpent, and ordered the shaping of the cherubic figures without violating the command, for these were objects commanded by the Deity to reflect and present the principles of divine Truth. Our religious worship must be governed by the power of faith, and not by that of imagination, or the need to be stimulated by external objects to incite it.

This second commandment requires attendance on God’s Word, supplemented by the practice of prayer and of praise.

VERSE 5

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them” — An Israelite might imagine that the prohibition regarding images was limited to making them, and that he could, under certain circumstances, offer worship or servitude to the gods made by others. This is now specifically prohibited. The use of images in Roman Catholic churches is plainly contrary to the letter of this command, and so also is the elevation of a building as an object of worship. Yahweh must be worshipped in faith.

“For I Yahweh thy God am a jealous God” — Yahweh demands our undivided allegiance. He will not share the glory and praise due to Him with others (Isa. 42:8; 48:11). He is so insistent upon this, that He has surnamed His name with

the title of *Jealous* (see notes Exo. 34:14; Deu. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Jos. 24:19). Unfaithfulness in worship before Him is treated as spiritual adultery (James 4:4; Jer. 3:1-2; Eze. 16:20-26), punishable with death.

“Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me”

— This warns that though Yahweh is ever just (cp. Num. 26:11; Deu. 24:16; Eze. 18:10-22), the punishment that parents might receive can also involve their offspring. They can bring distress upon those with whom they are responsible, just as a disease can be transmitted to those nearby. Therefore, parents who love their children, best help them by being circumspect in their worship of God. For example, the sin of idolatry in Israel was punished by the nation being taken to Babylon into captivity: a punishment that involved both the parents who were directly responsible for the sin, and the children who were brought up in its atmosphere.

Moreover such punishment could continue on until the third and fourth generation of those who hate Yahweh. Of course, if the children repudiated the actions of their parents, and sought to worship Yahweh in truth, they would be treated by God on that basis (Eze. 18:14-18). An example of this is seen in the case of the children of Korah, who evidently rejected the sin of their father, and were exonerated from the punishment meted out to him (see Num. 16:27, where the family of Dathan and Abiram are mentioned, but not that of Korah. Hence: 1Chr. 9:19).

VERSE 6

“And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments” — The word “mercy” is *chesed*, and signifies “kindness, favour, and pity” rather than mercy in the sense of forgiving sins. *Chesed* is a divine characteristic (see Exo. 34:6), and manifests Yahweh’s goodness toward those who reveal their love for Him in keeping His commandments; for, “this is love that we walk after His command-

ments” (2John 6). The literal Hebrew is “to the thousandth generation of them that love Me” (Deu. 7:9; Ps. 105:8). Consequently, Yahweh’s lovingkindness is boundless: a contrast to His action toward those who hate Him, which is limited to the

“third or fourth generation.” “He is slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy” (Psa. 103:8), and “His anger endureth but a moment” (Psa. 30:5).

VERSE 7

“Thou shalt not take the name of Yahweh thy God in vain” — This third commandment has relation to practical principles in regard to the worship required by God. His Name was named upon the people of Israel (Num. 6:27) as it is on those today who worship Him in truth (Acts 15:14).

Those who bear this relationship to the Name, being Name-bearers, can “take it in vain,” by treating it lightly, not living up to what it requires. Thus Israel is said to have “profaned the holy Name” when the people acted so inconsistently with it as to bring it into disrepute (Eze. 36:20). And this even though they refused to mention the Name out of a superstitious regard for the very commandment before us! Proverbs describes breaking the commandments of God, as indicative of “taking His Name in vain” (Pro. 30:9), which can be done without any mention of it. On the other hand, the Lord taught his disciples to pray: “Hallowed be Thy Name” (Mat. 6:9).

We take God’s name in vain by:

[1] **Hypocrisy.** Making a profession of God’s Name, and setting a value on it, but not living up to that profession. “Let every



one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2Tim. 2:19).

[3] **Covenant-breaking.** If we make promises to God, yet do not perform our vows, we treat His Name lightly (Mat. 5:33). It is folly, and God has no pleasure in fools (Ecc. 5:4), nor will He be mocked (Gal. 6:7).

[3] **Irresponsibility.** By using it lightly or carelessly, and without regard to its significance, or our responsibility as Name-bearers to manifest the divine qualities associated with it (Exo. 34:6-7).

The statement in the verse before us has particular reference to the utterance of an oath. The word "take" is from *nasa*, "to lift up," and here refers to one taking the Name of Yahweh upon the tongue as in an oath. The term "in vain" can be rendered "for vanity" or "falsehood." Yahweh's Name is holy and must not be used to testify to anything that is untrue, insincere or trivial.

"For Yahweh will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" — Whatever a person may think, however he may plead his own cause, or confess to ignorance of what is required in relation to the Name, Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who treats it lightly (see Mat. 5:33-37).

VERSE 8

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" — In this fourth commandment Israelites were to "remember the sabbath day." Hence they had to bear in mind the circumstances in which it was first introduced. It is significant that the sabbath rest was first commanded at the giving of the manna from heaven (Exo. 16:23), for, at the appearance of the antitypical "manna" from heaven (John 6), there was offered to the people a true rest from the works of sin (Mat. 11:28-30).

It is also significant that it was on the background of that statement, that the Lord proceeded to demonstrate the sense in which his disciples "keep the sabbath." He explained that even as the priests in the temple "profaned the sabbath and were blameless" (Mat. 12:5-8), so also were his

disciples, who had been called to a higher form of priestly ministrations in him (1Pet. 2:9). The sabbath was not a day of rest for the priests ministering in the temple, but the very reverse: their labours were doubled, and their time was given to actively performing the will of Yahweh. So also with the followers of the Lord. They keep the sabbath as did the priests in the temple: by constantly striving to do the will of God every day, rather than limiting this to one day in seven. Thus they try to rest from the works of the flesh every day whilst striving to do the will of God (Heb. 4:4-11).

The sabbath was not a day of idleness, but of spiritual labour (cp. Heb. 4:11), of concentration of the mind on the things of Yahweh, and finding it a "delight" so to do (Isa. 58:13). This was only possible when the spiritual significance of the sabbath was brought to mind, and Israelites saw it as a foreshadowing of the millennial rest yet to come (Isa. 58:14). Unfortunately, most Israelites "polluted His sabbaths" (Eze. 20:13), impatiently awaiting their end (Amos 8:5), exclaiming, "What a weariness it is!" (Mal. 1:13).

The observance of the sabbath is not enjoined on believers today, because their status is that of priests in the temple (cp. Mat. 12:5; 2Cor. 6:16; 1Pet. 2:9). The sabbath was a shadow, the fulness of which is seen in Christ (Col. 2:14-16; Rom. 14:5; Gal. 4:9-10). Even the Law witnessed to that, for if it was necessary to circumcise a child on the sabbath, being the "eighth day" of the child's life, the sabbath rest was waived to perform it (John 7:22-23). Circumcision took precedence of sabbath keeping because it was the token of the Abrahamic covenant, whereas the latter was the token of the Mosaic covenant. The sabbath pointed forward to the millennial rest, whereas circumcision on the eighth day, pointed forward to the end of the millennium when sin and death will cease, and all living will inherit immortality. Meanwhile, it is significant to notice that sabbath keeping will be re-instituted in the kingdom (Eze. 44:24; 45:17; 46:3; Isa. 66:23), but then, apparently, on the first

day of the week, and not on the seventh (Eze. 43:27).

Although sabbath keeping was first introduced at the giving of manna (Exo. 16:25), evidently the division of time into weeks and months was observed from the beginning. At the time of the exodus from Egypt, the months of the year were re-adjusted to provide for a religious new year for Israel as well as its civil year (Exo. 12:1). The sabbath rest was appointed shortly afterwards.

VERSE 9

“Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work” — Note that Israelites were commanded to *labour* on the six days, not to *loiter!* This command identifies the labourer in his field with the Creator, who continues in activity (Jn. 5:17), upholding all things by His power. So Paul exhorts that our daily experiences of labour are an expression of co-operation with God, who provides the food to “eat” (2Thes. 3:10).

VERSE 10

“But the seventh day is the sabbath of Yahweh thy God” — The R.V. has a significant change of this statement, altering *of to unto*. There is no rest for Yahweh at present. This was illustrated by the comment of the Lord when he was accused of breaking the sabbath. He answered his critics by stating: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). God rested at the beginning, but sin intervened to prevent a continued rest. The sabbath rest was designed to intermit man’s labour that he might give himself unto God.

“In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle” — A man’s wife is not included in this prohibition because, normally what he would do she would endorse. In commenting upon the sabbath restrictions, Brother Thomas states (*Elpis Israel*, p. 16-17):

“From these testimonies (Exo. 31:12-17; Deu. 5:15; Exo. 35:2-3; Num. 15:32-36; Jer. 17:21-27; Exo. 16:29-30) it is

clear that it was unlawful for servants in the families of Israel to light fires, cook dinners, harness horses, drive out families to the synagogues, or priests to the temple to officiate in the service of the Lord. The visiting of families on the sabbath day, the taking of excursions for health or for preaching, and conversing about worldly, or family, or any kind of secular affairs, was also illegal... On this day, however, it was ‘lawful to do good;’ but then, this good was not arbitrary. Neither the priests nor the people were the judges of the good or evil, but the law only which defined it. ‘On the sabbath days the priests in the temple profaned the sabbath, and were blameless’ (Mat. 12:5), for the law enjoined them to offer ‘two lambs of the first year, without spot, as the burnt offering of every sabbath’ (Num. 28:9-10). This was a profanation of the seventh-day law, which prohibited ‘any work’ from being done; and had not God commanded it, they would have been ‘guilty of death.’ It was upon this ground that Jesus was ‘guiltless;’ for he did the work of God on that day in healing the sick as the Father had commanded him.”

“Nor thy stranger that is within thy gates” — The Hebrew *ger* denotes the resident alien, a proselyte of the gate, or, as the Talmud states: “The non-Israelite who agrees to keep the seven Noahic precepts.” See also Exo. 12:48.

VERSE 11

“For in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” — The word “made” is *asah*, and signifies not merely to “make” but also to “appoint,” and is so rendered in Job 14:5 and Psa. 104:19. It is also translated “dressed” (Gen. 18:7-8; 2Sam. 12:4; Lev. 7:9). Therefore, the statement does not necessarily mean that our heavens and the earth were created six thousand years ago, but rather that they were put in order, or appointed their positions in relation to the earth and man upon it.

“And rested the seventh day” — Six days of activity brought the work of creation to the apex of Yahweh’s intention,

and was followed by a day of rest, typifying His ultimate purpose to fill the earth with His glory (see Heb. 4:9).

“Wherefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it” — The word “blessed” is from the Hebrew *barak*, “to kneel,” and hence to submit to its requirements. The term in relation to Yahweh and the sabbath means that He condescended to provide a day for man’s good (cp. Mark 2:27). To “hallow” (*qadash*) it is to set it apart for special observation.

Making reference to the resting of God on the seventh day, Moses declared: “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it!” But when did He do that? Not at creation, but at the time Moses recorded. Thus Moses, in noting the work of the first seven days, linked it up with the sabbath day ordinance given exclusively to Israel 2,500 years later.

VERSE 12

“Honour thy father and thy mother”

— This is the fifth commandment, and because five is the number of grace, it is appropriate that Israelites should be reminded of their duty to parents. See this command endorsed in Mat. 15:4; Eph. 6:2; Col. 3:20. It cuts right across modern philosophy which encourages children to think independently of, and even in opposition to, the counsel of their parents. This commandment is not limited to minors however, but has application to parents as well. Paul makes the point, that the father of the household, in status and responsibility should reveal the “image and glory of God” (1Cor. 11:7; see also Eph. 3:14-15), and elsewhere he likens the ecclesia to “the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26). In similar typology, Yahweh is the Father of the nation, whilst Israel is likened to His Bride (Isa. 54:5). This fifth commandment, therefore, not only taught the need for filial affection in the home and among the family, but also the need for adult Israelites to manifest love, respect and loyalty towards their spiritual Father (Deu. 32:6), and the nation into which they were born. A similar love and loyalty should be manifested towards Yahweh and the

Ecclesia by believers today.

It is significant, that the ten commandments were inscribed on two slabs of stone, the first five on one; and the last five on the other. The first stone carried commandments that related to God and the family; the second stone those that relate to human relationships. God first, family next, then neighbours, is the divine order. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself” formed the basis of all the law and the prophets, taught the Lord (Mat. 22:38-40). In fact, the fifth commandment concerning family responsibilities, is associated with God as listed on the first stone, demonstrating the divine association in the family.

“That thy days may be long upon the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee”

— This addition to the fifth commandment elevates it into a special category, for Paul comments: it is “the first commandment *with promise*; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:2-3). This promise related to Israel both nationally and individually; for the home unit is the basis of the nation, as it is of the ecclesia. Let homes be regulated according to divine principles, and there will be no need to fear the future of either a nation or an ecclesia. See Pro. 23:22-25; Mal. 1:6; Col. 3:20, and contrast with Pro. 15:5; 30:11, 17.

Because Israel did not honour their heavenly Father, they were driven into exile (Mal. 1:6; Deu. 4:25-27, 40; 25:15; 32:47). This punishment, inflicted because of the sins of parents, was experienced by children also, who thus learned to avoid the failings of adults. For example, the seventy years captivity in Babylon had a salutary effect upon the nation as a whole, for it cured it of idolatry. Never again did Israel turn to pagan idols. Therefore, although the effects of sin sometimes fall on innocent members of the family, the result is instruction for their ultimate benefit.

VERSE 13

“Thou shalt not kill” — This sixth

commandment legislates against unauthorised killing, such as man-slaughter and murder, and not against judicial executions or the destruction of enemies in a holy war: a war commanded by Yahweh. Thus Noah was told that “at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man” (Gen. 9:5), but Joshua was commanded to completely destroy the Canaanites.

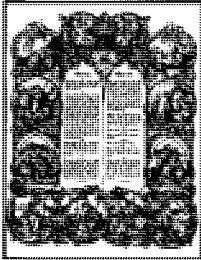
The command, “Thou shalt not kill,” did not override these other requirements, but related to the taking of personal vengeance. The commandment was confirmed by the terms of the new covenant (Mat. 5:21-22; Rom. 13:9; Jas. 2:11). Indeed it went further, and forbade the very root and cause of such unauthorised killing. It prohibited a believer manifesting anger against his brother without due cause (Mat. 5:22), and described one who harboured hatred in his heart as a “murderer” without hope of eternal life (1John 3:15). What care we should exercise in our relationships one with the other! How important to observe Paul’s exhortation of

restraint in regard to anger: “Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26). Whilst there is such a thing as righteous anger, and it is good to manifest such (Mark 3:5), there is also need to exercise patience and avoid being “soon angry” (Tit. 1:7).

VERSE 14

“Thou shalt not commit adultery”

— Christ’s instruction on this command is to avoid even looking at members of the opposite sex to incite such a lust (Mat. 5:28), thus revealing the spirit behind the law. Adultery is an act of unfaithfulness. In that regard there is such a thing as spiritual adultery. James admonishes: “Ye adulteresses [the word “adulterers” is not in the original], know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4). The Redeemed are likened to virgins who have been faithful to their Lord, avoiding unscriptural associations with Babylon the Great and her harlot daughters (Rev. 14:4; 17:5). In the New Covenant, an unwarranted friend-



Summary of The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments, described as “*the ten words*” (Deu. 5:22) were inscribed on two tables of stone representative of the two great commandments upon which all the Law rested: **Love to Yahweh**; and **love towards neighbour** (Mat. 22:40).

The first five, inscribed on the first stone have each an explanatory addition; the last five, on the second stone, are brief and emphatic; a series of *Thou shalt nots!* This is appropriate. An explanation of our duty to Yahweh whom we cannot see is necessary; whereas personal experience should teach us how to act towards others. These duties have their root in the principle: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Lev. 19:18). The first five commandments all mention the divine Name; the last five do not — for the first stone had relation to God, whereas the second stone concerned behaviour towards men.

The *Ten Commandments* provided the basis of the Mosaic Covenant (Deu. 4:13; 1Kings 8:9,21; Heb. 9:4). They introduced a new social order in Israel based upon worship of God, and thoughtful consideration of others. This was further amplified in the statutes that were introduced to the people at the same time (Deu. 4:14).

ship with the world is accounted as adultery, which, under the Old Covenant, was punishable with death.

VERSE 15

“Thou shalt not steal” — The New Covenant likewise warns against dishonesty to man or God. In relation to the first, Paul advocates that brethren should observe scrupulous integrity: “Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). We live in an age of dishonesty. Petty thieving is increasing rapidly among young and old alike. Moreover there prevails a dishonest attitude in regard to labour. Sometimes employees “go slow,” “take sick leave” when not ill, waste time which, in fact, they have sold to their employer. In measure this is stealing. In addition, there is such a thing as “robbing God.” Israelites were guilty of that when they failed to return to God His due (Mal. 3:6-10).

A person also steals who robs God’s Word of its true significance. Thus the Lord decried as “thieves and robbers” those shepherds who failed to minister to the flock as directed by God (John 10:1). In illustration of that, he declared that the religious leaders of Jewry had turned the temple of God into “a den of thieves” (Mark 11:17).

VERSE 16

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” — To falsely slander the character of another is to bear false witness against him. We need to bear in mind that Christ “is the silent listener to every conversation” and will execute judgment on those who bear false witness, whilst he will also vindicate the righteous (Psa. 101:5-6; Pro. 10:18; 11:13; Rom. 13:9; Eph. 4:25). James wrote at length on the need to keep a guard on the tongue. He pointed out that the man who learns to tame the tongue is a perfect man, whereas on the contrary, “therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude

of God” (James 3:9). From the same source, he continues, there “proceedeth blessing and cursing,” a thing which should not so be. He states that a person who speaks evil of his brother actually flouts the law, and therefore, himself, will come under the strictures of the law (James 4:11).

VERSE 17

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” — As noted in an earlier comment, covetousness, against which this tenth commandment legislates, is a form of idolatry. Therefore, there is little use a person priding himself upon having no other God but Yahweh, if at the same time, he is given over to covetousness. The danger of the times in which we live, is that covetousness is encouraged on every hand. Modern advertising is designed to make a person discontented with what he has, and to incite him to covet what others possess. The great antidote is the study of the Word (see Psa. 119:36; Ecc. 4:8; 5:10-11; Mat. 6:24-34; Luke 12:15; Heb. 13:5). The Word will reveal how little we really need in order to discover true happiness, and it will also show us how great are those blessings that Yahweh has lavished upon us. It will teach us not to place undue importance upon this life and all that it presents, but to labour for that which is to come.

A covetous man is a discontented man: a man not satisfied with his lot in the life God has permitted him. Covetousness is the root of all sin: murder, adultery, thieving, slandering. It makes a child dissatisfied with his family heritage. It creates impatience with the restrictions of the Truth, and views them as an infringement of personal rights in self-seeking to personal advantage. It destroys faith, for it doubts Yahweh’s ability to provide the necessities of life, whilst viewing luxuries as life’s vital needs! It is significant that Paul cited this tenth command as a prelude

to his discourse on indwelling sin (Rom. 7:7). Obviously he recognised that selfish desire comprised the root of every evil. However, he had learned to rise above it: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11), and summarised his experience by stating: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1Tim. 6:6-8).

Moses The Mediator — vv. 18-21.

At the conclusion of the proclamation of the ten commandments, the people, moved by fear, plead that they may be permitted to withdraw, and that any further revelations should be made through Moses as mediator. See Deu. 5:23-31; Heb. 12:19.

VERSE 18

"And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking" — The roar of thunder, the flash of lightning, the ear-splitting, strident note of the shophar trumpet, together with the smoking mountain, caused the people to fear and tremble. The Sinaitic mountains are so constructed that the claps of thunder and the long drawn out trumpet notes would reverberate and echo throughout the valleys with terrifying effect. They would be banded from crag to crag, to roar along the wadis and mountains, until lost in the distance.

"And when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off" — In fear and trembling they retired from the barrier at the foot of Horeb, to the shelter of their tents in the valleys leading to the plain (Deu. 5:30). There they did not hear the voice of the angel, which would not have been the case, if the divine voice had sounded as thunder (Deu. 5:27-31). We have given reasons for believing that amid the noise of thunder and the sounding of the trumpet, the Voice of Yahweh must have been as a "still, small voice," penetrating in its power. If it had sounded as

thunder from Sinai which is some five kilometres (8 miles) distant from Horeb, it would have been unclear and unintelligible, distorted by echoes. A fuller account of this incident is given in Deu. 5:22-32.

VERSE 19

"And they said unto Moses" — Representatives of the tribes approached Moses with this request (Deu. 5:23).

"Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" — A fuller account of their request is given in Deu. 5:24-27. Therein they acknowledge that they had witnessed the divine glory, and heard the voice of God out of the midst of the fire. They particularly express fear because of the consuming fire that flamed on the Mount (see Deu. 5:25; 4:24; 9:3). They request that Moses should act as their mediator, promising again to obey God in all that is required of them. Paul uses this experience as a means of demonstrating how much more accessible is God under the covenant of Grace, than under the covenant of Law (Heb. 12:18-21).

VERSE 20

"And Moses said unto the people" — Moses first held colloquy with the angel who authorised him to permit the withdrawal of the people. Indeed the angel, representing Yahweh, acknowledged that they "had spoken well" in making such a request: they recognised the tremendous responsibility of worshipping according to Law. He expressed the hope that the healthy, spiritually motivating fear they now manifested, would continue to activate them (Deu. 5:28-33); for "the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge" (Pro. 1:7).

"Fear not" — Moses attempted to pacify the people with the assurance that there was no cause for total, abject fear, if their hearts were right with Yahweh (see Deu. 5:29).

"For God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" — Yahweh's words to Moses on that score are recorded in Deu.

5:29. So long as the “fear of Yahweh” was before the people they were more likely to keep His commandments. Familiarity with the things of God can cause contempt. We must never allow the privilege of worship granted to us to become a mere matter of routine.

VERSE 21

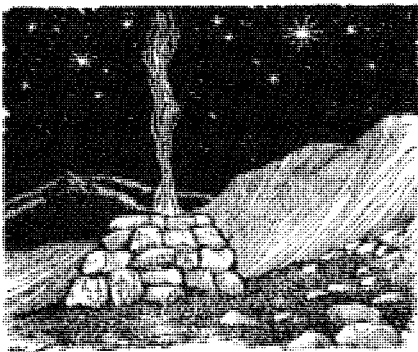
“**And the people stood afar off**” — The people retired to their tents (Deu. 5:30), fearfully watching the apocalypse of glory from afar, being at that distance unable to hear the Voice.

“**And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness**” — Moses remained at the foot of Mount Horeb from whence the angel spake with him (Deu. 5:31). The thick darkness was designed to veil the divine glory which the angel manifested, and which it is not possible for mortal man to view without harm (1Tim. 6:16).

“**Where God was**” — The word *Elohim* is frequently used for an angel as representing the host of heaven. It is clearly stated that Moses received the Law “by the disposition of angels” (Acts 7:53). This angel spake the words of Yahweh, for the divine name was named upon him (Exo. 20:22; 23:20-21).

The Yahweh Altar: Sole Means of Approach — vv. 22-26.

As a basis for further revelation, Moses is told to instruct the people that they must not worship God through idols



of silver or gold. Their approach is to be to an invisible God, symbolised by the “thick darkness” Moses had approached, and the only visible object in such worship is to be the altar, particulars of which are now disclosed to Moses.

VERSE 22

“**And Yahweh said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel**” — Moses now assumed the position of mediator, so that Paul later wrote: “The Law... was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Gal. 3:19).

“**Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven**” — The words were spoken by the angels on earth, but they originated from heaven.

VERSE 23

“**Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold**” — Instead of “with Me,” the Septuagint renders *for yourselves*, making it consistent with the rest of the statement. The Vulgate omits the statement altogether, whereas the Peshitto (Syriac) has both: *for yourselves with Me*. The Berkeley translation has: “Make yourselves no gods of silver or gold to rival Me,” which seems to set forth the correct idea. The first thought of the Israelites, when they imagined that Moses had deserted them, was to make a golden calf for a god.

VERSE 24

“**An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me**” — The word “altar” is *mizbeach* from *zabach* signifying “slaughter.” Such an altar could be made of earth or stone, but in either case it must not be shaped according to man’s device. If it were an altar of earth, it must be heaped up in a simple manner. The elevation symbolised the lifting up of man toward Yahweh; its simplicity directed man’s attention from himself and material things to the God of heaven. In *Eureka* vol. 2, p. 236, Brother Thomas observes: “In the building of altars the will of the Deity was that they should be of earth; or if of stone,

that the stone should not be hewn... Now, all this was significant of the substance, Christ, who was 'the end of the law.' The Holy Spirit signified something that he regarded important in his system of wisdom, in commanding an altar to be made of earth, or of unhewn stone; and in forbidding a tool to be lifted upon it. The things commanded were 'a parable for the time then present' — a riddle, the meaning of which would be found in the realities developed in the Christ. He is declared by Paul to be the christian altar. 'We have an altar,' says he in Heb. 12:10, which in being cleansed by the blood of Jesus is made identical with him. He was the altar of earth, or of unhewn stone; and in his making, or generation, he was begotten, 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the Deity.' To affirm that in his generation he was begotten of Joseph is to 'pollute him.' In admitting his altarship, and at the same time affirming his paternity to be of Joseph, and not of the Deity, as related in Luke, is to make Joseph the builder of an altar of hewn stone — a polluted altar, upon which a man's nakedness had been discovered." See also notes on Exo. 17:15.

"And shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen" — Such offerings were made even before the Law of Moses. They comprised the tokens of dedication of self to God, and of fellowship with Him. For further details see Lev. 1:1-17; 3:1-17.

"In all places where I record My name" — The building of altars was restricted to those places where special theophanies of God occurred. Ultimately Zion became chief among these places, for Yahweh chose it that it might be the main centre of worship. He instructed the people, through Moses, that once they were in the land, He would select a specific site at which to place His name, and to that centre they must turn for worship (see Deu. 12:5, 11, 14, 21, 26; 14:23; 16:5-6, 11; 26:2). Later that site was revealed as Zion (Psa. 132:13-14), and subsequently, the temple was built there (1Kings 8:29, 43;

9:3; 2Chr. 6:6; 7:16; 12:13; Ezra 6:12; Neh. 1:9; Psa. 74:7; 76:2; 78:68; Jer. 7:10-12). Jerusalem shall be the centre of universal worship in the Age to come, the place where Yahweh's name will be recorded. Hence the prophet declared: "Surely the isles shall wait for Me... to bring thy sons from far... unto the name of Yahweh thy God" (Isa. 60:9). Meanwhile, during the epoch of Israel's dispersion, no specific centre is found for worship. The question was put to the Lord by the woman of Samaria, and he replied: "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain (Gerizim), nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (Acts 15:14), and as such constitute the spiritual temple of Yahweh (2Cor. 6:16). See also Mat. 18:10; 1Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:22-23.

"I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" — The word "bless" is the Hebrew *barak*, and comes from a root signifying to kneel as a servant. Yahweh did this to Israel by attending to their needs through angelic ministrations (Heb. 1:14). But in a particular fashion He has served all the elect in that He sent His Son to minister to their needs, and to reveal unto them the great blessing of eternal life. In order to emphasise this, and to demonstrate the need of his followers to act as servants one to the other, the Lord, in the upper room, "laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself;" and so acted the part of a servant to the apostles, calling on them to do likewise. The one kneeling before them in that gracious act of humility was Yahweh manifested in flesh, tending to their needs that they might receive the blessing (see also Luke 22:27; John 13:12-13). The fulness of the blessing is yet to be revealed in Zion (Psa. 128:5; 133:3; 134:3).

VERSE 25

"And if thou wilt make Me an altar of stone" — An altar of earth would be erected at a temporary place of worship; but if something more permanent was

deemed necessary, an altar of stone could be built.

“Thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it” — The stone had to be unhewn stone as shaped by the Creator. Christ is our altar (Heb. 13:10), made in our physical likeness (earth or stone), but of divine parentage or character, unshaped by human devices. The type was fulfilled in the Lord. “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14). “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2Cor. 5:19). “God was manifest in the flesh” (1Tim. 3:16). The beautiful character of Christ was not derived by giving way to the desires of the flesh, but by strength obtained of the Father (Psa. 80:17). “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” could only have been spoken by him, and that because of his divine parentage.

VERSE 26

“Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar” — The altar must not be too high; it must be easily accessible, as is the Christ-altar to all those who seek it. That is the first principle presented by this prohibition; but there is a secondary and more important consideration, now presented by Moses.

“That thy nakedness be not discovered thereon” — The altar that Yahweh would provide (the Lord Jesus — Heb.

13:10) was to be “the seed of the woman,” and not the “seed of man” (Gen. 3:15), as Brother Thomas states in the extract from *Eureka* cited on page 267. God, not man, was to be his Father, and to emphasise that principle this prohibition is introduced into the Law of the Altar. It was important to recognise that man’s state in sin was so feeble, that he could only be rescued out of it by the divine provision of a saviour-altar. Concerning nakedness in worship, Bro. F. W. Barling writes in *Law And Grace*: “Those organs which enable man to procreate might be regarded as endowing him with the same creative power as God himself, a notion akin to the perverted one which formed the basis of the revolting fertility cults of those and later days. Such cults were abhorrent to the Creator, and no altar of His was to be, even in the most incidental way, profaned by those who ministered at it, as were the altars at which pagan priesthoods ministered (often naked) to the fiendish gods of their own devising” (p. 70).

The clothing of Aaron, with special garments down to the feet (Exo. 28:42-43) made this prohibition unnecessary, whilst the prohibition was allowed to stand, not merely as a protest against the Canaanitish forms of worship, but to emphasise the more important principle, that the antitypical Christ-altar would not owe its existence to a human father, for that would have polluted it. The Christ-altar was the specific interposition of God.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

FURTHER JUDGMENTS

The Ten Commandments formed the basis of the Mosaic Covenant (Exo. 34:28; Deu. 4:13), whereas the additional judgments now outlined comprised portion of the Book of the Covenant (Exo. 24:7). Both the Ten Commandments, and the Book of the Covenant, provided the nucleus upon which the rest of the Law was based. All this was proclaimed from Horeb: the Ten

Commandments to the people, and the Book of the Covenant to Moses. Later the Ten Commandments were inscribed on stone and given to Moses (Exo. 31:18). As harsh as the judgments of the Law might appear, in the Christ covenant capital offences are treated even more severely (Heb. 10:28-30). Therein unreasonable hatred is considered as equivalent to murder (1John 2:9,11; 3:15; 4:20); anger without due cause is treated as the intent to murder (Mat. 5:21-22). The respect that the Law demanded of children towards parents is made subordinate to that due to Christ (Luke 14:26; Mat. 10:37). The Law permitted retaliation in non-capital offences, but Jesus, whilst recognising that the Law was just, asked that love and forgiveness prevail (Mat. 5:38-44). He warned that if his followers do not do so, the law of retaliation will be applied against them at the Judgment Seat (Mat. 7:1-2; cp. Rev. 16:6; 18:6-7). See how the same law of retaliation is applied in the exercise of love (Luke 6:38), and in the consideration that should be shown towards servants etc. (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1). In short, the believer in Christ will apply the principles of the Law more stringently than the Mosaic Code required. He will go beyond the Law, and seek to apply the spirit of its commandments. Thus, in Christ, he is not so much delivered from the Law, as delivered from its curse; the Law remains as a guide and a teacher now.

**Concerning Masters And Servants —
vv. 1-11.**

The Law carefully legislates against abuse, when an individual, through necessity, has to sell himself into slavery. These rules apply only to Hebrew slaves (Lev. 25:44-46), and are designed to protect their individual rights. It is important to observe the typical or prophetic application of the various laws.

VERSE 1

“Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them” — The people had withdrawn to their tents, and the angel now addresses Moses, delivering unto him these judgments. The word is *mishpatim* and signifies “verdicts” or “decrees.” Given whilst the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were more particu-

larly to be the basis of the social foundation of the new order to be established when they were settled in the promised land (Deu. 4:14).

VERSE 2

“If thou buy an Hebrew servant” — An example of the application of this judgment is given in Jer. 34. Many poor Hebrews had been compelled to sell themselves to their more wealthy brethren, and the latter were warned against going beyond the limitations of service set down by this decree. It was because they failed to carry out Yahweh’s requirements in that regard, that the nation was taken into captivity (Jer. 34:18-20). Hebrews became slaves through poverty (Lev. 25:35), and sometimes also through crime (Exo. 22:3).

“Six years he shall serve: and in the

seventh he shall go out free for nothing"

— The seventh year referred to in this verse is the seventh year of his servitude, and not the sabbatical year.

This is a parable of Yahweh's bond-servants. In Romans 6, Paul sets forth the analogy of God's servants as those who have been purchased from the slave-owner Sin (the flesh) to serve Righteousness (Rom. 6:18). Such servitude has continued for six days of a thousand years each (cp. 2Pet. 3:8), but for those who have laboured faithfully for God it will terminate in the glorious freedom of the millennium when they shall be rewarded with eternal life (Rom. 6:23).

VERSE 3

"If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself" — Under normal conditions servitude brought no gain. A Hebrew might sell himself through poverty, and would receive food and clothing during the six years of his service, but that would be all. He came in "with his body" (see margin), and he went out with his body.

"If he were married, then his wife shall go out with him" — If he were married when he went into servitude, she went out with him.

VERSE 4

"If his master have given him a wife" — If the slave was unmarried when he went into servitude, or if his wife died, and his master then gave him a wife from among his female slaves, the master was not to lose his property in his female slave by reason of having permitted the marriage. When the man claimed his freedom at the end of the sixth year, he was to "go out" alone.

"And she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself" — The children belonged primarily to the mother, and therefore remained with her.

VERSE 5

"And if the servant shall plainly say,

I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free"

— Masters were commanded to treat their slaves as hired servants, bearing them every consideration (Lev. 25:39-43). If a slave was well treated by his master, and had married and obtained a family, he might well prefer to remain in servitude. Very often the condition of slaves in a good household was better than that of free men in the hurly-burly of life. This was the case in less enlightened ages with negroes and similar slaves, and would certainly be so in a home governed by the Word, in which the head of the house recognised that he has a Master in heaven to whom he must give account.

This legislation concerning slaves not only regulated life in Israel, but constituted a prophecy of Yahweh's purpose with His people. They were in servitude to sin. They brought nothing in except their body, and it was certain they would take nothing out (see 1Tim. 6:8). They might have received benefits during life, in wives, sons and daughters, but when the time of release came, having fulfilled the term of their service, they obtained freedom only for themselves.

But if a slave had been given a wife, and had gained sons and daughters, he was permitted to remain with them in perpetual servitude; in which case he waived the opportunity to be freed.

That is exactly what the Lord Jesus did. He came as Yahweh's suffering servant, upheld by his heavenly Master who delighted in him (Isa. 42:1). During the period of his servitude, he obtained a wife and children. The wife constituted "Jerusalem which is above" (Gal. 4:26; Rev. 21:9-10), the children, the members of various ecclesias concerning whom he declared: "Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:13).

When the time of "release" came, he refused to accept it, and instead continues to serve his Master in heaven on behalf of his wife and family, in loving service both to them and to Yahweh. A slave who had come to love his master, his wife and chil-

dren, would appreciate the motives of Christ.

VERSE 6

“Then his master shall bring him unto the judges”— The word “judges” is *elohim*, the same word so frequently translated “God,” and is the word rendered “angels” in Psalm 8:5. The term is used for the administrators of Yahweh’s Law in Israel, because in doing so they became His representatives (see Psa. 82:6).

Notice also the Lord’s use of this title in John 10:34-36. He asked the Jewish leaders who accused him of blasphemy because he claimed to be the Son of God, how they could reconcile their charge with the fact that “those to whom the Word of God came,” are called “gods” (*elohim*) in the O.T. Scriptures! The Lord could certainly claim the title, for he was the complete manifestation of the Father.

As in the legislation before us, the willing slave was presented before earthly *elohim* (the judges), antitypically the Lord Jesus Christ was brought to the heavenly Elohim (see 1Pet. 1:12; Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 1:9).

“He shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post”— The slave was brought to the entrance of his master’s house, its most prominent and public part, and affixed by the ear to it, symbolising that he was ready to hear and obey all that was asked of him. Figuratively the Lord did likewise in regard to his Father’s “house,” the ecclesia. He is identified with “the door” (Jn. 10:7; 14:2; Heb. 3:6).

“And his master shall bore his ear through with an aul”— The word for “aul” is *martsea* from a root to *pierce*. The typology of the act proclaimed that the servant, or slave, had voluntarily agreed to serve that house forever, and therefore his ear was permanently opened to all that was required of him in relation to it. The type is used of the Lord Jesus Christ. In a Messianic Psalm (Psa. 40:6-8), prophetically setting forth the principles of Christ’s sacrifice, the Spirit is represented as saying:

“Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire;

*Mine ears hast Thou opened:
Burnt offering and sin offering hast
Thou not required.*

*Then said I, Lo, I come;
In the volume of the book it is written
of me,*

*I delight to do Thy will, O my God:
Yea, Thy law is within my heart.”*

These words are cited in Hebrews 10:5-8 and applied to the Lord. The statement: “Mine ears hast Thou opened,” is rendered by the R.V. as “Mine ear hast Thou pierced.” Pierced ears, or “dugged ears”(see A.V. mg) are ears opened to receive the instruction and teaching of God, and because of this, become part of a body prepared” to do the will of the Father. Hence the explanatory rendering of Heb. 10:5. The Lord’s willingness to serve the Father because of his great love for both Him and his Bride is thus prophetically expressed in the ordinance concerning willing slaves provided for in the Law. Hence, here again, the Law becomes a “shadow of good things to come”(Heb. 10:1).

“And he shall serve him for ever”— Josephus and others maintain that the law of the jubilee release overruled this enactment, but there is no confirmation of this in scripture. If the willing servant loved his master as well as his wife, he would doubtless prefer to continue in association with him beyond any period of jubilee, for servitude under those circumstances becomes a joy. When a person finds pleasure in his labour, he does not want release from it, no matter how exacting or how difficult the work might be. His joy is in its completion and in the pride of accomplishment. Most of the industrial strife of today stems from complete boredom in work, in the refusal to find pleasure in labour.

What does the Psalm say? “I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart” (Psa. 40:8). It was this that made the Lord’s offering so acceptable, for as the Psalm implies, Yahweh does not desire ritual “sacrifice and offer-

ing" in the absence of such an attitude. He desires necessary sacrifices, only when properly presented: salted with the offerer's delight in performing that in which God takes pleasure. Love of God will motivate an offerer to render such a service.

Perhaps we can see a little more in the statement, "He shall serve him *for ever*," when applied to the substance of the divine purpose (of which the Law was but the shadow). How could the servant serve his master for ever? It was a physical impossibility, for in the course of nature both would die. But what of those who have been "bought with a price," and constitute "the slaves of righteousness?" For how long is their service? If you are among their number (Rom. 6:18), O reader, you have been called to an eternal service. So Paul concludes: "For the wages of sin (our previous slave owner — see v. 17) is death; but the gift of God (the gracious gift that He extends to those servants who love Him, and whom He loves in return) is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Christ loved his Father, and his *captive spouse*, and the children that were given him, and would not be released from his undertaking, but engaged to serve in it for ever (Isa. 42:1-4). Great cause have we to render unstinted service back to God. We have every reason to love our Bridegroom espoused during the period of our common servitude, and to rejoice in the love he has shown towards us. Christ told his apostles, "I will not leave you comfortless" (John 14:18). In that fact, in the assurance that he will extend himself to help us in every circumstance, we can reach to the peace which passes the understanding of man (John 14:27). As the Lord has been prepared to remain in servitude to help us, we can look forward to the future with every confidence.

VERSE 7

"And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant" — There are different Hebrew words to denote "maidservant" (ct. Exo. 20:10). Here the word is *amah*,

and signifies a female servant. The term is sometimes used deprecatorily in the spirit of humility (1Sam. 1:11, 16; 1Kings 1:17), but in the present context, it denotes one acquired to be made the concubine, or secondary wife, of the purchaser. If this intention were carried out, then she was entitled to her status and maintenance as a wife during her lifetime, even though her husband might take another legitimate wife (cp. v. 10, and see the term used in this sense, for married concubines in Gen. 20:17; Jud. 9:18).

The same Hebrew word is rendered "bondwoman" in Gen. 21:10, 12-13; and "handmaid" in Exo. 23:12; Ruth 3:9. Most significantly of all, the word is used of Mary, the mother of the Lord, in her relationship with Yahweh (Psa. 86:16; 116:16). That faithful young woman recognised her status when the news was brought to her by Gabriel that she was to be the mother of the Lord. She willingly responded: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word" (Luke 1:38). By this means, the Lord became the "born servant of Yahweh." Thus the very ordinances of the Law shadowed forth the gospel.

"She shall not go out as the menservants do" — If she is married during the term of servitude, she is to remain in that marriage all her life, under the protective care of her husband. Her term as such did not cease at the end of six years' service. Marriage, even under those circumstances, was for life.

VERSE 8

"If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself" — The word for "betrothed" is not the normal word, but is *ya'adoth*, rendered "espoused" in the R.V., signifying, according to Strong's, "to fix upon her by agreement, designated, appointed." The statement evidently means that the master purchased her with the purpose of marriage, so in a sense it was a tentative betrothal, but not one that was completely binding. For example, through extreme poverty, a man might have sold his daugh-

ter when she was quite young, to one whom he hoped would marry her when she grew up. But if that did not eventuate, the Law legislated that the master must arrange for her release.

Note that Yahweh applied this very law to Israel, representing Himself as purchasing her as a young girl with the ultimate purpose of marriage (Eze. 16:8).

“Then let her be redeemed” — The word is not the usual *goel*, but *padah*, “to sever.” The Hebrew is: “He shall allow her redemption.” He must treat her with every care and consideration, seeking someone else to purchase her, or allowing her to go free.

“To sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power” — In fact, Yahweh did this to His “Bride,” but only because she had wantonly turned to strange nations, and spiritually had played the harlot.

“Seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her” — He had purchased her with the object of marriage, and had not carried it out. His responsibilities towards her did not cease even though he had determined not to proceed with the proposal of marriage; the matter must be terminated properly as prescribed by law.

VERSE 9

“And if he have betrothed her unto his son” — A man might purchase the maiden for this purpose. In fact, that is what Yahweh did in providing a Bride for His Son, for “we are bought with a price.”

“He shall deal with her after the manner of daughters” — Such a maiden was given the status of a daughter, and therefore was taken into the family of the one purchasing her. So the Law made provision for the redemption of the Lamb’s Bride.

VERSE 10

“If he take him another wife” — This is supposing he marry the maiden he has purchased, and now desires to take another wife.

“Her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish”

— She shall retain all the privileges granted her when she became the man’s wife. The “duty of marriage” includes shelter and right of cohabitation. Whatever the man might do, her status as a wife must be upheld.

VERSE 11

“And if he do not these three unto her” — The three things referred to are those expressed in vv. 8-10: either [1] marry her himself; [2] marry her to his son; [3] care for her if he marries another wife.

“Then shall she go out free without money” — She shall not be retained as a drudge, a mere maidservant without her rightful status, but shall be permitted to leave the home a free woman, without payment for her freedom.

Laws Concerning Physical Injuries — vv. 12-36.

The sixth commandment made clear that unlawful killing was to be strictly prohibited. The rules now outlined set forth judgments concerning capital offences (vv. 12-17), and non-capital offences (vv. 18-36). The penalty to be observed in regard to capital punishment, was usually death by stoning.

• Capital Offences — vv. 12-17.

VERSE 12

“He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall surely be put to death” — The Law prescribed death for murder. Christ went further, and warned that “whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (see Mat. 5:21-22). When the Jewish leaders cried concerning Christ, “His blood be on us and on our children,” their words were taken very literally by God and resulted in the overthrow of the State (Mat. 26:52). See the reiterated warnings against unwarranted anger in Eph. 4:26; Titus 1:7; 1John 2:9; 4:20. So homicide was punishable with death, as it will be also at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1John 3:15).

VERSE 13

“And if a man lie not in wait” — The Law established a distinction between deliberate and accidental homicide.

“But God deliver him into his hand” — This did not mean that God deliberately did this, but that He permitted it to happen. All things are known of God (Luke 12:6-7), but for His inscrutable purpose, He permits certain circumstances to occur that He could prevent if He desired to intervene. The principle of individual volition, and of freewill, which is incidental to His relationships with humanity at present, does not permit Him to so interfere, and things are left to what men call “chance” (see Ecc. 9:11). Thus we must not presume on God’s protection, but exercise care. If we flout the laws of God or man, we may well suffer the consequences. Meanwhile, the expressions of this verse relate to accidental deaths, whilst at the same time recognising that God knows all. Of this, a true Israelite will be always conscious.

“Then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee” — The appointment of these cities of refuge (see Num. 35:11, 22-28; Deu. 4:41; Josh. 20:2) enabled justice and mercy to be admirably blended, whilst setting forth principles illustrative of the gospel (see Heb. 6:17-19).

VERSE 14

“But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile” — The Hebrew is *ormah*, which signifies “trickery,” and thus suggests a scheming in complete disregard of the will of God as revealed in the restrictions of the Law (see Num. 15:30). It relates to a man who in fierce anger determines to take the law into his own hands, to exact the vengeance that he feels himself a right to demand.

“Thou shalt take him from Mine altar, that he may die” — The most sacred associations will not save him. After all, it would be somewhat incongruous for one who has spurned the will of God in exacting vengeance, to seek the help of God to avoid the punishment that

God himself has decreed for such an offence! See the case of Joab who was completely irreligious when the Law of Yahweh stood between him and his ambitions, but rushed to the altar (though in vain) to escape the just punishment that was ultimately inflicted upon him (1Kings 2:28-34).

VERSE 15

“As he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death” — The Law promised that long life would be the reward of those who suitably honoured their parents (Exo. 20:12; Eph. 6:2-3); now it legislates that merely to offer them the indignity of a blow, and so to ignore this provision of the Ten Commandments, was punishable with death (see Pro. 30:17).

VERSE 16

“And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death” — See 1Tim. 1:10. Joseph suffered this indignity (Gen. 37:28), and so did Jesus (Luke 22:4-6, 48), Judas dying as a result.

Such kidnapping is described in Deu. 24:7 as “making merchandise of him,” an expression used by Peter (2Pet. 2:3) to describe the effect of the heretical doctrines of false teachers. They brought their dupes into captivity with the object of getting rich.

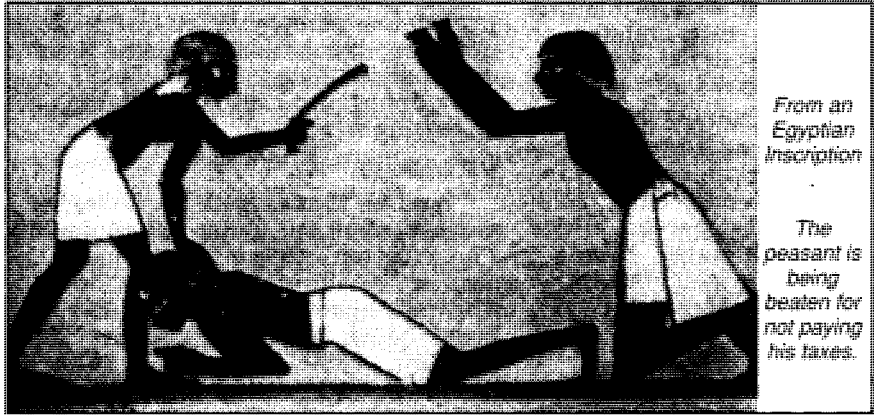
VERSE 17

“And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death” — The word “curseth” is *qalal*, “to make light, despise, revile, etc.” There are constant warnings against this sin (see Lev. 20:9; Pro. 20:20; 30:11, 17). The Law is cited in Mat. 15:4; Mk. 7:10). This and blasphemy against Yahweh were the two sins of the tongue punishable with death (Lev. 24:16).

• *Non-capital Offences* — vv. 18-36.

VERSE 18

“And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his



*From an
Egyptian
inscription*

*The
peasant is
being
beaten
for
not paying
his taxes.*

fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed”

— In assault, the normal rule was that of strict compensation (vv. 24-25), but where an attack was so severe as to cause a person to take to his bed, so as to be “hospitalised,” additional payment was required. How much better is it to cultivate love and consideration for others, rather than the spirit of vengeance, for “love is the fulfilling of the Law.”

“If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit” — If he recover sufficiently to leave his bed, and get about with a stick to lean on, his hurt was not to be brought up against the injurer, for the injured party had himself contributed to it (cp. v. 18).

“Only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed” — The injured party was to receive compensation for loss of time and medical expenses required in his cure.

VERSE 20

“And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod” — This was the instrument normally used for correction. See Pro. 10:13; 13:24. The rods wherewith Egyptian slaves were chastised appear upon the monuments. They were long canes, and could be used cruelly. It is not unknown for criminals to die under the bastinado.

“And he die under his hand; he

shall be surely punished” — The penalty of homicide of slaves was not clearly defined, each case being judged on its merits. Hebrew slaves were expected to be treated especially well, and their status was nearly on a par with that of hired servants (see Lev. 25:39-41). A slave-owner, therefore, had to be careful as to how he treated those under his care.

VERSE 21

“Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his money” — The slave being the property of the owner constituted presumptive evidence that the latter did not intend to kill him, but only to punish him. The fact that he was denied his services for some days due to the severity of the punishment, so that the slave-owner experienced some financial loss, was considered sufficient punishment. On the other hand, slaves had to recognise their responsibility to serve their masters properly, and so avoid the severe punishment that could result otherwise. We need to do likewise in regard to our Master.

VERSE 22

“If men strive” — Under the law of Christ they are warned against doing so (2Tim. 2:24).

“And hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her” —

Women naturally, are apt to interfere in the quarrels of their men, and run the risk of injury by so doing. Because of this the Law warned against men striving at all, because the repercussions can be extremely evil as in the case cited in this verse (see also Pro. 30:33).

“And yet no mischief follow” — The woman does not die as a result. The word “mischief” is often used in that relation (Gen. 42:4, 38; 44:29).

“He shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him” — Though the man might be considered only half responsible for the “mischief” that ensued seeing both men were guilty of “striving,” he had to pay compensation for the miscarriage. In view of this judgment, a man engaged in such strife had best retire from so doing if a woman with child intervened. Otherwise tragedy and loss could result.

“And he shall pay as the judges determine” — He was wholly at the mercy of the injured father, and if he thought the sum demanded was excessive he could appeal to the judges. Here the word is *paliylim*, and signifies magistrates. Cp. with “judges,” the *elohim* of v. 6.

VERSE 23

“And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life” — This statement does not mean that if the woman in question died, the life of the one responsible was taken in consequence; it means that he would be compelled to pay compensation according to the damage suffered. This is shown in the parallel passage, Lev. 24:18, 21: “He that killeth a beast shall make it good: beast for beast... He that killeth a beast, he shall *restore it*.” It would accomplish nothing if the injured party killed a beast of the offending party in retaliation for his own loss, but it would advantage him if due and proper compensation were paid. And that is what is meant in the verse before us.

The only crimes which were not atoned for by monetary compensation were capital offences, like murder (cp. Num. 35:31). The law of compensation

provided the basis for true justice. It not only eliminated the need of jails, but reduced crime drastically, as it would do if enforced today. Where there is no fear of punishment, the crime rate must inevitably increase; but if a person were compelled to make compensation for every loss his criminal action imposed on others, it would be to the good of all.

VERSE 24

“Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” — This law is further cited in Mat. 5:38, and, in accordance with the comments above, indicates that compensation should be commensurate with the crime.

VERSE 25

“Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” — These enactments form the basis of justice to be meted out through adequate compensation, and were not intended to be carried out literally. How, for example, could one tell the exact measure of the hardness of a blow, or the severity of a wound, so as to administer one of equal hurt! A literal “eye for an eye” would be flagrantly unjust for a one-eyed man; and certainly it would not be for the public good to augment the number of mutilated people in society. The Law demanded equal compensation, so that “the punishment fit the crime,” and these are legal terms expressing this.

VERSE 26

“And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye’s sake” — This legislation would make the unmerciful slave owner more humane and considerate, lest he lose his valuable slave-help.

VERSE 27

“And if he smite out his manservant’s tooth, or his maidservant’s tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth’s sake” — Repeated as in v. 26, to emphasize that judgment must be always just; again, this reminds masters of the need for

consideration towards their servants. See Eph. 6:8; Col. 4:1.

VERSE 28

“If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit” — The ox, in such a case, would suffer the same penalty as a human murderer. Once dead, its body was to be considered as accursed, and the owner had to suffer the monetary loss of his valuable animal.

VERSE 29

“But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death” — If the owner knew that his ox was notoriously dangerous, requiring supervision, and this had not been effected, the blame rested upon the owner who, by neglect, had contributed to a homicide, and was “guilty of death.”

VERSE 30

“If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him” — A man guilty of death under the terms of v. 29 could save his life by paying due compensation, such as was not permitted for one guilty of murder (Num. 35:31-32). As a matter of fact, except for first degree murder, there were hardly any circumstances under the Law when death was enforced as a punishment.

VERSE 31

“Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him” — Such a ransom was also allowed if the slain person were a son or daughter. Most likely, if the family asked too high a price, the judges were called in for a settlement (v. 22).

VERSE 32

“If the ox shall push a manservant

or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned” — This was the amount of money paid to Judas for the betrayal of the Lord (Mat. 26:15; cp. Zech. 11:12-13), and, in the prophetic type, it was an amount appropriate to the circumstances. In order to effect the atonement on behalf of believers, the Lord “took upon him the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:7), and in his death was figuratively gored by a bull. The leaders of Jewry who secured his death are likened to “bulls of Bashan,” ready to attack him (Psa. 22:12-13).

However, though the leaders of Jewry looked upon the Lord as a nonentity, he was actually the Son of Yahweh, and the Law made provision for compensation to be made in such a case.

But the nation refused this, saying, “His blood be upon us and our children.” Through the priests, the amount paid was that of a mere slave, and not satisfactory to the Father. In fact, the nation was guilty of murder (Acts 7:52). As a consequence, the political death of the nation followed in AD70. The very Law upon which its leaders rested prescribed the penalty which removed both it and them.

VERSE 33

“And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein” — Pits in the ground were dug as storage places for water or grain. If left uncovered, they could be dangerous.

VERSE 34

“The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his” — The landowner had to assume responsibility over his property, and so reimburse the owner of the animal which fell into the uncovered pit. When this was done, he could claim the body of the dead beast. Apparently there was the right of open range for the livestock. The Law taught the need of thoughtful consideration for others.

VERSE 35

“And if one man’s ox hurt another’s, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide” — Out on open ranges animals grazed together, and one ox might kill another. In that case justice was meted out to both the owners.

VERSE 36

“Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own” — If the ox doing the damage was known to be dangerous, its owner had to take full responsibility for its action; he must pay the full value of the ox in compensation, though he could keep the carcass. In disputed cases, there would be witnesses called before the judges, and in

such decisions, proof of serious negligence was considered important.

There are spiritual lessons to be learned from these judgments. They underline the principle of personal responsibility. A person was held accountable if others were adversely affected through his negligence.

In 1Cor. 9:9, Paul shows that the law relating to oxen had a spiritual application to the preaching of the gospel. So also with the principles advanced above. It is good for a spiritual shepherd to be diligent in “knowing the state of his flocks, and looking well to his herds” (Pro. 27:23). Such an one will learn to restrain dangerous animals under his care so that they do not bring him loss ultimately.

See how the Lord, as the Good Shepherd, accounted to his Master in heaven for the whole of the flock placed in his care: John 17:12.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

LAWS RELATING TO PROPERTY RIGHTS
AND SOCIAL EVILS

This chapter continues the judgments which Moses is instructed to place before the people. As the laws on capital punishment point to the sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” this chapter contains legislation concerning property as relating to the eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” It reveals that man’s attitude to his fellow-man is based on his attitude to God and His law.

Laws Concerning Property Rights —
vv. 1-15.

The right of private property is recognised by the rules set out for the guidance of Israel, and proper reimbursement is to be made when those rights are trespassed.

VERSE 1

“If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox” — The first

impressive feature of this law is its soundness in dealing with thieving. It demands compensation paid to the one suffering loss, a far more just provision than imprisonment which is the normal Gentile punishment. Who advantages from a person being placed in a jail? Nobody; in fact many suffer unwittingly on behalf of the thief, for generally taxes are required to upkeep the criminal. But let him be set at work to compensate those who have suf-

ferred loss through his crime, and all benefit. Notice also the justice revealed in the penalties laid down. It requires more criminal impudence in a thief to carry off an ox than to steal a sheep, beside which, the loss factor was greater. Thus the crime was visited with a heavier penalty. Five oxen had to be restored for one stolen. Such a penalty would be quite profitable to the one suffering loss — if the thief were discovered.

“And four sheep for a sheep” — This penalty of the law applied when David was faced by Nathan in the case of a poor man whose “one little ewe lamb” was stolen by a ruthless rich man. In legislating upon the case (in fact against himself) David declared that such a man was worthy of death, but, in any case, he should pay fourfold according to the Law (2Sam. 12:6). In giving this decision, David adjudicated upon his own sin, and in a tragic way paid for the stealing of Bathsheba by the lives of four of his own children — though they deserved to die. The children in question were the unnamed son of Bathsheba (2Sam. 12:18), Amnon (ch. 13:29), Absalom, (ch. 18:14), and Adonijah (1Kings 2:25).

This same law was invoked by Zachaeus when he promised the Lord that he would “restore fourfold” anything that he had wrongfully taken from others (Luke 19:8).

VERSE 2

“If a thief be found breaking up” — Breaking up defines forcible entry, by digging through a wall into another’s property. Reference to such an action is made in Matt. 24:43. For a spiritual application, see John 10:1.

“And be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him” — If the intruder was caught in the act and slain, there was no guilt to the one killing him. It was treated as justifiable homicide. In such a case, the avenger of blood was not entitled to proceed against the slayer.

VERSE 3

“If the sun be risen upon him, there

shall be blood shed for him” — If the breaking and entering had been attempted in the darkness of night, the defender was excused if, in his defence of his property, he mortally injured the thief. But such violence was inexcusable in the daytime, and the avenger of blood would be justified in proceeding against him, forcing him to the City of Refuge where the case could be properly heard by the judges.

“For he should make full restitution” — Being caught, the thief should make full restitution, by restoring double (v. 4).

“If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft” — If he had not sufficient to pay, he could be sold. How much better is this law than the modern practice of jailing the criminal, whilst the victim is forced into bankruptcy!

VERSE 4

“If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double” — If the thief was caught before he had killed or disposed of the animals stolen he could restore double instead of fourfold as in v. 1. He thereby lost the amount he had expected to gain, and so felt the power of divine justice (see Isa. 40:2; Jer. 16:18; Rev. 18:6).

VERSE 5

“If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man’s field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution” — This legislated in regard to the crime of trespassing. It ordered that the guilty party, without reference to the quality of the crop damaged, should forfeit an equal amount of his own best produce.

VERSE 6

“If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution” — Such rules as

this inculcated care in regard to the property of others, and encouraged respect for the rights of fellow-Israelites.

VERSE 7

“If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man’s house: if the thief be found, let him pay double” —

This and the following verses to v. 13, legislated in regard to goods held in trust. If these were stolen, a search had to be made for the thief who then had to make restitution and pay the prescribed penalty (cp. Pro. 6:30-31).

If the trustee was found guilty, he had to make an atonement offering in addition to paying the penalty laid down (Lev. 6:1-6). In a spiritual sense, Israel was found in that category (Jer. 2:26), and had to “pay double” as under the Law (Jer. 16:18).

It is significant that Lev. 6:2 aligns trusteeship with “fellowship.” How often have brethren betrayed the Truth left in trust with them, and so “committed a trespass... in fellowship.”

VERSE 8

“If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour’s goods” —

The word for “judges” is *ha elohim* “the mighty ones” as in Exo. 21:6, and in contrast to v. 12 these elohistic judges determined matters of conscience in accordance with the Law of the oath (vv. 10-11) by which the trustee restored the equivalent of the amount stolen without additional fee.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Elohim, as his ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), will hold us accountable for the manner in which we have conducted ourselves as trustees of that committed unto us (Mat. 13:49; 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-26). Note Paul’s exhortation on that “delivered to his trust” (1Tim. 1:11, 18) which is today in our care (2Tim. 2:2). We must guard the Truth against those “thieves” who would rob it of its power (John 10:1).

VERSE 9

“For all manner of trespass” — The word is *pesha*, “revolt,” a different word from that appearing in Lev. 6, and here relates to the crime of embezzlement.

“Whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his” — The Hebrew is more dramatic. It reads: “...which one says. *That is it!*” as though the speaker was actually pointing to the embezzled article.

“The cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour” — Here, again, the word for “judges” is *ha elohim*. The magistrates in Israel administered the Law of Yahweh, and therefore became His representatives, as well as representatives of the Elohim of heaven on behalf of whom they acted. See Exo. 18:15-19; 21:6; 22:8-9; Psa. 82:1, 6; John 10:34-35.

VERSE 10

“If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it” —

If such an animal could not be found, and there was no certainty that it had been stolen (see v. 12), then restitution must be made. This rule is different from the one concerning money or goods in v. 7. It was probably reckoned that shepherds and herdsmen could generally prevent the theft or hurt of an animal, whereas money is more easily taken.

Again, the spiritual lesson is apparent. Yahweh has delivered His flock into the care of those appointed to take the oversight thereof, and will hold them accountable for the safety of its members (1Pet. 5:1-4). Christ accounted to his Father for the state of the flock placed in his care (John 17:12).

VERSE 11

“Then shall an oath of Yahweh be between them both” — The trustee was required to proclaim his innocence before Yahweh. This principle will be applied at

the Judgment Seat of Christ, as to the way in which the Truth has been maintained in our hands.

“That he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour’s goods” — That he has not made improper use of the property against the wishes of the owner.

“And the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good”

— The declaration of innocence having been made before Yahweh, should be accepted as genuine. It was done so in faith, recognising that Yahweh will deal with all liars (Rev. 2:18).

VERSE 12

“And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof” — Restitution was required if the animal was taken whilst being held in trust. See Gen. 31:39.

VERSE 13

“If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn” — If an animal were slain by a wild beast, the trustee was free from guilt if he could bring evidence of the killing. Note that Laban did not grant Jacob that concession (Gen. 31:39).

VERSE 14

“And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good” — A person was responsible for that which he borrowed. If it was hurt or stolen whilst the borrower was absent, he must assume responsibility. This would help curtail borrowing. Christ advocated liberality in lending for necessary purposes (Mat. 5:42; Luke 6:24-35. Cp. Psa. 37:26; 112:5; Pro. 19:17, and the warning of Pro. 22:27).

VERSE 15

“But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire” — Damage to a thing hired was not to be made good by the hirer, since it was

loaned with the profit motive in mind, and the possibility of damage must form part of the calculation upon which the amount of the hire was determined. The *Amplified Bible* renders the last part of this sentence as “the damage is included in its hire.”

Laws Concerning Evil Practices

— v. 16 to ch. 23:9.

The judgments now listed relate to punishments for various social evils. In legislating regarding them, the balanced character of Yahweh is revealed. He is severe in punishing evil (vv. 18-20), compassionate towards the needy (vv. 21-27), desiring of respect and obedience (vv. 28-30), holy in all His ways (v. 31-ch. 23:9).

VERSE 16

“And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her” — Darby renders “entice” as *seduce*. In this case, the girl became a consenting party, and the judgment had relation to the crime of seduction if they were not betrothed. If they were betrothed to others, the action was treated as adultery, and both parties were put to death (see Deu. 22:23-24). See the seriousness of this latter crime when considered in a spiritual sense (2Cor. 11:1-3; James 4:4; Rev. 2:14).

“He shall surely endow her to be his wife” — A dowry was normally paid for a wife (cp. 1Sam. 18:25). In the case cited in the verse before us, the dowry was placed at fifty shekels of silver (Deu. 22:29). By this means, the man attempted to purchase his redemption through the grace of the father.

VERSE 17

“If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him” — The father might consider the man to be totally unsuited for his daughter, in which case he had the right to prohibit the marriage.

“He shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins” — A set sum for such a dowry is not listed so that evidently the amount to be paid would be determined according to the circumstances.

VERSE 18

“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live” — Spiritualism was strictly forbidden (see Deu. 18:10-11; Lev. 19:26,31; 20:27; 1Sam. 28:3,9). It was professedly a league with powers in rebellion against Yahweh. How far it was delusion, and how far imposture, is difficult to say. The word *kashaph* signifies “to whisper,” signifying a spell, to enchant, by which the “witch,” like modern spiritualists, was supposed to talk with the dead. But as the dead are unconscious and unknowing, how could this possible! Hence, witchcraft, or spiritualism, is totally opposed to the principles of the Truth, and those practising it are said to have “familiar spirits” (Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deu. 18:11; 1Sam. 28:3, 9; 2Kings 21:6; 23:24; Isa. 8:19; 19:3). This is from the Hebrew *oboth*, a word rendered “bottles” (Job 32:19), and likened to the belly.

The Septuagint renders the word as “ventriloquists,” apparently because such speak from the belly, or at least the sounds seem to derive therefrom.

Strong derives the word from a common root with *ab*, “father,” reminding one of the words of the Lord: “Ye are of your father the devil,” by which he referred to the flesh. Paul adds: “whose god is their belly,” since speaking inwardly from the belly, the spiritualist expressed the feelings of the flesh. By the delusion of incantations and magical songs, witches, or spiritualists, claimed to speak with the dead, so as to give answers to future or unknown things. They used a special tone of voice, described by Isaiah as “chirping” or “muttering” (Isa. 8:19; 29:4), to help delude their dupes.

In treating with this word, Gesenius states that the “familiar spirit” said to “possess” such a person “specially denotes a python, or a soothsaying daemon.” Reference to such is found in Acts 16:16 where a demented woman, described as following Paul and crying out, is said to have been “possessed with a spirit of divination.” In the margin, however, the Greek is given as *of Python*. Python was the name of a fabled serpent dwelling in

Pytho, at the foot of Mt. Parnassus, guarding the oracle of Delphi. In Greek mythology it was slain by Apollo, and thence the name was transferred to Apollo. Diviners, soothsayers and ventriloquists were popularly regarded as inspired by Apollo.

Witchcraft or spiritualism is not always complete imposture. In *Odology*, Bro. Thomas points out that it is possible for the “hidden spectral impressions of a seeker” to be so impressed on the sensorium of a highly sensitive medium, that she is able to see, as it were, the image of a person long since dead because the impression of that dead person remains vividly to the mind of the seeker. Hence any “message,” is said to be a message from the dead. This is the explanation of any real powers of clairvoyance such as might be claimed. It is not that the medium has any power to speak with the dead whose very “thoughts have perished,” but that the memory of such a person is so powerfully impressed upon the mind of the seeker as to be transmitted on the sensitive and responsive mind of the medium. That was the case, we believe with Saul and the witch of Endor.

Isaiah condemned the practice of a people who should seek the living God, turning, instead, to the dead (Isa. 8:19). In this same passage, he aligns those claiming to have “familiar spirits” with the clergy, and urges that their teaching should be compared and rejected in the light of “the law and the testimony” (see Isa. 8:19-20). As the people of Israel were commanded that they should “not suffer a witch to live,” so spiritual Israelites should resist the teaching of the clergy who claim to speak for the dead.

VERSE 19

“Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death” — Such vile perversions were practised in connection with some pagan religions, and are some of the “vile affections” to which man has given himself (Rom. 1:26). This disgusting practice of bestiality is said to have formed part of Egyptian religion (*Herodotus*, 2:46). There was to be no toleration for such actions.

VERSE 20

“He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto Yahweh only, he shall be utterly destroyed” — Yahweh will not share the loyalty and love due to Him with any other. The flouting of this principle later caused the downfall of Israel at Moab (Num. 25:2). All semblance of false worship was to be abandoned. Persons attempting to instigate or perpetuate relics of pagan religion in Israel were to be publicly executed.

VERSE 21

“Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him” — The word “vex” is from the Hebrew *yanah* and signifies “to rage, be violent, suppress, maltreat, intimidate.”

“For ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” — Having experienced the rigours of Egyptian oppression, Israelites were to treat any stranger in their midst with special consideration. They were to be cognisant of his viewpoint, so that by experience they would “know the heart of a stranger” (Exo. 23:9). They should treat him as one of themselves, extending loving hospitality towards him (Lev. 19:33-34). They were to go out of their way to help him, and relieve him if need be (Lev. 25:6). They were to provide him with food and clothing if he were in want (Lev. 23:22; Deu. 10:18-19; cp. Jer. 7:6; Zech. 7:10; Gal. 6:10). Nevertheless, they must remember that he was a “stranger,” and whilst doing all they can to help him, maintain the separateness that the Law enjoined (cp. Exo. 12:43).

VERSE 22

“Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child” — Yahweh has a special sympathy for widows and orphans who put their trust in him, and His ear is ever tuned to their cries of oppression. Hence, an Israelite, understanding this, would extend whatever help he could to such. God is represented as a *Father* to the fatherless, and a *Judge* of widows” (Psa. 68:5), and therefore, any oppressing them should bear in mind that He will extend

Himself to vindicate such (see Deu. 10:18; Mat. 19:29; Mk. 10:29-30).

VERSE 23

“If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry” — See Deu. 15:9; 24:15; Luke 18:7; Psa. 18:6; James 5:4).

VERSE 24

“And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless” — The wanton neglect of this section of the Law was partly the reason why Nebuchadnezzar, as Yahweh’s “servant” (Jer. 25:9) was permitted to take Jerusalem (Jer. 22:3-5; ct. Mat. 19:29).

VERSE 25

“If thou lend money to any of My people that is poor by thee” — This Law relates to loans for the relief of poverty in dire need. In such a case, interest could be charged a foreigner, but not to an Israelite (Deu. 23:20). It does not relate to the loan of money for business or building purposes. In the rural society which formed the basis of Israel’s national existence, the principle of modern banking was not then practised, though it was in N.T. times (Luke 19:23). Borrowing was for the purpose of relieving dire need. Yahweh has special regard to the poor, and in this judgment, prohibited the rich from taking an advantage of such. When a poor man had to borrow (most likely taking an advance on his wage, or crop, to obtain food) there was to be no interest charged.

“Thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury” — The word “usury” is the Hebrew *neshar*, “interest,” from a root *nashar*, “to bite” or “strike” with a sting, as a serpent. The word is rendered “bite” in Ecc. 10:8, 11; Jer. 8:17; Amos 9:3, etc. The word does not of itself signify excessive interest as in modern usage, but merely an unspecified increase. When an Israelite was in want, he had to be liberally and cheerfully relieved, and the same law holds good in Christ (Mat. 5:42; Luke

6:30-38). See the abuse of this law in Neh. 5:7.

VERSE 26

“If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down”

— The greatest consideration is to be shown to the poor. Even if the creditor took a garment as a pledge, it was to be returned by nightfall, in order that he might not be unduly inconvenienced. Certain articles were prohibited for this purpose (Deu. 24:6). Compare the taking of pledges, and the rebuke of Nehemiah (ch. 5).

VERSE 27

“For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?” — The garment was the outer, flowing cloak, not needed during the warmth of the day, but certainly required during the coolness of the night. Consideration for others was commanded by law under the Mosaic Covenant.

“And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious” — All share the grace that stems from Yahweh, and His true sons will likewise manifest graciousness to others (see Exo. 34:6; 2Chr. 30:9; Psa. 86:15). They will be noted for their compassion (Mat. 5:44-48). The word “gracious” is derived from the Hebrew *chanun*, “to bend or stoop in kindness as to an inferior.” As Yahweh does that to us, let us do similarly to others.

VERSE 28

“Thou shalt not revile the gods” — The word is *elohim*, elsewhere rendered “judges” because they dispensed the law on Yahweh’s behalf (see Exo. 21:6; 22:8), and the use of the term in Psalm 82:6; 138:1; John 10:34). In reviling the judges who administered the divine law, the people, in effect, would revile Yahweh.

“Nor curse the ruler of thy people” — The rulers were the leaders in each tribe, and were reckoned as God’s representatives. They occupied divinely

appointed positions, as did those chosen to positions of ecclesial authority in apostolic days (1Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24). Compare Paul’s citation of the Law in regard to the godless high priest in Acts 23:5, for even an evil ruler was to be respected because of the status he held.

VERSE 29

“Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits” — Israelites were called upon to recognise that a bountiful harvest is the result of divine blessing, and, therefore, to instantly and eagerly offer the firstfruits unto Yahweh. The Hebrew has “thy fulness” instead of “thy ripe fruits” (see mg.), and, therefore, did not limit it only to fruits. This law was constantly reiterated: Deu. 26:2-10; Pro. 3:9-10, but was often neglected because of an apathetic attitude on the part of the people (see Neh. 10:35-36; Mal. 3:8-10).

The law has a spiritual lesson, reminding us to recognise that our heavenly Father knows that we have need of the necessities of life, and has promised to supply all such requirements. Out of His bounty given unto us, we should offer the “firstfruits” of our interest and labour. Therefore we should “seek first” the kingdom of God and His righteousness, in confidence that all life’s necessities will be supplied (Mat. 6:30-34). Those are the firstfruits in which He delights, and those who reveal them will constitute the “firstfruits” of the harvest of the earth to be reaped for His pleasure (1Cor. 15:23; Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:4).

“And of thy liquors” — The margin gives the Hebrew meaning as *tears*. The RSV supplies the significance of the term: “the outflow of your presses.” These are squeezed out as tears, illustrating the need to give the first of our emotions unto Yahweh.

“The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto Me” — The firstborn of sons is the “beginning of the family’s strength” (Gen. 49:3). The firstborn were given unto Yahweh to indicate that family strength is dependent upon Him. They were redeemed by a monetary payment repre-

senting redemption (Exo. 13:13; Num. 3:46-48). The firstborn, as belonging to Yahweh, are mentioned in Exo. 13:12.

The main principle behind the requirement of this verse is, to put Yahweh first in all considerations. Later, Israel forgot to do so (Mal. 1:5-8) and suffered dire consequences as a result.

VERSE 30

"Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep" — With all elements of life which develop from the product of activity. See Deu. 15:19.

"Seven days it shall be with his dam" — From a natural viewpoint, this was an act of kindness to the animal's mother, who needed the newly-born for her comfort and health for that length of time.

The law also has a parabolic meaning. Seven days represent the seven millennia of sin and death to the end of Christ's thousand years' reign (Rev. 21:4), during which the natural things of life continue, until all is offered unto God as the "harvest" of the world (1Cor. 15:28).

"On the eighth day thou shalt give it Me" — The eighth day points forward to the time beyond the millennium when "God shall be all and in all" (1Cor. 15:28). For this purpose the gospel was impressed upon the people in the judgments affecting everyday life.

VERSE 31

"And ye shall be holy men unto Me" — The word "holy" signifies, to be separate. Thus Yahweh called His people to be separated unto Him (Exo. 19:5-6; Lev. 11:45; 19:2; Deu. 14:21). The statement: "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 20:7) sums up all the requirements of the Law, and of the gospel, for the call of the Truth is a call to God-manifestation. It is designed both to instruct and to change. It is the medium of sanctification (John 17:17), through which a believer is motivated to build into his life the characteristics of God as they are exhibited in the Son (see Mat. 5:48). Peter summarises all the practical requirements of the gospel by reference to this exhortation of the Law,

"Be ye holy for I am holy" (1Pet. 1:14-16).

"Neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field" — The Law classified animals under the general title of clean and unclean. The former typified Israel; the latter, the Gentiles. By this distinction, Israelites were instructed to observe the habits and characteristics of the various beasts of the field and the birds of the air, that they might spiritually emulate the desirable characteristics of "clean" beasts and birds, and avoid the undesirable characteristics of "unclean" species. When Peter was shown the vision of animals clean and unclean, and was invited to eat of them indiscriminately, he was reluctant to do so. He learned later that the vision had relation to the preaching of the gospel to Gentiles as well as to Jews, and that he was required to overcome his natural reluctance to include the former in his ministry. The vision he received illustrates the significance of the two classes of beasts. Israelites were educated to avoid "unclean beasts," in order that they might learn the lesson of separateness, and that they might be taught to avoid the "meat" or teachings and ways of Gentilism.

But the ordinance before us goes further than that. It taught that even clean beasts must not be eaten unless properly killed, and the blood carefully drained therefrom.

The spiritual lesson behind those requirements was that as the eating of meat was parabolically identified with the Word (cp. Peter's vision and the invitation to him to "arise and eat"), so that Word must be properly prepared before its value will be appreciated. There is a need to "correctly divide the Word of Truth" (2Tim. 2:15). Clean meat that is "torn of the beasts in the field" can well be likened to the Word of truth mangled by Gentile teaching and perversions, of which the religious world of today gives ample evidence.

"Ye shall cast it to the dogs" — Such meat could be sold to aliens (Deu. 14:21) who are given the title of "dogs" (i.e., unclean animals). See Mat. 7:6; 15:26-27; Phil. 3:2; 2Pet. 2:22; Rev. 22:15).

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHERS: ON OBSERVANCE OF NATIONAL FEASTS: AND REGARDING THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

The heart of the instructions of this chapter is the information given concerning the overshadowing presence and influence of the angels of heaven, and the authority they have been given in supervising Yahweh's people (vv. 20-23). The people are called upon to recognise the reality of their invisible presence, to bear in mind that the final Judgment awaits them, and to recognise that their walk in faith will be successful if they scrupulously follow the instructions delivered unto them.

It can be summarized as [a] Seven laws of social ethics (vv. 1-9); [b] Six laws of religious worship (vv. 10-19); [c] Four laws of conquest (vv. 20-23). The first relate to [1] perjury, v. 1; [2] against following mere popular opinion, v. 2; [3] against favouring the poor because he is such, v. 3; [4] How love must be manifested towards an enemy, vv. 4-5; [5] against injustice, vv. 6-7; [6] against bribery, v. 8; [7] against oppression, v. 9.

Then follow laws relating to the sabbaths and annual festivals, vv. 10-19.

Finally, a statement regarding the angelic supervision of their proposed wars of conquest, vv. 20-33.

Seven Laws of Social Ethics — vv. 1-9.

In order to uphold the benefits of the divine law amongst the nation, Moses delivered certain principles to govern social contact.

VERSE 1

“Thou shalt not raise a false report”

— The Ninth Commandment prohibited false witnessing (Exo. 20:16 and see Lev. 19:16; Psa. 15:3; 101:5; Pro. 10:18). Here the matter is taken further. The word “raise” is from the Hebrew *nasa* and signifies both “to receive” or “to repeat.” The RV renders it as “take up” a report, hence

not merely to originate such a thing, but to extend or repeat it. The Amplified Bible has: “You shall *not repeat or raise* a false report.” What incalculable harm has been done by ignoring this law! How often has a matter with a semblance of truth been extended, perverted, altered, and then repeated to destroy a character! Such action is described as abominable in Yahweh's sight (Pro. 6:16-18). Let us strictly avoid it.

“Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness” — Christ experienced the trial of an unrighteous witness. See it predicted (Psa. 35:11), and

enacted (Mat. 26:59-61). Stephen (Acts 6:11), and Paul (2Tim. 4:14-17), together with others (1Pet. 3:16; Rev. 12:10) received similar treatment.

VERSE 2

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" — It is easy to do so, because the way of worldliness is a broad road, along which multitudes walk (Mat. 7:13-14). People do not like to be unpopular and therefore are reluctant to support an unpopular cause, preferring to follow the majority. Even a dead fish will float with the tide; but it requires a virile, active and healthy fish to swim against it! The man of God must manifest the independence of mind to seek Yahweh's counsel his a matters, and walk in His way irrespective as to the opinion of others (see how people can be swept along by a popular movement to evil and destruction — Gen. 6:1-3, 12; 7:1; 19:4; Exo. 32:1-5; Num. 14:1-10, 11, 15; 34:14; Mat. 27:24-26).

"Neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" — Rotherham renders this difficult verse as: "Neither shalt thou answer in a quarrel so as to turn away after multitudes to deceive."

The tendency of flesh is to join a majority; the danger is that the majority may be supporting that which is wrong. It is possible for a person to speak in support of an issue merely to deceive others that he supports it, whereas he knows it to be wrong. It is difficult to stand against the tide of public opinion, but it is evil to imply support for a matter that one secretly opposes.

VERSE 3

"Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause" — Rotherham renders this: "Even a poor man thou shalt not prefer in his quarrel." Strict impartiality must be observed that truth may prevail (cp. Lev. 19:15). There is a tendency in flesh to support the underdog in certain circumstances, merely because he is such. This, too, is wrong. In all circumstances, it is *Truth* that should be sup-

ported, for Yahweh is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34).

VERSE 4

"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray" — By "enemy" is meant a personal opponent, not a public enemy that has stood against the things of God. We are to overlook personal opposition, and to assist our "enemies" (Mat. 5:44).

See Deu. 23:6 for treatment of a national enemy.

"Thou shalt surely bring it back to him again" — The Law commanded consideration of one's enemy, teaching that it is necessary to overlook personal bias, and seek the good of others. The principle is that expressed by Paul in Rom. 5:8: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners [and enemies — v. 10], Christ died for us."

The Law was consistent in this (see Deu. 22:1-4; Pro. 25:21). The statement, "thou shalt hate thine enemy" (Mat. 5:43) was not an injunction of the Law, but a Rabbinical interpretation of it (cp. v. 44; Luke 6:27-28; Rom. 12:17-21). Note the warning of Pro. 24:17-18 against rejoicing over an enemy's fall.

VERSE 5

"If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him" — It may go against the grain to help the animal of an enemy under such circumstances, and one might be induced to say, "Serves him right; he deserves what he is getting!" But the Law commanded that such an attitude be avoided, sternly put away, and a helping hand given to the animal. Such action would not only be an act of mercy toward a fallen beast, but would help to bring reconciliation to two Israelites, previously at variance with each other.

VERSE 6

"Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause" — As in v. 3, there is a warning not to favour a poor

man merely because he is poor, so there is provided another stern warning against oppressing him because he may lack the means to fight back. The scales of justice are to be held evenly; strict impartiality is to be exercised in all such decisions.

VERSE 7

“Keep thee far from a false matter”

— Avoid such issues as much as possible, otherwise you will bring upon yourself the vengeance of Him who will not justify the wicked.

“And the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked” — The manifestation of divine vengeance against those who unjustly and violently oppose the innocent or the righteous will be very real (cp. James 5:4). In considering this, let it be borne in mind that it is possible to “slay” such people by word of mouth as much as by the sword (see Pro. 30:14).

VERSE 8

“And thou shalt take no gift” — The worst sin of a judge is to accept a bribe for the purpose of perverting justice. A suppliant then loses all confidence in law, whether divine or human. This is revealed in the practice of Eli’s sons (1Sam. 8:3), the lament of David (Psa. 26:10), the observation of Solomon (Pro. 17:23), the warning of Isaiah (Isa. 1:23, and the indictment of Micah (Mic. 3:9-11).

“For the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous”

— The literal Hebrew is as the margin: “The gift blindeth *the seeing*.” It causes the receiver to close his eyes to facts, so that the evidence of a righteous man is warped and twisted by a corrupted judge.

VERSE 9

“Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger” — See note, ch. 22:21. On the contrary, the Law legislated that a stranger should be permitted to glean the fields of Israelites (Lev. 23:22; cp. Ruth 2:8), or, in cases of extreme poverty, assisted with the tithes that were taken up from the people (Deu. 26:12).

“For ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” — They knew how a foreigner would appreciate kind actions, as they had known their need of such when in Egypt. Thus Israelites were taught to profit by their own experiences, and so to assist others. As members of a priestly nation, they were to act out of compassion towards those who were lonely and destitute (see Heb. 5:2).

The word “Egypt” is *Mitzraiym* and signifies “oppressors.”

Laws Concerning The Keeping Of Festivals — vv. 10-19.

The importance of setting aside time from normal avocations of life and devoting it exclusively to Yahweh is now emphasized. Israel is to celebrate not merely the sabbath day, but the sabbath year, in which the land is to rest for a whole year. This is now introduced for the first time, and is an ordinance not found among other nations. It may have appeared too drastic to an agricultural people, and, certainly, if they lacked faith, they would be hesitant to let a whole year pass by without cultivating the fruits of the ground. Faith would lead a godly people to look for a double increase the year before, but Israelites, like Gentile believers, often lacked such faith. Indeed, 2Chr. 36:21 can be interpreted as implying that it was neglected seventy times, or about half the time between the Exodus and the Captivity.

Three great annual festivals are listed as being obligatory upon Israelites to observe. They served to emphasize the status of Israel as a unique nation before Yahweh.

VERSE 10

“And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof” — A spiritual lesson can be found behind this ordinance. The Lord likened the sowing of seed in a field to the preaching of the gospel (Mat. 13:1-9).

Six is the number of flesh, and the parable of the sabbath sets forth the oppor-

tunity of the field, representing mankind, to heed the gospel. 6,000 years is the time providentially designed for that purpose, after which "the day of Yahweh" shall dawn: an epoch of 1,000 years (Mal. 4:2; 2Pet. 3:8-10). During the previous six thousand years, the gospel has been sown in the heart of flesh (the earth) with the object of gathering in a harvest unto Yahweh (James 1:18).

VERSE 11

"But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still" — During the seventh year, the people were to intermit their labours, and rely in faith upon Yahweh to supply the yield of harvest (Lev. 25:1-7). It foreshadowed the millennial sabbath of rest.

"That the poor of thy people may eat" — The sabbatical year was a period of solemn religious significance underlying the lessons of faith and dependence upon Yahweh. During the Feast of Tabernacles held that year, the Law was read in its entirety before the people (Deu. 31:10-11), reminding them of their responsibilities to God. By allowing the land to rest, the people were taught the principle of utter dependence upon Yahweh in receiving only that which He provided (Mat. 6:25-34); and in sharing it with the poor and the stranger they were taught the practical application of the law of kindness. The sabbatical year, therefore, emphasised the principles of Mat. 5:45-48, "The Father which is in heaven, maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust... Be ye therefore perfect (*in thoughtful kindness to others*), even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It is thought by some that the occasion of the disciples plucking the ears of corn (Mat. 12:1) took place during a sabbatical year.

"And what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat" — In Bible symbology the "beasts of the field" represent the unredeemed (cp. Acts 10:12). In the millennium, foreshadowed by the sabbatical year, they will be permitted to enjoy the food normally reserved for Israelites: the

bread of life.

"In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard and with thy oliveyard" — Corn, wine and oil were the main products of the field as far as the Israelites were concerned. In regard to the last two, there was no need of a yearly sowing of seed, but, nevertheless, the principle of the sabbatical year of rest still held good, and there was to be no pruning or cultivating of trees or vines. The whole land was to rest.

VERSE 12

"Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed" — See comments on the Fourth Commandment (Exo. 16:23; 20:8-11). The sabbath law was to apply even during the sabbatical year. In the terms of the law as now expressed, its more merciful provisions are stressed: "That thine ox and thine ass may rest," and that others may be "refreshed."

VERSE 13

"And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect" — The word is from the Hebrew *shamar* signifying "to hedge about, guard, observe," and thus implies to be particularly careful to observe all that is commanded, and to exercise extreme caution so as to allow nothing to hinder obedience to it.

"And make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth" — To make mention of the names of other gods leads to *thinking* on them, and that, in turn, can lead to imitating their ways and even to bowing down before them in worship. This is so with any evil practice, leading Paul to warn against even the naming of certain things (Eph. 5:3). The increase of such evils in modern civilisation is due in large measure to the publicity given to them, inducing others to experiment in like manner. Among the modern forms of idolatry is that of "covetousness" (Col. 3:5). It was by thinking upon that god, so convenient

to the human heart, that Israel failed in its sabbath observance (see Amos 8:5; Mal. 1:13), illustrating the importance of the command of this verse. Paul set forth the affirmative aspect of this command by writing: "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure etc... think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). The more the mind is filled with the things of the Truth, the more it is likely to respond to such in action.

VERSE 14

"Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year" — The word "feast" is from the word *hag* and signifies a festival feast, and not merely a "feast" as we might understand the term. The festivals referred to were [1] the feast of Unleavened Bread; [2] the feast of Pentecost; [3] the feast of Tabernacles. Fuller details of these occasions are provided in Lev. 23 and Deu. 16. The Law demanded that all males present themselves at the appointed place on such occasions as representatives of the nation as a whole (Exo. 34:23; Deu. 16:16).

VERSE 15

"Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread" — It commenced with the Passover, and continued for seven days. A "holy convocation" was held on the first and the last of the seven days

(Lev. 23:7-8. For details also see Deu. 16:8.).

"(Thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee)" — See note on ch. 12:15.

"In the time appointed of the month Abib" — "Abib" signifies *In the ear* as in ch. 9:31, and defines the beginning of spring. It was later referred to as "Nisan" (Neh. 2:1). The time appointed was the fourteenth day of the month (Exo. 12:18) when preparations for the festival were made, including the killing of the lamb. The festival proper commenced on the following day. On the first day of the week following the celebration of Passover (Lev. 23:10-14), a sheaf of new barley, representing the firstfruits of the expected harvest was waved before Yahweh foreshadowing the resurrection of the Lord.

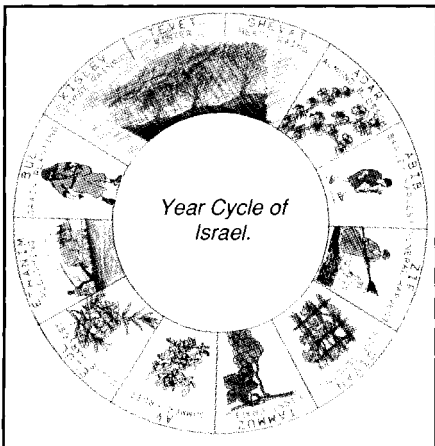
"For in it thou camest out from Egypt" — This moment of deliverance commenced a new beginning. It represented a separation from the previous way of life to one dedicated to Yahweh. It was recalled by Israelites at the beginning of spring each year.

"And none shall appear before Me empty" — Religion must not be a matter of mere empty words, but must represent a practical sacrifice of gratitude to Yahweh: something of value offered for benefits received (cp Deu. 16:17; Pro. 3:9-10) in which a true worshipper expresses "thanks unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2Cor. 9:15). The principal gift of Yahweh to humanity is His Son (Eph. 4:7), who, as the sheaf of barley, became a token of the harvest to follow (James 1:18).

VERSE 16

"And the feast of harvest" — This is better known as the *Feast of Pentecost*, from *pente*, "fifty." Fifty days were to be numbered from the day of offering the barley sheaf, and on the fiftieth, the festival of harvest was celebrated. The main ceremony of the festival was the offering of two leavened loaves of the finest flour made out of the wheat just gathered in, and called the "firstfruits of the harvest."

In contradistinction to the barley sheaf



which foreshadowed the Lord's offering, these two leavened loaves typified normal believers from the two great families of humanity: Israelite and Gentile. The celebration of Pentecost synchronised with the giving of the Law from Sinai (see notes, Lev. 23), which legislated on the behalf of the Israelites and the mixed multitude of Gentiles that came out of Egypt.

Significantly, the public proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom in the name of Jesus Christ was also made on a Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and resulted in an ingathering of both Jews and Gentiles (the two leavened loaves) to Christ Jesus.

"The firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field" — The *sown* harvest was gathered in by the time of Pentecost, and what remained to be collected was the produce of trees and vines. The two loaves offered on that day represented the firstfruits of that sown, and pointed forward to the present ingathering of the gospel call. See James 1:18; Rev. 14:4.

"And the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year" — This is elsewhere called the *Feast of Tabernacles* (see Lev. 23:39-43). It commenced on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (called *Tisri*), when the olives had been gathered in, and the vintage was completed. It commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the entrance of the nation into the land, typified by the final ingathering of harvest. In Lev. 23:39 it is said to have been celebrated in the seventh month, whereas here the period is defined as "the end of the year."

The Israeli calendar recognises two "years:" a civil and a religious year. The civil year commenced in the seventh month, whereas the religious year began in Abib, the first month of the religious year. See note Exo. 12:2.

"When thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field" — The fulness of the harvest typified the completion of God's purpose with humanity when He shall be "all in all" (1Cor. 15:28), and the labour of creation will be completed (Rev. 21:4).

VERSE 17

"Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh" — The males were representative of the whole nation. See note Exo. 12:6. The requirements of the Law in compelling Israelites to so gather before Yahweh, emphasised the divine fellowship which became a great unifying factor in the nation. What a contrast to the Grecian Games of ancient times, or the Olympic Games of today, when nations send their representatives to compete together in an attempt to "unify" humanity. Instead of achieving this, the extreme competition engendered tends to divide them further apart. The calling of Israelites together for religious purposes will be extended to include all nations in the Age to come (Zech. 14:16).

The instruction of the Law commanded them to appear before *ha-adon Yahweh*, signifying: *The Sovereign Ruler, Yahweh*. The people assembled to pay their respects and demonstrate their allegiance to the Sovereign Ruler of the heavens (see Jud. 8:23), a very important addition to the family Name of *Yahweh*.

VERSE 18

"Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread" — The word "leavened" is from the Hebrew *chametz*, which signifies *sour*, and figuratively, *to be harsh*. It is translated "cruel," "dyed," "grieved," "leavened," "vinegar." Gesenius says that the word is used figuratively of the mind [a] to act violently, like the kindred word *chamas* which signifies violent, oppress, injure; [b] to be bitter as in Psa. 73:21. The word is translated several times as "vinegar" which was prohibited the Nazarite (Num. 6:3. See also Pro. 10:26; 25:20). Gesenius also draws attention to Ps. 69:21 where *chametz* is rendered "vinegar" and comments that it is suggestive of that "offered in cruelty to a thirsty man" and therefore is figuratively expressive of harshness, and lack of sympathy. In Amos 4:5 it is aligned with that which is gained by violence and wrong; and in Hos. 7:4 with the corrupting influ-

ence of spiritually depraved men. In 1Cor. 5:8, Paul aligns leaven with "malice and wickedness," and urges that all such be purged out.

Leaven was forbidden in all offerings to Yahweh made by fire (Lev. 2:11; 6:17). W. E. Vine notes: "Being bred of corruption and spreading through the mass of that in which it is mixed, and therefore symbolizing the pervasive character of evil, leaven was utterly inconsistent in offerings which typified the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ." It is used metaphorically of corrupt doctrine (Mat. 13:33), of error mixed with truth (Luke 13:21), as well as of corrupt practices (Mark 8:15).

"Neither shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until the morning" — This injunction has relationship to the Passover (Exo. 12:10) and to the peace offering (Lev. 7:15). Both concern the principle of fellowship with God. In connection with the Passover, other Israelites were invited to join a family in the celebration of the feast and so associate together in fellowship and communion. In the case of the offering of thanksgiving, the offerer could invite his friends and relations to gather with him for the purpose of consuming the meal, again expressive of fellowship. In either case, the idea was to draw others into mutual worship, whether it be to celebrate the deliverance indicated by the Passover, or the thanksgiving which was due to Yahweh. Thus the ordinance required the true worshipper to broadcast to others the principles of Deliverance and Thanksgiving.

VERSE 19

"The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of Yahweh thy God" — Israelites were expected to get their priorities right, and to give unto Yahweh the pre-eminence due to His holy name. They were to give practical expression to this by presenting the firstfruits unto Him. In Num. 18:12 these are defined as "the best" of the products, and in the following verse, as the very first of the ripened products. See also Lev. 2:12; Deu. 26:2; Neh. 10:35; and particu-

larly the words of Mal. 3:10. The principle of this law should be applied by believers today (see Pro. 3:9-10), in that they should give unto Yahweh the best of their time, their talents, and their resources.

The word "house" is from the Hebrew *bayith* and signifies a dwelling, and is here used in an anticipatory sense for the tabernacle, yet to be built.

"Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" — That which is designed for life (a mother's milk) must not become the cause of death! How often does the reverse become the case! Parents spoil their children by unwise over-indulgence, and so project them along a course of life that leads to anguish and death. This is equivalent to "seething a kid in his mother's milk."

It is highly significant that the personal laws in the *Book of the Covenant* (see Exo. 24:7) terminate with this remarkable law which is thrice repeated (see Exo. 34:26; Deu. 14:21). The over-indulgence by children has been the sad cause of many lives being lost for the kingdom, including Eli's sons, Samuel's children (1Sam. 3:13), Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah (1Kings 1:6), and others. Let parents take heed. Modern child psychology which frowns upon any restraints being placed on children, and advocates granting them free expression, is an illustration of that which is prohibited by this law. See the warning of Pro. 19:18; 23:13-14; 29:15; 1Tim. 3:4, and learn to apply it in family life. In this age of over-indulgence to children, the scriptural principles of family control tend to be overlooked even by those who should know better.

Laws Concerning Angelic Supervision — vv. 20-33.

Angelic supervision of events is introduced as a very real feature of life. The name, and therefore the authority, of Yahweh is set forth as conferred on His angel into whose care the future of the nation has been placed. This angel must be obeyed because transgressions against his voice will not be pardoned. Therefore submission to his invisible presence will mean

victory whereas disobedience will result in defeat. Guidelines for conduct are laid down, obedience to which will result in immediate blessings of a concrete nature. Israelites are to look beyond any difficulties that might face them, for Yahweh will send His fear among their enemies, causing them to be overthrown. In this section of the Law, the people were taught [a] obedience to the voice of Yahweh (vv. 20-22); [b] confidence in His promises (vv. 23-28); [c] trust in His provision (vv. 29-31); [d] separation from the Gentiles (vv. 32-33).

VERSE 20

“Behold I send an Angel before thee” — The angels are Yahweh’s ministering spirits working on behalf of His people (Heb. 1:14), and it seems from passages such as Mat. 18:10 and Gen. 48:15-16, that the charge of saints is given into the care of specific angels. Reference to the angel who oversaw the affairs of Israel, is found again in Exo. 33:1-3, and in ch. 14:19 as supervising the cloud and fire that overshadowed Israel. In Isaiah 63:9, he is described as the “*angel of Yahweh’s presence*.” In Jos. 5:13-15, he is given the title of *Captain of Yahweh’s host*. And in Dan. 10:21, his name is announced as *Michael*, and he is shown as foreshadowing the future status and work of the Lord (Dan. 12:1). In “going before” the people, the angel acted as a shepherd (Exo. 32:34; Psa. 78:52; 80:1).

“To keep thee in the way” — For a description of God’s “way” see the note at Gen. 3:24; and for what is involved see the comment on Gen. 18:19.

“And to bring thee into the place which I have prepared” — Primarily the “place prepared” was the land of Canaan, but in the ultimate application of the phrase, it relates to an abiding place in the family of God. Thus Christ taught: “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).

VERSE 21

“Beware of him and obey his voice” — The word “beware” is the Hebrew *shamar*, which signifies to “hedge around,

to guard, to exercise great care.” The literal Hebrew is “Be careful from before him,” thus, always bear in mind his presence, and so walk as though he is visibly in your sight.

“Provoke him not” — Unfortunately, Israel did provoke the angel as the representative of Yahweh (see Num. 14:11; Psa. 78:17, 40, 56), particularly by limiting the power of God (Psa. 78:41).

“For he will not pardon your transgressions” — See also the warning of Exo. 32:34, and the exhortation of Joshua (Josh. 24:19). The word “transgressions” suggests refusals to heed, and so “revolts.” These would not be forgiven, and it was because of such that the generation which came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness. The angel would administer a law of retribution in which there was no forgiveness except through the Redeemer to come. This was designed to cause a true Israelite to seek for such a mediator (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3:24).

“For My name is in him” — This statement denotes that the full authority of God, represented by the divine Name, rested upon the angel, and, therefore, that he acted accordingly. True Israelites comprise a people separated for the Name (Num. 6:27; Acts 15:14), which will be named upon them in its fulness at the coming of the Lord (Rev. 3:12). Christ both proclaimed and manifested that Name unto his disciples (John 17:6,26), for in him is found its fulness bodily (Col. 1:19; 2:9). We can similarly attain to this state in him (Eph. 3:19).

VERSE 22

“But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak” — “Obey” and “do” are repetitious words in Hebrew: “If hearkening thou dost hearken...” Such a repetition emphasizes a hearkening so as to obey.

“Then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies” — Conditional upon their obedience, Yahweh would act toward them as He promised to act toward Abraham (Gen. 12:3; Deu. 30:7), so that the Law endorsed the Covenant of Faith.

“And an adversary unto thine adversaries” — Under the conditions stated, Yahweh would enter the arena against the enemies of Israel. See the prophetic promise of Isa. 51:22-23.

VERSE 23

“For Mine Angel shall go before thee” — God’s messenger of this verse types the *Messenger of Yahweh* promised through the prophet Malachi (Mal. 3:1).

“And bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites” — See notes Exo. 13:5.

“And I will cut them off” — The reason being, not merely that they were Gentiles, but, because of their depraved actions. Their wickedness was not fully developed in the days of Abraham (Gen. 15:16), but now their polluting presence would endanger the moral integrity of the people, and therefore their future (see Num. 33:55; Josh. 23:13; Jud. 2:3).

VERSE 24

“Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works” — Associated with pagan worship were evil rites calculated to undermine the moral integrity of the people. Thus “their works” are associated with their worship.

“But thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images” — The Israelites were to ruthlessly destroy all pagan gods, irrespective as to their “cultural” value; they were to look upon the conquest of the land as a holy war.

“Images” were memorial pillars, which were to be torn from their bases and completely destroyed, so that “the memorial of them shall vanish.”

VERSE 25

“And ye shall serve Yahweh your God” — The verb is from the Hebrew *abad*, the root of *ebed*, “bondservant.” Having been delivered from the servitude of Egypt, the Israelites were not free to please themselves, but were to look upon

themselves as slaves of Yahweh (cp. Rom. 6:16-23).

“And He shall bless thy bread, and thy water” — Material blessings would flow from obedience to the Law (Deu. 7:13).

“And I will take sickness away from the midst of thee” — In this statement *Yahweh Ropheka* spoke again to the people (see note on Exo. 15:26).

VERSE 26

“There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land” — The fulfilment of this promise would have rendered them rich in flocks and herds beyond any other nation, but unfortunately they did not fulfil the conditions (see Deu. 28:15-22).

“The number of thy days I will fulfil” — They would not suffer a premature death, but would fill out their appointed time. This is based upon observance of the Fifth Command. See Deu. 5:16 and contrast Psa. 55:23.

VERSE 27

“I will send My fear before thee” — See Deu. 2:25 where the promise was repeated and implemented. Balak (Num. 22:3), and the people of the land (Jos. 2:9-11) gave expression to the fear that fell upon them. On the other hand, Israel was exhorted to “fear not” (Deu. 1:17, 21, 29; Jos. 1:7-8).

Fear Not! is the keynote of Moses’ last message as recorded in Deuteronomy (see Deu. 1:17, 19, 21, 29; 3:22, 28 etc.).

“And will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee” — For the fulfilment of this promise see Num. 21:3, 24, 35; 31:7; Jos. 8:20-24 etc. However, it was always conditional upon the obedience of the people (Deu. 28:1,7). Had their obedience been more thorough, the power of the Canaanites would have been completely destroyed, and the sufferings and servitude recorded in the book of Judges would not have taken place.

But the people did not carry out Yah-

weh's conditions nor His instructions to destroy (see Jud. 1:27, 29-30 etc.).

VERSE 28

“And I will send hornets before thee” — These “hornets” were designed to weaken the resistance of the Canaanites in the conquest of the land by the Israelites. But opinion is divided as to what is meant by the statement, and as to whether it should be interpreted literally or figuratively.

In regard to the former, there is no direct evidence as to swarms of hornets being used to drive out the Canaanites from before the Israelites, whilst figuratively, the term has been aligned with the Egyptians. It is said that the hornet was the badge of Thotmus III and his successors. The archaeologist Garstang claims that Thotmus (recognised as Egypt's greatest warrior) invaded the land of Canaan and overthrew Megiddo, following which a policy of devastation was maintained for sixty years, causing great fear throughout the land. The attack on Megiddo is dated 1479BC, but such dates should be treated with caution (see note, pp. 12-14). Thotmus III, however, reigned a considerable time before Joshua's entrance into the Land, whereas the statement of the verse before us implies something as yet to take place in the time of Moses.

There is a third explanation. The Hebrew *tsirah*, “hornet,” comes from the root *tsara*, “to scourge,” which is also rendered “leper.” *Tsirah*, therefore, could be used for a scourge apart from hornets, perhaps to denote fear induced by plague, pestilence or anything that might sting or scourge the enemy, and so lower his powers of resistance. This could cause the hearts of such adversaries to melt in consternation and so pave the way for an Israelite victory (Jud. 2:10; 8:3; 10:12).

“Which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee” — The Hivites and Hittites evidently were foreigners who had settled in the Land, whereas the Canaanites were native to it. The Gibeonites were Hivites (see note Gen. 34:2).

VERSE 29

“I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate” — By this provision, Yahweh is revealed as both practical and purposeful, even in His judgments. He manifests patience, where we reveal impatience, and He sometimes bears long with people in order to bring about the best results. Man might consider this as “slackness” (2Pet. 3:9), but, in fact, it is “long-suffering” designed to obtain salvation for some (v. 15). The population of Canaan was permitted to remain that the land might be preserved in a fit state for Israel to inherit. In the same manner, man is subduing the earth today (Gen. 1:28), in preparation for the kingdom to come.

“And the beast of the field multiply against thee” — This could result from the sudden depopulation of the country, an example of which is recorded in 2Kings 17:25.

VERSE 30

“By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land” — There was a gradual conquest of the Land as recorded in the books of Joshua and Judges.

VERSE 31

“And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea, even unto the sea of the Philistines” — This establishes the east and west boundaries of the land: from the Gulf of Eilat to the Mediterranean Ocean.

“And from the desert unto the river” — The word “river” is *ha-nahar*, a term that is applied to the Euphrates. These bounds mark the southern and northern borders, which territory was later occupied by David (1Kings 4:21).

“For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee” — Yahweh did His part, but Israel failed to fulfil its responsibility (see Jud. 1:21, 27-29, etc.).

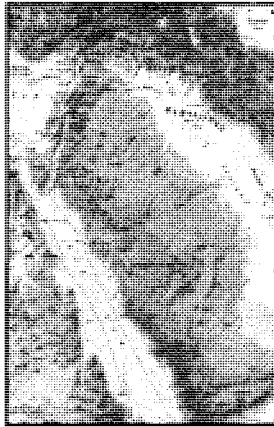
VERSE 32

“Thou shalt make no covenant with

them, nor with their gods” — Joshua, caught by guile, did enter into covenant with the Gibeonites (Jos. 9:14-15), demonstrating the extreme care that must be manifested in regard to Yahweh’s instructions.

VERSE 33

“They shall not dwell in thy land” — Unfortunately, Israel permitted them to do this, so that ultimately they became a snare, leading to the downfall of the people of God.



“Lest they make thee sin against Me” — Yahweh, “knowing what is in man,” exercised considerable care for His people, instructing them as a parent would his child. Unfortunately, long before they even reached the Land, the generation of Israelites to whom Moses delivered this warning, perished in the wilderness.

“For if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee” — This they did. See Jud. 2:3; Psa. 106:34-37.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

CONFIRMATION OF THE COVENANT

The Ten Commandments form the basis of the Mosaic Covenant (Exo. 34:28; Deu. 4:13), whilst the judgments of Exodus 21:1 to ch. 23:33 comprise the Book Of The Covenant (Exo. 24:7). Upon this nucleus, the rest of the Law is built. Having agreed to the Covenant submitted (Exo. 19:7-8), the nation now has to officially and nationally ratify it in blood. For that purpose, representatives of the people are gathered together, an altar is erected, sacrifices are offered, the Book of the Covenant is read, and the people again proclaim their acceptance of it. So the ratification proceeds. Afterwards, Moses and the elders of the people, eat and drink, in confirmation of the covenant with the Elohim.



Moses and Joshua then leave the people and ascend into Horeb. From there they move further to Sinai into whose heights Moses alone ascends to remain for forty days and forty nights.

Moses Called to the Mount — vv. 1-2.

Moses receives instructions to conduct a special form of worship in order to endorse the acceptance of the covenant by the people.

VERSE 1

“And he said unto Moses, Come up unto Yahweh” — This does not mean into the mount, but closer to the foot of it where the theophany could be observed. See similar expressions in Exo. 19:13, 17.

“Thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu” — The names of these four men proclaim the purpose of Yahweh: *Drawn out* (Moses) to *enlightenment* (Aaron), through *freedom of will* (Nadab), unto the *Father* (Abihu). Nadab and Abihu were the elder sons of Aaron, and although the priesthood had not as yet been conferred upon the tribe of Levi, nor Aaron appointed to the position of high priest, Yahweh, with that prescience that is incidental to Him, foreknew what would happen, and so commenced to prepare for it by projecting Aaron to the forefront of the nation.

The first mention of Aaron is found in Exo. 4:14. Some give the meaning of his name as *A Shining Light*, or *Enlightened* (see *The Hebrew And English Bible Students' Concordance*). Both Moses and Aaron typed the Lord: the former, as shepherd, lawgiver and leader; the latter, as high priest. Aaron is called “the Levite” (Exo. 4:14), a significant title, for it signifies *to join; to have fellowship with*.

The general organisation of the nation can be summarised in the following manner: From the tribes there came the warriors; from Levi there came the workers; from the family of Aaron there came the worshippers.

Nadab and Abihu, the elder sons of Aaron, were later tragically destroyed by divine judgment because of their blasphemy (Lev. 10:1-2).

“And seventy of the elders of Israel”

— These were elders of the tribes (Exo. 18:21) whom later, Yahweh chose to endow with His spirit (Num. 11:16-25). The selection of the seventy on this occasion, was carried on in the *Sanhedrin*, or

special court of seventy elders, referred to in the N.T. In the terms of spiritual numerics, “70” is formed of: **10**, the number of completeness, showing the whole, multiplied by 7, the number of the covenant. Thus it is representative of the complete covenant people.

So low had Israel sunk in the days of Ezekiel, that this order of men, called to represent the divine eldership, were discovered worshipping idols in their hearts (Eze. 8:9-11) — if not openly (v. 12).

Why should seventy men be chosen? Not merely because of the symbolic significance of the number mentioned above, but also because Israel was designed as a priestly nation (Exo. 19:6), ministering to mankind generally and so becoming the channel of Yahweh’s goodness to all. In this regard “seventy” is the number of nations (see note, Exo. 15:27).

“And worship ye afar off” — Note the difference of worship under Moses, and that in Christ. Whereas those represented by the former were “afar off,” those in Christ are brought “nigh” (Eph. 2:13).

VERSE 2

“And Moses alone shall come near Yahweh” — This was to be after the seventy-four witnesses had eaten with the Elohim on the plain before Horeb (vv. 9-11). See note v. 12.

“But they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him” — They were to remain on the plain when Moses ascended into the mount.

The Covenant Endorsed by Blood — vv. 3-8.

The terms of the covenant are proclaimed to the people, after which the covenant is ratified with sacrificial blood. Once again the “Book of the Covenant” is read in the hearing of the people, and they agree to its terms. Accordingly, the people and the book are sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, which is then ratified by Yahweh.

VERSE 3

“And Moses came and told the peo-

ple all the words of Yahweh, and all the judgments” — Moses was at the foot of Horeb when Yahweh spoke with him. This was after his third ascent and descent (see note p. 248). At the conclusion of the instructions given, he returned to the people who had withdrawn far from the mount. Calling the leaders of the nation before him, he reminded them of the “words” of law that they had heard, and revealed to them the additional judgments that had been delivered exclusively to him. The “words” are the *Ten Commandments* (styled “*ten words*” in Deu. 4:13), and the “judgments” are those instructions recorded in Exo. 20:22-23:33. These comprised the nucleus of what is called *The Book of the Covenant*. It was first read to the people, and afterwards sprinkled with blood (Exo. 24:8; Heb. 9:18). Finally, it was extended to include the rest of the Law given to Moses, and was placed at the side of the ark, as a witness against the people (Deu. 31:24-30).

“And all the people answered with one voice” — They answered unanimously in the affirmative. Of course, there was no real choice in this. The alternative to embracing the covenant was death, for the people were surrounded by enemies, and dependent upon Yahweh for food and drink. Yahweh’s covenant was a command (Deu. 4:13; Psa. 105:8), and the people were already under law (Exo. 15:25; 16:26-28).

“And said, All the words which Yahweh hath said will we do” — This was a repetition of their acceptance as previously given (Exo. 19:8).

VERSE 4

“And Moses wrote all the words of Yahweh” — This scroll became known as *The Book of The Covenant* (v. 7).

“And rose up early in the morning” — In type this pointed forward to the new millennial day to dawn (2Sam. 23:4), when the Christ-altar (Heb. 13:10) will be surrounded by a perfected Israel, with the twelve apostles as their rulers (Mat. 19:28).

“And builded an altar” — See note

Exo. 20:24-26. The altar represented Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation as fulfilled in Christ (Heb. 13:10).

“Under the hill” — Under the shadow of Horeb: representative of divine Law. This was “magnified and made honourable” by the Lord Jesus (Isa. 42:21), and will be restored as the basis of national life in the age to come (Mal. 4:4; Isa. 2:2-4).

“And twelve pillars” — The Hebrew *matstebah* denotes “memorial stones” or “pillars,” from a root signifying “to station, or place,” i.e., in a position of prominence. In the symbolism of Moses’ action, they represented the twelve rulers of the twelve tribes in the age to come (Mat. 19:28). One of those rulers of the future Age is styled a “pillar” in Gal. 2:9, and all the apostles were set up in positions of prominence, acting as “memorials” to the rest of the disciples (1Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11; 1Cor. 4:9). These twelve memorial stones formed the altar set up by Moses.

“According to the twelve tribes of Israel” — Pointing forward to the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). Moses’ altar of twelve stones foreshadows the Christ-altar upon the foundation of the Israelitish hope (Eph. 2:12), with the apostles representing the twelve tribes (Mat. 19:28; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:12).

VERSE 5

“And he sent young men of the children of Israel” — These were the appointed priests referred to in Exo. 19:22. But who were they, seeing that Levi had not yet been selected as the priestly tribe? The answer is, the firstborn of each family in Israel who, according to the Melchizedek order of priesthood, acted in that capacity. Later, after Israel had sinned, the Levites were selected instead of the firstborn to act as priests (Num. 3:12; Exo. 32:26-29). The Melchizedek priesthood will be re-established in Christ. Accordingly, those in him, are constituted “the ecclesia of firstborns” (Heb. 12:23 *Diaglott*), “the firstfruits” of God (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4), and as such will be appointed to the royal priesthood of the

Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10).

The "young men" therefore represented Israel as a "kingdom of priests" (Exo. 19:6; 1Pet. 2:9).

"Which offered burnt offerings" — See Lev. 1 for the preparation of a burnt offering. Such a sacrifice represented the dedication of self, consumed by the divine fire (typifying the Spirit-Word).

"And sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Yahweh" — A "peace offering" (see Lev. 3) was expressive of fellowship with Yahweh: portion of the slain animal providing the means for the sacrificial feast that followed (Exo. 24:11; Lev. 7:15). Paul used this passage in Heb. 9:15-23 as a basis of his exposition of the Atonement and referred to the sacrifice as comprising "calves and goats" (Heb. 9:19).

The goat in sacrifice typified the waywardness of flesh, and was used for the sin offering (Lev. 16:15), whereas oxen represented the strength of offerers, given in dedication unto Yahweh.

In the covenant established as described, the two contracting parties are Yahweh and Israel. But as sinful flesh cannot approach the Creator without blood, He is represented in sacrificial manifestation as an altar.

But what do we mean by "without blood?" Blood represents life (Lev. 17:11), whilst blood shed in sacrifice and splashed on an altar, symbolises a life devoted to doing the will of Yahweh. Christ gave the perfect example of this, whereas lesser mortals can but strive to attain unto that state.

Let us remember, however, that no sacrifice is acceptable unto God if the offerer does not attempt to so dedicate his life, for the blood shed is but a token of this. Accordingly, Paul concludes "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Without an attempt on our part to conquer the flesh (represented by the shed blood in its application to us) there is no forgiveness of sins. We must achieve something in this respect ourselves, as well as identify with the sacrifice of Christ.

VERSE 6

"And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons" — The word denotes "cups" as in Lk. 22:17. Half of the blood was reserved for the book and the people so as to unite them with Yahweh, represented by the altar.

"And half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar" — The altar represents Christ (Heb. 13:10). He was first physically cleansed by his own offering (Heb. 13:20; John 17:19; Exo. 29:36), and as such is in a position to cleanse, through forgiveness, those who come unto God through him (cp. Exo. 29:37). The efficacy of his offering has extended throughout the ages, reaching backwards as well as forward (Heb. 9:15). This was illustrated by Moses' action at this time. Paul comments: "When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you." (Heb. 9:19-20).

Nothing is said in *Exodus* of the water, scarlet wool and hyssop, and therefore, for a complete picture of what took place on that significant day, and its important symbolic meaning, they must be added to the account as given by Moses.

Water was added to the blood to delay coagulation which otherwise would take place quickly and cause it to become useless for sprinkling. It therefore extended the time of the efficacy of the blood as a token of sacrifice which is an important feature of "the blood of Christ" (see Heb. 9:14-15). In view of Paul's words, note the highly significant features of the ceremony conducted by Moses:

1. The book written: *Instruction is the basis of the covenant.*
2. The altar built at the dawn of a new day: *Hope through forgiveness.*
3. Goats sacrificed: *Recognition of sin.*
4. Burnt offerings made: *Dedication of self.*
5. Peace offerings made: *Fellowship with Yahweh.*

6. Blood and water: *The efficacy of the sacrifice extended.*
7. Book read to the people: *Individual endorsement of its requirements.*
8. Blood sprinkled with hyssop: *God manifestation under trial.* See note Exo. 12:22.
9. Scarlet wool: *Flesh sacrificed.*
10. Altar, book, and people sprinkled with blood: *Christ, the Truth and believers united in dedication through repudiation of the flesh.*

VERSE 7

“And he took the book of the covenant” — This constituted the Ten Commandments and the judgments, as recorded in Exo. 20-23.

“And read in the audience of the people” — Moses read the book in the ears of the people, or the seventy representatives of the nations (v. 7), before partaking of the sacrificial meal in company with the Elohim (v. 11). Likewise, the Lord exhorted the apostles before the Memorials (John 13:14-21). See Paul’s comment (Heb. 9:19).

“And they said, All that Yahweh hath said will we do, and be obedient” — They enunciated this three times (Exo. 19:8; 24:3; 24:7). Christ also was compelled to submit to three trials before his death, but remained obedient to his Father’s will. After the Lord’s discourse, the apostles likewise declared that they would be obedient (Mark 14:29, 31).

VERSE 8

“And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people” — He sprinkled the blood on the representatives of the people: the seventy elders separated for that purpose (v. 1). This was the first covenant made with Israel, and it was sealed with the blood of animal sacrifices. The second, or new covenant as initiated by the Lord, replaced the old and was sealed with his blood (Heb. 8:6-9; 9:14). If the old covenant required the obedience of the people to the will of Yahweh, no less is expected of those who enter into the new covenant (Rom. 2:13-15; Heb. 10:28-31).

“And said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh hath made with you concerning all these words” — The word “covenant” is from the Hebrew *berith*, derived from a root signifying to cut or divide, and hence to slay so as to eat (see notes Gen. 15:10). It does not, of itself, signify a mutual undertaking between two parties, but it does bind the one entering into such a covenant to fulfil his part of it. A covenant established upon the shedding of blood is for life, and demonstrates that those entering into such an undertaking will be held accountable to it. Hence the solemn significance of Moses’ words said on this occasion. Similar words, were used by the Lord Jesus when laying down the terms of his covenant with the disciples (Luke 22:20).

To “behold the blood” is to recognise the significance of the memorials represented thereby.

The Glory of Yahweh Manifested

— vv. 9-11.

The covenant having been ratified by the unanimous acceptance of the people (as the apostles did that of the Lord as representatives of all believers — cp. John 17:19-20), Moses proceeds to carry out the instructions given him in respect to Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the elders which he had received (vv. 1-2). Leading them to the foot of Horeb, they receive a vision of divine glory which symbolises the principles of God’s reign on earth. They then enter into fellowship with the Elohim by mutually partaking of a sacrificial feast: the whole of which points forward to events yet to happen at the consummation of the purpose of Yahweh in the earth.

VERSE 9

“Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel” — They moved up to the foot of Horeb. See notes v. 1.

VERSE 10

“And they saw the God of Israel” — They saw the *Elohim of Israel*, but not the angel upon whom Yahweh had superim-

posed His name (Exo. 23:20-21), for it is stated that "Moses alone shall come near Yahweh" (v. 2). In fact, Moses saw the "similitude of Yahweh" (Num. 12:8) for no mortal has looked upon Him directly (1Tim. 6:16).

In this symbolic portrayal of divine glory, the "Elohim of Israel" represented those "mighty ones of Israel" who, in the Age to come, shall be made "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36), and will take over the administrative work that the angels perform at present (Heb. 2:5). In symbol, the assembled elders of Israel, at the foot of Horeb, saw that which was invisible but which was nevertheless real, as is the presence of angels at the present-day memorial meetings of the brethren: (Mat. 18:10, 20; Luke 15:10).

"And there was under his feet" — The personal pronoun is in the singular number although related to the plural term *Elohim*. Though the term *Elohim* denotes a company of mighty ones, each member acts in complete unity and co-operation with all others.

"As it were a paved work of a sapphire stone" — The term "paved work" is from the Hebrew *libnah* signifying "whiteness," and by implication, *transparency*. The word "sapphire" is from a root denoting to *engrave, to write*, pointing to the impress of the Word of God. The sapphire is a blue stone, and being connected with the word *libnah*, suggests the glorious, transparent blue of heaven in its clearness. Blue was used in the Law to emphasise the heavenly origin of things (see Num. 15:38; Deu. 22:12). In the breastplate of the high priest the sapphire represented the tribe of Simeon whose name signifies *Hearing* (Exo. 28:18), but in the Apocalypse (cp. Rev. 21:19 with 7:5) it represents Reuben, signifying *See a Son!* Thus the use of the stone represents a transformation from *hearing* to *seeing*.

In witnessing this theophany of the Elohim of Israel enthroned above such a pavement, Moses and the leaders saw a similar vision as that of the cherubim later revealed to Ezekiel, for the same description is given (see Eze. 1:26). It symbolised

the "new heavens and the new earth" that Yahweh intends to establish upon the earth (Isa. 65:17-18; 66:22). It set forth before the leaders of the people the hope of their calling, and the destiny that Yahweh had in mind for them in drawing them out of Egypt: namely, to establish a perfect realm on earth.

"And as it were the body of heaven in his clearness" — This statement emphasises the heavenly nature of the divine governance, the new political heavens and earth in which "dwelleth righteousness" (2Pet. 3:13).

VERSE 11

"And upon the nobles of the children of Israel" — In the symbolic vision of the kingdom thus presented, the "nobles of Israel" at the foot of Horeb, represent those who shall constitute the king-priests of the Age to come (see Isa. 41:9-14; Rev. 5:9-10).

"He laid not his hand" — This represents divine acceptance, ultimately to be experienced by the righteous at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

"Also they saw God" — In the Elohim they saw the manifestation of the Father. See the promise of Mat. 5:8; Rev. 22:4.

"And did eat and drink" — They partook of a sacrificial feast with the Elohim. A similar promise was made to the apostles by the Lord (Mat. 26:29). As Melchizedek prepared bread and wine for Abraham following his defeat of the confederacy from the north (Gen. 14:18), so shall Christ, as the antitypical Melchizedek, in the Age to come, for his victorious associates (Isa. 25:6-7).

Therefore, the vision of glory revealed to the elders of Israel, symbolised the consummation of the divine purpose as far as the nation was concerned. They were shown "the joy set before them" (Heb. 12:2), and thereby given an incentive to carry out the will of Yahweh in action.

Moses Ascends The Mount To Receive The Covenant — vv. 12-18.

Moses is commanded to ascend Mount Horeb once more, and does so for the fifth

time. On this occasion, he takes Joshua with him, and they move towards the eminence of Sinai. They see the mount encompassed with the glory of Yahweh in cloud and devouring fire, and for six days they await further instructions as to what they should do. On the seventh day Moses is commanded to ascend Mount Sinai. Leaving Joshua at the foot of the mount, he does so. The cloud receives him out of the sight of his waiting companion, and he remains there in the mount for forty days and forty nights.

VERSE 12

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount, and be there” — This is the fifth ascent of Moses. On this occasion, however, it is to be for a protracted stay suggested by the additional clause “and be there.”

“And I will give thee tables of stone” — The Ten Commandments were inscribed on tablets of stone (Exo. 31:18; Deu. 5:22). These tables were provided by the hand of the angel (Exo. 32:16) but were later broken at the time of the rebellion of Israel in the matter of the golden calf (v. 19); the second tablets were hewn by Moses himself (see ch. 34:1).

“And a law, and commandments which I have written” — The Hebrew has the definite article: “*the* law, and *the* commandments which I have written.” The law and the commandments were all summarised in the Decalogue already proclaimed to the people (Exo. 20:1-17), and which now were to be given to Moses, inscribed on stone by the angel himself.

“That thou mayest teach them” — It is important that the Word should be taught, for it is of little value in the absence of such study. See the need for a “teaching priest” (2Chr. 15:3; Jer. 32:33; Mal. 2:6-7).

VERSE 13

“And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua” — This title of *sharath*, an attendant, is here applied to Joshua for the first time, indicating the status to which he

was rising. Moses had used him earlier to lead Israel against the Amalekites (Exo. 17:9-13), and was to bring him more and more into prominence, until, finally, he became his successor.

The name Joshua is here used by anticipation, as he did not receive it until he was sent by Moses to explore the land of Canaan; formerly he was named *Oshea* (Num. 13:8), but Moses renamed him *Yahoshua* (v. 16). Joshua was evidently one of the seventy elders selected to represent Israel (Exo. 24:1).

“And Moses went up into the mount of God” — With Joshua, Moses ascended Mount Horeb, styled *The Mount of God* (see note pp. 246-247).

VERSE 14

“And he said unto the elders, Tarry here for us, until we come again unto you” — Moses’ ascent into the mount typified the Lord’s ascent into heaven. Significantly, the Lord also admonished: “Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13).

“And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you” — These two leaders assisted Moses previously (see Exo. 17:10), and are now appointed to assume responsibility in his absence.

“If any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them” — Moses’ instructions in this regard, should have prepared the people for his lengthy stay in the mount, so that they were without excuse in their subsequent faithlessness and wilful worship of the golden calf.

VERSE 15

“And Moses went up into the mount” — Accompanied by Joshua, Moses ascended Mount Horeb in the sight of the elders watching from below. The Lord Jesus was similarly watched ascending to heaven by his disciples (Acts 1:9).

“And a cloud covered the mount” — When he ascended to the top of Horeb, he and Joshua would see the higher peak of Sinai in the distance. They perceived that its peak was clothed in cloud. The Hebrew is *ha-anan*, *the* cloud. See Acts 1:9.

VERSE 16

“And the glory of Yahweh abode upon mount Sinai” — The cloud was exceedingly luminous. See note Exo. 16:10. Mount Sinai is about five kilometres (3 mls) distant from mount Horeb, and in relationship to that peak, represented the Most Holy as against the Holy Place. See note p. 246-247.

“And the cloud covered it six days” — The glory was veiled for six days, a delay that gave Moses time to prepare for his approach to the angel manifesting the name and glory of Yahweh. The period prefigures the six thousand years of history during which the divine glory has been veiled, awaiting its full manifestation at the coming of the Lord at the seventh millennium (cp. 1Tim. 6:14-16).

“And the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud” — The divine glory at the Lord’s return will be apocalypted in a cloud of resurrected and glorified witnesses (see Rev. 1:7; Mat. 24:30). On this occasion, Moses was summoned to approach closer.

VERSE 17

“And the sight of the glory of Yahweh was like devouring fire on the top of the mount” — A *devouring* fire is one that consumes or destroys. The purpose of the Law was to destroy the lusts of the flesh that are contrary to God, and to purify the people for the kingdom. The fire of divine scrutiny at the Judgment Seat will complete the process (see 1Cor. 3:13, 15). It will perfect faith, for gold, which is the symbol of faith (1Pet. 1:7), can never be destroyed; it can only be purified by fire. Therefore God still remains as a “consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28-29), and will manifest Himself as such against the world of the ungodly at the coming of the Lord (2Thes. 1:8; 2Pet. 3:12).

Meanwhile, Moses’ experience in the mount must have reminded him of the “great sight” he had witnessed some years earlier at Horeb, when a bush was encompassed with fire, but not consumed (Exo. 3:2). Accordingly, among his last words, he exhorted Israel to seek “the good will

of Him that dwelt in the bush” (Deu. 33:16). Those who do so may be purified by trial, but will never be destroyed by “the devouring fire.”

“In the eyes of the children of Israel” — The glory of Yahweh which was centred particularly on Mount Sinai was diffused over the whole area, so that the children of Israel, at the foot of Horeb, could see the glow of the devouring fire. This filled them with fear and perhaps contributed to some of them claiming that Moses had been destroyed in the mount.

VERSE 18

“And Moses went into the midst of the cloud” — The cloud veiled the peak of Sinai, which represented the Most Holy before the tabernacle (see p. 259). Joshua, who was left at the foot of the mount, saw the cloud “receive him out of his sight” (Acts 1:9 portrays the antitype).

“And gat him up into the mount” — Moses ascended into the mount, to the very presence of the angel upon whom was named the name of Yahweh.

“And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights” — Moses observed a complete fast, without eating or drinking for forty days (Deu. 9:9-17). It was the first of three such fasts recorded in the scripture (cp. Deu. 10:10; Exo. 34:28). Both Elijah (1Kings 19:8), and the Lord (Mat. 4:2) did likewise. Fasts were designed to prepare the mind for particular approaches unto Yahweh; but such a fast as this required special strength, by divine provision, to endure it.

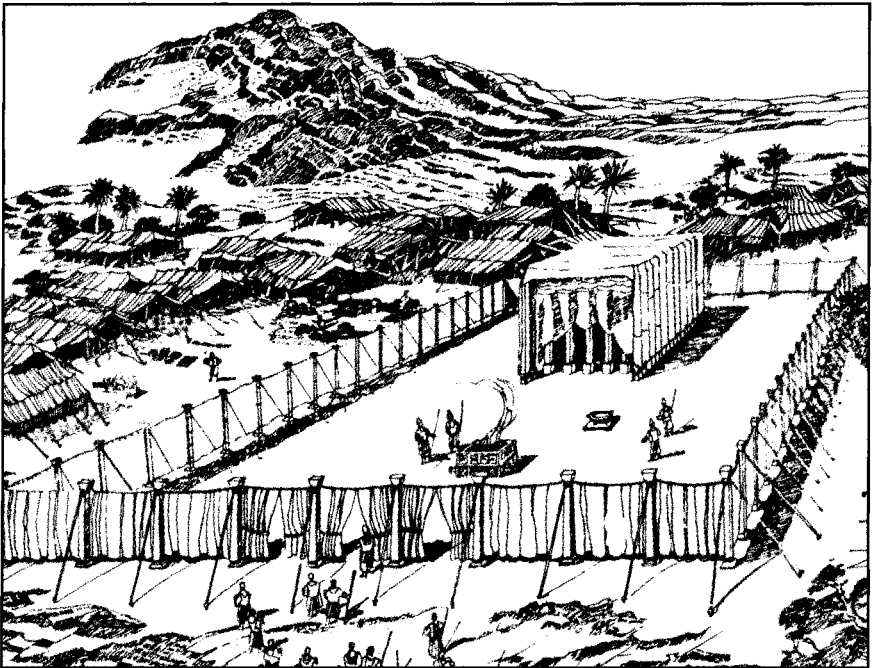


EXODUS: A PATTERN OF REDEMPTION

SECTION SIX

DEDICATION

CHAPTER 25:1 to 40:38



The various steps of Redemption portrayed in The Book of Exodus reach the fifth stage in the construction of the tabernacle which provided a centre of divine worship in the midst of Israel. There are three sections in it. First, the pattern of the tabernacle is revealed to Moses during his forty days in the mount. Then, in the episode of the golden calf, the execution of the plan is delayed through Israel's lapse into idolatry, during which interval a temporary substitute for the tabernacle is provided in a tent pitched "without the camp" (Exo. 33:7). Finally, the tabernacle is completed and erected, and the divine glory descends upon it, so that, in this way, Yahweh dwells in the midst of Israel.

As in the other divisions of the book, therefore, this one, also, is divided into three parts: [1] The tabernacle proposed: [2] The tabernacle resisted; [3] The tabernacle accomplished.

The sections are divisible as follows:

- [1] — **Designed:** *by the pattern revealed to Moses (chs. 25-31);*
- [2] — **Delayed:** *through the idolatry of Israel (chs. 32-34);*
- [3] — **Completed:** *by its construction when Moses returns the second time (chs. 35-40).*

The scriptures devote more room to the description of the tabernacle and its appurtenances than to any other single subject. Its details are described minutely in the Old Testament, whilst the New Testament writers draw upon it largely in setting forth the principles of redemption in Christ. It was designed not merely for architectural beauty, but as a symbolical and typical expression of wonderful spiritual truth: as a parable of God-manifestation in three developments: Preparation (the court); Application (the holy place); Glorification (the Most Holy Place).

Finally, the three sections of this part of Exodus, from the planning of the tabernacle until its construction, when the glory of Yahweh was revealed therein and God dwelt thus in the midst of His people, provide a parable of the divine purpose in the gospel: first proclaimed, then delayed during the absence of the Son, and finally accomplished in the earth when "the tabernacle of God will be with men" (Rev. 21:3).

[1] THE TABERNACLE DESIGNED (Proposed)**Ch. 25:1 to 31:18**

In the mount, Moses is instructed concerning the tabernacle, to be provided as a place of meeting between Yahweh and the people of Israel (Exo. 25:22). The materials of which it is to be built, and the various aspects of both the tent and the furniture, are described in great detail. A solemn charge is given Moses that he should make all things according to the "pattern" which is shown him "in the mount," and this instruction is seven times repeated in scripture (Exo. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Num. 8:4; Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5). The word used implies that Moses is shown a vision of the actual tabernacle already constructed, and not merely a blueprint of it or a series of measurements. In the mount, he was probably able to walk around what was shown to him, and so could examine it in detail, as Ezekiel later was able to do in relation to the temple of the future (Eze. 40). Every detail of the tabernacle is significant, and worthy of the closest attention. But, in large measure, we must leave this to the student, for to attempt anything like an exhaustive commentary of it, with its many symbolical and typical meanings, would be beyond the scope of this exposition. However, we will set down guidelines of study in relation to this wonderful theme.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE**THE OFFERING, ARK, TABLE,
AND LAMPSTAND**

This chapter describes the opening directions concerning the tabernacle. First, the materials out of which it is to be constructed are described, and the people are asked to provide such materials. Then specific direction is given that it must be made according to the "pattern" revealed to Moses in the mount. Finally, its details are outlined.

It is significant that the instructions commence with the ark in the Most Holy. It is as though Yahweh, from His throne in the midst of Israel, invites worshippers to fellowship with Him; and sets before them the incentive of striving to attain unto the Most Holy state.

However, this is only possible through the "new and living way" revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:19-20).

The People's Offering — vv. 1-9.

The willing-hearted among Israelites are to supply materials as listed by Yahweh, in order that a suitable sanctuary is constructed, in which He may dwell among them. The design of it must strictly conform to the pattern then revealed to Moses. The materials supplied are from the wealth obtained in Egypt, as well as from the spoil of the Amalekites.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — High up on Mount Sinai, remote from the people below, Moses received detailed instructions regarding the tabernacle to be constructed as a centre of worship in the midst of Israel (cp. v. 9).

VERSE 2

“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering” — The word in Hebrew is *terumah*, and signifies “heave offering” as in the margin. It is derived from a root *ruwm*, “to be high; to be lifted up;” and denotes something taken up from the bulk for a special purpose: in this case, the items listed are lifted up for Yahweh’s use.

The “heave offering” was actually lifted up by the offerer, in a ceremonial action, as though presenting it to Yahweh on high. In this it differed from the “wave offering” that was waved from side to side to indicate the activity of the worshipper before God. In the case before us, the people were to select an offering from the substance that they had received in Egypt (see Exo. 12:35; Psa. 105:37), and offer it unto Yahweh for use in the tabernacle. In this it differed from most heave offerings as specified by the Law, for usually the exact amount to be given was stated. Here it was left to the judgment of the individual. Ultimately the people responded with such goodwill that in a short time ample was supplied, and, finally, they had to be restrained from giving (Exo. 36:5). There will be a repetition of this in the future in regard to the temple at Zion (Isa. 60:5, 9; Hag. 2:8-9).

“Of every man that giveth it willingly

with his heart” — The literal Hebrew is “whose heart impels him.” An Israelite would feel impelled to respond in gratitude, and so give of the abundance he had received. This is well-pleasing to Yahweh who “loveth a cheerful giver” (2Cor. 9:7). A person can give himself, his heart, or of his possessions to God. See references to such in the following places, and apply the exhortation: Judges 5:2; 1Chr. 29:5-6, 9, 14, 17; Ezra 1:6; 2:68; Neh. 11:2; 2Cor. 8:12. The virtuous woman is represented as “working willingly with her hands” because she is keenly interested in what she is doing and sees the benefit of it.

“Ye shall take My offering” — That is, “Ye shall accept the offering given unto Me.”

VERSE 3

“And this is the offering which ye shall take of them” — Again the word is *terumah*, heave offering.

“Gold” — Heb. *zahab*, denoting pure, highly polished gold, such as would shine like glass (see Rev. 21:18).

There are a number of words in Hebrew for “gold,” each of which defines the metal in a particular state. Here the word denotes the best and most expensive gold. Such gold is a symbol of a tried faith (see 1Pet. 1:7; Rev. 3:18). The figure of 1Pet. 1:7 is that of a goldsmith of ancient times who placed his crude gold-ore in a crucible, and subjected it to intense heat in order to liquify the mass. By such means the impurities rose to the surface, and were skimmed off. It is said that when the metal worker was able to see the reflection of his face clearly mirrored in the surface of the liquid, he would take it off the fire, for he knew that the contents were then pure gold. So it is with Yahweh and His people. The purpose of trial is to purify them as gold for the kingdom (see Job 28:1, 19-23; Pro. 17:3; 25:4; Lam. 4:2; Heb. 5:8; 1Pet. 4:12-13). The gold of faith is a divine quality, pleasing to the Father (Heb. 11:6). He sees in the faith of worshippers a reflection of His own excellent character.

The gold was required to cover the

boards of the ark; pure gold was required for the crown of gold that surmounted it (v. 11); the rings (v. 12); the mercy-seat (v. 17); the cherubim (v. 18); the dishes, spoons, covers, bowls (v. 29); the lamp-stand (v. 31); the tongs and snuff-dishes (v. 38); the hooks and taches (ch. 26:6,32); the covering of the table of shewbread (ch. 25:24); the staves and pillars (chs. 25:28; 26:32, 37); as well as for parts of the dress of the high priest (ch. 28:6-14).

We, too, can become vessels of honour for the use of Yahweh in His spiritual tabernacle (2Tim. 2:20-21).

“And silver” — Whereas gold, by its very colour, is suggestive of the glory of the sun, the white of silver speaks of the glory of the moon, reflecting the light of the sun. Silver is the metal of redemption (see Exo. 30:13). As such, it is particularly appropriate to the Bride of Christ whose symbol is the moon. As the moon gleams in the darkness of heaven’s vault, so the redeemed of Yahweh should shine in the darkness of the Gentile night that encompasses us today (Isa. 60:1-2).

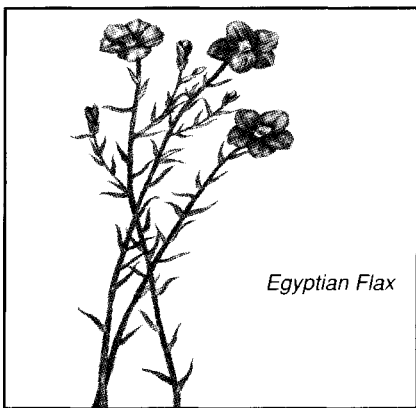
The silver was obtained mainly as the price of redemption (Exo. 30:12-16). It was required for the sockets that supported the boards of the tabernacle (Exo. 26:19), as well as for the hooks and fillets of the pillars of the court (Exo. 27:10).

“And brass” — The “brass” mentioned in the A.V. was either bronze or copper. Bronze is a combination of copper and tin, and was used extensively in ancient times. Some copper has been found with an admixture of zinc, suggestive of brass, which is an alloy of copper and zinc, but bronze was more frequently used. It is supposed that the tin used in manufacturing it, came from Cornwall, and was brought to the Middle East by the Phoenicians. Bronze or copper was required for the taches which coupled together the curtains of the tent (Exo. 26:11). It was also required for the sockets of the pillars (v. 37), the external coating of the altar (ch. 27:2), the covering of its staves (v. 6), the sockets of the pillars of the court (v. 10), the pins of the court (v. 19), and its vessels (v. 19). In the sym-

bology of the tabernacle, brass, bronze or copper represented the flesh purified by fire (Num. 16:37-38; 31:22-23). The Judgment Seat of Christ will play a part in the final purification of flesh as far as individuals are concerned (1Cor. 3:13), whilst the Lord’s fiery judgments on the nations (Mal. 4:1) likewise will purify them. In the tabernacle, “brass” was found only in the outer court, whilst the further one penetrated into the holy and Most Holy, the more precious became the metals used.

VERSE 4

“And blue” — This dye was obtained from a shellfish called *Helix lanthina*, found on the coast of Phoenicia. Josephus Ant. 3:7:7) states that it was emblematic of the deep, dark hue of the mid-eastern sky. The A.V. in Est. 1:6 (mg.) has rendered it as “violet.” It was the colour used by royalty (Eze. 23:6), and in the tabernacle, as representing the blue vault of heaven, it symbolised the principle of God manifestation (Num. 15:38; Deu. 22:12).



Egyptian Flax

“And purple” — This was a brilliant red-blue colour, prized by the ancients for dyeing (Pro. 31:22; Jer. 10:9). The chief source for the best of this colour was from a tiny mollusk (*murex*) found along the coast of Phoenicia. Great labour and skill were required to extract the dye, so that only royalty or the rich could afford it (cp. Luke 16:19; John 19:2; Acts 16:14). Being

a blending of blue and scarlet, purple is the colour of God manifest in flesh.

“And scarlet” — The Hebrew is *tola'ath shani*, or “the worm scarlet” (see Psa. 22:6). The *tola* is a small insect, about the size of a pea. The females, called *coccus illicis* (and here the word is in the feminine gender), are collected and dried, and from them is obtained the dye known as crimson and cochineal.

Wherever our word *scarlet* occurs as relating to the tabernacle, in Exodus, these two Hebrew words appear together. The first of these is rendered “worm” in Psa. 22:6, and is there related to the sacrifice of the Lord. The other word is rendered *scarlet* in Josh. 2:18; Pro. 31:21; Song 4:3; Isa. 1:18, etc. From references such as 2Sam. 1:24, Pro. 31:21 and Lam. 4:5, it is obvious that the colour was used as one of honour or glory in some particular: an emblem of royalty. For example, when the Lord Jesus was, in mockery, hailed as king, the soldiers of imperial Rome clothed him with a *scarlet* robe (Mat. 27:28), in addition to the purple one described by Mark and John. (According to the Greek, the garment described by John is a different one from that described by Matthew).

The scarlet of the tabernacle, therefore, seems to typify the human kingly glory of the Lord Jesus. He was of the royal line of David, and, therefore, *born* King of the Jews (Mat. 2:2), though his royalty was not merely a matter of inheritance, but of personal conquest. He demonstrated his right to rule by his victory over self (Pro. 16:32). The “scarlet,” therefore, represents the right to rule by the conquest of sin’s flesh.

The word *tola*, rendered “worm” in Psa. 22:6 indicates one dedicated to sacrifice, and therefore one who could not escape death. In this verse the Lord is represented as contrasting the deliverance from death that the fathers experienced when they sought the help of Yahweh, with his own state, as delivered unto death. Why? Because he was “a worm,” being given over to sacrifice, and “no man.” The word for “man” in this verse is

ish, denoting a great and honoured man. The Lord did not assert his authority as a great man, but instead took the lowest place, and submitted to the “death of the cross.” This, however, became his badge of royalty, for Paul continues, “therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Phil. 2:8-9). Thus the “scarlet,” spoke of sin’s flesh, in that the Lord partook of our nature, yet was never dominated by it.

It is significant that the order of the colours, blue, purple, scarlet, repeated at least twenty-four times in Exodus, is never varied. The scarlet and the blue was next placed in juxta-position with each other throughout the fabrics of the tabernacle. The order is expressive of the thought: the commandments of *Heaven* (blue) will reveal *God Manifest* (purple) in the *Flesh* (scarlet).

“And fine linen” — There are various Hebrew words used to define linen, and each seems to have special significance. Here the word is *shesh* and appears to be of Egyptian origin similar to the Coptic word *shens* used to describe an importation of Tyre from Egypt (Eze. 27:7; 16:10, 13), and therefore is appropriate to describe the garment of Joseph (Gen. 41:42), as well as that thread which the Israelites evidently brought with them out of Egypt. The Egyptians were famous for their fine linen. The flax was planted in Egypt in November and gathered about four months later, around Passover time. It had to be separated from its seeds, bunched, retted, laid in the sun and immersed in water to bleach and soften for crushing. The flax fibres were beaten out of the woody portions and it was drawn by a comb-like implement into thread for weaving on looms. Of Rahab it is said that she had dried flax on the top of her roof (Josh. 2:6), and the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is described as “seeking wool and flax, and working willingly with her hands” at the spindle and distaff (vv. 13, 19). In the wilderness, the women of Israel did the spinning and embroidering (Exo. 35:25), assisted and supervised by Aholiab

who was specially skilled in this art (Exo. 38:23).

As we will find when we come to consider the linen breeches of Exo. 28:42, other Hebrew words are used to describe variations of *shesh*, the fine linen of Egypt.

As a symbol, fine linen represents righteousness (Rev. 19:8). There is need of beating, careful preparation, and elaborate and skilful weaving to produce the best quality linen. So also to reveal those works of righteousness in which Yahweh delights.

“And goats’ hair” — Goats’ hair was black in colour, and was woven into a form of canvas to provide a covering. The goat was used as a sin-offering (Lev. 16:15), and therefore was appropriate to form the inner covering of the tabernacle.

VERSE 5

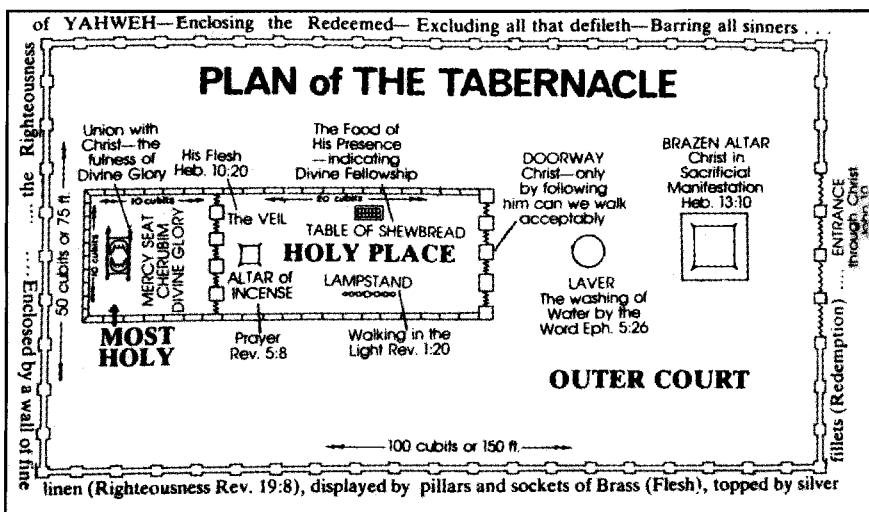
“And ram’s skins dyed red” — There is no word for “dyed” in the Hebrew, so the reference is to red rams, or to skins tanned red. This draws comparison with the sacrificial *heifer* described in Num. 19. The heifer was to be without spot or blemish; ungalled by any yoke; marked in its very birth, by its colour, for

sacrifice. As a sacrifice it cleansed from the defilement of contact with death. And as a remarkable foreshadowing of the Lord’s offering, its efficacy remained long after it was put to death for that purpose.

Therefore, the reddened skins of the tabernacle suggest the *humanity* of the Lord, the antitypical tabernacle. The Hebrew term is *oroth aylim meod’anim*, the latter words signifying “from Adam.” The word for “rams” (*aylim*) signifies *strength*. The ram was the protector of the flock, so that the type points to one from Adam who would be of sufficient strength to protect the flock: a wonderful foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus (Psa. 80:17).

The word for “skins” is *oroth* from *awr* to be bare, made naked. Hence the rams were made naked to provide a covering for naked man. They were appointed as a covering above the tent, or curtains of goats’ hair (Exo. 26:14; 36:19). The rams’ skins being reddened by tanning, would speak of the Lord’s suffering because of his obedience to God (Heb. 5:7; cp. 2Sam. 7:14). Isaiah prophesied that he would be esteemed of men as “smitten of God and afflicted” (Isa. 53:4). That was certainly the outward aspect of the Lord.

“And badgers’ skins” — It has been



objected that badgers' skins would not be suitable for the outer covering of the tabernacle, nor for sandals with which they are associated in Eze. 16:10. What, then, were the "badgers' skins?" Some suggest that reference is to the skins of seals, identifying the Hebrew term *tahash* with the Arabic word *tahas*. G. H. Cansdale, in *Animals of Bible Lands*, suggests that reference is to the dugong, a species of seal found in the coastal waters of the Red Sea. Others, however, see the reference as relating to the colour of the skins used. Burckhardt contends that it defines a deep blue colour. The Septuagint renders the term as *blue skins*; the Vulgate has, *skins dyed violet*. Perhaps this outer covering of the tabernacle was formed of skins of the dugong coloured blue. This would mean that the outer appearance had a colour that emphasised the divine origin of both the nation and its worship (see Num. 15:38; Deu. 22:12).

It also would mean that the Israelite who obeyed the instruction of the Law in wearing a ribband of blue upon his garment would identify that colour with the covering of the tabernacle, and would see himself as a living representation of it.

Moreover, if, indeed, the covering was of the skins of the dugong (although we cannot be sure of this), it means that this outer covering had been drawn from out of the Red Sea for the purpose of worship: an excellent reminder of the national baptism of Israel by which the people were separated from Egypt, as a people for the Name.

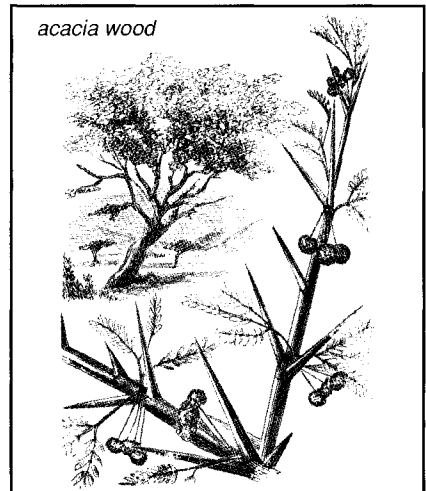
"And shittim wood" — The word "shittim" is rendered *acacia* in the R.V. Strong derives it from a root signifying *to pierce, to flog*, and hence to punish. Others see it as signifying *that which is despised*. Its presence in the tabernacle points to human nature, that is, human nature that has "learned obedience by the things it has suffered" (Heb. 5:7-9).

The acacia is a desert tree, thriving in the wadis of Sinai and the Dead Sea, but not found in upper Israel. It is of thorny growth, such as may pierce the unwary; it bears sweet-smelling, yellow, golden

flowers like the Australian wattle. It grows to the height of a mulberry tree, has a gnarled, rough, black bark and angular spreading branches. It is indestructible by insects, and on piercing, yields a medicinal gum.

The Septuagint renders the term as "incorruptible wood." When the bark is removed, the shittah tree provides a beautiful, close-grained wood, orange in colour, and very heavy. It darkens with age, and is long lasting. It is a wonderful type, both of him who was pierced that we might live, as well as of those incorporated "into him."

The Israelites would have had to search for and select the trees to be used; then to cut them down, or humble them to the dust; then shape them according to divine requirements; cover them with gold; finally cause them to stand upright, shoulder to shoulder, as the prefabricated walls of the tabernacle, God's dwelling place. So with saints. They are selected (Acts 15:14), humbled, shaped, and caused to stand upright, coated with the gold of faith, to shine forth in all their glory as the walls of Yahweh's habitation among men. That transformation symbolises the change that takes place in a saint, in consequence of the call of Yahweh (cp. Eph. 2:21-22).



VERSE 6

“Oil for the light” — This was to be of the finest quality so as to ensure a clear, bright light. It was to be “pure oil, olive beaten.” This was obtained by gently pounding immature olives in a mortar and then straining the oil. This was fed to the lamps (the word “light” in this place is *ma’or*, “light-bearer,” as in Gen. 1:16), and the resultant light represented the expression of truth (see Psa. 119:105; Zech. 4:1-3, 13-14; Phil. 2:13-15). Every Israelitish household was invited to contribute oil for the lamp, which meant that every family could be represented in the Holy Place through the oil supplied to illuminate it through the seven-branched lampstand.

“Spices for anointing oil” — See Exo. 30:23 for the various spices required for this purpose. The spices were designed to add to the fragrance

“And for sweet incense” — See Exo. 30:34 for the ingredients of the incense, to be offered daily, a symbol of prayer.

VERSE 7

“Onyx stones” — The word signifies *finger-nail* stones, so called because of the layers of different colours which alternate with each other and bear some resemblance to the white and flesh coloured bands of the finger-nail. For their use see Exo. 28:9,12. The Hebrew word is *shoshaom* which signifies, according to Soltau, *To shine forth with the lustre of fire*. Specific reference to the stone is given in Gen. 2:12, whilst in Exo. 28:12 those placed in the ephod of the high priest are described as “stones of memorial.” In the breastplate, the onyx stone represented the tribe of Asher whose name denotes *Blessed*. Blessings are derived from an upright walk before Yahweh (Psa. 1:1), or from the forgiveness of sins committed through weakness (Psa. 32:1).

“And stones to be set in the ephod” — This would imply that further onyx stones were to be set in the ephod, which was not the case, as only one was used therein. The literal Hebrew is: “Stones of onyx and stones of setting for the ephod

and for the breastplate.” Two large onyx stones were used for the ephod of the high priest, and other large stones of various kinds were used for the breastplate which formed part of his dress.

“And in the breastplate” — Described in ch. 28:15-21. It contained twelve gems representative of the twelve tribes of Israel.

VERSE 8

“And let them make Me a sanctuary” — The word “sanctuary” is *mikdash*, and is derived from *kadash*, “to be sanctified,” that is, set apart for exclusive divine use. It defines the tabernacle proper. It was to be set up in the centre of the tents of the tribes, with a space intervening between both, to denote separation. The sanctuary, therefore, represented separation, sanctification and unity, leading to God manifestation.

It was divided into three parts: the court, the holy and the Most Holy, answering to the three developments in God manifestation: *preparation* (doctrine), *application* (walk), and *glorification* (divine nature). Separation is the keynote of a true life in Christ (see John 1:12-14; Acts 15:14; 2Cor. 6:16), but it must be a separation as unto God, with the object of God manifestation, leading to the possession of divine nature (John 17:21; Rev. 21:3). Thereby, believers become sanctuaries of Yahweh, through the indwelling of His Spirit-Word (Rom. 8:9; John 6:63), thus becoming “an habitation for God” (Eph. 2:22). The sanctuary was to be made exactly after the details revealed in the pattern given in the mount, and no deviation from it was permitted (Exo. 25:9,40). Therefore, when it was completed, each article was submitted to Moses for inspection: foreshadowing the coming judgment (Exo. 39:33-43). Thus Yahweh was the Architect of the Sanctuary. It was His work, as the development of a righteous character through His Word in a believer is His work. As the Potter, He has the right to inspect such and reject any that may be faulty, if necessary (Jer. 18:4-6). In the antitype, the characters of believers are

treated as "His workmanship" (Eph. 2:10; Rom. 8:29).

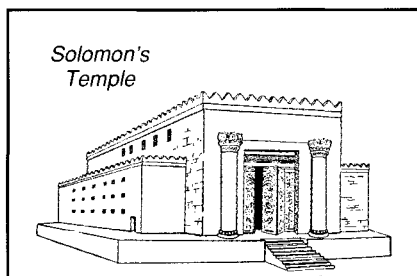
In the sanctuary set up in the midst of Israel, no embellishment was left to Moses. Workmen were endowed with special skills and qualifications to construct that which was necessary, and therefore, like the apostles and other endowed men, they became "workers together with God" (2Cor. 6:1).

"That I may dwell among them" —

The Hebrew for "dwell" is *shakan*, and signifies "to dwell permanently," which was Yahweh's intention. From it is derived the word *shekinah*, used to describe the indwelling divine glory.

The tabernacle, therefore, became the symbol of Yahweh's presence in the nation (Exo. 29:45-46), the token of God-manifestation such as the people were called upon to reveal, and a prophecy proclaiming that ultimately the glory of Yahweh shall fill the earth as the waters do the sea (see Num. 14:21; 1Cor. 15:28; Rev. 21:2-3). Accordingly, any defiling element was to be removed therefrom (cp. Num. 5:3; 35:34), so that it became the ideal of holiness and righteousness in the midst of the nation. Once the Israelites reached the Land of Promise, a special place was selected by God as the place where He would "cause His name to dwell," as the centre of divine worship (Deu. 12:11). When that time came, the temporary structure of the tabernacle was to be exchanged for the permanent building of the temple (1Kings 6:12-13). But even then, the fullness of glory was hidden (1Kgs. 8:12; 2Chr. 6:1), for, in fact, it was not Yahweh's purpose to dwell merely in a building of stone, but in an abiding place of living stones. Therefore, although the temple was subsequently destroyed, and Yahweh's dwelling place is now in the temporary abode of the ecclesia, it is His purpose to again dwell at Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17; Psa. 68:16-18), in a "house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 57:15; Zech. 2:10-11; 8:3, 8).

Meanwhile, He is calling out a people for His Name (Acts 15:14) to comprise the living stones in the permanent building to



be manifested on earth (2Cor. 6:16). Such "living stones" (1Pet. 2:5) must be shaped according to the pattern revealed in the Word (John 17:17).

The sanctuary, in the midst of Israel, witnessed to the dwelling of Yahweh in the hearts of His people, called out of Egypt for that purpose (Deu. 4:5-8). Yahweh called the people of Israel out of Egypt, not merely to save them, but to make them worth saving, by revealing Himself in them. "God manifestation, not human salvation" was the primary purpose of the call then, as it is today. Israel had to become "a holy people unto Yahweh," the channel of His manifestation to other nations (Jer. 13:11), that all peoples might see that Israel "was called by the name of Yahweh" (Deu. 28:9-10). The sanctuary in the heart of the nation witnessed to the divine requirements. Unfortunately, the people "profaned His holy Name," and brought discredit upon it (Eze. 36:19-23); and so He turned to the Gentiles.

VERSE 9

"According to all that I shew thee"

— Moses is instructed that there must be no deviation from that to be shown to him in the mount, no seeming "improvements" designed by the flesh. The tabernacle must be made exactly according to the specifications given, even as the spiritual temple of living stones must conform to the laws and instructions set down by God in His Word.

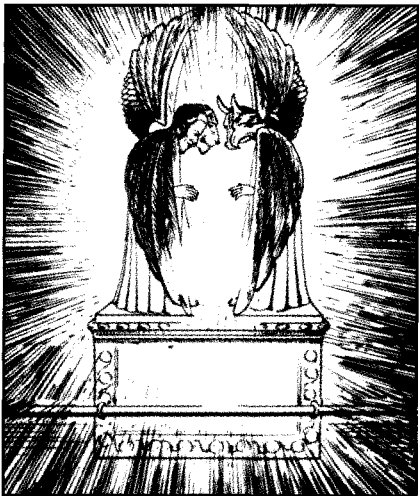
"After the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" — The word "pattern" is from the Hebrew *tabniyth* which denotes the structure of a

thing, and by implication a model or a resemblance. It is from a root *banah*, "to build." Moses evidently saw in vision an actual representation of the tabernacle set up before him, and probably was able to move throughout its sections: Court, Holy Place, Most Holy, as Ezekiel was to do in his vision of the future temple.

Later, Moses was told: "Thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exo. 26:30). From this it would appear that, in vision, Moses saw the completed tabernacle erected on the mount, in order to equip him for supervising the erection of the literal tabernacle when it was built. It is said, that some of the furniture would be beyond the ability of men to construct according to the requirements of the Law, but Bezaleel was specially endowed with the Spirit to do so (Exo. 31:2-4). The demonstration given Moses in the mount would have enabled him to confer with Bezaleel and his associates in the construction of any of its more difficult parts, if such were necessary.

The Ark — vv. 10-16.

In practice, a worshipper, on approaching the tabernacle, would first



see the wall of linen; whilst the ark itself would be the last of the objects revealed. But Yahweh commenced at the very heart of His sanctuary, beginning from within to without, thus describing the hidden ark first of all. This is characteristic of His revelation to man.

In prophecy, the final consummation is first revealed, and then are the steps by which it will be attained. Typical examples are found in Isa. 2 and Rev. 11:15, 18. In Isa. 2, the future glory of Jerusalem is first described, and then the means by which it will be brought about is outlined. At the beginning of creation, God proclaimed that man was designed for dominion (Gen. 1:28), but Paul adds "but now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:8). Thus the final picture is given first. Similarly, a believer is transformed by "the renewing of his mind" (Rom. 12:2). The metamorphosis commences from within.

In size, the ark was 1.5 metres (3 feet 9 inches) long, 0.68 metres (2 feet 3 inches), both deep and wide. It contained the tables of stone inscribed with the ten commandments, and therefore was known as the Ark of the Covenant, or the Testimony; it also contained Aaron's rod that budded, and a golden pot of manna that was miraculously preserved. It was covered with a sheet of gold called the "mercy seat," which constituted Yahweh's throne and meeting place in the midst of Israel.

Cherubim formed both ends of the mercy seat. The ark, mercy seat and cherubim represented the multitudinous Christ-Body. That Body contains within it the Law of God as the basis of the covenant (the "ten words"), the principle of divine selection and hope of resurrection, symbolised by Aaron's rod that budded (see Num. 17), and the promise of life eternal exhibited by the golden pot of manna (see John 6:51; Rev. 2:17).

VERSE 10

"And they shall make an ark" — The Hebrew word is *aron* derived from the root *arah*, "to pluck, to gather." As such, it is appropriate as a type for the multitudinous Christ, the members of

which have been "plucked" out of the nations (Acts 15:14). The same word is translated "*coffin*" in Gen. 50:26 relating to the container in which was placed the body of Joseph. As Joseph represented Christ, the Israelites, in carrying his "coffin" throughout the wilderness wanderings, constantly bore with them the tokens of his death and his hope of a resurrection (illustrated by his desire to be buried in the Land of Promise). In this they typed the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) who bear with them the tokens of the death and resurrection of their Lord.

The ark, constructed under the supervision of Moses, is also called *The Ark of the Testimony* (Exo. 25:22; 26:33; 40:3), the "testimony" being the Ten Commandments (Exo. 25:16, 21) which formed the basis of the covenant (Exo. 34:28). In Hebrew, "testimony" is *eduth*, the feminine form of *ed*, "witness." Those whose lives are governed by the principles of the Ten Commandments constitute the multitudinous Bride, for their lives witness and testify to the truths believed by them.

In Ezekiel 16:8-14 and Isaiah 54:5, the Mosaic covenant is likened to a marriage contract between Yahweh and the nation. He is represented as drawing Israel out of Egypt to constitute His Bride. The ark is also described as *The Throne of Yahweh* (Psa. 80:1), because it was there that He met His people (Exo. 25:22) in order to commune with, or direct its leaders as to what should be done (Num. 7:89).

The ark contained the golden pot of manna symbolising the hope of life eternal; Aaron's rod that budded, representing the principle of divine selection and resurrection; and the tables of the covenant, testifying to the need of obedience. Thus it was covered by mercy on the basis of sacrifice, and was overshadowed by the cherubim representing the principle of God manifestation. It was linked to the Holy Place by prayer through the golden censer (Heb. 9:4), and was only personally reached by the priest walking therein by the light of the lamps, and so moving to and beyond the veil.

There are many other titles given to

the ark. It is called merely *the ark* some fifty-three times (e.g., ch. 25:2, 22); the *Ark of the Covenant of the Adon [Ruler] of the earth* (Josh. 3:11); the *Ark of Yahweh, the Adon of all the earth* (Josh. 3:13); the *Ark of the covenant of God* (Jud. 20:27); the *Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh of Hosts* (1Sam. 4:4); the *Ark of the God of Israel* (1Sam. 5:7); the *Ark of Adonai Yahweh* (1Kings 2:26); the *Ark of Yahweh Elohim of Israel* (1Chr. 13:6; 15:14); the *Ark of Thy Strength* (2Chr. 6:41; Psa. 132:8); the *Holy Ark* (2Chr. 35:3).

Like all other divine titles in scripture, these are most significant. When Israel sought for Yahweh to manifest Himself belligerently against the enemy, it is called the *Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh of Hosts* (1Sam. 4:4); when it was triumphantly conveyed across the Jordan, it was named the *Ark of Yahweh Lord of all the Earth* (Josh. 3:13). It is the *Ark of Testimony* because of the witness of the Law inside it; the *Ark of the Covenant* because the covenant was established on sacrifices associated with it; the *Ark of Thy Strength*, because it represented what Yahweh was to Israel in power and blessing; the *Holy Ark* because of the separateness and sacredness of the worship connected with it.

In describing the ark, David declared that Yahweh's "name is called on it" (1Chr. 13:6), hence the various titles used in conjunction with it, expressing as they do, divine principles exhibited by the ark. It was covered by mercy, set forth the principle of God manifestation, and is associated with prayer, through the golden censer (Heb. 9:4).

"Of shittim wood" — See note v. 5. The basis of Yahweh's purpose of God manifestation in human nature. It must be humbled, shaped, and beautified by divine means, found in the Word. Therefore, the thinking of the flesh must be supplanted by the thinking of the Spirit-Word (Rom. 8:6) in order that the character formed may be fit for eternity. Such characters constitute God's workmanship (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 2:10). Hence we must yield ourselves to His control and guidance.

“Two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof” — “Cubit” is from the Hebrew *ammah*, and literally denotes a *mother*, as the basis for all measure. It is derived from the root *em*, the common Hebrew word for “mother,” but according to Gesenius, it is always used metaphorically for the *beginning, head, and foundation* of a thing. Particularly it signifies *the mother of the arm*, i.e. the fore-part of the arm. As the length from the elbow to the hand is approximately 45cms (18 inches), this is considered the measure of the cubit. The length of the ark of the tabernacle, therefore, was approximately 113 cms (3'9”).

“And a cubit and a half the breadth thereof” — The breadth of it was approximately 113 cms (3'9”).

“And a cubit and a half the height thereof” — It was approximately 68cms (2'3”) deep. The ark, therefore, was not noted for its size, but for its significance and glory.

VERSE 11

“And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold” — See note, v. 3. Acacia wood covered with gold represents human nature shaped according to the divine pattern, covered with the gold of a tried faith, immortalised.

“Within and without shalt thou overlay it” — Not merely an outward manifestation of faith, but one that springs from within. Cf. *Psa. 45:13*. The wood of the ark was entirely hidden by the gold: so with human nature in regard to Christ and the Redeemed: faith overcomes completely the weakness of human nature (*Rom. 8:3*).

“And shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about” — A crown of solid gold represents the victory of faith. Men crowned the Lord with thorns, but Yahweh crowned him eternally with glory and honour. A crown (*Gr. stephanos*) of glory can also be the possession of the Redeemed (*1Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11*).

Brother Roberts comments: “The crown (or ornamental border) all round the top of the ark, is an intimation of the royal

character of the whole organization. It is a kingly institution that is contemplated in the finished work of God on the earth. Christ and his brethren, manifesting the glory of God, will be a community of kings and priests, exercising power, receiving honour, and conferring blessedness — on the basis of God exalted in sacrificial vindication, and honoured by a tried faith (gold) in previous times of evil (wood).” (*The Law of Moses*, p. 115).

VERSE 12

“And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof” — As Israel was divided into four encampments (*Num. 2*), so the ark had its four rings of gold, representative of the Israel of *Gal. 6:16*.

“And two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it” — These rings were to be fixed, not at the upper, but at the lower corners of the ark. The Hebrew for “corners” is *pa'amot*, and is derived from a root signifying to hit or tap regularly, indicating the “feet,” and thus pointing to the lower part of the ark. Most likely the object was to ensure it was perfectly balanced without coming into contact with the persons of the priests (*cp. v. 14*). Covered with gold, as it was, and with the golden mercy seat and cherubim on top, it would have had considerable weight. This is appropriate when bearing in mind the objects it symbolised.

VERSE 13

“And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold” — As the ark was borne aloft by two staves, so the true Israel has been drawn from the two great families of humanity (Jew and Gentile), sustained by two great covenants of law and of grace (*Heb. 8:13*).

The Hebrew word for “staves” is *badyi*, and denotes “separation; something separated.” The word is rendered “by themselves” in *Exo. 26:9*, and the meaning of the word indicates the purpose of the staves: not merely to carry, but also to keep the holy furniture apart from contact

with flesh when Israel was on the move. The principle of holiness, of separation, is essential to true worship, whether the nation was stationary, or moving from place to place. The ark, mercy seat, table of shewbread, and so forth, must be treated circumspectly wherever found: whether at the meeting or conducted in the home.

The sacred furniture was not only carried by staves, but also hidden from the curious view of the public. When on the march, it was carried by Levites with the aid of the staves, after first being overspread by special coverings (see Num. 4:4-5 onwards).

The staves were placed in "the sides" of the ark. Here the word is *tsaloth*, the feminine form of *tsela* rendered "rib" in Gen. 2:21. As the ark represented the glorified Redeemed, the use of this term, points to the part of Adam that was taken from him to form his bride, an appropriate representative of the Bride of Christ in glory.

VERSE 14

"And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them" — The purpose of carrying the ark was not for processional display, but to convey it from place to place. Nevertheless, because the rings were placed on the lower position of the ark, it would have been borne aloft whilst on the march, higher than the other furniture. When the Truth has been proclaimed, the principles of mercy, sacrifice and salvation have been prominently displayed as was foreshadowed by the lifting up of the ark as it was conveyed from place to place (see Gal. 3:1).

VERSE 15

"The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it" — In the wilderness the tabernacle had no permanent abiding place; it was so constructed as to be always ready for the move. So true believers are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13), having no permanent abiding place. More-

over, the Truth has found temporary lodgment in many places: first in Palestine through the work of the Lord, afterwards in Asia, then in Europe by medium of the apostles, and today through believers, mainly within the English-speaking world.

When the tabernacle finally arrived in the Land, an abode was appointed it of Yahweh (Psa. 132:4-14). With the emplacement of the ark in the temple of Solomon, the staves were withdrawn, yet placed by the ark, indicative of it having reached the resting place designed for it by Yahweh (1Kgs. 8:8).

VERSE 16

"And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee" — This comprised the two tablets of stone bearing the ten commandments. See note, v. 21.

The Mercy Seat — v. 17.

Brother Roberts comments: "The cover-lid or mercy seat was all of gold. This is an intimation that the Mediator (who is the antitypical propitiatory or mercy seat) should be without fault, and would exercise his function as intercessor in the immortal state."

VERSE 17

"And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold" — The word "seat" is not in the Hebrew, but is appropriate to the work of mercy completed by Christ. Unlike the priests who ministered under the Mosaic dispensation, and who continuously "stood" to accomplish this, the Lord, having accomplished his work, "sat down" (Heb. 10:11-12). He thus became the Alpha (author) or Brazen Altar, and Omega (finisher) or Mercy Seat of faith (Heb. 12:2; Rev. 1:8). The word in the Hebrew rendered "mercy seat" is *kapporeth*, and is, according to H. Spence, derived not from *kaphar*, "to cover," but from *kipper*, the Piel form of the same verb, which has never any other sense than that of pardoning, or forgiving sins. In this sense it is used in the O.T. some seventy times.

The mercy seat is so described in places such as Lev. 16:2 and 1Chr. 28:11 as to imply that, in some ways, it transcended the importance of the ark itself. It was of pure gold, whereas the ark was wood overlaid with gold. Atonement (as the covering away or forgiving of sins) was made through the sprinkling of the blood of expiation upon it (Lev. 16:14-15). It comprised the golden lid of the ark, the Seat or Throne of Yahweh in Israel from whence He spoke to the people (Num. 7:89). In the N.T. the word "mercy seat" is the Gr. *hilasterion* (Heb. 9:5) which is also rendered "propitiatory" (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:5), and is identified with Yahweh's work of mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ. He provides a cover for sins (Rom. 4:7), and believers are required to "put him on" in the way appointed (Gal. 3:26-28), as a "garment of salvation" (Isa. 61:10). In 1Chr. 28:2 (see also Psa. 99:5; 132:7) the ark is described as the "foot-stool of God."

The Hebrew verb *kaphar* is connected with *kapporeth* (mercy seat) and is rendered "atonement." It is used in connection with the burnt offering (Lev. 1:4; 14:20; 16:24), the trespass offering (Lev. 5:16, 18), the sin offering (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35), the sin offering and burnt offering together (Lev. 5:10; 9:7), the meal offering and peace offering (Eze. 45:15, 17), as well as in other respects. It is used of the ram offered at the consecration of the high priest (Exo. 29:33), and of the blood which God gave upon the altar to make propitiation for the souls of the people. Because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11), it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life.

The term "propitiatory" (mercy seat) is used of Christ in Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:5 (see also 1John 2:2; 4:10). The mercy seat, all of gold, therefore is emblematic of the justice and mercy of Yahweh as exhibited in the work of salvation He effected through Christ (Rom. 3:25-26).

"Of pure gold" — Unlike the ark which was constructed of wood and overlaid with gold, the mercy seat was a sheet of pure gold, purified with fire, and beaten

into shape according to divine specifications. The perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ set him apart from the rest of humanity, and emphasised his divine origin (John 1:14).

"Two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof" — It was 118cms (33'9") long.

"And a cubit and a half the breadth thereof" — It was 70 cms (2'3") wide.

The Cherubim — vv. 18-22.

The shape of the cherubim is not given in this place, but from Ezekiel 1, it appears that there were two cherubim with four faces, answering to the four divisions of Israel. From Rev. 5:9-10 it is obvious that the cherubim typified the Redeemed in glory. In the tabernacle they were formed of the same slab of gold as the mercy seat, expressing the antitype of saints being "one with Christ Jesus." The faces of the cherubim symbolised the principle of God manifestation exhibited first in the Lord Jesus, and afterwards in the glorified Redeemed.

VERSE 18

"And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold" — The word should be rendered "cherubim" for the "im" on the end of a Hebrew word denotes the plural number. The first mention of cherubim is in Gen. 3:24, where see our notes thereon.

In *Phanerosis*, Bro. Thomas writes: "We believe that the word is derived from the root *rachav*, 'to ride,' whether on an animal or in a vehicle. By transposing the first two letters, and heemantively inserting *wav* before the last, we have 'cherub' or *that which is ridden* — in the plural, 'cherubim.' This convertibility of the verb *rachav* into the noun 'cherub' is illustrated in Psalm 18:10."

According to this derivation, the cherubim comprise the chariots of Yahweh, in which He rides by His spirit, and through which He manifests Himself. In 1Chr. 28:18 the phrase "the chariot even the cherubim" occurs according to the R.V., supporting the contention of *Phanerosis*. It is further supported by the

expressions of 2Kings 2:12 and 13:14 identifying Yahweh's prophets as vehicles in which He manifested Himself to the people.

However, W. Brown in *Antiquities Of The Jews* provides another meaning. He states that the word signifies *Resembling the majesty*. This derivation is obtained by dividing the word "cherubim" into *kay* as a particle of "resemblance," and *rab* as signifying "majesty."

Either definition emphasises the doctrine of God manifestation. The former suggests that the cherubim are those who are taken possession of, and are driven and guided as a charioteer would his vehicle. In that meaning of the word, a cherub is a person, whether mortal or immortal, of whom Yahweh takes hold, in order to manifest Himself. The latter emphasises the purpose of taking such possession: that the one so used might *resemble the Majesty* on high, and so reveal in flesh some of the royal qualities of God.

The cherubim were made entirely of gold, for faith must dominate the lives of all such (Heb. 11:6).

"Of beaten work shalt thou make them" — The word is *miqsha* and signifies "hammering." It is from a root (*kasha*), denoting to be hard, stiff, difficult. The term speaks of the moulding influence of trial, the hammering into shape of a character that it might honour Yahweh. The "hammer" used for that purpose is the word of Yahweh, which Jeremiah likened to "a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" (Jer. 23:29). When David pleaded the mercy of God he declared: "The sacrifices of God, are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." The Hebrew is *lev nishbar venidkakh*, and Adam Clarke derives the latter term from *dakar*, "to beat out thin." By such hammering, masses of metal are beaten into thin plates that are easily bent to any desired shape.

This introduces us to one of the most significant names of God: that of *Yahweh Yatsar* rendered "Maker" (Isa. 45:9). The word is from a root signifying *to press*,

and so signifies to squeeze or mould into shape. Yahweh is introduced to Israel as both the "Creator and the Former" of His people (Isa. 43:1). The former word signifies to bring into being; the latter denotes moulding into shape. Believers are spiritually brought into being, and formed into new creatures when they accept Christ in the way appointed (2Cor. 5:17). But that is not the end of the process. They must be beaten into shape. This is accomplished by the trials of life and the hammer of the Word. The former will "soften" the hard metal of the heart, make it malleable; the latter will shape it into the desired form. The combined influence will mould a character so that it is pleasing to Yahweh, and fit for life eternal. That was the lesson that the hammers of the goldsmiths beat out upon the precious metal before them, for all who had ears to hear.

"In the two ends of the mercy seat" — They were thus one with the mercy seat actually arising therefrom. In like manner, believers are to be "one with Christ," owing their spiritual existence to him, so that it can be said that they are "out of" him. There were two cherubim, for they were representative of those who have been drawn out of the two great families of humanity: Jew and Gentile. They are identified with the "four living ones" of Rev. 5:9-10. Though only two cherubim they had four faces as revealed in Eze. 1.

VERSE 19

"And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof" — The preposition "of" is from the Hebrew *min*, signifying "out of" (see *A New Old Testament*). Thus the two cherubic figures rose from out of the two ends of the mercy seat, as the true ecclesia is one with Christ.

VERSE 20

"And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings" — The four wings (see Eze. 1:6) answer to the four

extremities of Israel: the four camps into which it was divided (see Num. 2). The wings were lifted high above the figures, and over the mercy seat, so as to form a protective arch. This is in contrast to the larger cherubim with wings outstretched which were placed in the Most Holy of the temple of Solomon. In the present dispensation, mercy is limited to those called out of the nations, but in the millennium, as foreshadowed by the rule and worship of the kingdom under David and Solomon, the influence of the cherubim will be worldwide.

“And their faces” — A description of the faces of the cherubim is not given here, but it is supplied by Ezekiel (ch. 1). There were four faces: that of a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. They represented the emblems of the four leading tribes of the fourfold division of the nation: the lion for Judah; the ox for Ephraim; the man for Reuben; and the eagle for Dan. Yahweh is revealed fourfold as *Light* (1Jn. 1:5), *Fire* (Deu. 4:24) and *Spirit* (Jn. 4:24), and His characteristics are manifested through the *Man* (Jn. 1:14). The ancients selected the animals referred to as representative of these things. The shining eyes, tawny, gold-like colour, flowing mane, and resistless strength of the lion is held as being descriptive of fire, whilst the lofty skimming of the eagle, and its speedy flight are suggestive of the Spirit.

Typically, the lion speaks of *royalty*, the ox of *service*, the man of *flesh*, and the eagle of *spirit*. As such the cherubic faces proclaimed an exhortation to those exercised in such matters: If you would *rule* (lion), you first must *serve* (ox), and as you are *flesh* (man), you can only do it effectively through the power of the *Spirit-Word* (eagle).

The four major prophecies, and the four gospel records seem to answer to the four faces of the cherubim. Thus Isaiah and Matthew speak of the royal *majesty* of the Lord; Jeremiah and Mark depict him as Yahweh's *suffering servant*; Ezekiel and Luke emphasise his *humanity* (the term “Son of man” frequently being used in the former prophecy, whilst Luke traces

his origin back to Adam — see ch. 3); Daniel and John demonstrate his divine origin and power.

Can we be sure that the faces of the cherubim in the tabernacle were as those described by Ezekiel? We believe so on the authority of the prophet's statement in ch. 10:20: “This is the living creature that I saw... and I knew that they were the cherubim.” How did he “know” this? As a priest he would be familiar with the subject of the cherubim and would instantly recognise the four faces as identified with those found in the Most Holy.

“Shall look one to another” — Again this presents a powerful exhortation for believers. As the faces of the cherubim looked towards one another, so the faces of true Israelites should be turned one to another to their mutual profit and assistance. The positioning of the faces in that particular speaks of agreement and fellowship (1Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:13-17). This idea is further enforced by the Hebrew. The phrase *ish el-achiv* rendered “one to another” is derived from *ach* (brother), and literally “a man towards his brother.” So brotherly love and fellowship were demonstrated in the positioning of the faces of the cherubim one towards the other.

Bro. Thomas commented upon the cherubim (*Elpis Israel* pp. 149): “Being made out of the same piece of gold as the mercy-seat, upon which they looked down, beholding, as it were, the blood sprinkled upon it; it is evident, they were symbols connected with the institution of atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. But they were still more significant. They were God's throne in Israel. Hence, the psalmist saith, ‘The Lord reigneth; He *sitteth* between the cherubim.’ This throne was erected upon mercy: and for this reason it was, that the covering of the ark containing the testimony, the manna (Exo. 16:33; John 6:33), and the resurrected rod (Num. 17:8; Isa. 11:1), was styled the Mercy-seat or throne, where where the Lord covered the sins of the people. It was also the Oracle, or place from which God communed with Israel

through Moses. 'There,' said the Lord, 'will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the Ark of the Testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.'

"Toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be" — The figures were constructed so that the faces were turned towards each other, but also looking down upon the mercy seat upon which was placed the blood of the atonement (Lev. 16:14). The exhortation is powerful. The cherubim were so constructed that their faces were always directed towards the blood of the sacrifice. As the antitypical cherubim, believers should ever bear in mind the offering of the Lord, the means by which mercy is extended to us, and the dedicated life that we should offer unto Yahweh in imitation of that of the Lord, who is our representative, our example, and not a substitute. There must be a complete identification; a merging of one into the other.

VERSE 21

"And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark" — Moses was carefully instructed as to where the mercy seat was to be placed. The Hebrew expresses a point of emphasis: *above upon*, similar to that of Heb. 2:14, "he also himself likewise..." In type Moses was shown that mercy transcends justice, that mercy is higher than law. If it were not for divine mercy we would be without hope. James wrote, that in the Day of Inspection, "mercy will rejoice against judgment." The word used, *katakauchomai* signifies "to speak loud against," thus "to drown out by noise." Whereas, strict judgment of law would demand condemnation, mercy will provide for forgiveness. Hence the power of his exhortation: "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy," and the significance of the request, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." To emphasise that salvation is dependent upon divine mercy, Moses was required to place the

golden mercy seat above upon the ark containing the tables of stone. The mercy seat covering the tables of stone, suggests a combination of mercy and truth. These qualities are frequently linked together in the Word (Psa. 25:10; 57:3; 61:7) for the provisions of divine worship (see Psa. 85:10-11) —

*Mercy and truth are met together;
Righteousness and peace have
kissed each other.*

*Truth shall spring out of the earth;
And righteousness shall look down
from heaven.*

Though the word for "mercy" in these places is not that used to describe the mercy seat, the latter is expressive of the lovingkindness of Yahweh, which is the meaning of the word used in the Psalm.

"And in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee" — The "testimony" was on the two tablets of stone on which were inscribed the ten commandments, the basis of the Mosaic covenant (Heb. 9:4). The Hebrew word *eduth*, translated "witness" or "testimony," expresses the idea of an attestation, or formal affirmation. It therefore denotes a solemn declaration of God's will, especially on points of moral or religious duty, or against the deviation of human propensity therefrom (see *Cambridge Bible*, and note Deu. 4:45; 6:17, 20, etc.). So the Psalmist declared: "Blessed are they that keep His testimonies" (Psa. 119:2).

It is significant that at this place reference is made only to the tablets of the Law, and not to the other items placed in the ark. The obvious reason is that the other items had not yet been manifested. The Law came first, and was given to be kept (Psa. 119:2), but as it is beyond the ability of flesh of itself, to keep it perfectly (Rom. 8:3), the mercy seat was provided as a cover for the forgiveness of sins, when, through weakness of human nature, man transgressed.

VERSE 22

"And there I will meet with thee" — This became the appointed place where Yahweh would meet with Israel. An

example of this is provided in Jud. 20:28. In addition to times of urgency when divine direction was needed, there were specifically appointed times when it was required that the high priest should appear before Yahweh on behalf of the nation (see Exo. 23:14-17; 29:31-46; 34:22-24).

Though not a priest, Moses had privilege of access into the Most Holy (Num. 7:89). In this he typed the Lord Jesus Christ (Deu. 18:18; Heb. 9:21). The high priest, also a type of Christ, likewise had access (Lev. 16:2). In this holy spot the divine glory shone forth as the shekinah light (Psa. 80:1; Exo. 25:22; 29:24-43), foreshadowing that manifested by the Lord Jesus (John 1:14). As Christ is our mercy seat (Rom. 3:25; 1John 2:1-2) we are able to commune with the Father through him by prayer (Eph. 2:13). He is the meeting place between God and man. In the days of his flesh he proclaimed God's word (John 7:17; 8:28, 38; 12:45-50; 14:10), and manifested the glory of the Father as a light in a dark place: the anti-type of the divine light in the darkness of the Most Holy (John 1:9).

“And I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat” — The mercy seat, representing the throne of Yahweh in Israel, it was appropriate that thence He should issue His directions to Moses as his prime minister. Thus the theocracy was to be a government by Yahweh in reality, and not in name only. There were to be constant instructions from God to the earthly ruler of the nation: and Moses or the High Priest would appear before His invisible presence whenever necessary, to learn His will or to receive His directions.

The word “commune” is *dabar* in Hebrew, and is rendered *logos* in the Greek Septuagint. It expresses the idea of instruction or command. The Ten Commandments are described as “ten words” (*dabarim*, Deu. 4:13). The instructions of Yahweh were at times audibly expressed in the most holy, in consequence of which it is sometimes called *The Oracle* (Heb. *debir*. See 2Sam. 16:23; 1Kings 6:5, 16, 20; 7:49; 8:6, 8). The Psalmist prayed

(Psa. 28:2) —

*Hear the voice of my supplications,
when I cry unto Thee,
When I lift up my hands toward
Thy holy oracle.*

In the New Testament reference is made to the “holy oracles of God,” as to the commands that issued forth from Him to Israel through the Word (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; Heb. 5:12; 1Pet. 4:11).

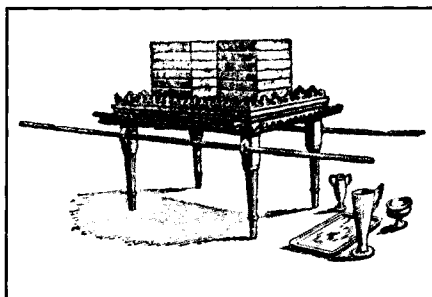
“From between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” — The word “commandment” is the Hebrew *tsavah*, and denotes a definite command imposed by authority. It expresses the requirement of a king.

The Table of Shewbread — vv. 23-30.

Moses is commanded to construct a table of acacia wood, and overlay it with pure gold. It is to be 115cms (3ft) long, 50cms (18in) wide, and 70 cms (2'3") high. It has to be decorated with a crown of gold around its top edge, and a border about 100mm (4in) wide probably placed between the legs, just below the crown of gold. This also is to be finished off with a crown of gold. Various dishes are to be made to be used in conjunction with it, and upon it is to be displayed the shewbread which is to be replaced every sabbath, and eaten by the priests.

VERSE 23

“Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood” — The word “table” is *shulchan* from *shalach* “to spread forth.”



thus indicating its purpose: to spread out a meal. It is indicative of fellowship with Yahweh through eating the bread of life: "consuming" the hope of Israel.

"Two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof" — As the cubit was approximately 18 inches, the table was about 90cms (3 ft.) long, 48cms (18 in.) wide, and 70cms (2 ft. 3 in.) high. As a table, therefore, it was not large. In fact, the very measurements imply limitation, suggesting exclusiveness in fellowship. Fellowship implies endorsement. When David declared: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies," (Psa. 23:5), he expressed his gratitude that Yahweh would openly manifest His acceptance of His servant in the sight of those who opposed him.

Attendance at the table of Yahweh implies personal responsibility to conform to the spiritual etiquette required of those invited to partake thereof. Paul taught that when engaged upon the solemn privilege of partaking of the Lord's memorials, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself" (1Cor. 11:28-29).

VERSE 24

"And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold" — see note v. 11.

"And make thereto a crown of gold round about" — The ordinary priests were not permitted into the Most Holy where was the crown of gold (v. 11), expressive of the ultimate victory of faith; but they could see this crown of gold, and so in prospect look forward to the final victory, as they partook of the bread, and enjoyed the fellowship of Yahweh.

VERSE 25

"And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about" — An hand breadth is about 100mm (4in.), so there was a border of approximately that size around the table.

The word "border" is *micgereth* and denotes an *enclosure*, from the root signifying to *shut up*, to *enclose*. But we are not told where this border was placed. It is claimed that the border on the table depicted on the Arch of Titus is placed below the table-top, so uniting the legs together, as they supported it. This is certainly appropriate to the symbolism. A border, acting as a shelf, below the level of the table, would both unite and strengthen the legs, and would constitute a most convenient ledge upon which to place the plates, dishes, bowls and flagons associated with the table.

We say that this is appropriate, for the meal of fellowship which is the apex of spiritual experience enjoyed by believers at the present time, is dependent upon those who minister to that end: the presiding brother, the exhorting brother, those who prepare the bread and the wine, or the hall where the meeting is held. These are all necessary appendages to the communion that takes place: they are comparable to the vessels associated with the table of shewbread, and though on a lower level than it, nevertheless lead to it, and support it.

"And thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about" — The Hebrew word for "crown" is *zare* and implies wreathen work, such as the *stephanos* or coronal wreath of the Apocalypse. It speaks of the rewards of victory (Rev. 2:10; 3:11). There will be rewards for those who minister at the table as for those who fellowship around it.

VERSE 26

"And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold" — Cp. v. 12.

"And put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof" — Here the Hebrew word is different to that rendered "corners" in v. 12. It is *pe'ath* signifying "to blow," and thus suggesting the four quarters from whence the wind blows. Whereas, on the march, the ark was lifted high as indicated by the placing of its rings, the table of shewbread was as was appropriate. The rings were at

the four corners, placed on the feet, or legs, of the table, close to the border as the following verse states.

VERSE 27

“Over against the border shall the rings be” — As the border was probably a little lower than the level of the table, the rings would be immediately below it. Not on the lower part of the legs, but just below the table top.

“For the places of the staves to bear the table” — The word “places” is the Hebrew *bayith*, denoting “houses,” and so suggesting a dwelling place for the staves. See Exo. 26:29; 30:4; 36:34; 37:14, 27; 38:5. As the staves, and those bearing the sacred furniture by their means, represent believers throughout the ages, whether from Israel or the Gentiles, the use of *bayith* is quite significant. It suggests that in “the Father’s house are many abiding places” (John 14:2; Heb. 3:6).

VERSE 28

“And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them” — See notes vv. 3, 5.

VERSE 29

“And thou shalt make the dishes thereof” — The word “dishes” is from the Hebrew *kearoth*, and signifies a vessel as hollowed out (Strong). These were probably used for the bread on the table. It is suggested by some, that they were made in the exact shape of the loaves, and that there were twelve such dishes, on each of which was one of the twelve loaves. Nothing is said of this arrangement, however, except that the loaves were placed one on top of the other in two rows (Lev. 24:6). They could well have been in twelve dishes that would fit one inside the other.

“And spoons thereof” — Heb. *kappoth* from *kaph*, the hollow of the hand, and thus denotes cups. As a similar word is used to describe the vessels that held incense, it is presumed that these “spoons” or “cups” held the frankincense which was offered each sabbath as a memorial to

Yahweh (Lev. 24:7).

“And covers thereof” — The Hebrew *kasvoth* signifies “to be round,” suggesting a jug. The purpose of these jugs is not specifically stated. Probably they contained wine, and in that regard were associated with the “bowls.”

“And bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them” — In this statement the explanatory note “to cover withal” should be placed in conjunction with the “covers” and not the “bowls” (see Exo. 37:16). The margin would then give the meaning as “pourers to pour out withal.” The wine in the pourers was poured out into the “bowls.” The word is a translation of *menakkivoth* defined by Strong as sacrificial basins, such as held blood. Significantly, the word is from a root *nakah* signifying “to be or make clean.”

The wine poured out from the pourers into the bowls represented the blood of sacrifices given in dedication to Yahweh. On each sabbath a public ceremony was observed by the priests that dramatised principles of acceptable worship before the people of Israel. The shewbread was eaten in the Holy Place, the frankincense was burnt on the altar of incense, and the wine was probably drunk by the priests (Lev. 24:5-9). This action emphasised fellowship between God and man on the basis of sacrifice, pointing forward to the offering of the Lord. It thus proclaimed the same principles as do the memorials of eating bread and drinking wine today.

VERSE 30

“And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before Me alway” — The Hebrew is *lehem panim*, literally “bread of the faces,” or “of the presence.” The name reminded the priests, and through them, the people, that they were in the presence of Yahweh, and of His ministering spirits, the angels. Cain was cut off from “the faces” (*panim*) of Yahweh (Gen. 4:14), because he was denied access to the cherubim who were stationed east of the Garden of Eden, and whose faces “turned every way” to preserve the “way to the tree of

life." The faces of cherubim looked down from the veil in the Holy Place, giving a further significance to the name of this bread; whilst, behind the veil, the *shekinah* glory that shone forth from between the cherubim over the mercy seat gave further emphasis to the reality of the divine presence, and the significance of the name of the bread.

Other names by which it was known are: *lehem ha-tamid*, or bread of continuance (Num. 4:7; 2Chr. 2:4), because it was always to be in evidence; *lehem hammaakareth*, or bread of the ordering (1Chr. 9:32), because it was to be placed in ordered rows; *lehem kodeth*, or holy bread (1Sam. 21:5-6), because of its sacred use.

Twelve loaves of unleavened bread (see *Jos. Ant.* 3:6:6) were placed in two rows upon the table, details of which are found in Lev. 24:5-9. The number *twelve* identifies them with the true Israel of God, and the division into *two* suggests that such are drawn from the two great families of humanity: Israel and the Gentiles.

Unleavened bread suggests the "bread of life" (John 6:35, 48), the Lord Jesus Christ who was free of the "leaven of malice and wickedness" (1Cor. 5:8). To eat of that bread is to absorb his teaching, and to manifest his characteristics. This will be done more effectively when the believer is conscious of *Yahweh's presence*, hence the name of the unleavened bread in the Holy Place. Specific instructions were given for the baking of the unleavened bread, and for its disposal at the end of each week. On that occasion, when the old bread was replaced by new, the former was not thrown out, but was eaten by the priests on the sabbath that it was removed (Lev. 24:5-9). This demonstrated that the shewbread was not food intended for God, but a symbol of the spiritual bread by which Israelites were to be nourished (see John 6:56-58). It was representative of that necessary spiritual bread "that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh" (Deu. 8:3), and which believers must eat, the need of which was brought home so vividly to the people by the provision of manna each day.

The twofold division of the loaves was duplicated in each loaf. Each had two tenth deals of flour (about 3.5kgs; or 8 lb), and, according to Vine, formed a loaf about the thickness of the thumb. The eating of the shewbread each sabbath was an act of communion that witnessed to the fellowship that existed between Yahweh and the people. The bread thus pointed to Christ as the "living bread" (John 6:35), who forges the bond of fellowship between God and His people today.

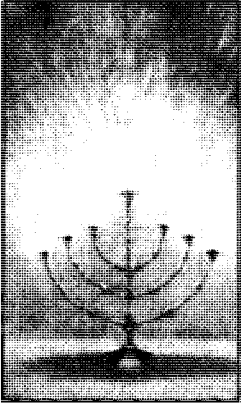
The instruction to set the shewbread upon the table before Yahweh always, taught that He is ever ready to enter into communion with His people through the revelation of His Word, which was made "bread" in Christ.

The Golden Lampstand — vv. 31-39.

There were no windows provided in the tabernacle, so that the only light was that which came from the seven-branched lampstand which stood on the south side of the Holy Place, on the left hand of the priest as he entered that sacred apartment. It, therefore, was opposite the table of shewbread. Its light was kept brightly burning by priestly ministration each morning and evening, being fed with oil supplied by all Israel (Exo. 27:20-21; Lev. 24:1-4; Num. 8:1-4), and particularly illuminated the bread upon the table. It is identified with the central stem (v. 34) which had four bowls, knops, flowers, and a branch, whilst the six other branches that came out of its side had only three bowls, knops and flowers. It represented the light of truth, personified in the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect, without which darkness reigns supreme (Isa. 60:2). The lampstand typified the active ecclesia (Rev. 1:20).

VERSE 31

"**And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold**" — The reference is to a lampstand, not a candlestick. The use of candles found no place in the true worship of Yahweh. The word is *menorah* from *nerah*, "to glisten," referring to the light that it gave forth. The word is in the



feminine gender which is appropriate to its symbolic significance, for the *menorah* symbolised both Christ and his Bride-ecclesia as the co-operative lightstand of Truth (Zech. 4:2-14; Rev. 1:12).

“Of beaten work shall the candlestick be

made” — The lampstand, the most beautiful, ornamental, and most elaborate of all the pieces of furniture, was not cast in a mould, nor made in sections and assembled together, but was beaten into its form and beauty out of a solid piece of gold. It is claimed that this is beyond the skill of man to do, and this we can well believe, for Bezaleel was specially endowed with the Spirit to perform the work set him to accomplish. So Christ declared, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), a light that shone forth in a dark place (John 1:5-14); and the glory he revealed was divine in origin (John 1:14). As the divine Lightstand, he was “beaten into shape,” learning “obedience by the things that he suffered” (Heb. 5:8); and by those very means he provided the pattern upon which the ecclesia was formed. It, too, must be beaten into shape. Paul taught that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

The word “tribulation” signifies “pressure,” and by such pressures, characters are moulded into the shape desired of Yahweh. The problems of life are a challenge to faith, and comprise a very necessary challenge, for they constitute the beating of the divine hammer by which individuals are changed for the kingdom. Such then become “His workmanship” (see Eph. 2:10; Psa. 100:3; 138:8; 1Cor. 3:9; 2Cor. 5:5), beaten by tribulation without and influenced by the Word within, to

conform to the pattern revealed in Christ Jesus. Believers thus “fellowship his sufferings” (Phil. 3:10), and so develop a fellow feeling for those who suffer (see Heb. 4:15; 5:1-2). Gold is representative of the trial of faith, and not faith in the abstract (1Pet. 1:7).

It was very important that the lampstand should be “beaten” into shape. One of the titles of Yahweh is that of *Yatsar*, rendered as “Maker” (Isa. 45:9). The word comes from a root signifying to squeeze into shape. Hence Yahweh is described as both Creator and the Maker of Israel: “Thus saith Yahweh that *created* thee, O Jacob, and He that *formed* thee, O Israel” (Isa. 43:1). The word “formed” is *yatsar*, and the statement teaches that Yahweh both created and shaped Israel — created him as Jacob, and shaped him into Israel. This transformation is symbolised by the changed shape of the piece of gold that, under the skilful hammering of Bezaleel, gradually formed into the lampstand of the Holy Place: a beautiful piece of furniture designed to illuminate the prevailing darkness.

The word “beaten” is from the Hebrew *miqshah* and denotes rounded work, referring to the rounding branches and stem of the lampstand. This was obtained by hammering, and, in the case of the lampstand, out of the one piece of gold.

“His shaft” — The Hebrew word is *yarek* and signifies “thigh.” Twenty times the word is translated “thigh,” twice “loins,” four times “side,” and once “body.” In such places as Gen. 46:26 and Exo. 1:5, *yarek* is connected with birth, defining “the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob,” etc. Its application to the Lord Jesus as the Father of Eternity (Isa. 9:6) is admirable. Isaiah 53, which speaks of the manner in which he submitted to the “hammering” he received, also says: “When Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed” (Isa. 53:10). And in Heb. 2:13, the ecclesias are presented as “the children” which God granted the Lord Jesus. His sufferings constituted the birth-pangs by which the ecclesia was brought to life, even as, in

Eden, Eve was formed out of Adam when he submitted to the "deep sleep" that came upon him.

The shaft was vital to the lampstand, for it supported the various branches. Of themselves they were useless. A branch broken off from the shaft would not give light. The importance of the shaft is presented in Christ's figure of himself as the Vine, and his followers as the branches (Jn. 15:1-2, 5). Observe the vine. Notice the main shaft, the vine proper. This is the all-important part of the plant. The branches spread out like a lampstand, but they can be pruned, even removed and replaced without harm to the vine itself. So with the spiritual lampstand: the shaft supported the whole. The shaft, therefore, represented Christ personal, from whom all others, as Christ multitudinous, derive their spiritual being and strength (Rev. 1:13; John 3:5; 15:6-7).

"And his branches" — Two important features are seen in this item. Firstly, the Hebrew word is *kaneh*, and signifies "a reed" for measure (Eze. 40:3; Rev. 21:17), and so the branch becomes the measuring *reed* of Yahweh's purpose with His people. Secondly, the word in this verse is singular in the Hebrew, in contrast to the same word in the next verse, but which is in the plural. Note that in Exo. 37:17, which repeats the wording of this verse, the word is given in the singular number, as it should be here.

This is most significant, for it shows that the shaft has a branch peculiar to itself. This would suggest that the central branch was higher and more dominant than the other branches that came out of the side of the shaft. It divided the number of branches into 6+1 making 7 in all. "Six" is the number of flesh, but the seventh completes the covenant number.

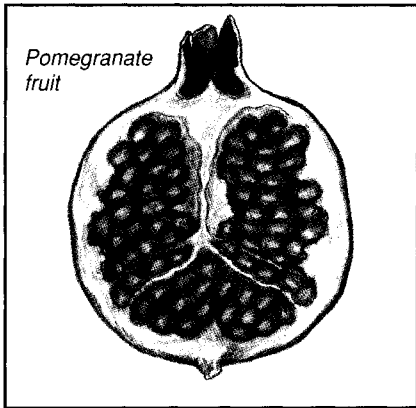
This seventh branch was more distinctive than the others. Moreover, it had the specific title of "*his* branch," representing the Lord in glory. The pre-eminence of Christ is expressed in the statement: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed *thee* with the oil of gladness

above thy *fellows*" (Heb. 1:9).

"His bowls" — Strong gives the Hebrew as *gebiya*, from a root signifying "to be convex," and hence a cup, or by analogy, the calyx of a flower. The word is elsewhere rendered as "cup" (Gen. 44:2, 12, 16, 17), and "pots" (Jer. 35:5). *Calyx* is a botanical term, and denotes a cup-shaped organ or cavity: the outer covering of leaf-like envelope of a flower. The principal function of the calyx is to enclose and protect the other parts of the flower while in bud. Those on the lampstand were "made like almonds" (v. 34), the symbol of divine selection and resurrectional life. There is divine protection for those in Christ who walk after the light of the Spirit-Word, for "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). Such is the divine protection afforded them, that nothing can "separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus" except their own folly in repudiating Him (Rom. 8:38-39).

"His knobs" — Here the Hebrew is *kaphtor*, and signifies "to encircle," hence the word "knop" or "knob." It indicates a ball of some kind. Josephus, and other Jewish writers, claim that they were shaped in the form of pomegranates, which are ball-like in shape, and which formed an important part of the dress of the high priest.

The pomegranate is a most significant fruit when considered in the light of the Truth. Its skin is purple in colour, suggesting God manifestation. Cut it open and an abundance of red wine-like juice flows out, whilst inside, the fruit is packed with white seeds as no other fruit. Pomegranate literally means *apple with grains*, the reference being to the closely packed seeds within. The fruit is a very refreshing delicacy to dwellers in a hot and thirsty land. It is a wonderful symbol of Christ: "When Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin (by shedding of blood as in the cutting of the fruit), he shall see his seed" (Isa. 53:10). The seed will be crowded within



the multitudinous Christ: "Lo, a great multitude which no man could number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Rev. 7:9).

There were pomegranates around the hem of the high priest's garment (Exo. 28:33-34), and on the pillars of the temple (1Kings 7:18-20). The packed seeds are suggestive also of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

"And his flowers" — The flowers speak of beauty; a beauty that the Word will create in all true students (cp. Psa. 45:11; 90:17; Eph. 5:26-27). It is generally accepted that these were lilies, the anemone of the Promised Land. In *The Song of Solomon*, the lily is used to describe the beauty of the Bride (ch. 2:1-2, 16), as well as the lips or speech of the Bridegroom (5:13). The "lily of the field" is probably the *anemone coronaria*, a beautiful wild flower which paints the countryside with great splashes of purple-scarlet, suggesting the principle of God manifest through the flesh. See notes in *Expositor: Song of Solomon*. The ornamentation of the lampstand in this particular, therefore, follows a pattern of development. The *almonds* speak of divine selection and resurrection; the *pomegranates*, of the multiplicity of the seed brought to the birth through the sacrifice of Christ; and the *lilies*, their future divine glory (see Mat. 6:28).

"Shall be of the same" — This is lit-

erally "from it shall be." They form part of the lampstand, not being merely attached to it. This speaks of complete unity with Christ (John 17:21).

VERSE 32

"And six branches shall come out of the sides of it" — Here the Hebrew *kaneh* is in the plural: *kanehim*, branches, and relates specifically to the six branches that spread out from the two sides of the central stem, but not to the single branch, styled "*his branch*" that was on its top.

"Three branches of the candlestick out of the one side" — The Hebrew for "the side" in this verse is *tsad*, a different word to that translated "sides" in v. 14. It means to sidle off, thus to branch out from the side.

"And three branches of the candlestick out of the other side" — The lampstand was symmetrical in appearance; divided into two parts with three branches on each side, making six in all; whilst the upper, central branch, made a total of seven. Six is the number of flesh; Two, the number of division (Israel and Gentile); and Seven, the number of covenant. Therefore the lampstand figuratively set forth the two great divisions of humanity (flesh), united in the bonds of the covenant.

VERSE 33

"Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch" — Each of the branches had three almond-shaped protrudences, in succession followed by a pomegranate and a lily-flower. This contrasts with the shaft that had four such knops and flowers.

Why more almonds than knops and flowers? The word for "almond" is *shaqad*, and comes from a root signifying "to awaken." The almond, one of the earliest of trees to bloom, is considered a herald of spring (see Jer. 1:11-12), and therefore a symbol of the resurrection. But of all who rise from the dead, only the righteous will attain unto the kingdom; hence there was but one pomegranate and one flower to three bowls made like almonds.

“And three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower” — So the perfect symmetry of the lampstand is preserved.

“So in the six branches that come out of the candlestick” — It is significant that the six branches are specified, leaving the seventh, styled *“his branch,”* on its own. Obviously, that branch, standing above all the others, represents the Lord Jesus *“in the midst of the ecclesias.”* Moreover, these six branches are represented as coming *“out of the side”* of the lampstand, again a significant expression.

In *Elpis Israel*, Bro. Thomas writes: *“Believers, so disposed, are the begotten of God, and have become as little children. They believe ‘the exceeding great and precious promises,’ together with the things testified concerning the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus. He fell into a deep sleep; and, while thus unconscious and insensible, his side was opened by a spear, and forthwith rushed blood and water (John 19:33-34). Being awakened out of his sleep, he was built up a spiritual body of flesh and bones; and, by his ascension, presented to the Father as the federal representative of his church [ecclesia]... A community of such individuals as these constitutes the mystical body of Christ... and, therefore, the beloved Eve of the last Adam, the Lord who is to come from heaven, and make her of the same holy spiritual nature as his own... figuratively taken out of the side of her Lord”* (pp. 53-54).

Similarly, in the symbology of the lampstand, the branches are said to *“come out of”* the lampstand.

VERSE 34

“And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds” — The reference in this verse is obviously to the central shaft or stem. This had twelve ornaments in all, the series of bowl, knop and lily, being repeated four times; once in connection with each pair of branches, and a fourth time at the summit from whence extended the seventh branch.

“With their knops and their flowers” — Hence making twelve in all.

VERSE 35

“And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick” — The branches were to extend from the shaft of the lampstand at the point of junction between the pomegranate, or knop, and the lily.

VERSE 36

“Their knops and their branches shall be of the same” — They were to be constructed out of the one piece of gold. There was both unity and diversity in the lampstand, as there should be in ecclesial life, and will be in the kingdom.

“All it shall be one beaten work of pure gold” — This is better rendered: *“all of it shall be beaten work of one piece of pure gold.”* The lampstand represents the ecclesia today, and the multitudinous Christ-body of the age to come. When the glorified redeemed are all associated together in one, it will be found that there is only one member thereof who has been without sin, Christ, but not one who has not been subjected to trial. They will all have *“fellowshipped the sufferings of Christ,”* being able to say that *“it is through much tribulation that we have entered the kingdom of God.”* To illustrate this, the lampstand was carefully, meticulously, painstakingly, and skilfully *beaten* into shape, as is each character that shall find approval at the Judgment Seat: the *“hammer”* being the Word of Yahweh (Jer. 23:29).

VERSE 37

“And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof” — The word for *“seven”* is *shibah* the masculine form of *sheba*. It is from a root that signifies to be complete. Hence to *seven* oneself is to *swear*, because an oath binds the one making it, to complete that which he sets out to do. Seven, therefore, is the number of com-

plateness, the covenant number. The seven lightstands of *The Apocalypse* (Rev. 1:20) represent the complete ecclesia. The lampstand with its *seven* lamps completely illuminated the dark interior of the Holy Place. Their appearance is not described.

“And they shall light the lamps thereof” — The lamps were attended to every evening at sunset (ch. 27:21; 30:8; Lev. 24:3), and every morning at the time of burning of incense (Exo. 30:7). Without the lamps, the other objects in the Holy Place would have been mere ornamentation hidden in darkness. The light gave usefulness to the beauty of the lampstand. So also with the manifestation of the Truth. It is the duty of the ecclesia to radiate light (Mat. 5:16; Phil. 2:15), to attract others to the Truth. But inasmuch as the lamps were lighted “before Yahweh” (Exo. 40:25), personal ability must be subjected to the will of Yahweh, and the work of expounding and proclaiming the Word be done as “unto Him.” In all of its labours, the ecclesia should be conscious of this fact, and lean heavily upon God in all its endeavours.

The word “light” in this place is from the Hebrew *alah* signifying “to cause to ascend,” and it was the work of the priests to do this. The word does not signify that the lamps had gone out and had to be lit, but that they had to be tended in such a way as to cause the light to “ascend” or burn brightly. This was done by tending the wicks, or replenishing the oil.

In its need of light, the holy place differed from the most holy, for the latter was illuminated by the shekinah glory of Yahweh shining from above the mercy seat and between the cherubim, and, therefore, had no need to be replenished by human agency. But the lamps in the holy place needed such attention. This taught that there is no open manifestation of glory at present, such as there will be at the Lord’s return (Rev. 21:22-23). There is light, but it is merely “the light of *the knowledge* of the glory of God radiated by the ecclesia as the symbolic lightstand.

Saints walk by faith which comes from understanding the Word (Rom.

10:17). This provides the oil for the ecclesial lampstand, with its sevenfold lamps, indicating the proclamation of the covenant. This is a real light, though faint by comparison with that which is beyond the veil, being that which shall be manifested in the age to come. Then the symbolic “moon,” the ecclesia, shall be “as the light of the sun” (Isa. 30:26). Though the light of the sun shall never fade, the light of the lampstand would if not constantly tended by the priests. This introduces the principle of personal responsibility to see that our lamps are “trimmed and burning.” Concerning this, Brother Roberts observes in *The Law Of Moses*: “The light was caused by the combustion of oil supplied to the lamps morning and evening, without which the light would have gone out — whence we may gather the idea that the candlestick does not represent the word of the Lord in the abstract, but that word as incorporate in living believers, after the example of the seven apocalyptic lightstands which stood for seven light-bearing communities of saints. It is manifest that the word of the Lord can have no operative existence apart from living reflectors. Inspiration itself is but the intelligence of God apart from a living medium. And when this inspiration, acting through the prophets and apostles, had incorporated itself in writing, the writing was not in itself the light, but the mere means of the light when it enters into the knowledge and understanding of living believers... The only light we can have at present is the light of illuminated brains, and this is not a fixed light, but a light that requires constant renewal by daily supplies of the oil of the word. ‘Order the lamps upon the pure candlestick from evening unto the morning before the Lord continually,’ is the type. Nothing less than the daily reading of the Word can answer to this type.” (pp. 127-128).

The light of the lamps illuminated the interior and furniture of the Holy Place: the table of shewbread, golden altar of incense, golden boards, multi-coloured veil, the cherubim wrought into the veil and ceiling-curtain, and so forth. These

articles symbolised the hope of Israel, the need of prayer, the beauty of faith, the perfection of Christ, the incentive of being one with the multitudinous redeemed, denoted by the cherubim, all of which were illuminated by the Word.

“That they may give light over against it” — The word “light” here is a different word from the earlier word in this verse. It is *owr* and signifies “illumination,” emphasising the result of the light of the lamps.

The word “it” in Hebrew is the plural *panyim* signifying *faces*. The lamps, therefore, comprise the *faces* of the ecclesia, and these *faces*, shining brightly with the illumination of the Truth, bring to bear their light upon the contents of the Holy Place.

VERSE 38

“And the tongs thereof” — The tongs were snuffers to trim the wicks and cause the light to burn better. This was done every morning and evening. During long hours of burning, the wicks would burn low, soot would accumulate thereon, and attention was required to bring up the wick or to remove the soot therefrom. The tongs did that.

The soot was not caused by the oil, for it was pure, but by the consumption of the wick itself, particularly after long hours of burning. So with ourselves. Things come into our lives that hinder our testimony, and cause the light to burn low. There is a need, then, for such ministration. This can come from co-operation with those of like precious faith, or from God himself who “chastens those whom He loves” (Heb. 12:6).

Constant attention was given to the lamps to cause the light to burn brightly, and it is important that we recognise that need in ourselves.

“And the snuffdishes thereof” — These were ash-pans into which any impurities of the wick might be placed whilst the lamps were attended and replenished with oil, after which all impurities were taken away. There is a need for us to remove from our lives those influences

that will hinder the shining forth of proper light of the Word.

“Shall be of pure gold” — The “trial of faith” will trim the wicks, and faith itself will cause the light to shine more effectively. Hence, these instruments of the lampstand were of pure gold.

VERSE 39

“Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels” — This is the first mention of the “talent” in scripture. It comes from the Hebrew *kikkar* signifying a *circle*, and therefore suggests the idea of eternity. The Berkeley Version renders the phrase: “use a circle of gold for it.” In weight this represented, according to some, about 60 kgs (131 lb), and in money value, according to Berkeley, some \$30,000 in 1945 (inflation would greatly add to this amount today).

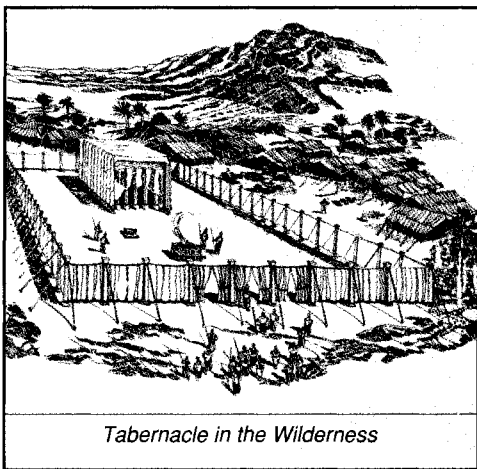
According to Unger’s Dictionary, some 6,000 *drachmae* went to the talent. This is remarkable, for six is the number of flesh, and the thousands suggest a multiplicity. It links the gold used with the sockets of silver that supported the boards of the tabernacle, for these were each made of a talent of silver, representing the redemption money of six thousand men (cp. Exo. 38:25-27). The talent, therefore, represented the measure of redemption in a multitude, and there is a significant application in regard to its use in Rev. 16:21, where the “weight” of the Redeemed is given as *a talent*. That being the case in respect to the silver talent, we can apply the same principle to the golden talent, which thus becomes the measure of *faith*, and was circular in shape, so representing the relationship of faith to life eternal.

VERSE 40

“And look that thou make them after their pattern” — See note, v. 9. This instruction is reiterated to Moses. As meticulous care had to be observed in the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture, so the greatest attention should be paid to the spiritual lessons developed therefrom. The characters of the

Redeemed must conform to the “pattern” of Christ as revealed in the Word.

“Which was shewed thee in the mount” — The Hebrew is as the margin: “Which thou wast caused to see in the mount.” In a very graphic vision Moses was shown the tabernacle, and invited to carefully inspect it, to enable it to be reproduced with the aid of the workmen appointed and endowed for that purpose. Though the pattern was divine, the workmen were of flesh, co-labourers with God. The tabernacle, therefore, was a prophecy of the relationship of those called to Yahweh and His future purpose in the earth to manifest divine glory in a multitude of the Redeemed.

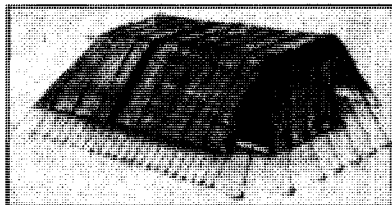


Tabernacle in the Wilderness

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

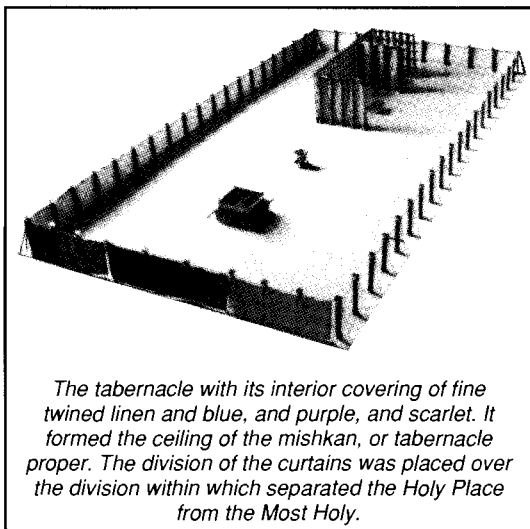
THE CURTAINS AND BOARDS OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE VEIL FOR THE MOST HOLY

The chapter opens with instructions concerning the ten curtains of the tabernacle, their loops of blue and clasps of gold, which are to form the ceiling of the “mishkan,” the dwelling place of Yahweh. Next are described the eleven curtains of goat’s hair that form part of the tent of the tabernacle, its covering, and then the record moves on to three other coverings that are to lie one on top of the other above the goat’s hair tent-covering. The gold-covered boards in their sockets of silver are next brought under consideration, and their supports by which the walls are firmly fixed together. Finally instructions are given as to the placing of the furniture and the hanging of the veil.



The Ten Curtains Of The Tabernacle — vv. 1-6.

The framework of the tabernacle proper is 4.5 by 18 metres [15 ft by 45 ft]. Its ceiling is made up of the curtains of fine twined linen upon which are embroidered blue, purple, and scarlet cherubim. Each of the ten curtains is 12 x 2 metres (42ft x 6ft), and they are coupled together in groups of five, making two large coverings, each 1280 x 915cm [42 x 30 ft]. On the 12 metre [40ft] borders of these curtains are placed fifty loops of blue, so that the two lines of blue loops exactly correspond with each other. These are linked together by golden clasps on hooks so as to form one large covering, approximately 12 x 18 metres [42 x 60 ft]. This large curtain is to be placed over the holy structure so as to form the ceiling of the tabernacle. It is always called the "mishkan" or tabernacle, whereas the other coverings are given the name of "ohel" or tent of the tabernacle. The ceiling is placed on top of the gold coated boards so that it drapes over the sides and back. This is done so that the loops of the two pieces of the curtain are placed exactly above the division formed by the veil which divides the Holy from the Most Holy (see v. 33).



The tabernacle with its interior covering of fine twined linen and blue, and purple, and scarlet. It formed the ceiling of the mishkan, or tabernacle proper. The division of the curtains was placed over the division within which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy.

The ceiling, or covering of the tabernacle represents Christ (both personal and multitudinous) in resurrectional glory. In that regard, note the preponderance of "five" (the number of grace) in the measurements given, and consider the fivefold titles of the Lord as Prince and Priest in relation to the Redeemed: The former are given in Isaiah 9:6, "Unto us a son is given... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty Warrior (Heb. Gibbor), the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace." The latter are set forth in Hebrews 7:26, "For such an high priest became us, who is Holy, Harmless, Undefiled, Separate from sinners, and made Higher (like the ceiling) than the (Mosaic) heavens."

VERSE 1

"Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle" — The tabernacle foreshadowed the redeemed. As all Israel were invited to co-operate in its construction, so all believers have the great privilege of becoming "co-workers with God" in the formation of the spiritual tabernacle (2Cor. 6:1). The word "tabernacle" is the Hebrew *mishkan*, signifying "dwelling." It is from the root *shakan*, "to dwell." In the tabernacle, Yahweh figuratively dwelt in the midst of His people, as He does in saints by the Spirit-Word (2Cor. 6:16). There the symbol of His presence was in the midst of Israel (Exo. 25:8, 22; 29:45-46). Thus the sacred structure, in its typical significance, exhibited Emmanuel, *God with us* (see Mat. 1:23; Heb. 8:2; 9:23), and through him foreshadowed the company of the glorified Redeemed in whom Yahweh will again tabernacle among men, in the age to come (Rev. 21:3).

The literal House of Prayer for all nations (Isa. 56:7), to be built in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4), will symbolise His presence in the midst of His people (Eze. 37:26-28; 43:7, 9), representing the greater temple of living stones in the building of divine

glory (Isa. 66:1-2; 1Pet. 2:4-9; Rev. 21:2).

“With ten curtains” — The word is *yeriyoth*, in the feminine gender, signifying curtains, as tremulous. The number “ten” denotes *completeness*. As there were ten commandments, divided into two sets of five, emphasising the principle of grace, so there were ten curtains likewise divided into two sets of five.

“Of fine twined linen” — Linen is the symbol of righteousness in action (Rev. 19:8). Fine twined linen is constructed of threads which are formed of several fine strands twisted together. Egyptian linen was the finest in the world, and was most skilfully made. It is said that this was so perfectly done in ancient times (as exhibited in samples of such linen discovered by archaeologists) being beyond the ability of modern skills.

“And blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubim of cunning work shalt thou make them” — The word “with” is in italics and can be eliminated from this statement. The cherubim were embroidered in these significant colours (see notes, Exo. 25:4). Being inwrought in the ceiling and veil of the Holy Place, these cherubim set forth the prospect of God manifestation as the ideal to be attained. It taught in symbol that Yahweh would dwell with flesh (1Tim. 3:16; 2Cor. 6:16). Such a process is not complete until a believer is bodily changed into the physical glory of Christ at the Judgment Seat (Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 1:19; 2:9-10). The *hope* of this was exhibited in the likeness of cherubim embroidered into the pattern of the ceiling of the tabernacle, whereas the *reality* was symbolised in the Most Holy, to be revealed in believers when they are “clothed upon with their house from heaven,” even eternal life (2Cor. 5:1-4).

The Hebrew *ma'asah chasab*, rendered “of cunning work,” is literally “the work of a skilled weaver.” The linen was produced in the loom, and all the coloured materials were deftly woven together to form a beautiful, symbolic pattern. Such, also is the result of God-manifestation as revealed in an individual or a community.

The beautiful pattern of the divine character is interwoven in a life of righteousness, to the glory of the “skilled Weaver,” and the transformation seen in saints becomes His workmanship (Phil. 2:13). As Moses and his associates were used to weave the divine pattern in the tabernacle, so Yahweh has used men and women throughout the ages to further His purpose in bringing many sons to glory. Such are required to develop skill in the work He has set them to do (2Tim. 2:15), whilst the characters of those so affected are likened to beautifully designed and skilfully made garments of exquisite and intricate embroidery (Psa. 45:13-14). In forwarding the work of Yahweh they become “co-workers with God” (1Cor. 3:9).

VERSE 2

“The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits” — Twenty-eight cubits is approximately 12.6 metres (42 ft). The number 28 has a spiritual significance, being a multiple of seven and four: the numbers of the covenant combined with the organisation of the camps of Israel (Rev. 21:16).

“And the breadth of one curtain four cubits” — Five such curtains were joined together to make a single curtain of twenty cubits. There were two such curtains, and they were so joined together to form one large curtain twenty-eight by forty cubits. The size permitted portion of the curtains to drape over the sides and end of the wooden structure. See introductory above.

“And every one of the curtains shall have one measure” — They were uniform in size.

VERSE 3

“The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another” — Like the ten commandments, the ten curtains were divided into two sets of five each: five being the number of grace, and the whole was to form a *mishkan*, or dwelling place for Yahweh in Israel. The ten commandments being “coupled together” in two sets of five each, comprised the *terms* by

which Yahweh would dwell among His people, whilst the tabernacle symbolised what obedience to the commandments is designed to create.

The statement "one to another" is literally "each unto her sister," speaking of the unity of fellowship in the Bride of Christ. The word "one" or "each" is in the feminine, *ishah el-achoth*, the word *ishah* having the same consonants as the word "woman" in Gen. 2:23. The explanation is given that she was so called "because she was *taken out of Man*" — a significant statement in relation to the tabernacle, symbolising, as it does, the multitudinous Christ, "taken out of The Man."

"And other five curtains shall be coupled one to another" — They were joined together to form one whole, as also the ten commandments. This, perhaps, foreshadows the call of the gospel to Jew and Gentile, and their incorporation into "one fold" (see John 10:16).

VERSE 4

"And thou shalt make loops of blue"

— The colour blue drew attention to the heavenly calling of Israelites, who were to uphold the holiness of God manifestation. See note Exo. 25:4.

"Upon the edge of one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling" — The RSV clarifies this by rendering: "on the edge of the outmost curtain in the first set."

"And likewise, shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second" — Loops of blue were to be placed along each side of the curtains where they were to be linked together to make a whole.

VERSE 5

"Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second" — Fifty is a combination of five (the number of grace) multiplied by ten (the number of completeness), forming the total of fifty (the number of the jubilee which proclaimed liberty to all Israel).

"That the loops may take hold one

of another" — The blue loops, speaking of the heavenly calling of Israel, corresponded with each other, so that they could be conveniently joined together by the golden taches, clasps, or hooks. These blue loops and golden taches thus united what previously had been separate. It is divine teaching (Num. 15:38-39) and a common faith (1Pet. 1:7) that unites Israelitish and Gentile believers as one (John 10:16). The ceiling, therefore, represented Christ in resurrectional glory both personally, and multitudinously. The latter, of course, comprises his Bride who is formed "out of him," and is to be made "one with him." It is significant that the feminine gender is used in regard to the two curtains and the fifty loops. Thus where the AV reads: "the loops may take hold one of another," which would imply that they were joined together by some sort of interlocking, the Hebrew has: "corresponding shall be the loops each unto her sister." A common likeness will be manifested by each member of the multitudinous Bride, conforming to their Lord. Again we draw attention to the combination of masculine and feminine words in this description of the tabernacle.

VERSE 6

"And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold" — Fifty clasps or hooks of gold typically added faith to the virtues of grace (the number 5) and completeness (the number 10). The clasps held the two curtains as one. Communities that respect their heavenly calling are completely united together as one, when a true faith is manifested in such.

This large single curtain was 12 metres by 18 metres (42 x 60 feet). It was placed over the holy structure which was 4.5 metres by 13.5 metres (15 x 45 ft). The curtain was large enough to cover the full 13.5 metres (45 ft), with 4.5 metres (15ft) hanging down over the back. This would mean that the curtain on the top, forming the ceiling of the tabernacle, would have the divisions exactly above the pillars that separated the holy from the most holy. It would also extend over the sides for

several metres, and so be fastened into position (see note, v. 33). Only a flat roof can provide for such an arrangement.

“And couple the curtains together with the taches” — The gold clasps of faith figuratively took hold of the loops indicative of a divine calling, and joined into one the two curtains of righteousness. “Coupled” is *chabaroth*, “to join,” or “to have fellowship with” (Psa. 94:20).

“And it shall be one tabernacle” — In the antitype, those called out of Israel after the flesh, and those from out of the Gentiles, will form the “one tabernacle” of the future age, when God will dwell among men (Rev. 21:3). The Berkeley Version of the Bible expresses this unity very expressively, rendering it: “so the Dwelling becomes a unit.” What a beautiful thought! All the diverse gifts of the Israelites, the various portions of the curtains, are linked together to form a unit. This suggests complete fellowship: a glorious whole. The words of Paul are appropriate: “Ye are of the household of God; built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are *builded together* for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).

Eleven Curtains of Goat's Hair

— vv. 7-13.

The second covering is of goat's hair woven into a kind of thin matting. It is made in a similar manner to the linen curtains, except that it is 60 cms (2ft) longer, and there are eleven curtains instead of ten. Joined together, these form the second covering 92cm (3ft) wider and 184cm (6ft) longer, or 14metres (45ft) by 20metres (66ft). But the connecting hooks are of brass, not the golden hooks of faith as of the first curtain. Placed over the inner covering, this one extends 45cms (1.5ft) farther down on each side, like a valance. The extra length is folded over partially, as a decoration at the front of the tabernacle, and the remaining length

drapes down at the rear. This curtain represents sin's flesh, the nature possessed by Christ at his first advent. This curtain of goat's hair forms the first of three coverings over the tabernacle, and is not part of the tabernacle proper. It is given the title of “ohel,” or the tent of the tabernacle.

VERSE 7

“And thou shalt make curtains of goat's hair” — The word for “goat” in Hebrew signifies assertiveness, which is a characteristic of the goat. The curtain of goats' hair was in stark contrast to the fine twined linen ceiling of the tabernacle proper, for it was black in colour (Song 1:5). The goat was used as a sin offering (Lev. 9:3; 16:5-8), and Christ, in his parable of the Judgment Seat, likens the rejected to goats (Mat. 25:32), for they have followed the assertiveness, or sin-proneness of the flesh.

Christ came in the likeness of sin's flesh (Rom. 1:3), but manifested the mind and character of God. In that, he was like the covering of goat's hair, hiding from outward view the beautiful linen ceiling of the tabernacle. Because he came in sin's flesh, he became a fit sacrifice on behalf of mankind (including himself, for he needed redemption from such a nature); hence the appropriateness of this covering of goat's hair.

“To be a covering upon the tabernacle” — The word for “covering” is *ohel*, and signifies a tent. It is treated as being independent of the tabernacle, forming the tent, or protection, of the tabernacle. So with Christ. He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” but possessed the mind of Yahweh, who thus dwelt in the midst of the people in the person of His Son.

“Eleven curtains shalt thou make” — Eleven is the number of disorder and disorganisation, as it is one short of twelve, the number of order and divine government. There were eleven dukes of Edom (Gen. 36:40-43); eleven sons of Jacob, when, unsuspecting, it was said of Joseph the so-called missing one, “one is

not;" it was in the eleventh year of Zedekiah that Jerusalem was "broken up" (Jer. 39:2), and so on. All the sins of humanity are traceable to sin's flesh (Mark 7:18-23) symbolised by the goat. Christ succeeded only because he figuratively crucified the flesh in his life as he did literally in his death. To that end, he derived strength from Yahweh, and so never capitulated to sin. Even in him, however, the "flesh profited nothing," for it was the mind of the Spirit that gained for him the ascendancy. Appropriate, therefore, are eleven curtains of sacrificed goats' hair as a covering, or tent of the tabernacle.

VERSE 8

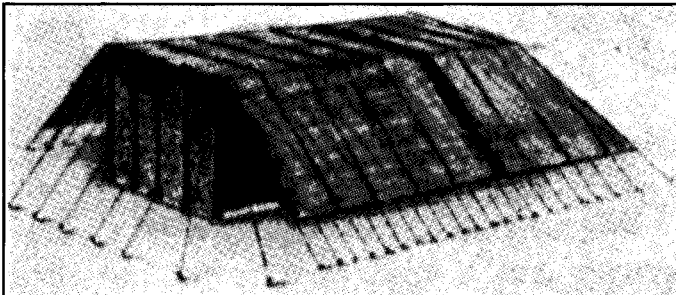
"The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits" — Thirty cubits is 13metres (45ft), hence this curtain was larger than that of the fine twined linen (cp. v. 2). It covered the tabernacle, as the flesh clothed Emmanuel. Six multiplied by five makes thirty. Six is the number of man who was created on the sixth day. Here it is associated with five, the number of grace. Being larger than the first curtain, its size enabled it to drape over the sides of the tabernacle to within a cubit of the ground. Lengthwise it would overhang the tabernacle by five cubits each end, but if allowed to fall within a cubit of the ground on the western side, it would leave one cubit to protrude over its front as a form of protection.

"And the breadth of one curtain four cubits: And the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure" — Though this is the same breadth as that of the inner curtain, there were eleven pieces instead of ten, making the size forty-four cubits in comparison to the linen curtain of forty cubits, and the size of the tabernacle which was thirty cubits.

VERSE 9

"And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves" — The numbers five and six in relation to the tent of goats' hair, are suggestive of grace associated with man on the basis of the sin offering.

"And shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle" — This is specified of the sixth curtain, and six is the number of flesh. It protruded beyond the others, and was doubled over at the front of the tabernacle thus forming a sort of protection or verandah over the front of the entrance. In that position, this covering of goat's hair was always presented to the view of any who might be looking at the tabernacle, whether they be priests, Levites, or common worshippers. They thus had prominently presented the means by which it is possible to conquer: the sacrifice of flesh, and they would see in this the token of the sin offering through which they could obtain forgiveness of transgressions, and through which, alone, man can acceptably approach Yahweh.



The Covering of goats' hair woven. This formed the tent (ohel) of the tabernacle. The sixth curtain in front (not shown in the illustration) was folded into two and hung over the entrance forming a shelter — reminding Israelites of their need of the sin-offering as a cover.

Therefore, as the cherubim in the Most Holy gazed upon the mercy seat (Exo. 25:20), on which was sprinkled the blood of the sin offering (Lev. 16:15), so the people could view the significant symbol on the outside of the tabernacle. Worshippers today

should similarly view the Lord (see 1Pet. 2:21-25; Heb. 12:2), and endeavour to emulate the example he provided.

VERSE 10

“And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second” — For the significance of the number fifty, see v. 5. However, in contrast to the blue loops of the curtain of fine twined linen, the loops of this curtain were evidently made of goats’ hair, in conformity with the covering itself.

VERSE 11

“And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops”



A flat-topped Bedouin tent — a common sight in the Holy Land.

— For brass, see note ch. 25:3. It was appropriate that the clasps should be of brass, for it typifies flesh purified, and this is in conformity with the curtain of goats’ hair which represents flesh sacrificed as a basis for God manifestation.

“And couple the tent together, that it may be one” — The word “tent” is *ohel*, rendered “covering” in v. 7. As the coupling of the linen curtains together formed the *mishkan* or dwelling place of Yahweh, so the coupling of the goats’ hair curtains formed the *ohel*, or tent in which was the tabernacle. The tents still used by the Bedouins today, were doubtless used

by Israelites in their wilderness wanderings. They are flat topped structures supported throughout by uprights, and not as we understand a tent being a covering slung over a ridgepole. There is no provision made for such in the specifications of the tabernacle, or its tent.

VERSE 12

“And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent” — Reference is to the five curtains that remain, for the six curtains were considered in v. 9.

“The half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle” — The five curtains formed the second half of the united curtain of goats’ hair, and provided the covering for the back portion of the tabernacle. Being longer than the curtain of linen, it fell further over the back.

VERSE 13

“And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side” — The linen ceiling of the *mishkan* extended to a cubit off the ground, but this space is now covered by the greater length of the goat’s hair covering. The Hebrew has the definite article “the cubit” — the cubit by which this goats’ hair covering exceeded that of the linen ceiling of the tabernacle.

“Of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent” — The reference is to that section of the goat’s hair covering that extended over the linen curtain.

“It shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it” — It hung, like a valance, on both sides of the tabernacle, hiding the gold-covered boards which otherwise would have been visible.

The Final Coverings — v. 14.

Final coverings of reddened rams’ skins and badgers’ skins are now briefly considered.

VERSE 14

“And thou shalt make a covering for the tent” — Here the word for “covering”

is *mikseh* and denotes such a covering as would keep out the weather. The size of this covering is not given, but, as it is said to be "a covering for the tent," or *ohel*, most likely it was of the same size, and draped over the sides of the tabernacle.

"Of rams' skins dyed red" — See note Exo. 25:5. The Hebrew has it as *rams' skins red-dened*. The word for rams is *ayilim*, from a root signifying, to be strong. The Lord was "made strong" in order to conquer sin (Psa. 80:17; John 16:32), and the redness of the rams' skins is suggestive of his sacrifice.

The ram, used as a burnt offering (Gen. 22), pointed forward to Christ. As such it was also used at the consecration of the priests (Lev. 8:18). It was offered for atonement in the case of trespass (Lev. 5:15). Antitypically, Christ's complete dedication of self fulfilled the burnt offering, and represents the means whereby we might attain unto consecration as priests, with provision for forgiveness of trespasses.

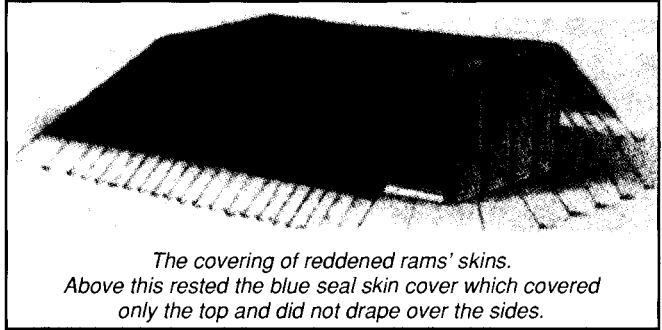
"And a covering above" — Again the word for "covering" is *mikseh*, implying a covering to keep out the weather. All three words: *mishkan* (tabernacle), *ohel* (tent), and *mikseh* (covering), are used together in Num. 3:25. In Scripture the term *mikseh* is employed only for the covering of the tabernacle, or Noah's Ark (Gen. 8:13). These curtains were placed above the tabernacle, but not over its front. The statement "a covering above" implies that this covering of badgers' skins was on the top only, and did not drape over the sides.

"Of badgers' skins" — See note, Exo. 25:5.

The Gold Covered Boards In Their Sockets Of Silver — vv. 15-25.

Forty-eight boards, each, ten by one

and a half cubits, including two angle boards, are required for the walls of the tabernacle. Twenty of these are designed for the north and south sides; and eight, plus two angle boards, are ordered for the west. All the boards are encased in gold, and made to stand upright by being firmly secured by tenons fitting into silver



The covering of reddened rams' skins. Above this rested the blue seal skin cover which covered only the top and did not drape over the sides.

sockets. The suggested inside measurements of the tabernacle comprise twenty by ten cubits for the Holy Place, and ten by ten cubits for the Most Holy, each cubit representing about 45cm (18 inches).

VERSE 15

"And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle" — To provide boards for the walls of the tabernacle required the selection of suitable shittah trees for the purpose (a symbol of the flesh — see note, Exo. 25:5). They then had to be cut down, or humbled to the dust, next shaped according to the divine specifications. In the antitype, God is selecting from the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14). They are first humbled, then shaped according to the pattern revealed in the Word.

"Of shittim wood standing up" — After being typically humbled, and shaped, the boards were fitted so as to stand upright: suggesting in figure the moral status of a believer in Christ. The boards were then found of equal height, and importance (cp. 1Cor. 12:12-25).

The Hebrew for "boards" is *gereshim*, from a root signifying "to split off," thus a

plank, implying a separation.

VERSE 16

“Ten cubits shall be the length of a board” — Each board was some 4.5mtrs (15ft) high.

“And a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board” — Each board was some 6cms (2.3ft) wide. It would require an outstanding acacia tree to provide boards of this size.

VERSE 17

“Two tenons shall there be in one board” — The word for “tenons” is *yadoth*, a word in the feminine gender, signifying “hands.” These “hands” took hold of the sockets, enabling the boards to stand upright.

“Set in order one against another” — The tenons, or hands, unitedly held on to the sockets. How important it is for followers of the Lord “to follow the pattern.” It is no use holding on to the ecclesia with one hand, and to the world with the other. The word “together” is *achowth*, her sister. So the two “hands” were like two sisters in the multitudinous Bride of Christ, firmly taking hold of the sockets, and so enabling the boards to stand fast, and upright.

“Thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle” — Each board had to be uniform in height, and firmly fixed in its sockets of silver. How expressive of the ecclesia of Christ! Paul likens it to being “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded for an habitation of God through the spirit” (Eph. 2:20).

VERSE 18

“And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward” — The word for south is *negeb*, signifying “dryness.” The Hebrew for “southward” is *teman* which denotes the “right” hand, when facing the east, as did the tabernacle. So even in the

positioning of the tabernacle, there was a reminder of the south, the arid desert, the parched *negeb*, from whence Israel would emerge on its way to the Promised Land. Outside of the things of God, life is an arid wilderness!

VERSE 19

“And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver” — Forty represents eight multiplied by five. Eight is the number of a new beginning, being the day of Christ’s resurrection; the eighth day, and the first at the same time. Since these forty sockets enable the boards to “stand up” (v. 15), they are suggestive of a resurrection.

As five is the number of grace, the total represents a resurrection through grace. Secondly, the sockets are typically significant. The word in Hebrew is *edonim*, a plural form of *Adon*, the title of God which relates to a Sovereign Ruler.

These sockets gave strength to the boards, “ruling over them,” so that they were enabled to stand upright. Each socket was made of a talent of silver, and represented the redemption money of silver for several thousand men (cp. Exo. 38:25-27), so that each board, possessing two sockets, represented twelve thousand men (a significant number: see Rev. 7; 21:16). Thus each talent pointed to the measure of redemption in a multitude (Rev. 16:21), for silver is the metal of redemption (see Exo. 25:3). The sockets (or *adonim*, angelic rulers — cp. Heb. 1:14) provided a foundation of strength which the “hands” of the boards firmly grasped, enabling them to stand upright. The sockets were placed on or in the earth, but were not of it, exemplifying a separation therefrom which is necessary to complete redemption (2Cor. 6:17-18; cp. again Eph. 2:20-21).

“Under the twenty boards” — Twenty is a multiple of four and five, the numbers of Israel and of Grace. Through divine grace, Gentiles can become Israelites, being brought nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13).

“Two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under

another board for his two tenons” — The sockets (*adonim*) were provided for the “hands” to take hold, and so stabilise the boards. In illustration of the antitype, the Lord declared of believers, “their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 18:10). The angels, or *adonim* are “ministering spirits, ministering on behalf of the heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14).

VERSE 20

“And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north side there shall be twenty boards” — The words “side,” used twice, are two entirely different words in the Hebrew. The first is *tsela*, “side,” or rib (see note, Exo. 25:12), and the second is *pe’ath*, denoting “region.” It is called the “second” side, probably because the sides were erected in that order, when the tabernacle was set up.

References to the north throughout Scripture are very interesting. The Hebrew is *tsaphon*, and signifies that which is “hidden, dark, or unknown,” from a root signifying “to hide (by covering over),” and by implication “to hoard” or “reserve.” Figuratively it signifies “to protect, to lurk, hide, lay up, keep secret.” It therefore denotes something hidden which is to be revealed. The tribe of Dan, whose name means *Judge*, was the chief tribe stationed on the north of the tabernacle (Num. 2:25), suggesting that this is figuratively the direction of divine judgment. The north is also described as the place from whence comes “fair weather” (Job 37:22; Pro. 25:23), the area that is empty of man’s presence, and therefore symbolic of the unknown (Job 26:7). It is mentioned in relation to God’s throne (Isa. 14:13-14); and the direction out of which came the past judgments of the cherubim against Judah and Jerusalem (Eze. 1:4), as well as the future outpouring of judgment upon the earth (Isa. 14:31; 41:25). It is described as the place of obscurity into which Israel was driven, and from whence the nation is to return (Jer. 3:12,18). The Psalmist sums up the matter by stating that promotion (Heb. *ruwm*, elevation; elation)

“cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south” (Psa. 75:6). That leaves only the north as the direction of obscurity, concealing God’s presence, and the judgment of the future. Thus the Israelites, as they observed the order in which the tabernacle was erected at each stopping place, were taught to consider the aridness of their wilderness wanderings in regard to future judgment of God.

VERSE 21

“And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board” — Though there were two tenons or hands to each board, taking hold of the sockets, the boards were each treated as units. Likewise, Israelite and Gentile, drawn out of different races, unite as one in the ecclesia of God.

VERSE 22

“And for the sides of the tabernacle westward” — Here the word for “side” is different in the Hebrew. It is *yerekoth*, a word in the feminine gender denoting “thighs.” We have observed the masculine form of the word in the shaft of the lampstand (Exo. 25:31), and here is the feminine counterpart. As we note in considering the former, “thighs” are associated with birth in Scripture, and in that relationship, the use of the masculine and feminine forms of the word are significant.

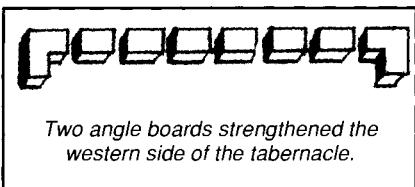
The lampstand, symbolising the Word of God, suggests the seed of God that begets one unto incorruptibility (1Pet. 1:23), whereas the “thighs” of the tabernacle, on the “westward” or hinder side of the most holy, can imply the birth of the Spirit body. Certainly the Most Holy, which the western “thighs” enclosed, contained the symbols of the multitudinous seed of incorruptible ones to be brought to birth through the begetting of the seed of Truth.

The word “westward” is a translation of *yamoh*, and literally signifies *towards the sea*. The word itself, however, denotes the sound of the sea, and sometimes this is used in Scripture for a multitude, as in

Eze. 43:2. Therefore whilst the word in its primary sense indicates direction (the west, because it is the region of the Mediterranean), it can have a secondary application to the multitude of the Redeemed who will be identified with the antitypical Most Holy, and who are taken out of the sea of humanity (Isa. 57:20).

Thus the very words used to describe the four sides of the tabernacle, as well as the order in which they are given, are significant. The *negeb* denotes the desert from whence the tribes emerged to enter the Land of Promise, the *tsaphon* (north) points to the judgment of Yahweh for which they waited; the east (which it faced) is the direction of the sun's rising; a symbol of hope in the day that is to dawn; whilst the west denotes the sea, the multitudinous Redeemed, drawn out for the worship of Yahweh.

"Thou shalt make six boards" — This is the number of flesh, but with two corner boards, the west required eight boards in all, the number of perfection. In association with the Most Holy, flesh is perfected.



Two angle boards strengthened the western side of the tabernacle.

VERSE 23

"And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle" — The word for "corners" is *metqutsoth*, and signifies to bend, or to angle. These boards, therefore, were corner boards, halved in size and set at right angles. This would allow for six boards plus two angle boards at each end. The total outside measure of the Most Holy would then be 10.5 cubits, but, allowing half a cubit for the thickness of the boards, the inside measurement would be ten cubits. The length of the tabernacle would thus be extended by half a board, but this would allow for

the pillars of the veil, and excluding the room taken up by those, give an inside measurement of exactly twenty cubits for the holy place, and ten cubits for the most holy.

"In the two sides" — The word in the Hebrew is "the two thighs."

VERSE 24

"And they shall be coupled together beneath" — The Hebrew word for "coupled" is *ta'anim*, signifying "twined." The corner boards were to be turned into twins, or doubled. This may have been done by halving the boards and grooving the two pieces one into the other from beneath to the top. This, together with the tenons and sockets, would have made for firmer corner-boards, even as the "cornerstone" strengthens a building (Zech. 10:4; Eph. 2:20; 1Pet. 2:7).

"And they shall be coupled together" — This word is *tamim* but, according to Strong, from a different root. Hence it signifies "to perfect," or "to complete." It is rendered *perfect* in Job 1:1,8; 2:3; 8:20; Psa. 37:37; 64:4. It has a common root with *tamiym* rendered "perfect" in Gen. 6:9; 17:1, and therefore suggests spiritual maturity (note how begettal, birth and maturity are linked in these measurements). The word is rendered "undefiled" (Song 5:2; 6:9), "upright" (Pro. 29:10), as is also its root *taman* (Psa. 18:25; 19:13). The grooving together from beneath would continue to the top, thus perfecting or completing the process.

"Above the head of it unto one ring" — They were to be doubled or twined beneath, and the two parts to be finished or perfected upon its head to the same ring which would completely unite them. This ring or staple would connect each of the angle boards, thus uniting them as one, and giving firm stability to this part of the tabernacle.

"Thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners" — Both sides were symmetrical in design.

VERSE 25

"And they shall be eight boards" —

The eight boards were made up of six conventional boards, and two corner boards, split in two, and set at right angles to form two angle boards. This made eight in all, the number of perfection.

“And their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board” — The doubling up of the sockets is suggestive of the two great divisions of mankind from whence the Redeemed are drawn. See note, v. 24 above.

The Supporting Bars Along The Sides And End — vv. 26-28.

Five bars are placed along the sides and end of the tabernacle to give added stability. Typically they answer to the five forms of ministration provided the first century ecclesia (Eph. 4:11), the effect of which is still in evidence today, and through which stability is given to ecclesias, protecting them from the disastrous effect of the adverse winds of false doctrine (see Eph. 4:14). So the ecclesia becomes “fitly framed together as an habitation for God” (Eph. 2:21-22).

VERSE 26

“And thou shalt make bars of shit-tim wood” — The term “bars” in Hebrew is the same word as that for “fugitive,” because of their ability to move rapidly. The bars or wooden bolts were designed to give greater strength and stability to the walls of the tabernacle. They were designed to slide quickly into position.

“Five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle” — Five is the number of grace. There were five such bars on the two sides (*tsela*) of the tabernacle, and five for its end, making fifteen in all. Fifteen is the total of 5×3 , which suggests grace and resurrection. Three is the number of resurrection because, on the third day, the earth appeared above the water, and life was manifested (Gen. 1:9-13); it was on the third day that the Lord Jesus rose from the grave of death.

VERSE 27

“And five bars for the boards of the

other side of the tabernacle” — The Hebrew designates “side one” and “side two” respectively, relating to the south and the north in that order, as previously designated. The word “side” is *tsela* as previously commented upon.

“And five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward” — The west, or hinder side of the tabernacle only had one side, so that this would appear as a contradiction. In fact, the word is not *tsela*, “side,” but “thighs” as in v. 22, and denotes the two corners. The hinder part of the tabernacle was divided into two parts thus described, so that, as representative of the multitudinous Christ, it had its sides and thighs!

VERSE 28

“And the middle bar in the midst of the boards” — There were five bars in all, four of them reaching half way across the length of the tabernacle, and the fifth bar in the centre stretching from end to end. Some suggest that the middle bar was placed in the centre of hollow wooden boards forming the wall of the tabernacle, but there is absolutely no provision for this in the specifications, nor any substance for it in typology. Indeed, to have such a hidden board would be quite incongruous; and, in fact, the boards being all totally covered with gold, there appears no provision for such a hole in the centre.

The RSV renders the phrase, “the middle bar half way up the frames.” Strong renders the word as in the “centre” of them. The following verse states that rings were made for the bars, and provides no exception for the central bar. Such “rings” would be unnecessary for the centre board if it travelled through the middle of the boards.

“Shall reach from end to end” — This board, unlike the other four, was so long, that it traversed the full length of the tabernacle. It would have been a most unusual acacia tree that could yield a board, some 14 metres (45ft) long. Evidently this bar was spliced or sectionised, and so fitted together as to bring it to the length here described.

VERSE 29

“And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold” — As the boards were entirely covered with gold, there was no opening for a bar to go through the centre. The acacia wood, emblematic of the flesh, shaped according to divine requirements, was entirely covered over with that which symbolised faith.

“And make their rings of gold for places of the bars” — Each of the five bars had their appointed rings of gold. These comprised the *houses* (see note, ch. 25:12) in which the bars, or fugitives (same word) could rest.

“And thou shalt overlay the bars with gold” — The wood was entirely covered with gold. Antitypically, the flesh is to be hidden from view by the covering of faith.

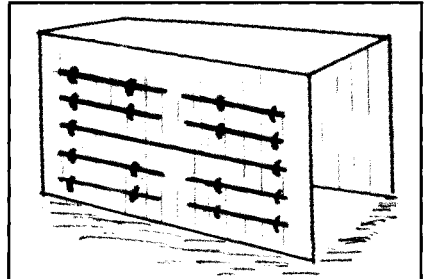
VERSE 30

“And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the mount”

— The word “fashion” is *mishpat*, which denotes a verdict, or decision, pronounced judicially, whilst “shewed thee” is literally *what thou wast caused to see* (see note, Exo. 25:9). Evidently Moses not only saw in vision an exact replica of the tabernacle, but also visualised it as if it were erected before his eyes. He would have had opportunity to minutely examine it, and discuss the construction of each section with the presiding angel. In doing so, the solution to any problem he might have foreseen in his own supervision of the construction, would have been resolved by a judicial decree.

The Veil — vv. 31-33.

A veil hung in front of the most holy dividing it from the holy place, shutting off the former, from the view of the priests ministering in the holy place. The holy place and the most holy place represented the mortal and immortal states of believers. Entrance into the latter by ordinary priests was barred until the offering of the Lord opened the way thereinto (Heb. 10:19-20). Indicative of that, the veil of



The five horizontal bars that gave stability to the boards of the tabernacle, preventing them collapsing under strain of storm,, answer to the five forms of first century ministration (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—see Eph. 4:11-14) that have given stability to Ecclesias since, strengthening them against the contrary “winds of (false) doctrine” that can endanger them.

the temple was rent asunder at the crucifixion of the Lord (Mat. 27:51) demonstrating that the way into the Most Holy and to the state of immortality had been opened up through his death. The veil, therefore, was representative of the flesh of the Lord, whilst its blend of colour and intricate design shadowed forth the glorious divine character he revealed: that of the Father.

VERSE 31

“And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work” — The Hebrew for veil is *parocheth*, from *parach*, to break or rend. The veil broke, or divided the tabernacle into two: the holy and the most holy, and in so doing, signified that the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest whilst it remained (Heb. 9:8). The veil represented the flesh of the Lord, which was “rent” in death, that the way into life might be revealed (Heb. 10:20). When that happened, a new and living way into the holiest of all was revealed (see Heb. 9:24; 10:19-20). At the same time, the literal veil of the temple was “rent,” corresponding with the signifi-

cance of its name.

The various colours have their application to Christ. The *blue* speaks of his heavenly origin and character as the Word made flesh, the *purple* speaks of God manifest in flesh, the *scarlet* of his dedication in performing his Father's will, and the fine twined *linen*, the righteousness of his deeds.

The veil was of "cunning work," indicative of the skilful labour of those who ministered in the manufacture of the veil, which they did on Yahweh's behalf. It also pointed forward to the Lord's outstanding and divine ability to reveal his Father's characteristics. There has been no man like him before or since; he is unique.

"With cherubim shall it be made"

— The veil was to be of the same material and skilful workmanship as the inner covering which formed the ceiling of the *mishkan*. It matched it in that it was embroidered with figures of cherubim woven into its texture by a skilful weaver.

VERSE 32

"And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold" — The four pillars answer to the four faces of the cherubim: the lion, ox, man, and eagle. It is appropriate that the life of the Lord, and his mission, were set forth prophetically by "four pillars": Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel; and made manifest through the combined witness upon four gospel "pillars" (see Gal. 2:9), namely, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Four is the number of Israel, for the tribes encamped in four squares (see also Rev. 21:16).

Unlike the pillars from which the curtain for the tabernacle door was suspended, these, apparently, had no capitals. Thus these pillars lacked the normal architectural finish. Perhaps this was to display a feature relating to the One whom the veil depicted. Christ was "cut off" out of the land of the living (Isa. 53:8), with his flesh (which the veil represented), before its normal life-span was complete, in fulfilment of the prophetic Psalm, "He short-

ened my days" (Psa. 102:23). Because of this premature termination of his life in sacrificial offering in the way appointed, God made him to be unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption" (1Cor. 1:30), a fourfold perfection, meeting our fourfold need, epitomising the fourfold gospel records. Accordingly, as Paul concludes, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (v. 31). The Lord's glory was depicted in the varie-coloured veil with its beautiful and significant cherubic pattern.

"Their hooks shall be of gold" —

The Hebrew *vaveyhim*, "their hooks," is derived from the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet [ו] *waw*, which is given that meaning by most lexicographers, because it resembles a hook. They suggest it signifies: "connect; attach; join to; hook." The letter is frequently used as a particle serving to connect, or hook together words and phrases. The hooks of the veil were attached to the pillars, and from them the veil was suspended.

"Upon the four sockets of silver" —

The pillars stood in sockets of silver (see note above on the word "sockets"). These pillars, therefore, depict progress toward salvation. It commences with the foundation of redemption (the sockets), it reaches up to the point where flesh is hidden by the gold of faith (pillars of wood coated with gold), it is completed by the bestowal of incorruptibility (the pure, solid gold of the hooks).

VERSE 33

"And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches" — The RSV changes this to, "Thou shalt hang the veil from the clasps," but that is not what the Hebrew signifies. It uses the word *tachath* meaning "under," so that the veil was hung under the taches or clasps, not from them.

The taches or clasps are evidently those of v. 6 which joined the ceiling curtain together, and which were evidently immediately above the hooks that held up the veil. This means that the coverings above were draped in such a fashion as to show the division within at the point

where the most holy was separated from the holy. It has been conjectured, though nowhere specifically stated, that the Holy Place was twenty cubits (10 metres; 30 ft) long, and the most holy ten cubits (5 metres; 15 ft). The division was discernable from outside, but the fulness of its glory was only seen within. How true to present experience!

“That thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony”

— In the Hebrew, the clause is directive: “And thou shalt bring thither...” See RV. The “ark of the testimony” is so styled because it contained the two tables of stone (Exo. 31:18; 32:15; 34:29) which testified, or witnessed, as to what was required of the people.

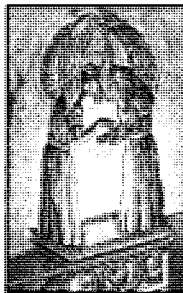
“And the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy” — The term “divide” signifies to separate completely so as to distinguish one from the other. A priest in the Holy saw before him a barrier that clearly separated the one place from the other. The lesson is to believers who have accepted Christ. Though they commence to walk in the antitypical Holy Place, they shall not presume that they inevitably move through the veil into the Most Holy. They must qualify for that by faithful service.

VERSE 34

“And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place” — For the importance of this action, and the manner in which it was to be carried out, see note, ch. 25:21.

VERSE 35

“And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and thou shalt put the table on the north side” — A priest entering the Holy Place would do so from the east which the tabernacle faced. He then would have on his left the lampstand and on his right the table of shewbread.



The Hanging For The Door

— vv. 36-37.

A further hanging, similar to the veil dividing the holy place from the most holy but lacking the cherubim, forms the entrance of the tabernacle. It is hung from golden hooks, supported by five pillars overlaid with gold, fixed in sockets of bronze.

VERSE 36

“And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent” — The Hebrew for “hanging” in this place is *masak*, and denotes a curtain, or screen to hide, rather than a veil to separate as in v. 31. It is rendered “screen” in the RSV. This curtain-screen lacked the cherubim though it displayed the colours of the veil. Jewish commentators claim that both the screen at the entrance, and the dividing veil between the Holy and Most Holy were five fingers in width and therefore thick enough to exclude light.

“Of blue” — The deep azure blue of heaven reminded Israel of their heavenly origin, and of the responsibilities attached thereto (Num. 15:38; Deu. 22:12). It emphasised the holy origin of the Lord: “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), and the motivating power of the Word in him.

Israelites were commanded to place on the fringes of the hems of their garments a “ribband of blue,” that they may look upon it “and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, and do them” (Num. 15:37-41). A ribband in such a position meant that the Israelite would walk within a circle of blue; in other words, within the limits of teaching honouring to Yahweh; their footsteps restricted by the heavenly calling the nation had accepted. It is significant, that this command followed the execution of one who had “forgotten” what was required of him, and so had “despised the Word of Yahweh, and broken His commandment” (vv. 30-36). Further, the incident which follows this instruction

concerns the action of certain who determined to usurp the position of divine leadership, rejecting the authority of Moses (Num. 16:1-40). Both incidents record actions of deliberate waywardness, and emphasise the importance of the "law of the ribband of blue."

"And purple" — See note, Exo. 25:4. Purple is the colour of *God manifestation*. It is also appropriately the colour of royalty, for Yahweh is a "great King" above the heavens (Psa. 74:12; 84:3; 89:18; 95:3; 98:6) and requires that His people be manifestations of His character and glory.

Purple is a blend of blue and scarlet, which normally clash with each other. In all the twenty-four places where these colours are mentioned in conjunction with each other, the order in which they are presented never varies, and this, in itself, teaches an important lesson. Blue comes first, as God should come first in the consideration of true worshippers. When scarlet is added, the colour purple results. Scarlet represents the flesh, and when added to the blue teaches the principle of God manifest in the flesh. Divine teaching converts the principles of the flesh.

"And scarlet" — As blue is the colour of heaven, the bright splash of scarlet represents the colour of earth. One word for "earth" in the Bible is *adamah* and signifies "red earth;" the most dominant colour of flowers, the product of the earth, is bright red.

Red blends with blue, creating the purple colour of royalty. The Lord was mockingly clothed in both purple and scarlet robes, in ridicule of his claim to be king of the Jews (Mark 15:17; John 19:2; Mat. 27:28). He was *born* King of the Jews, and therefore had a title to the throne of David and the sovereignty of the world by descent. He demonstrated the validity of his claim by virtue of his own intrinsic excellency. He "ruled his own spirit," and thus demonstrated his ability to reign (see Pro. 16:32; 15:33). He triumphed in his meekness and righteousness. He combined mercy and truth in all his actions, uniting compassion towards others, with boldness and courage in the face of evil. Though

born King of the Jews, and the Son of God, he humbly submitted as a servant to the requirements placed upon him, even unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2:9), and because of that he was elevated above all others, and given a name above every name (vv. 9-10). All this is becoming of the colour before us, for the dye of scarlet was only obtained through the death of an insect (the *coccus* — see note, ch. 25:4), producing it.

As noted before, two Hebrew words are united in all the passages in Exodus relating to the tabernacle, where the word *scarlet* occurs. The first of these (*tohlah*) is translated "worm" in such places as Psa. 22:6. The other word (*shahnee*) is of doubtful signification, and some suppose it to mean double-dyed. In Pro. 31:21, "double garments" is the rendering suggested, instead of "scarlet." In Isa. 1:18, both words occur separately: "Though your sins be as scarlet (*shahnee*), they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson (*tohlah*), they shall be as wool." These two words used together, indicate the *coccus* insect from which this most brilliant dye is procured. It provides the key to the significance of scarlet in the tabernacle. It speaks of the death of the Lord, which provided the "dye" that makes baptism valid. It symbolises the dedication of his life in doing the will of Yahweh. The token of this in sacrifice was the outpouring of blood, for blood represents the life (Lev. 17:11). Christ's blood figuratively acts as a dye by which baptism is "coloured," for "baptism" itself is derived from a Greek word signifying "to dye."

Each of the three colours mentioned also represent a dye obtained from an insect, or some form of sea life; in any case, from life given up for the purpose in some manner. The word "blue" is from the Hebrew *tekeleth*, a shell fish (*helix ianthina*), a species of mussel found in the Mediterranean Sea, which has a blue shell, and from which the cerulean purple is made. Strong identifies the word with the Hebrew *shecheleth*, also denoting a sea mussel, but which is translated "onycha"

in the Bible. See its use in the incense (Exo. 30:34).

The word "purple" is from the Hebrew *argaman*. It is a brilliant red-blue colour prized by the ancients for dyeing garments. The chief source of the famous Tyrian purple was the tiny mollusk (*murex*) found along the coast of Phoenicia and adjacent lands. It was exported far and wide as a staple commodity of Phoenician commerce (Eze. 27:7, 16). Great labour was required to extract the purple dye, making it very costly. Hence only royalty or the wealthy could afford the resulting richly coloured garments (Est. 8:15; Dan. 5:7). How appropriate to represent the colour of God manifestation: the tiny, obscure mollusk, sought and taken from the sea, that its life might be given up to produce, with infinite care, the dye required. The application as a type of those drawn out of the sea of nations for the Name of God is obvious.

"And fine twined linen" — See note, Exo. 25:4. "Fine twined linen" is representative of righteousness in action, and is the obvious effect of a life given in dedication to God. Thus the four colours in conjunction one with the other, spelt out the message, that true worship required [1] acknowledgement of Yahweh as found in His Word — *blue*; [2] the manifestation of His characteristics in flesh — *purple*; [3] the giving of life in dedication to His service — *scarlet*; [4] the revealing of all this in acts of righteousness — *white linen*.

It is significant that, in Rev. 19:8 where "fine linen" is defined as "the righteousness of saints," the word is in the plural: *righteousnesses*. In *Eureka*, Bro. Thomas renders it as "righteous actions of saints."

These principles were exhibited at the door of the tabernacle, demanding that those who enter thereat should reveal them in life. They comprise the garments of salvation which one puts on in Christ (Isa. 61:10; Gal. 3:26-28; Rev. 19:8). The body of the Lord was wrapped in "fine linen" (Mark 15:46), indicative of his righteousness in life.

"Wrought with needlework" — The

Hebrew is "the work of the *embroiderer*." Exodus 35:25 states that "wise hearted" women (those skilful in such labour) produced the coloured thread, which was then carefully and skilfully worked into a pattern according to the requirements specified. Faithful and outstandingly skilful men such as Bezaleel and Aholiab, supervised all that was done, to ensure the finest possible workmanship (see Exo. 31:2-6). They were endowed with the Spirit for that purpose, so that actually the finished product was "wrought of God." In Psa. 45:14, the Bride of Christ is represented as being clothed "in raiment of needlework," a reference to the character of the redeemed, developed through skill and patience from a God-given pattern, and through a God-given motivation (Phil. 2:13). See further note in ch. 26:1.

VERSE 37

"And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood" — These pillars are for the entrance of the tabernacle, and appropriately number five, the number of grace. Only through divine grace can sinful man find the way to worship Yahweh. Christ, as the high priest appointed of Yahweh, declared "I am the way." His fivefold characteristics as priest are outlined in Heb. 7:26, "such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the (Mosaic) heavens." There are also five titles that define the Lord as king (see Isa. 9:6), so that he is set forth as King-Priest (Zech. 6:13). All this was attested by five witnesses which the Lord advanced for the consideration of his Jewish contemporaries who refused to accept his own witness (Jn. 5:31) — John Baptist (vv. 32-33); the Master's work (v. 36); the Father's testimony (vv. 37-38); the Scriptures (vv. 39-44) and Moses (vv. 45-47).

The writers of the N.T. epistles who displayed the principles of the Christ-like life to the ecclesias, number five: Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude. The five pillars of the *entrance* therefore match the four of the veil in displaying the principles of Christ to "whosoever hath eyes to see."

“And overlay them with gold” — Faith is necessary to acceptably enter upon the worship of Yahweh.

“And their hooks shall be of gold” — See note, v. 32.

“And thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them” — Here, at the outside of the tabernacle we come upon brass, bronze, or copper, for the first time. On the other hand, the further we penetrate into the tabernacle itself, the more precious become the metals used; until, at last, the mercy seat and cherubim are all of solid gold.

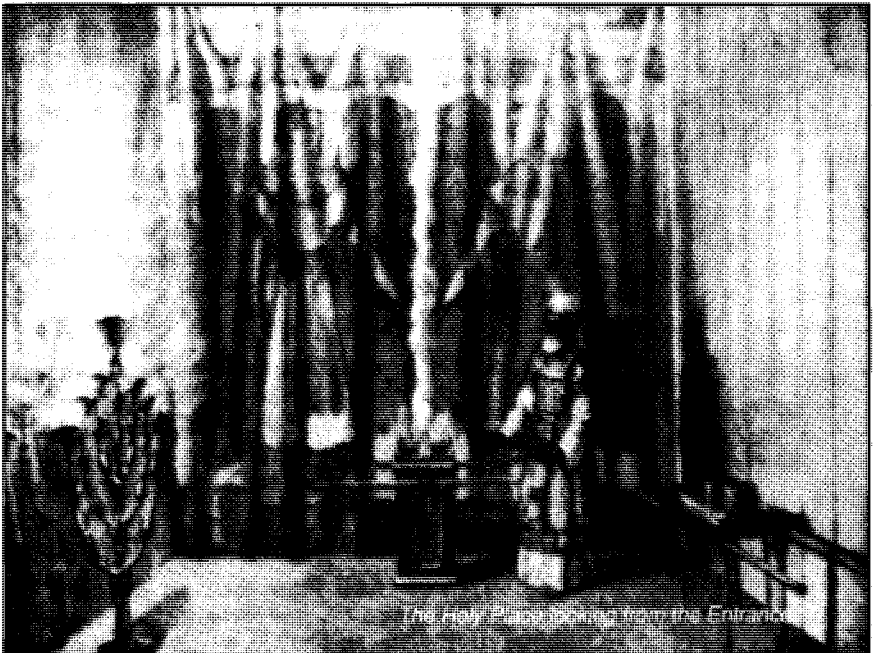
Brass or copper represents flesh purified by fire (Exo. 25:3). The entrance of the tabernacle, therefore, presented the wonderful exhortation that what commences in flesh purified, can develop into that which is most glorious, even immortality. For though the sockets were of brass, the capitals and fillets of these five

pillars were of gold (Exo. 36:38). Flesh purified forms a basis whereby can be revealed the gold of a faith acceptable to Yahweh.

From the outside, only the coverings of black goat's hair, reddened rams' skins, and blue seal skins were visible, whereas the beautiful coloured ceiling with its intricate pattern of cherubim wrought therein, was hidden from view. One had to enter the tabernacle to appreciate the beauty of that covering.

How true to the Truth's experience. Outside, God's way often looks drab and uninviting, with emphasis given to the weakness of the flesh, the need of sacrifice, and of personal denial.

But inside, as the divine beauty is progressively revealed to the eyes of the student, the view is glorious, and the incentive to attain unto that which is thus typified becomes impelling.



The Holy Place looking from the Entrance

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

OUTSIDE IN THE COURT: THE BRAZEN ALTAR, HANGINGS FOR THE COURT, OIL FOR THE LAMP

The court outside the tabernacle emphasises the need of flesh to make proper preparation before entering the holy place. Most prominent of its furniture is the great brazen altar that stands immediately in line with the entrance of the court and that of the tabernacle. It bars the way to worshippers, who first must present their offerings unto Yahweh in the manner specified. Moses is instructed how all this is to be constructed. He is given details concerning the linen fence that is to enclose the Sanctuary; the gate of the court through which entrance is gained thereto; and the oil for the lamps which it is the responsibility of every Israelite to contribute.

The Great Altar Of Burnt Offering — vv. 1-8.

This altar is usually depicted with a ramp running up the side, but, in fact, no such appendage is described. Indeed, it seems hardly to be necessary. The altar is approximately 230cms (7½ ft) square by 137cms (4½ ft) high. What need of a ramp to attend an altar of that size? The altar is like a hollow box, shaped square, open at both ends, and made of shittim wood overlaid with bronze or copper. It is equipped with poles placed through rings for the purpose of carrying it, in similar fashion to the furniture of the tabernacle. Since Israel is instructed to make altars only of earth or unhewn stone (Exo. 20:24-25), it has been conjectured that this boxlike

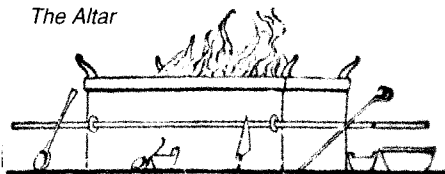
altar is to be filled with earth wherever Israel stopped, and the sacrificial victims are to be placed on top of the earth which filled the bronze-wood frame.

VERSE 1

“And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood” — The word for “altar” is *mizbeach* from a root *zabach*, signifying “to slaughter.” Hence by its very name it suggests death. Paul makes the point that “without the shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22), because blood shed in sacrifice represents a life devoted to Yahweh (Lev. 17:11). There is a need, therefore, to “crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24), and give one’s life in dedication, if we would please God.

In Mosaic sacrifices, the animals were slain, and the blood was smeared upon the horns of the altar, and poured out by its side (Exo. 29:12; Lev. 8:15; 9:9; 16:18), representing that the offerer sacrificed his fleshly desires, and gave his life in dedication to Yahweh. Why should it be neces-

The Altar



sary to represent the flesh as being put to death? Because of its sinful proclivities, called in Romans *sin in the flesh*. The altar, or slaughter place, barred the way to the tabernacle, reminding Israelites that death to fleshly desires and dedication of self is the basis of acceptable worship.

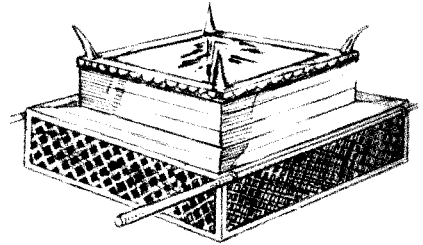
The altar was made of acacia wood, representing human nature: that is, human nature shaped according to divine pattern, and therefore pointing forward to Christ "our altar" (Heb. 13:10). Atonement had to be made for the altar (Exo. 29:36), and accordingly, in the antitype, the Lord, though sinless, also "had somewhat to offer," for he, in common with all humanity, needed redemption from the nature he bore (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14; 8:3; 7:27).

Being "cleansed," however, the altar made "holy" all who had contact with it (Exo. 29:37), and in fulfilment of the type, the Lord "sanctified himself" that his followers might also be sanctified through the Truth (John 17:19). The Lord benefited by his death, and now, in life, offers to share that benefit with others (Phil. 2:8-9; 3:21).

"Five cubits long, and five cubits broad" — The altar was approximately 230cms (7½ ft) square. The number five is the number of grace, so that despite its fearful title of *mizbeach*, the altar was expressive of the grace of Yahweh: it provided a means to salvation. Indeed, grace is emphasised in other ways associated with the altar. There were five utensils used in connection with it: pans, shovels, basons, flesh hooks, and firepans; there were five kinds of animals that could be offered on it: lambs, bullocks, goats, heifers, and turtle doves; there were five forms of offerings in connection with it: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering and the trespass offering.

"The altar shall be foursquare" — Four is the number of Israel, for the nation encamped in four huge sections around the tabernacle. The altar is only accessible to Israelites, though Gentiles may become proselytes, and so partake of Israel's benefits (see Eph. 2:11-13). It shares this

foursquare appearance with the nation itself, the breastplate on the high priest (Exo. 28:15-16), the temple of the age to come (Eze. 42:17-20), and the Holy



Jerusalem (the Lamb's wife) of Rev. 21:16.

"And the height thereof shall be three cubits" — "Three" suggests resurrection, for on the third day the earth first appeared, and life showed itself thereon. The altar, though called a *slaughter place*, was actually connected with resurrection: that to newness of life. *So it taught the principle of life through death*. Baptism is an immersion into death, but at the same time the gateway to life. "I am crucified with Christ," wrote Paul, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Again he reasons in 2Cor. 5:14 that "if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Three cubits is approximately 37cms (4½ ft), so that the altar was not high. Most drawings of the altar depict a sloping ramp moving up to it, but, in fact, no such provision is given. Nor is there any need of such. The altar was low and easily accessible, a reminder to all that though sacrifice might be required, there is easy and ready access to God on the part of those whose minds are in the right frame to approach Him. See our notes on Exo. 20:26.

VERSE 2

"And thou shalt make the horns of

it" — Horns are representative of power and protection. These horns probably were curved so as to point to the four corners of the compass, and in doing so emphasised the universality of approach for those who are prepared to submit to the conditions. The four horns, therefore, would point to the four directions outside the court where the foursquare encampment of Israel was found. The horns so symbolised protection and salvation, that criminals rushed to them to obtain sanctuary in time of need (1 Kings 1:50; 2:28). In sacrifices, blood was placed upon the horns of the altar, indicative of life devoted, displayed for all to see.

"Upon the four corners thereof" — The word for "corners" in this verse is *pinath*, and signifies "angles," and by implication, pinnacles. As the same word is rendered "towers" in Zeph. 1:16; 3:6, here is suggested the elevated nature of the four corners, with the angles of the altar due to its horns.

"His horns shall be of the same" — They were part of the altar, formed out of it, and not mere projectiles fitted into it as additions.

"And thou shalt overlay it with brass" — The material used, most likely copper or bronze, is representative of flesh purified by fire. As such it points forward to the perfection Christ manifested in spite of the nature that he possessed in common with all humanity. A solid plating of bronze would protect the shittim wood from the fire, and prevent it from being burnt. Evidently when the altar was set up, a mound of earth or stone was placed within, upon which the sacrifice could rest. Later, a bronze grill or covering was provided for the top through the peculiar circumstances recorded in Num. 16:37-39.

When the wood was so coated, it was completely fire proof. In recent times it has been "discovered" that if wood is overlaid with copper, and the joints are so hammered as to hermetically seal them, a structure is absolutely safe against fire. According to C. W. Slemming, in *Made According To Pattern*, "the invention was passed on to the London Country Council

Fire Brigade who put it through their tests. It stood all, and was certified 'fireproof.' This was considered a 'modern invention.' This fact not only answers the query as to whether the altar was fire proof, but also reveals the accuracy of the Bible, and demonstrates that in such matters it is ahead of science, not adverse to it." Spiritually, the fire of trial will never harm a person who has been purified with the Truth (1 Pet. 2:12-13; 4:12-13).

VERSE 3

"And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes" — The word for "ashes" (*dashen*) literally is "fat." There would be very little of ashes (as we understand the term) resulting from the burning of the victim, but there would be a great deal of fat. This was not just thrown away. The "ashes" represented all that remained after the animal had been consumed by the fire, and it was taken "without the camp," and deposited "in a clean place." A special ceremony was devised to convey it to the place appointed (see Lev. 6:10-11).

Now consider Christ as a burnt offering. After his death "without the camp" (Heb. 13:13), his remains were taken and placed in "a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid" (John 19:41). John stresses that point because he wants to emphasise that in Christ, the perfect sacrifice, there was a perfect alignment with the requirements of the Law.

"And his shovels" — The word for "shovels" comes from a root signifying *to sweep away*. They were used for collecting the ashes, and depositing them in the pans, as well as for tending or feeding the fire. See the ceremony by which the ashes were removed (Lev. 6:10-11).

"And his basons" — The word *mizraqoth* is derived from a root signifying, to sprinkle, and therefore denotes sacrificial bowls designed to hold blood. The blood was smeared on the horns of the altar, and poured out by its side. It represented life (Lev. 17:11) devoted unto Yahweh, given to Him at the expense of self, so that the offerer became a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), and the slain animal a

representation of the means by which he attained unto that state: death to fleshly desires.

“And his fleshhooks” — These were three-pronged forks (see 1Sam. 2:13), used to arrange the pieces of the sacrifice on the altar.

“And his firepans” — The Hebrew does not refer to “fire” at all, but merely signifies, a receptacle. It is the word elsewhere rendered “censers” (Lev. 10:1; 16:12; Num. 16:6-7). It could here designate the vessels used for carrying burning embers from the altar of burnt offering, to the altar of incense (Lev. 16:12).

“All the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass” — This is quite significant. The vessels of the altar represent those who are associated therewith, and who assist in the form of worship thus indicated. Such, however, must be purged of pollution, “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2Cor. 7:1), so as to become “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use” (2Tim. 2:21). We have seen that bronze or copper represents flesh that has been purged by fire. The fact that the altar has these utensils and vessels associated with it, teaches that believers can actively labour in support of Christ, their altar. Moreover, as censers of brass were taken into the holy place where all was gold, teaches that flesh can acceptably approach God through prayer.

VERSE 4

“And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass” — What was the grating? Many seem to think that it was inside the altar, but the subsequent words show that it was outside of it. The Hebrew is *makber* and, according to Strong, is used in the sense of “covering.” It is from a root signifying to plait together, so that evidently, it was in the form of bronze fretwork, probably designed for protection for the lower portion of the altar.

“And upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings” — This makes it obvious that the grating was on the outside of the altar, for the four rings are attached to it for conveyance from point to point.

“In the four corners thereof” — Here the word for “corners” is *katsoth*, and denotes the “ends” of the grating.

VERSE 5

“And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath” — The R.V. gives “compass” as “ledge.” The Hebrew *karkob* denotes a rim which could be extended into a ledge. It was probably used to there place the vessels of the altar.

“That the net may be even to the midst of the altar” — The word for “midst” can also signify “half.” Therefore, if the ledge were at the top of the altar, the bronze network covered the top half; if it were in the middle, it covered the bottom half. This latter seems to be the most appropriate placing, though the actual position is not revealed.

VERSE 6

“And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass” — Compare with ch. 25:13.

VERSE 7

“And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it” — The word is *tseloth*. See ch. 25:14. The staves were used for the conveyance of the altar from place to place.

VERSE 8

“Hollow with boards shalt thou make it” — The altar, therefore, was a box-like structure, hollow inside like a case. In conformity with the law of Exo. 20:24-26; Deu. 27:5, the inside of the altar would have been filled with earth or stones whenever the tabernacle was set up.

“As it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it” — See note Exo. 25:9. Moses evidently saw in vision a replica of the tabernacle. The Hebrew is as the margin: “*He [that is, the angel of Yahweh] showed thee...*”

The Court Of The Tabernacle

— vv. 9-19.

A wall of white linen separates the

Sanctuary (or tent of Yahweh) from the tents of the Israelites, thus teaching that "the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). The court is primarily a BARRIER, preventing unlawful approach, and so protects the worship of Yahweh against defilement. It represents A CLEAR LINE OF DEMARCATION, emphasising the separateness which is an essential feature of acceptable worship. It makes clear THE WAY OF APPROACH, teaching Israelites to realise that Yahweh dictates the terms of worship.

The wall of white linen, contrasting with the black tents of the Israelites, symbolised righteousness in action to which they were called. The court is one hundred cubits long (approximately 30mts; 150 feet) by fifty cubits (approximately 23mts; 75 feet) broad.

VERSE 9

"And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle" — The court was an enclosure that separated the tabernacle from the people.

"From the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side" — For the significance of the direction given, see note at Exo. 26:18. "South" is *negeb*, a word that represents the drought-prone desert area, whereas "southward" is *teman*, denoting the "right hand," derived from a root *yaman* that signifies, the right hand.

The "fine twined linen" speaks of righteousness manifested in action (see Rev. 19:8).

The term "hangings" is from the Hebrew *kelaim*, used to define a "sling" (Jud. 20:16), and so to "cast" a people out of a country (Jer. 10:18). It is used to engrave, to sculpture, to carve in, or to make indentations like slings (1Kings 6:29, 32, 35). In Arabic it is used of the sail of a ship; in 1Kings 6:34 for the leaves of a door. The Septuagint has translated the word by the Greek *istia*, sails, and therefore the Jews thought that a loosely woven sail-cloth is intended, such as would enable the common Israelite to gaze at what was going on inside. But there is

no certainty of this, and the term itself could relate to a form of hangings that would allow the wind to move in and out, thus performing the action of a sling. A loosely woven fabric, permitting the curious to gaze into the court, does not seem appropriate to the purpose of the hangings at all. If an Israelite wanted to watch the service being conducted, he could do so from the appointed entrance. From there he would observe the altar of burnt offering as the barrier to the holy place, and be made conscious of his need to sacrifice, if he would acceptably approach Yahweh.

VERSE 10

"And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars" — There were sixty pillars in all, answering to the sixty companions surrounding the Bridegroom in Song 3:7, thereby representing the company of the faithful who surround the present of God, and prevent those unworthy of entering into the holy presence. These pillars stood in sockets of brass (flesh purified), and were topped with the silver of redemption.

"And their fillets" — The Hebrew is *kashukim*, from a root, signifying "to cling, to join, and, figuratively, to love, or delight in" (Strong). The fillets were evidently connecting rods that extended from pillar to pillar, and so united the whole structure. What an expressive word to use to describe this strengthening feature of the wall of white linen! It not only sets forth the principle of righteousness in action, but the need for those manifesting such a quality to be united together in love.

"Shall be of silver" — Nothing is mentioned here of chapters, but they are included in the description of Exo. 38:17. The pillars were topped with chapters of silver, and joined as one with connecting rods of silver. Silver is the metal of redemption, and hence, in the pillars a wonderful exhortation was presented. The wood represents human nature, specially selected and fashioned according to the divine requirements. The pillars stood in

sockets of brass, which speaks of flesh purified; they were united by fillets of silver, suggesting a unity based on a life begotten by the redemption set forth in the Word; and their chapters (or heads) held aloft the principle of redemption.

All this formed part of the frame-work of righteous actions exhibited by the linen. The silver rods, or fillets, bound the wall of linen together as one, and Paul wrote: "above all these things [*works of righteousness*] put on love, which is the *bond of perfectness*" (Col. 3:14). The silver chapters, holding aloft the linen wall of righteousness, suggest Christ's words: "look up, and lift up your heads [*chapters*], for your redemption [*silver*] draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

VERSE 11

"And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver" — For the significance of the word "north," see note, Exo. 26:20. The north side of the court exactly matched the south side.

VERSE 12

"And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten and their sockets ten" — For "west" see note, Exo. 26:22. The west side was similar to the south and north sides, except that it was to be half the length, and therefore required only half the number of pillars and sockets. Notice how the multiples of five occur, emphasising the principle of grace to Israelite and Gentile in the way appointed.

VERSE 13

"And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits" — The east is always the forepart of any direction, in Scripture. The term "east side eastward" is *kedmah mizrakh*, and literally denotes the "forefront towards the sun's rising." *Mizrakh* is from the root *zarach*,

to shoot forth beams, suggesting the beams of light that stream forth from the rising sun.

A corresponding Greek term is rendered "east" in Rev. 16:12, and is rendered by Bro. Thomas as "kings who are out of a *sun's rising*." In both places the use of the term is significant. In the Apocalypse it relates to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Sun of righteousness with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:2). The tabernacle which always faced east was a constant reminder of that hope (Mal. 4:1-2).

However, the priest, in commencing the national worship at the beginning of the day, turned his back upon the sun, and after washing at the laver and offering the morning sacrifice at the altar, entered the holy place, walking now in the light of the seven-branched lampstand. This impressed upon the thoughtful Israelite, that whilst the tabernacle faced the rising sun, and thus pointed to the coming of the Sun of righteousness, and the beginning of the seventh millennial day of glory, he was not to walk in the illumination of natural light, but in that which emanates from the Word. Hence his back also was turned on the natural light of the sun as he looked at the tabernacle, for the so-called "light within" a man is but darkness; and so, entering the darkness of the holy place, he walked in the light of the golden lampstand, a representation of the Word of life.

VERSE 14

"The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits" — In this specification, the word "side" is *katheph*, and signifies "shoulder." It is from a root signifying "to clothe," because the garments of a person hang from the shoulders. Hence, as an Israelite approached the forefront of the tabernacle, the very description of the hangings of righteousness as viewed from that side emphasised the need of the "garments of salvation" and "the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10; Gal. 3:26-28). The hangings were fifteen cubits, a multiple of five and three, the numbers for grace and resurrectional completeness.

“Their pillars three, and their sockets three” — Three is the number of completion, of fulfilment, and of resurrection. See notes above.

VERSE 15

“And on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three” — The pillars were three, not counting the corner pillars of the southern and northern sides of the tabernacle. This made four on either side.

VERSE 16

“And for the gate of the court” — In Exo. 35:17 the “gate” is called *the door*, representing the Lord Jesus who declared: “I am the door” (Jn. 10:7).

“Shall be an hanging of twenty cubits” — The number “twenty” can be divided into two tens (the number of completeness) as representing Israelite and Gentile who accept the terms of entrance; or four fives as speaking of divine grace shown towards the true Israel of God.

The entrance to the court was 10 metres (30ft) wide; thus wide enough to receive “whosoever will” enter, but, at the same time, limited in size so as to accommodate only those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Isa. 55:1).

The size of the gate is the same size as the door of the tabernacle, and the veil of the most holy. This would teach Israelites that, whilst they were not permitted to enter the holy place or the most holy, the size of their entrances would permit it to be done, suggesting that ultimately the way would be opened to them to enter into glory. This was the promise of the tabernacle.

“Of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen” — The colours represent the principle of God manifest in the flesh, seen to perfection in the Lord Jesus.

“Wrought with needlework” — Rendered literally, this signifies *the work of the embroiderer*. The hanging was embroidered in a pattern not specified, but which was minutely variegated, beauti-

fully blending the various colours mentioned. Such work requires patience and skill, and was performed by those whom Yahweh “filled with the spirit of God” in wisdom and understanding (Exo. 35:31, 35). It therefore was a work of God, and the embroiderers were “labourers together with God” (1Cor. 3:9). The hanging of the gate, like that of the door of the tabernacle, and the veil of the most holy represented the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone entrance is gained to the court of the tabernacle, and the other sections of the sanctuary (Acts 4:12).

In Psalm 139:13-18, prophetic reference is made to the conception and the birth of the Lord in such a way as to illustrate the symbolism before us. From his Father, Christ inherited the potential to manifest the wisdom, and the perfect obedience unique to him, and which he revealed because he completely subjected his will to that of the Father. In the Psalm he is represented as saying:

I will praise Thee;

For I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

Marvellous are Thy works;

And that my soul knoweth right well.

My substance was not hid from Thee,

When I was made in secret,

And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect;

And in Thy book all my members were written,

Which in continuance were fashioned,

When as yet there was none of them.

The verb “curiously wrought” signifies to variegate colour, to embroider. The only other occurrence of this form of the word is in ch. 35:35, where it relates to the skilful embroidering of the blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen which formed the gate of the court, the door of the tabernacle, and the veil of the most holy — clearly identified by Paul with the flesh of the Lord (Heb. 10:20; 6:19; 9:3). In other words, the Lord was strengthened to overcome (Psa. 80:17), and this process began, as the Psalm and the words of the apostle

(John 1:14) clearly show, at the begetting of the Son — being completed at his resurrection. Then the full beauty of the skilful work of the Embroiderer was manifest for all to see (Rom. 1:3; 1Tim. 3:16). Thus the work of God in Christ, as designed from the beginning, was brought to a wonderful completion (1Tim. 1:15; 2Cor. 5:19). In *The Christadelphian*, 1953 (p. 234), Bro. J. Carter commented:

“The Spirit in the Psalmist invites us to consider with wonder and with awe the most remarkable event in human history, when God’s redeeming power, brooding as did His creative power at man’s beginning, thus moved to bring into being a new man, not son of earth as Adam, but son of Mary, and thus Son of man and Son of God. God’s power moved; His watchful eye never slept, as in secret the interweaving embroidery which belonged to a divine manifestation went on, producing in the finish a man who bore the divine likeness, for the strands skilfully blended formed a cherubic figure.”

The hanging of blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen foreshadowed the beautiful character of the Lord wrought by Yahweh in the Son. He became the example, and representative of all who would approach God in truth and righteousness; and so proclaimed of himself: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

“**And their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four**” — “Four” is the number of Israel, and only Israelites (both natural born and proselyte) could enter the court. As the hanging represented the Lord as the basis of redemption, appropriately there is a fourfold development for all who enter thereat. Paul taught: “of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*” (1Cor. 1:30). Christ is displayed to all who would worship in Truth, on those four pillars of salvation.

The four pillars of the gate, plus the three pillars on each side of the eastern hangings, completed the ten pillars of the entrance to match the ten pillars of the western side. This, with the twenty pillars

on each side of the northern and southern sides of the court, brought the total number of pillars to sixty. Sixty is a multiple of six and ten, representing the flesh, and completeness, and as those sixty pillars displayed the white linen wall of righteousness, the court of the tabernacle represented the multitude of the redeemed taken out of the nations. These sixty pillars, with their silver heads held high, to witness to their status as such, that separated the tabernacle from the world, answer to the sixty warriors who surround the antitypical Solomon, as symbolised in the Song of Solomon (ch. 3:7).

From Exo. 38:18 we learn that the height of this wall of linen was five cubits, or about 230cms (7½ feet). The significant fact is added, that it was constructed in squares, each piece being 5 x 5 cubits. Hence, as an Israelite came to the front of the court, he would view the “gate” as a beautifully woven entrance of four significant colours worked into a pattern on four large squares of five cubits each. How significant! Five is the number of grace, and the square is the shape of the true Israel of God, and in this design both are united.

VERSE 17

“**And the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver**” — The whole structure, though made up of many parts, will be completely united in love.

“**Their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass**” — That which displayed the curtain of righteousness was the work of redemption; and that which sustained and ruled it were the sockets of brass representing flesh purified by fire.

VERSE 18

“**The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where**” — See notes, vv. 9, 12.

“**And the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass**” — This statement outlines the height of the linen wall, and later we learn of the curious mode of construction. It was formed into a series of foursquare patterns, like the foursquare breastplate on the robe

of the high priest, the foursquare altar in the court, the foursquare encampment of the tribes, and, prophetically, the four-square appearance of the New Jerusalem, the Lamb's Bride (Rev. 21:16).

VERSE 19

"All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof" — The Septuagint omits the reference to the tabernacle, and limits the statement to "the instruments and pins of the court." This is doubtless correct, because the vessels in the tabernacle proper were of gold. Of course, those vessels in the court were used in conjunction with the tabernacle service, and therefore can be referred to as belonging to the tabernacle as in the A.V., but obviously, they were those used in the court. There were many such that have not been mentioned, including the laver (ch. 30:18) with basins in which to wash, which must have been associated with it. All, however, were of brass, or bronze, and contrasted with those of gold in the tabernacle itself. Though bronze was a common metal of the times, it was very suitable for the purpose in view. It is extremely hard, and yet, at the same time, exceedingly ductile, and ready to form all shapes. Though "common" it was not "unclean," for it had gone through the fire (see Num. 31:23).

The various vessels in use typified the different activities in which believers can engage in the service of God. Paul speaks of vessels of wrath, and vessels of mercy (Rom. 9:22-23), and declares that though we have "this treasure in earthen vessels" (2Cor. 4:7), we can be transformed to a better status. To Timothy he wrote that as there were "vessels of gold and silver" as well as those of "wood and of earth" in the temple, if a man purge himself of that which is dishonourable, "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2Tim. 2:21). By this means we can make ourselves worthy aids in the divine service. Though we may be only common "vessels of bronze," yet shaped as the Master would have us be, we can

and will engage upon honourable service both now and in the age to come.

"And all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass" — The word "pin" is elsewhere translated "nail" (Jud. 4:21-22; 5:26) and defined as a tent pin or metal stake (see also Isa. 33:20). Associated with these pins, there were cords. They are not mentioned here, but they are elsewhere (Exo. 35:18; 39:40; Num. 3:26,37; 4:26, 32). There were pins, first for the tabernacle itself (Exo. 27:19; 35:18; 38:20, 31); secondly, for the court (Exo. 27:19; 35:18; 38:20; 38:31); thirdly, for the court gate (Exo. 39:40). Apparently the pins for the court, and for the court gate were especially connected with the pillars, from which the hangings forming the court and the gate were suspended. By means of these pins of bronze, the tabernacle and the court wall were securely fastened to the desert ground, so that no storm, or flood of waters could sweep away the structure. Storm and stress were part of the life of the Lord, as it is of those who "fellowship his sufferings" (see Psa. 55:4-6, 8). At the moment of greatest trial, he was able to say: "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." He was firmly fixed in his resolve to carry out the divine will by the pins and cords of trust and faith.

The same word rendered "pin" is translated "nail," and applied to Christ in Isaiah 22:20-25; Zech. 10:4. In the former place, it is described as a peg upon which was displayed items of glory, and this certainly applies to the Lord. Note that the peg is represented as supporting "the offspring and the issue," as well as "all vessels of small quantity." The prophet, moreover declares: "I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place," and the word "sure" is from the same root as *amen*, one of the titles of Christ emphasising the certainty of God's purpose to be fulfilled in him (Rev. 3:14; 2Cor. 1:20).

Oil For the Light — vv. 20-21.

The supply of high-quality oil for the seven-branched lampstand was the responsibility of all Israel: providing

scope for any Israelite to contribute to the essential service of the Holy Place.

VERSE 20

“And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light” — The highest quality olive oil was required for the lamps. It was obtained by gently pounding immature olives in a mortar and then straining the oil, purifying it from any admixture of watery juice normal to olive oil; whilst other inferior oil was obtained by roughly crushing the berries in a mill. The “beaten oil” is clear and gives a bright pure light with little smoke. In biblical symbology it represents the light of Truth (Psa. 119:105; Zech. 4:1, 12, 14; Mat. 25:4). “light” is *ma’owr*, luminary or lightbearer; i.e., the lamps. The same word is used for the sun and the moon in Gen. 1:16. It is derived from *owr*, to make luminous. In the tabernacle, the light of the natural sun was exchanged for that of the lampstand. In its light the priests walked in the Holy Place.

“To cause the lamp to burn always”

— The word “burn” is *aloth*, and signifies “to ascend up,” as rendered in the margin. “Always” is from the Heb. *tamyid*, and signifies “continually,” as in the R.V. From this it would appear that the lamps in the Holy Place never went out entirely, but were regularly tended morning and evening so that they might burn brightly.

VERSE 21

“In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil” — The Hebrew has the “tent (*ohel*) of meeting (*mowade*).” *Mowade* signifies “a set time.” As such it relates to the “set time” at which the people were expected to gather at the tabernacle for specific purposes. The R.V. has “*tabernacle of meeting*,” because it was the place where Yahweh would meet with His people (Exo. 25:22), which He did at set times.

“Which is before the testimony” —

See note, v. 16.

“Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before Yah-

weh” — This statement anticipates the appointment of Aaron as the high priest in Israel, and of his sons as his attendant priests, and the consecration of whom is described in the following chapter. The ministry of the priests as far as the olive oil was concerned (for which see note on v. 20) was to “order” it each evening. The word is *arak*, and signifies “to arrange in order, to set in a row” as in Exo. 40:4. The context suggests that it was the oil so “ordered,” the bowls of the lampstand being replenished with oil every evening one after the other, or “in order,” so that there would be no danger of the light going out when all slept. So the light of Truth has been maintained throughout the ages through the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and others.

In the morning, the priests “dressed” the lamps in order (Exo. 30:7; Lev. 24:1-4), so that the light was always burning, as Josephus testifies. The light was caused to shine “before Yahweh.” The priests were called upon to be always conscious of His presence, and to recognise the solemn responsibility resting upon them to tend to the lamps, and so cause the light to shine “continually.”

Believers are in the position of prospective priests today (1Pet. 2:9), and their labours within the ecclesias, in keeping the light of truth burning brightly, must be performed “as before Yahweh.”

“It shall be a statute for ever unto their generations” — A statute is an appointment; in this case something fixed for worshippers to do. The work of the priests by divine appointment, therefore, was to tend the lamps. It typed their work of preaching and teaching (see 2Chr. 15:3; Mal. 2:7, and hence Dan. 12:3). They were as lightbearers within the community of Israel, shedding abroad the illumination of truth. Believers should “shine as lights” in the Gentile “night” (John 9:4-5) of “darkness” (Isa. 60:1-2) in which they dwell.

“On the behalf of the children of Israel” — The action of the priests in attending to the lamps was done “on the behalf” of all the people. The people had contributed the oil, but priestly mediation

was required on their behalf to feed it to the lamps, and so cause them to shine with light in the presence of Yahweh.

Co-operation between teachers and students was necessary to that end. Note

the co-operation implied in the statute regarding the light. The people *prepared* the means; the priests *perpetuated* it; and the result was illumination of the Holy Place.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THE PRIESTS AND THEIR GARMENTS

Aaron and his sons are selected to serve as priests. Until this time Moses has been the only mediator, but now Aaron's family, rather than that of Moses, is chosen to minister before God for Israel. This had been previously implied from the instructions regarding the tending of the lamps. Now Aaron and his sons are to be set apart from the rest of Israel, being consecrated as priests. To that end, special holy garments for "glory and for beauty" are designed for their exclusive use. They are intended as an outward display of inward holiness and beauty of character which they represented. The appointment of priests through whom alone the people can approach Yahweh serves to again illustrate the exclusiveness of worship. Brother Roberts observes in "The Law of Moses" (p. 154): "That God should dwell with men at all was esteemed by Solomon a great condescension on the part of a Being to whom it is humbling Himself 'to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth' (Psa. 113:6)... Hence, familiar and indiscriminate approach was not invited: 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me.' He would be approached in a consecrated and concealed recess, and that only once a year, and that only by blood shed, and that only presented by a man of His own choice, assisted by men of His own appointment, and attired in a way prescribed by Himself." Hence the appointment of a priesthood, and the provision of special garments setting them aside from all others.

Garments For Glory and Beauty — vv. 1-5.

Moses is ordered to separate Aaron and his successors unto the priesthood by

a perpetual ordinance. Holy garments for glory and for beauty are to be made for them by workmen specially endowed with the skill to do so. Those garments would

be a constant lesson to the people, directing them to the manifestation of the divine character, the holiness required for approach before the Deity, and the standards of appearance to be encouraged in the people. The nation was to observe in the priests, an example of their individual elevation in the presence of the Father.

VERSE 1

“And take unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel” — To this moment, Moses had been the sole mediator between Yahweh and the people (Gal. 3:10), but now he is instructed that a portion of his functions will be delegated to others. Aaron and his sons are to be selected from out of Israel for special appointments as priests. Later, further instructions were given in regard to such. They were to be without blemish, and any disfigurement was to be a disqualification, though not for the eating of sacrifices (Lev. 21:17-23); they were to have no land inheritance, for Yahweh was to be their inheritance (Num. 18:12-20; 1Chr. 23:13); they were to be custodians of the Law, teaching its precepts to the people (Mal. 2:7); they were to be taken out from among the Israelites as an exclusive class: an ecclesia from the larger national-ecclesia, whilst any unauthorised person obtruding upon the sacred office was to be put to death (Num. 18:7).

“That he may minister unto Me in the priest’s office” — Only the father was to be high priest; whereas the sons were his assistants. Nevertheless the singular pronoun is used in regard to the whole body of the priesthood, for though subsequently there came many priests, they were required to act in unity on behalf of the family. In like manner, Christ’s brethren are many, but constitute “one” in him.

“Even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons” — Their names are significant and denote their high office. Aaron means *Very High*, Nadab, *Willing*; Abihu, *He is my Father*; Eleazar, *El is a Helper*; Ithamar, *Land of the Palm*.

The meanings of these names can be paraphrased as follows: *He who has been elevated will render willing service to He who is his Father; and because El is his helper, he will grow up as the Palm: producing fruit and providing shade in the desert* (cp. *Psa. 92:12*). The names of Aaron’s sons are always coupled together in pairs in the *Pentateuch*. Unfortunately the sin of the first two brought about their early death, and Eleazar subsequently became high priest.

VERSE 2

“And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother” — Nakedness is a symbol of sin (Rev. 16:15). Special “holy garments” were designed, distinguishing the high priest from all other men in Israel. Their “holiness” consisted in them being set apart for God’s exclusive use.

“For glory and for beauty” — The garments of the high priest were designed to illustrate the character he was called upon to manifest. Antitypical priests (1Pet. 2:9) are likewise to strive for characters that reflect glory and beauty (Gal. 5:22), whilst they “keep their garments unspotted from the world” (*Isa. 61:10*; *Rev. 3:18*).

Bro. Roberts comments: “What do we see in this but the fact that glory and beauty are the attributes of divine wisdom, whether we regard it intrinsically or in its living expression in all experience.” The “garments” of the Bride of *Psalm 45:13-14* are so represented, as, among other things, she is described as being “all glorious within.” The gospel is a call to “glory, honour and immortality (*Rom. 2:7*); and develops in believers the qualities illustrated in the garments of the high priest. See also *Psalm 29:2*.

The *glory* attributed to the garments exalted the priestly office in the eyes of the people, causing them to look with greater reverence on the priests themselves and their important functions, setting them and their work above the rest of the people and their activities. The *beauty* of the garments was revealed in their colorful richness, and appealing design. But their real

significance is manifested in the characters of the ones wearing them. So with believers. Their labours in the Truth are higher and more onerous than those of worldly duties; their characters should conform to the nature of their call.

VERSE 3

“And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted” — The Hebrew *chakam leb* signifies “intelligent, skilful, wise in mind, word and act.” The word for “wisdom” (*chokma*) is from the same root. Moses was to confer with such, instructing them as to what they should make.

“Whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom” — Moses was not to select workers merely because of their practical skill, but those who were prepared to allow their natural ability to be governed and directed by divine principles and influence. Such persons would recognise that their inherent gifts were to be used in the service of God in the way set out in IPet. 4:10-11.

“That they may make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him” — The word “consecrate” (Heb. *kadash*) denotes one set apart from all others for divine use. As the high priest represented Yahweh to the people and the people to Yahweh, he personified the setting apart of both for the purpose of the other. The sanctification, or setting apart, of the priest for God, illustrated that the people should likewise consider themselves as set apart for divine use, for he was their representative. But as he also represented Yahweh to them, it was necessary that they render to him the honour due to his great and holy calling. The Lord Jesus Christ, our high priest, declared concerning those whom he called to be his assistant priests (Rev. 5:9-10): “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19).

“That he may minister unto Me in the priest’s office” — Aaron was set apart that he might officiate as mediator on behalf of the people. The Hebrew word is *kohen*, and denotes to mediate or officiate. He represents the fulness of the

mediatorial work found in the Lord Jesus Christ (1Jn. 2:1).

VERSE 4

“And these are the garments which they shall make” — For the order in which the garments were placed on the priest, see Lev. 8:7-9.

“A breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle” — These six items of clothing were capped by the golden band upon the forehead of the high priest described in v. 36, making seven items in all. The numbers six and seven are significant. Six represents the flesh, which is to be covered by the garments of Yahweh determination; whilst seven is the number of the covenant, the binding contract between Yahweh and His people upon the basis of God manifestation.

“And they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons” — The garments of the sons of Aaron differed from those of their father; inasmuch as the glory of Christ supersedes that of his sons (Heb. 2:13).

“That he may minister unto Me in the priest’s office” — Notice the singular pronoun *he* used collectively for Aaron and his sons. Both father and sons were expected to work as a team, a unit, with the sons in complete subordination to the father. The garments symbolised the various powers, responsibilities and qualities attached to the important offices granted them. The antitype is in the co-operation which should be found in ecclesias, and the subordination of each member to the authority of Christ.

VERSE 5

“And thou shalt take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen” — The two materials here specified are gold and fine twined linen. The others are colours that were emblazoned upon the linen, and everywhere interlaced by the gold. For that purpose, the gold was beaten thin and cut into thread (see Exo. 39:3). In the garments designed, the strength and glory of the gold (a tried faith), was inti-

mately blended with every part of the ephod, and gave firmness as well as brilliance, to the whole fabric. Gold formed part of the Bride's garments as described in Psa. 45:13.

The significance of the colours is important, for blue represents God manifestation; purple portrays royalty; and scarlet speaks of sin. All those elements are revealed in the parable of the priesthood, for by this means is sin overcome, and God's authority upheld, to His honour and glory.

The Ephod — vv. 6-14.

The word "ephod" is the original Hebrew transliterated, and not translated into the English. Gesenius derives it from the root aphad, "to gird," so that the word actually defines any "vestment" or "garment." The ephod was a sort of waistcoat, consisting of two pieces, one to cover the chest and the other the back, joined together above the shoulders, set with precious stones, and united at the waist by a band, called "the curious girdle of the ephod." This band was of one piece with the ephod, being woven on to it, passed around the body, and so fastened. The ephod was worn over the tunic and robe (v. 31).

VERSE 6

"And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen" — The materials of the ephod were similar to those used for the hangings at the entrance to the court, the door of the tabernacle, and the veil between the Holy and Most Holy. The typical significance of the materials and colours used, illustrated the "glory and beauty" of Christ's character. Their presence as part of the ephod, borne by the high priest, "prefigured the perfect qualification of Christ for the priesthood, as it prefigured his perfect qualification in the several aspects typified by the gate, and the door, and the veil" (*The Law Of Moses*, p. 162). Again: "The constitution of the ephod (gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, on a ground-work of white), is a typifi-

cation of the method of the development of Christ as the great high priest, and of the principles that have become incorporate in him as the result of that method" (*ibid.* pp. 162-163). The placing of gold at the head of the list of materials used, emphasised that faith was a predominant characteristic of Christ. Then followed in order the blue, purple, and scarlet, the signification of which has been noted previously. And all this was inwrought into a colourful pattern on a background of white linen, emphasising righteousness in action.

The garment, therefore, denoted the development of faith unto works such as commended by James (ch. 2:14-18), and was exemplified to perfection by the Lord Jesus Christ.

"With cunning work" — This is rendered in the R.V. as "the work of a skilled workman." The Hebrew verb signifies to plait or weave, suggesting that the gold, blue, purple and scarlet thread were woven into the fine twined linen fabric. Thus the intricate pattern thus so patiently and skilfully wrought, symbolised the variegated aspects of Christ's perfect character.

VERSE 7

"It shall have the two shoulderpieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together" — The word for "shoulderpieces" is the same as that used for "side" in ch. 27:14-15, except that it is in the feminine plural as *kaphethoth*. The ephod, therefore, was in two parts, joined together at the shoulders. The word "joined," signifies to be united together, as in fellowship (cp. Psa. 94:20; 2Chr. 20:36-37; Hos. 4:17). The two pieces of the ephod, therefore, prefigure Christ in two aspects: individual and communal. The front with its breastplate representing the Lord himself as high priest; and the back, the ecclesia as a priestly community. The apostle refers to the latter as "that which is behind" (cp. Col. 1:24), which is as yet lacking the full manifestation of glory.

VERSE 8

"And the curious girdle of the

ephod — There is no word in the Hebrew for “curious” and yet the use of the adjective is very appropriate at this place, for it is difficult to ascertain both the pattern and the purpose of the girdle. This article of dress is distinct from the “girdle” mentioned in v. 4, which is a different word in Hebrew (*ephod*), and is connected both there, and in v. 39, with the mitre. The word used here is *chesheb*, and signifies a belt or strap. It is derived from *chashab* which denotes “to plait,” “interlace,” and suggests a band plaited of the same materials as the ephod.

The word “ephod” in this verse is different from that in the previous verses, though related to it. Here is *ephuddath*, in the feminine gender, suggesting the fastening on of the ephod. The phrase has been literally rendered: “*the band of its fastening.*” But what did it fasten? It probably drew the lower portion of the back of the ephod to that of the front so as to draw both tightly to the priest. Therefore, as the seam, or clasp, upon the shoulders joined the top, front and back of the ephod in fellowship, the “curious girdle” at the lower part of it completed the process by fastening the front and back to the high priest. In Exodus 29:5 where we read, “gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod,” the Hebrew has: “*ephodise him with the band of the ephod.*” This completely identified the high priest with the two parts of the ephod by uniting them to him, and him to them as one.

Based upon the suggestion that the two portions of ephod represent the Lord Jesus and his priestly community, his Bride, the belt or sash of the ephod completes their attire. In the case of the high priest, it prepared him for the work of ministry. A girdle is used to strengthen the loins, and thus equips a man for work or action (Exo. 12:11; John 13:4; Eph. 6:11-14). When the Lord Jesus is united to his Bride, they will be revealed as a completed priestly community, and he shall be ready for “the work before him” (Isa. 40:10). He shall be *ephodised*: the perfection of his character will be revealed for all to see in both him and in the commu-

nity that he will have drawn to himself as one.

“Which is upon it” — The girdle or sash was joined with the ephod. It probably went around the body, and united the back portion to that of the front.

“Shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen” — The workmanship and design was to be one with the ephod itself. Paul refers to divine love as being the “bond of perfectness” (Col. 3:14), holding all the virtues together as one.

The Two Onyx Stones — vv. 9-12.

The two parts of the ephod were joined together on top of the shoulders, and above them, set in gold, were placed two large onyx stones, upon which were indelibly engraved the names of the children of Israel. They acted as a memorial, testifying to the indubitable future of Israel according to the purpose of Yahweh. The high priest carried the names of the tribes of Israel upon his shoulders as a burden to be borne.

VERSE 9

“And thou shalt take two onyx stones” — Opinions differ as to what stone is represented by the onyx. The Hebrew word is *shoham*, and according to some, is derived from a root signifying “to shine with the lustre of fire.” Josephus states that the second stone in the fourth



The Shoulder Stones

row in the breastplate was an onyx, whilst those on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod were sardonyxes (*Ant.*, 3.7.5). Being very familiar with the dress of the high priest, his evidence must be conclusive. Moreover, the reference to the precious stones

in Exo. 25:7 agrees with this, for it implies a difference between the onyx in the breastplate, and those on the ephod, in that both are individually specified. The word *onyx* signifies "finger nail." It is a gem that displays layers of different colours which alternate with each other, and bear some resemblance to the white and flesh coloured bands of the finger nail. The sardonyx, however, is more sharply defined, with bands of dark red and white, and thus is appropriate to the position in which the two gems are placed on the shoulders of the high priest. The red and white streaks of the gems, and the flash of light they would give forth as the sun struck upon them, were appropriate to their identification with the tribes of Israel, for their colours would suggest the purpose of their call: the *red*, sacrifice; the *white*, righteousness; and the sparkling reflection of the *sun*, God manifestation.

"And grave on them the names of the children of Israel" — Illustrating the mediatorial burden borne by the high priest on behalf of the children of Israel.

VERSE 10

"Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone" — Six is the number of flesh, but when joined together, becomes the number of perfect government (12).

"According to their birth" — Again the flesh is emphasised. The names inscribed were according to the order of birth and differed to the order of inscriptions in the breastplate which was according to the positioning of the tribes, therefore revealing a divine arrangement.

The names on the shoulder-stones, therefore, were as follows: The first stone listed Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali; whilst the second stone continued with Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin. According to the following paraphrase, the message of the names teach: *See a Son! Hear him, join him, praise him, and at the judgment after wrestling you will prevail.* The second stone bore the message: *A company of blessed ones shall receive their reward by*

dwelling with, and increasing, the family and influence of the Son of His right hand. It is significant, that the names of both the first and last sons of Jacob should speak of the Son!

VERSE 11

"With the work of an engraver in stone" — The stones were to be permanently engraved, illustrating that the future of Israel as a nation is essential to the purpose of Yahweh. He will never forget them (see Isa. 49:15; Jer. 31:3).

"Like the engraving of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel" — The Hebrew *chotham*, "signet," is from a root signifying "to close up," hence to complete, or to shut up. The same word is rendered "seal" in other places, and in Song 8:6 denotes everlasting love (for which see Jer. 31:3). The purpose of Yahweh is sealed up in Israel, as denoted by the signet-engraved gems on the shoulders of the high priest. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the ideal Israelite (Isa. 49:3) was sealed by God, and revealed the engravings thereof in the character he manifested, as well as in the doctrine he proclaimed (John 6:27). That "sealing" illustrated that he was the chosen of Yahweh (Hag. 2:23), as the engraving of the names of the tribes on the onyx stones testified that Israel was the chosen nation. The Lord Jesus, as high priest, has the names of the true "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) engraven upon him (Zech. 3:9), so that they constitute the sealed of God (2Tim. 2:19), "sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 1:13; 4:30), though they may not be recognised among men as such.

"Thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold" — The "ouches" or settings of gold speak of characters established in faith. This is suggested by the Hebrew word for "ouches" which is *mish-betsoth*, a plural word in the feminine gender, referring to Israel as the Bride (Isa. 54:5). The word is derived from *shabats*, "to interweave." Hence the ouches were plaited settings of open or filigree work of gold, beautifully woven into a pattern,

indicative of a character of faith wrought by Yahweh.

VERSE 12

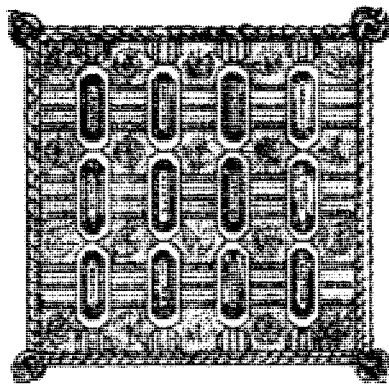
“And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod” — The R.V. renders *kethaiphoth* as “shoulder-pieces,” implying that the two sections of the ephod were joined together upon the shoulders.

“For stones of memorial unto the children of Israel” — This is better rendered “for the children of Israel.” They were stones of memorial in that they were borne by the high priest upon his shoulders into the presence of Yahweh in the Most Holy. Thus Aaron became a type of Christ as the burden bearer of Israel, for he had to bear “the iniquity of the holy things” (Exo. 28:38), typifying the Lord upon whom was laid “the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). As Aaron interceded on their behalf in relation to the weaknesses of the flesh, the names were engraved according to the order of birth.

“And Aaron shall bear their names before Yahweh upon his two shoulders for a memorial” — Aaron became the burden bearer for Israel typifying the Lord as mediator of his people.

Two Settings of Gold — vv. 13-14.

Two chains of gold were fastened to



Traditional setting: the breastplate showing the different precious stones.

the ouches of gold, in order to connect the breastplate to the ephod.

VERSE 13

“And thou shalt make ouches of gold” — Settings of brocaded work in gold seem to be intended.

VERSE 14

“And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them” — The Hebrew word *migbaloth* rendered “at the ends,” is given by Gesenius as meaning “of wreathen work;” whereas the statement “of wreathen work” in the A.V. is from the Hebrew *aboth*, and can be rendered “a work of cords or ropes.”

The description, therefore, should read: “Two chains of pure gold, of wreathen work, like unto ropes shalt thou make them.” Gold intertwined to make a chain or rope is indicative of faith strengthened by unity and co-operation, for which the true Israel of God should be noted. The very meaning of *aboth* has the sense of strength through interlacing.

“And fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches” — The breastplate was secured to the ephod by the wreathen chains.

The Breastplate — vv. 15-21.

The breastplate of judgment was among the most mysterious and significant objects of divine worship. It was made of the same material as the ephod, but doubled over so as to form a bag. Two rings of gold were placed inwards at the bottom ends and two rings were attached opposite to the ephod just above the “curious belt,” and these were bound one to the other by a lace of blue. The wreathen chains, or ropes of gold, of the previous verses connected the breastplate to the ouches at the top of the breastplate. Thus the ephod, the onyx stones, and the breastplate were all linked together, comprising the prophetic dress of the high priest. See 1Sam. 14:3, 18; 23:6; 30:7-8; 2Sam. 2:1.

VERSE 15

“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work”

— The Septuagint translates “breastplate of judgment” by the Greek word *logeion*, “oracle,” a word appropriately related to *Logos* (John 1), from whence the voice of Yahweh was heard. The Hebrew *choshen* translated “breastplate,” is said by Gesenius to signify *adornment*. Certainly the breastplate, with its twelve gems, must have been the most striking and beautiful object in the whole attire of the high priest. Strong gives its meaning as “to contain, or sparkle;” perhaps a pocket. Externally it represented the high priest as the mediator of the twelve tribes engraven upon the gems placed on his shoulder; but it was formed like a pocket, and, thus its interior expressed another, deeper significance. It contained within it the Urim and Thummim whereby Yahweh was consulted and the people informed concerning His will (see v. 30).

It is rendered *breastplate* in the A.V., not because the Hebrew word relates to that term, but because it was worn over the breast. It is called a “breastplate of judgment” because it was used as a means of conveying Yahweh’s *decision* on any issue. The Hebrew word is *mishpat* and denotes “decision” or a “judicial verdict.” The breastplate, therefore, was the prophetic mouthpiece of the dress of the high priest; by its aid decisions were made. See Num. 26:55 for the use of the “lot” (decision) in conjunction with the breastplate.

“After the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it” — The breastplate was made of the same fabric as the ephod, and is to be aligned with it in symbolic meaning.

VERSE 16

“Foursquare it shall be being doubled” — Its foursquare shape was similar to that of the camp of Israel (Num. 2), and of the New Jerusalem, the Lamb’s Bride (Rev. 21:16). It was doubled over, and so

formed a bag for the use of the “lot” in coming to decisions in matters of inquiry. The doubling of a matter suggests certainty (Gen. 41:32), though here the word means to *fold over*, and only figuratively, *to repeat*.

“A span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof”

— A span is half a cubit, about 200mm (9 inches). The significance of the word comes from the span of the fingers reaching to about that length.

VERSE 17

“And thou shalt set in it, settings of stones” —

The manner in which this was done is not revealed here, but in ch. 39:13 it is described as being similar to the ouches of gold that held the onyx stones on the shoulders of the high priest. The Hebrew word for “settings” is *milu’ath* in the feminine gender, signifying “to fill up, or complete” (see mg.). It is from the same root *mala*, here rendered “set,” as is the word “multitude” in the statement made concerning Ephraim, the son of Joseph, and representative of his spiritual seed: “His seed shall become a *multitude of nations*” (Gen. 48:19, see mg.). The root *mala*, joined with the word *yad* (hand), and signifying “to fill the hand,” is rendered “consecrate” (see Exo. 28:41; 29:9, 33, 35 etc.). Therefore, the expression in the verse before us suggests that the “filling” of the breastplate is symbolically related to Israel as a *multitude of consecrated ones*. It was filled by the stones which reflected the divine light.

“Even four rows of stones” — How were these rows of gems set out? The usual way is to illustrate them as placed in four rows of three gems, one row set beneath the other. But surely that would destroy the foursquare symmetry of the breastplate, for four rows of three gems each would be deeper than their width. The instructions given were to arrange the names of the tribes on the stones of the breastplate “according to the twelve tribes” (v. 21). This compares with the writing of the names of the tribes on the two onyx stones which was “according to

their birth" (v. 10). Hence we believe that the setting of the stones in the breastplate followed the arrangement of the tribes around the tabernacle. This would mean that the gems were placed around the four edges of the breastplate, leaving the centre empty to display the glory of the gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen of which it was constructed in imitation of the gate, door and veil of the sanctuary. This would seem to be a much more appropriate arrangement than other suggestions for the placing of the gems. The four rows of gems would then answer to the four rows of tribes surrounding the tabernacle in the centre as a vast square.

Therefore, on the dress of the high priest, Israel was represented in two ways: on the brilliant stones that rested on his shoulders, their names were engraved according to their birth; whereas in the breastplate, they were engraved according to their tribes. The former revealed Israel in its weakness; the latter in its strength. The former is according to the flesh; the latter according to the divine purpose in the ultimate. In the former, Reuben, the natural firstborn takes the first position, but was deposed from this position of status, and Judah was given the preference (Gen. 49:8; 1Chr. 5:2). There is an Israel after the flesh, and an Israel after the spirit — surely, above all else, the twofold arrangement of the stones was a reminder to Israel, and to us, that "the flesh profiteth nothing," for, saith the *Logos*, or Oracle, the Breastplate of Yahweh's teaching: "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

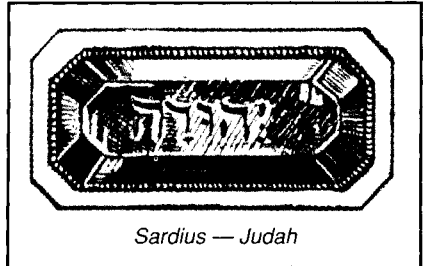
It is extremely difficult to specifically identify the precious stones used. There have been many laboured attempts to do so, but with the exception of a few, it is acknowledged that the subject is enveloped in obscurity. Perhaps this is how it should be; for we must accept the teaching of Yahweh in faith, awaiting His full manifestation, and the complete identity of the faithful, at that time when the great high priest himself will return to the earth "to make up his jewels."

"The first row shall be a sardius" —

The Hebrew word is *odem*, closely related to *Adam*, the name given by God to the man and woman in the beginning, including them both in one appellation (Gen. 5:2). One of the titles given the Lord Jesus is the "last Adam" (1Cor. 15:45), teaching that flesh, "a living soul," can become spirit. Some believe that the stone so described is the ruby, others claim that it is the deep red sardine stone which derived its name from Sardis, and is a variety of carnelian. Reference to the sardine stone is found in Rev. 4:3, and applied to the human origin of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here it represents the tribe of Judah (cp. Rev. 5:5) which name means *Praise*, so calling upon flesh to praise Yahweh. Judah was to be the object of praise according to the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49:8), and when the greatest of Judah's sons according to the flesh (Rom. 1:3) is manifested in spirit as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5), praise will ascend to Yahweh from all in heaven and in earth (Rev. 5:9-13).

Red is the colour of blood and of wine. Judah's land was to be a land of vineyards, and in a beautiful prophetic passage, predicting the glory of Christ, Jacob combined the aspects of wine and blood in one statement (Gen 49:11). It speaks of a dedicated life through sacrifice of flesh: by which means a person truly praises Yahweh.

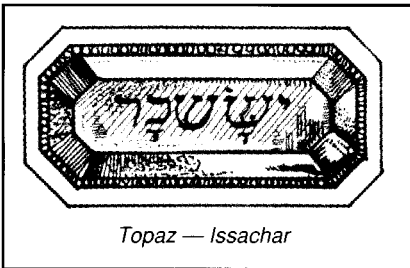
Why was Judah placed first? Jacob explained that Reuben, a man of the flesh, would not prevail because of his proclivity towards the things of the flesh; and so the royal status was taken from him, and given to Judah. Reuben as the firstborn after the flesh, was superseded by a



Sardius — Judah

younger brother, as the last Adam superseded the status of the first Adam, and was given the legal title of "Firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15).

How important was this first stone of the breastplate, both in its exhortatory and prophetic import. It taught that the flesh profiteth nothing, and that natural Israel (as exemplified in Reuben) would have to give place to spiritual Israel (the Lion of the tribe of Judah).

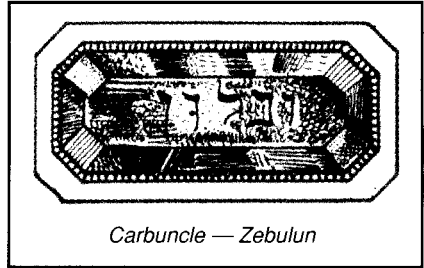


Topaz — Issachar

"A topaz" — It is generally believed, though not fully established (see Unger's Dictionary), that the topaz was the chrysolite, a yellow-green gem called by jewelers *peridot*, and by mineralogists *olivine*. Some of the stones are a very rich olive green, others a golden-green. The Hebrew word is *pitdah*, apparently of foreign designation.

However, the gem is identified with Issachar whose name signifies *Reward*. The yellow-green hue of the gem is suggestive of faith rewarded. El-Shaddai was introduced to Abraham as his "exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1), and in fulfillment thereof, the Lord's concluding message to Abraham's spiritual seed includes the statement: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). See the prophetic promise to Issachar in Gen. 49:14-15, and our notes thereon.

"And a carbuncle" — The name is now applied only to certain bright red garnets when cut convex and smooth, and the actual original identity of the stone in the verse before us is in doubt. The Hebrew word *bareketh* signifies "lightning," or



Carbuncle — Zebulun

"glittering," and denotes a gem flashing and glittering with light. On the gem was engraved the title of Zebulun, which means *Dwelling* (see Gen. 30:20; 49:13; Deu. 33:18-19). The terms of the various blessings bestowed on Zebulun, as described in these verses, indicate the full scope of the dwelling. It suggests a place of rest and security, as provided by a husband (Gen. 30:20), a haven for those who turn their backs upon the wickedness of Sidon (Gen. 49:13 — see notes in *Expositor: Genesis*), and a calling of them to the Mountain of Yahweh to offer the sacrifices of righteousness (Deu. 33:18-19; Isa. 2:2-4).

Though the stone may be red, it is different from the redness of the sardine stone, for it speaks of a life dedicated, given to the service of others.

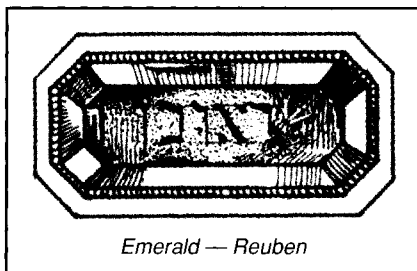
The name Zebulun, together with that of its gem in the breastplate, present the thought of the redeemed *dwelling* with Yahweh, and *giving light* to others.

"This shall be the first row" — The first row of gems corresponds to the first group of three tribes that encamped under the standard of Judah, as described in Num. 2:3-9.

VERSE 18

"And the second row" — This row answers to the second group of tribes: Reuben, Simeon and Gad that encamped under the standard of Reuben on the south side of the tabernacle (Num. 2:10-16). This row of gems was evidently on the bottom side of the breastplate.

"Shall be an emerald" — There is some doubt as to whether the emerald is referred to by the use of the Hebrew



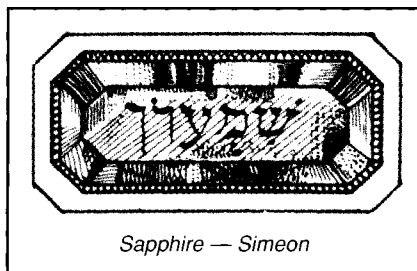
Emerald — Reuben

nophech. The word signifies “to shine, to glisten.” Upon this stone was engraved the name of Reuben, signifying *See a Son!* The name was proclaimed in triumph by Leah as she beheld her firstborn son. Though looked upon by Jacob as his might, the beginning of his strength, the excellency of dignity, and of power, Reuben proved unstable (Gen. 49:3-4), and the privileges of status that were conferred upon him because of his position in the family were transferred to others.

In the breastplate, however, Reuben represents unstable human nature by birth, identified with a stone of durable lustre and strength, which reflected the divine glory of light. The placing of the stone in the breastplate, therefore, represents the triumph of the Son over the flesh. “For,” predicted Isaiah, “unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isa. 9:6), and believers are required to view him as the personification of divine glory.

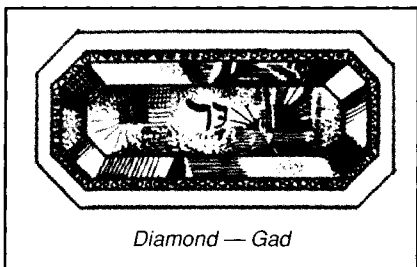
Paul took up the same theme in writing to his Gentile brethren, calling upon them to “see the Son” in the one raised from the dead (Rom. 1:4-5). “We beheld his glory,” wrote John, “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14). He continues concerning those who would see the Son in his true significance: “to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” In such Yahweh can see the Son reflected, for, adds Paul, “Christ in you” is the “hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

“**A sapphire**” — The sapphire is a deep-blue stone, like the blue of the heavens above, and therefore, recalls to mind the significance of blue, which speaks of things divine. The Hebrew word, *sappeer* signifies “to scratch or polish,” hence “to



Sapphire — Simeon

write or number.” It represented Simeon in the breastplate. Simeon’s name means *hearing*, which is appropriate to the symbolical significance of blue. It is a divine characteristic “to hear,” and as Yahweh is prepared to hear the pleadings of His people, so they, in turn, should hear and heed His Word. Faith comes by such hearing (Rom. 10:17), and without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Faithful hearing will engrave divine principles deeply upon our consciousness, and will ever cause us to recall what Yahweh has said.

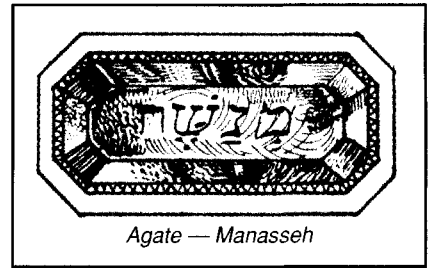
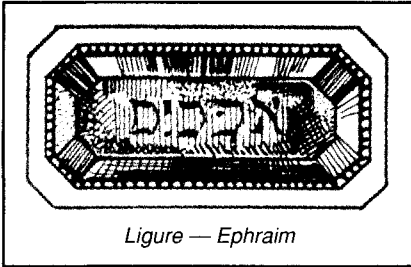


Diamond — Gad

“**And a diamond**” — As it is considered that the diamond was unknown to the ancients, we can suppose that the mineral referred to was some form of corundum which is very hard and translucent. The Hebrew word is *Yah-holam*, derived from *halam*, “to break in pieces or bruise,” hence to be strong and powerful, implying that this gem is extremely hard, and is capable of cutting or breaking all others. However, the *Yah* in front of the word denotes the future tense and therefore signifies “to become strong, powerful, so as to break in pieces or to bruise.” This is to be the work of Christ with the glorified

saints, in subduing oppressors (Psa. 72:4; 2:9; 149:5-9; Rev. 2:27). Hence it is remarkable that the stone is identified with the tribe of Gad, for the word *Gad* signifies a *troop*, or *company*, and in this context points to the multitudinous Christ.

*Increase*r, the eleventh son of Jacob and father of Ephraim.

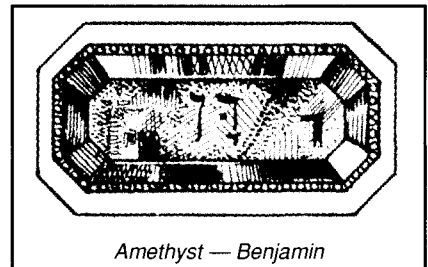


VERSE 19

“**And the third row a ligure**” — The significance of the Hebrew *leshem* is unknown. The English is a transliteration of the Greek found in the *Septuagint* and in *Antiquities* (3.7), by Josephus. The word is generally identified with the *lugkourion* of Theophrastus. This appears to have been a deep-yellow gem, its name relating to the legend that it was the solidified urine of the lynx. Theophrastus refers to it as being much favored for engraving of signets, suggesting the jacinth or hyacinth, used by modern jewellers. Engraved specimens of these stones are often found in collections of ancient gems, and to such, most probably, the reference is made. Theophrastus also states that it is electric, attracting light particles etc., and that this has led to some confusing it with amber. The R.V. has “jacinth” for “ligure,” whilst giving amber in the margin (see *Unger’s Dictionary*).

“**An agate**” — Strong suggests the Hebrew word *shebuw* has the idea of *subdivision* (suggesting separation) into flashes of light, and hence to *flame*. The stone represented Manasseh, whose name signifies *Forgetfulness* (Gen. 41:51). Manasseh was the firstborn of Joseph, who so named him because “God hath made me *forget* all my toil, and all my father’s house.” In saying this in Egypt, Joseph put behind him all the adverse experiences he had endured to that time, and awaited further directions of God. This led to the birth of Ephraim, and to *fruitfulness*. In Psa. 45:10, the spiritual Bride is exhorted to “forget her own people and her father’s house,” and thus to become the attractive and fruitful Bride of the great King. The agate is not mentioned in the Apocalypse, where Manasseh is represented by the sardius (Rev. 7:6; 21:20).

In the breastplate, the gem represented Ephraim whose name signifies *Double Fruit* (see Deu. 33:13-17; Gen. 48:13-20; and note Joseph’s reason for so naming his son, Gen. 41:52). This suggests the fruitfulness of the Lord’s labours (John 10:14-18; 12:25-25; 15:16). In the Apocalypse, the ligure appears as the *jacinth* (Rev. 21:20), and as the eleventh stone, answers to Joseph. (ch. 7:8), whose name signifies

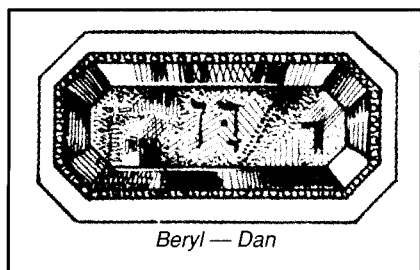


“**And an amethyst**” — Strong gives the Hebrew as *achlamah*, and provides the meaning as *Dream-stone*. The Oriental amethyst is a stone of great hardness and beauty, of a fine violet or purple colour, suggesting God manifestation. The stone in the breastplate represented Benjamin.

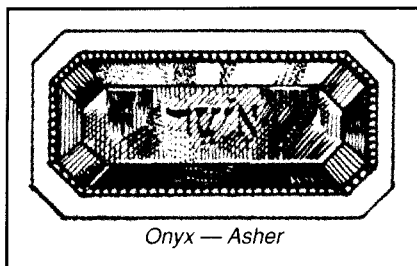
whose name was changed from Benoni, *Son of Sorrow*, to that of Benjamin, *Son of the Right Hand* (Gen. 35:18). The Son of the Promise (Gen. 3:15), which was the subject of Joseph's dreams, experienced both sorrow and elevation. After being *Benoni*, the "man of sorrow and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53), the Lord was elevated to the right hand of the Father, the place of special honour (Acts 2:33-35).

The right hand of Yahweh is mentioned many times in Scripture. Through it He reveals Himself as glorious in power, dashing in pieces the enemy (Exo. 15:6); as saving (Psa. 17:7; 20:6); as sustaining (Psa. 18:35; 63:8); as manifesting righteousness (Psa. 48:10; Isa. 41:10); as purchasing (Psa. 78:54); as planting (Psa. 80:15); as being strengthened (Psa. 80:17); elevated (Psa. 89:13); made victorious (Psa. 98:1); exalted, and doing valiantly (Psa. 118:15-16). In Psa. 110 the term is directly predictive of the Lord as priest "after the order of Melchizedek," a title and prophecy which Christ applied to himself (Mat. 22:42-46). In the Apocalypse, the tribe of Benjamin is likewise represented by the *amethyst* (Rev. 21:20). The Greek word *amethystos*, used only here, however, is supposed to prevent intoxication (cp. Eph. 5:18).

to break or subdue. The judgment of God shall do this as far as the power of the flesh is concerned. The stone is used to describe the hands of the Bridegroom (Song 5:14), thus indicating that he is strong in labour as the wheels of the cherubic chariot, indicating strength to subdue (Eze. 1:16; 10:9). It also represents the body of the multiple man seen by Daniel (Dan. 10:6), thus aligning the vision with the pouring out of judgment in the Age to come. The stone, therefore, is emblematic of the mighty subduing power to be manifested through Christ and the glorified saints, the Israel of God, in judgment on the nations (cp. Gen. 30:6; 49:16-17; Deu. 33:22; Psa. 149:5-9; Acts 17:31). The beryl is a light green, or bluish-green stone, green being the colour of immortality, and blue that of God manifestation. In the Apocalypse, the beryl is used as emblematic of Levi; the tribe of Dan not being represented (Rev. 7). The reason for this, perhaps, is that the vision of the Apocalypse extends to the epoch when the judgments shall be finished, being followed by the education of the people. Hence Dan is replaced by Levi.



Beryl — Dan



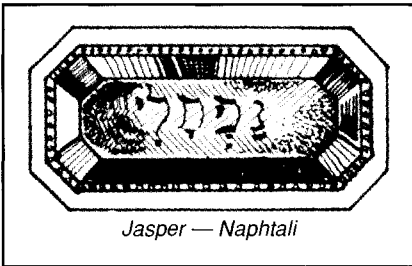
Onyx — Asher

VERSE 20

"And the fourth row a beryl" — This stone in the breastplate represented Dan, the leading tribe of the fourth division. Dan signifies *Judgment*, and the beryl is appropriately related thereto. Its Hebrew name is *Tarshish*, which signifies

"And an onyx" — Josephus states that the stone in the breastplate was an onyx, whereas those on the shoulders of the high priest were sardonyxes, although they are described as onyx in Scripture. Onyx signifies *Fingernail*. The gem displays layers of different colours which alternate with each other, and bear some resemblance to the white and flesh-coloured bands of the fingernail. The sardonyx is similar, but more sharply defined, with bands of red and white. The

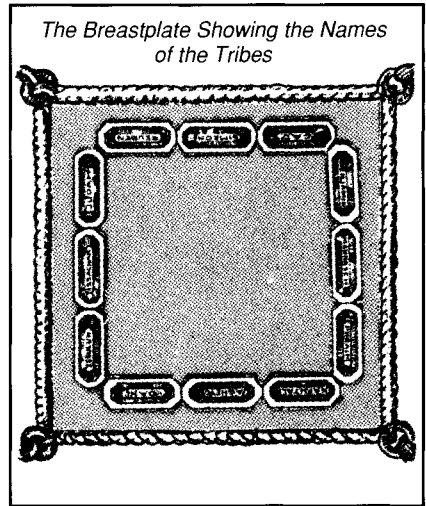
Hebrew is *shohham*, and comes from a root signifying *to flash forth in splendour*. The stone represented Asher in the breastplate. Asher signifies *Blessed or Happy*. A related word describes the state of the righteous man (Psa. 1:1), as well as that of the forgiven (Psa. 32:1). The destiny of such is *to flash forth in splendour* in the Age to come (Dan. 12:3), so that the stone is appropriate to the message of the tribe. In the foundations of the New Jerusalem, the onyx is not mentioned, though the sardonyx is supplied as representative of Naphtali. See comments in *The Apocalypse Epitomised: Revelation*.



Jasper — Naphtali

“And a jasper” — The jasper represented Naphtali in the breastplate. Again, the Hebrew name of the gem is appropriate to the tribe it represents. Its Hebrew title, *yahshpeh*, signifies *to polish*; whilst the meaning of Naphtali is *to wrestle, to prevail*. This suggests the striving against difficulties, and by enduring such trials, one “learns obedience,” being “polished” to reflect the divine likeness. In the Apocalypse, the jasper represents Judah, whose name signifies *Praise*. So there is a progression of thought in the symbolic use of the stone, from *wrestling*, to *polishing*, and *praising*. The future shall witness the glorious effects of successful wrestling today, the appropriate emblem being the flashing forth of glory by the polished jasper in the breastplate of the high priest.

“They shall be set in gold” — The word for “set” is *shabatsim*, and signifies *to interweave*. The word, therefore, is suggestive of filigree work, an embroidery of gold, as a fitting background to the gems. Strong suggests the root meaning of the



word implies that the settings were in squares which would be most appropriate to the square-formation of the tribes as they encamped.

“In their inclosings” — The word *millu'ath*, is in the feminine gender, denoting *fillings*. It is derived from *millis*, *to fill*, hence *to consecrate* (see Exo. 29:22, 26, 27, 31), and is used to denote the activity of the priests who were set to work for Yahweh. Used in conjunction with gems representative of the tribes, it suggests that Israel was priestly in concept: “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exo. 19:6). The R.V. renders the word as “settings” (see margin).

VERSE 21

“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names” — The significance of the number twelve (perfect government), together with the meanings of the names of the tribes, was emphasised in the placing of the stones in order in the breastplate.

“Like the engravings of a signet” — A signet gives the impress of authority (1Kgs. 21:8; Est. 8:8; John 3:33; 6:27), showing that the object thus marked belongs to the one who has applied his

seal to it. In that way, Israel belongs to Yahweh (Isa. 43:1; Eze. 38:16), His chosen nation (Hag. 2:23), whom He has taken unto Himself. In doing so, He placed a difference between Israel and the other nations (Exo. 11:7), but this requires of them such obedience to His commands as will constitute them a holy people (Deu. 28:9; Lev. 19:2). A position of privilege brings with it an equal proportion of responsibility, and therefore, greater punishment if this is ignored (Amos 3:2).

The divine seal is upon the nation of Israel, showing that it belongs to Yahweh, and so warning others against touching His possession, His inheritance (cp. Psa. 116:15; Zech. 1:14-17).

“Every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes” — Whereas the names of the tribes as inscribed upon the shoulder-pieces of the high priest were in the order of birth (v. 10), those on the breastplate were according to the tribal arrangement. The setting, therefore, evidently was foursquare, as follows:

First row: Judah (*Praise*), Issachar (*Reward*), Zebulun (*Dwell*).

Second row: Reuben (*See a Son*), Simeon (*Hearing*), Gad (*Company*).

Third row: Ephraim (*Double-fruit*), Manasseh (*Forgetting*), Benjamin (*Son of the Right Hand*).

Fourth row: Dan (*Judgment*), Asher (*Blessing*), Naphtali (*Wrestling*).

• The message proclaimed by the settings of the stones thus announced:

First row: *Praise Him who shall reward you and cause you to dwell with Him.*

Second row: *See a Son, hear him in the company of the redeemed.*

Third row: *The rewards of the future will cause a forgetting of the past in the presence of the Son of His right hand.*

Fourth row: *The judgment will bring a blessing upon those who have successfully wrestled with the flesh.*

How were the gems placed in the breastplate? The general idea is that they were set in four rows of three gems each

one below the other. But this would create an oblong arrangement of gems, and appear rather incongruous to the purpose. As they are named *according to the tribes*, they would be more appropriately placed in the breastplate in that order, forming a square revealing the cloth of the covering, suggestive of the tribes surrounding the tabernacle. This would be according to the foursquare shape of the breastplate, rather than the traditional setting of the gems in four lines of three each; and we believe that they would have been placed therein, in this manner.

Chains Of Gold — vv. 22-25.

A golden chain of faith connects the onyx stones on the shoulders of the high priest (representing Israel according to birth) with the ephod and breastplate, and its stones, representative of Israel according to its tribes, organised as a kingdom.

VERSE 22

“And thou shalt make upon the breastplate” — See note, v. 15.

“Chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold” — See note, v. 14.

VERSE 23

“And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold” — There is no end to a ring, so that the symbolism represents a faith that cannot be broken.

“And shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate” — The word “ends” is *ketsouth*, in the feminine gender, signifying the extremity. They were placed on the two extremities of the breastplate.

VERSE 24

“And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate” — So the breastplate was to be connected to the other garments of the high priest by a wreathen chain of gold, representing the victory of faith (1Jn. 5:4).

VERSE 25

“And the other two ends of the two

wreathen *chains* thou shalt fasten in the two *ouches*, and put *them* on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod before it” — See introductory note to this section.

The Breastplate Bound To The Ephod
— vv. 26-29.

Styled “the breastplate of judgment” (v. 30), it was designed to announce decisions in connection with the Urim and Thummim (Deu. 17:1-13). Its presence on the dress of the high priest authenticated his voice as being the expression of Yahweh’s will. Decisions were probably determined through the bag formed by the fold in the breastplate. See note, Num. 26:55.

VERSE 26

“And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward” — The word “border” is *sepheth*, and signifies *lip* or *margin*. The R.V. has “edge.” These two rings were attached to the lower portion of the breastplate, whilst those of v. 23 were at its upper extremities.

VERSE 27

“And two *other* rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath” — The word “sides” is *kaphethoth*, denoting “shoulder-pieces” as in v. 7. So these two rings on the shoulder-pieces connected with those on the bottom of the breastplate.

“Toward the forepart thereof” — “Toward” is from the Hebrew *muwl*, signifying “before.”

“Forepart” is a translation of *panim*, signifying *faces*. Significantly, therefore, the ephod, the dress of the high-priest, is described as having faces. The high priest represented Yahweh who acts through His faces, the Elohim, and Israelites were made conscious of that by such expressions.

“Over against the *other* coupling thereof” — The Hebrew is “near its join-

ing” (see *A New Old Testament*).

“Above the curious girdle of the ephod” — The “joining” of the ephod could be where the curious girdle was woven on to it. Compare v. 8.

VERSE 28

“And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue” — Thus rings of gold (faith that cannot be broken) were joined by laces of blue (God manifestation), so that breastplate and ephod were closely linked together, and thus united with the priest.

“That it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod” — See v. 8.

“And that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod” — The dress of the high priest, prophetic of the garments of salvation, were designed to teach the nation to keep close to the high priest, whose vestments typically illustrated the will of Yahweh.

VERSE 29

“And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment” — See note, v. 15. The word “judgment” is *mishpat*, from *shaphat*, to judge, or pronounce sentence, and signifies a decision or verdict. Such judgment could relate to the national conduct, or decisions, in regard to public welfare (see Exo. 28:30; 1Sam. 23:9; 30:7).

“Upon his heart when he goeth in unto the holy place” — The high priest bore on his shoulders the names of the individual sons of Jacob, and their names according to the tribes, on his heart.

Because of its weakness, human nature (the heritage of birth) is a burden to be borne by the high priest in his intercessory work whether he be Aaron or Christ, hence the stones on his *shoulders*. But the names of the tribes organised as the kingdom of God were upon his heart, for the heart was to the Hebrews the organ of intellect, and their priestly mediator ever kept in mind Israel’s God-given destiny.

“For a memorial before Yahweh continually” — The memorial contrasted

the weakness of the flesh (the names on the shoulders according to birth) with the high destiny to which Israel are called (the names on the breastplate according to the placing of the tribes). It was exhibited continually every day, foreshadowing the ceaseless intercession of the Lord (Heb. 7:25).

The memorial was also brought to mind by sacrifice in that, as the priest bore the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders and over his heart, the shoulders and breast of the peace offering were given to him. The first was offered as a heave offering, and therefore recognised the high priest as Yahweh's representative; the second was a wave offering, and represented the activity that the priest manifested before Yahweh on behalf of the people (see Lev. 7:34; 10:15; Num. 18:18). As the heave and wave offerings of shoulders and breast were given to Yahweh through the priest, we should give our strength and intellect to Him through our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Urim And Thummim — v. 30.

These mystical additions to the breastplate are now described, and their purpose is presented.

VERSE 30

“And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim” — This is a most intriguing statement, and one which commentators have discussed at length without arriving at any conclusion. What constituted the Urim and Thummim, and in what way were they placed in the breastplate of judgment?

In *Eureka* vol. 2, pp. 327-335, Bro. Thomas writes concerning the breastplate:

“The first place mention is made of it is in Exo. 28:15. It was not a plate of metal, but a texture wrought of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. It was foursquare and of equal sides. It was filled in with settings of precious stones; four rows of them, and three in a row, and each stone set in gold. Upon these twelve stones were engraved, as upon a seal, the

names of the twelve tribes of Israel, thereby showing that these tribes were represented by them; so that symbolically speaking, the whole nation of Israel was contained in the square ornament, and borne upon the breast or heart of the high priest in the holy place. This ornament, styled *khoshen mishpat*, and in our version, ‘the breastplate of judgment,’ was attached to the *aiphod*, a robe called *ephod*, or the *overall*, because it was put on over all other vestments.

“Having prepared the foursquare texture, Moses was commanded to put into it the Urim and Thummim; that is, the twelve precious stones: not that the stones abstractly were the Urim and the Thummim, but were indispensable to its manifestation. The Urim were the *glistening* of the stones — the *lights* refracted and reflected from their cut and polished surfaces, and developing *lights of divers colors*. These were styled *urim*, lights; and the twelve stones themselves, *thummim*, *fulnesses*, that is, of number and measure — fulness of number, and fulness of measure; or 144,000 and 144 cubits and furlongs; because these are the perfections, or square of 12.

“The next remarkable place where the Urim and Thummim are named is in Deu. 33:8. There Moses speaks of them prophetically. He addresses the tribe of Levi, whose chief pontiff wore the ornament, or as it is allusively termed by Paul, ‘the breastplate of righteousness,’ and saith, ‘Thy Thummim and thy Urim be of the Man thy Holy One, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah.’ In Exodus 17, the particulars of this strife are recorded. The question in debate was ‘Is Yahweh among us, or not?’ This was affirmatively proved by His saying to Moses, ‘I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink:’ and by His doing what He said. Now, in all this there was a *mystery hidden*, which they did not see into, nor Moses, nor the Elohim themselves; but which we may discern: for, in

'the revelation of the mystery' taught by Paul, referring to this strife in 1Cor. 10:4, he says: 'They did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.' The Holy Man, *ish khasid*, with whom they strove, stood upon the rock, and thus, in a figure, made the rock a part of himself; and representative of something afterwards to be smitten by certain, who, like Moses, should speak unadvisedly with their lips. In that way, it became a 'spiritual rock.' Paul says, 'the Rock was Christ;' that is, it was representative of him. The Holy Man upon the rock was the Elohist representative of the Deity dwelling in light whom no man hath, or can see — 1Tim. 6:16. He spoke the words of the Invisible One, by whose power, placed at his disposal, water was made to flow. Hence, Eternal and Almighty Power pervaded the rock in Horeb so long as the water gushed forth and followed them in their wanderings. The Holy Man himself was an embodiment of this power; and as the same power was afterwards to be manifested in the nature of Abraham, and thus become his Seed, the Rock became highly typical of Christ. Hence, the Power, of which the Holy Man on the rock was an expression, was Yahweh, or 'He who shall be,' first in Christ Personal, or Jesus; and afterwards, in Christ Mystical, or the Square of Twelve.

"In Moses' prophecy of Levi, he says: 'They have observed Thy word, and will keep Thy covenant.' The second generation of Levi in the wilderness had observed the divine word, but the covenant referred to they have not yet kept. Levi after the flesh has been in apostasy for ages, and will continue to be so until 'Yahweh, the Messenger of the Covenant,' shall come. When the time appointed arrives, he will suddenly come in, and proceed to the work of purifying the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto Yahweh an offering in righteousness — Mal. 3:1-4. From this future time, 'they will keep the covenant,' even the New Covenant of which Jesus, not Moses, is

the Mediator. Then, when Yahweh-Christ, the Branch of Righteousness, shall sit upon the throne of his father David, and execute judgment and righteousness in the land of Israel, 'the priests the Levites shall not want a man before Me,' saith the Spirit by Jeremiah, 'to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually' — ch. 33:15-18.

"When Levi, then, is in this purified condition contemporary with the reign of the Lamb and the 144,000, Levi's Urim and Thummim will be, as Moses testifies, 'of the Holy Man,' who will then be their High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He will not need to wear on his breast such Urim and Thummim as Aaron wore. The *Lights* and *Fulnesses* will be of himself, he being Deity incarnately manifested; for 'it pleased the Father that in him should all *fulness* dwell' — Col. 1:19.

"Ezra and Nehemiah, doubtless, understood that a priest was to stand up, in and from whom the reality signified by the Aaronic Urim and Thummim should proceed. This appears from Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65. In these places we learn that certain priests sought their genealogy in the register, but it could not be found; 'therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood; and the Tirshatha said to them, that they should not eat of the most holy thing until there stood the Priest, *kakkohain*, for Urim and Thummim.' Although they were thus excluded from the priesthood, yet, if they were Israelites of faith, when the Priest who shall himself be Urim and Thummim shall stand in the temple, Ezekiel describes, they, having risen from the dead, will be permitted to eat of the most holy things in the Paradise or kingdom of the Deity.

"It has been remarked that, where the precious stones are mentioned, there is no mention of Urim and Thummim, as in Exodus 39:10; and that, where the Urim and Thummim are mentioned, there is no mention made of the stones, as in Leviticus 8:8, which seems to show they are one and the same thing. The reader, however, will have perceived that they are not exactly the same — that the difference

between the Urim and the stones is the difference between *various colored lights* and the *stones reflecting them*; and yet, without the glistering gems there would be no light; so that the lights imply the stones, and the stones the lights, and the presence of the one argues that of the other. As to the Thummim, the difference between them and the stones is not a matter of lights, but of number and measure. If, by some accident, the filling in were deficient of one or more of the twelve stones, the Four-square Ornament would not have been Thummim, however bright the Urim of the gems present might have been. The deficient stones must have been supplied, and then Thummim would have been restored to the Holy Square."

In a very beautiful manner in *Eureka* (the whole of this section should be thoughtfully read), Bro. Thomas shows that the Urim and Thummim represented Christ personal and Christ multitudinous. The Urim represented the shining forth of divine light as from the Word; the Thummim represented the fulness of manifestation of both Christ and those to be gathered in both, Jew and Gentile.

Isaiah predicted that Gentiles would "glorify God in the fires" at a time when natural Israel would be cut off (Isa. 24:13-15). The word "fires" in this place is from the Hebrew *urim*: they shall "glorify Him as lights" in the world of darkness. This is a significant expression used of the saints by Paul in Phil. 2:14-15.

But whilst endorsing the application of the Urim and Thummim to Christ and the elect as so beautifully set out by Bro. Thomas, we do not believe that they relate directly to the gems in the breastplate of the high priest. The statement of this verse: "Thou shalt put *in* the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim," suggests an addition to the instructions regarding the setting of the stones on the outside of this article of dress. The breastplate was constructed so as to accomplish this. It was folded into two, and thus formed into a kind of pocket or pouch, into which something could be placed. It seems obvious, therefore, that the Urim

and Thummim did not comprise the gems, for they were already affixed to the breastplate. Later, Moses is said to put them "*in* the breastplate" when Aaron was first clothed, and as he already had placed on him the breastplate and its gems, it seems clear that the Urim and Thummim were something apart from those twelve tribal stones (Lev. 8:8).

The two words are used together only five times in Scripture (Exo. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Deu. 33:8; Ezr. 2:63; Neh. 7:65). The word *urim* occurs in that form two other times by itself (Num. 27:21; 1Sam. 28:6). It is used of the high priest giving counsel from God to Joshua (Num. 27:21); it is mentioned as a form of communication by which Yahweh refused to answer Saul (1Sam. 28:6). It is clear that Joshua received guidance from it in leading Israel into Canaan. He therefore must have used it in the case of Achan (Josh. 9:14). Later, he exercised the lot in dividing the land to the tribes (Num. 34:17; Josh. 17:1-2, 14). It was the method used in choosing certain cities for the Levites in which to live (1Chr. 6:54, 61-65); for setting the order of the priesthood (1Chr. 24:5-7; 25:9); to enquire of Yahweh (Jud. 1:1-2; 20:18, 26-28); to select Saul (1Sam. 10:20-22); to instruct David (1Sam. 22:10-15; 30:8; 2Sam. 2:1; 5:19, 23-25; 1Chr. 14:10; 14-17).

It is significant that whereas God answered Saul by this method early in his reign (1Sam. 14:36-46), the record later says that He no longer would answer him by Urim (1Sam. 28:6), strongly suggesting that the revelation through the latter was connected with the lot.

In regard to the use of the lot, Pro. 16:33 says: "The lot is cast into the lap (properly, *bosom*), but the whole disposing thereof is of Yahweh." The reference here suggests the pouch of the breastplate that was over the bosom of the high priest, the use of which caused contentions to cease (Pro. 18:18). In deciding a matter by lot, probably certain gems or stones were placed into the pouch of the breastplate, and drawn forth again that Yahweh might make known His decision on a matter. If

that be the case, then the Urim and Thummim evidently referred to those stones or gems, called the *Lot*. The word is *goral* in Hebrew, and denotes a stone or pebble.

As Urim signifies *lights*, and Thummim means *perfections* suggesting complete truth, the stones (if stones they were) represented the *shining forth of perfections*: the revelations of Yahweh in such perfections as to cause contention to cease.

There is a further word that seems related to the same subject. Hosea speaks of Israel being “without an ephod, and without teraphim” during the period of their dispersion (Hos. 3:4), a state contrasted with their restoration when they shall “return, and seek Yahweh their God, and David their king; and shall fear Yahweh and His goodness in the latter days” (v. 5). What are the teraphim that are denied Israel at the time of their dispersion? The Septuagint translates the word as “manifestations.” It is elsewhere rendered “images,” and is related to a divine revelation (Eze. 21:21). Rachel took the images (*teraphim*) of Laban her father, who was deeply concerned at his loss. It has been suggested that possession of these mysterious objects (and we really do not know what they actually represented) denoted the right to property as do title deeds today. Whether this was so, or whether they were merely local means of determining divine truth, the use of the term by Hosea suggests that the word had good connotations, as well as idolatrous ones as in Ezekiel.

In view of this, the *teraphim* of Hosea (a plural word) could well relate to the Urim and Thummim, and denote special stones or gems used exclusively in the manner suggested above for the purpose of revealing the divine will and purpose. How this was done is not specifically revealed, but in some way, these objects, associated with the breastplate and its tribal gems, made known the will of Yahweh in any given circumstance.

If the possession of *teraphim* denoted the right to property, as has been strongly suggested by archaeologists concerning the teraphim of Laban that were wrongly



purloined by Rachel, the statement of the prophet, that the people of Israel would abide many days “without teraphim,” suggests that they would exist without right of possession of the land, which is in accordance with the facts.

“And they shall be upon Aaron’s heart, when he goeth in before Yahweh” — To the Hebrew, the heart was the seat of intelligence. It is appropriate, therefore, that these important articles of dress should be so positioned when Aaron approached Yahweh, for they had relation to His purpose with Israel. This purpose is a matter of faith that stems from knowledge (Rom. 10:17).

“And Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Yahweh continually” — The decisions and decrees delivered by the high priest to the people were those revealed by Yahweh, and there was to be continued reference to those judgments. Joshua, though a great man of faith, failed to make due investigation of Yahweh’s will when the Gibeonites requested that he enter into covenant with them, and so was caught in the trap laid for him (see Josh. 9:14).

It is significant that the word “continually” (Heb. *tamiyd*) is used of the evil

"imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts" (Gen. 6:5; cp. Isa. 65:3), and, in contrast, of the continual offerings required (1Chr. 16:40; Eze. 46:14). Service to God must replace the power of the flesh in the hearts of His people.

The Robe Of The Ephod — vv. 31-35.

This important garment was made of blue. There was a binding around the neck of it to prevent tearing, and the hem was ringed with multicoloured pomegranates, interspersed with golden bells that tinkled at the movements of the high priest performing his duties.

VERSE 31

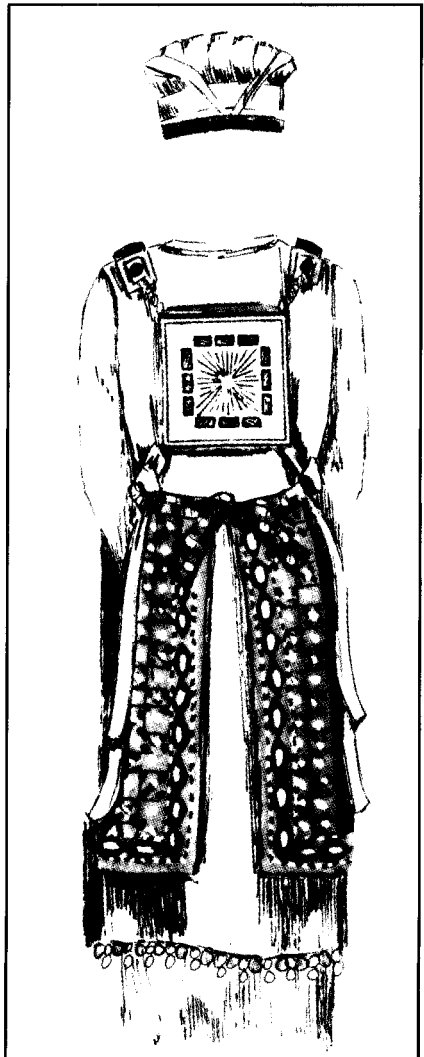
"And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue" — The word "robe" is *meheel* and signifies *covering*. It was blue, the colour of God manifestation, so identifying it with "the robe of righteousness" as part of "the garments of salvation" described by Isaiah (Isa. 61:10). Note that the A.V. marginal reference identifies the article of dress with that of a priest. This is significant, for those saved will constitute a royal priesthood in the age to come (Rev. 5:9-10).

Robes are essentially garments of dignity, insignias of office. As such, robes were worn by both kings and priests. The robe gave a royal status to the priest (see Zech. 6:13). As it was designed that "the law of truth" should be proclaimed from the mouth of the priest (Mal. 2:6-7), and that he should be a teacher of the people (2Chr. 15:3), it was appropriate that this item of dress, being his insignia, should express this. The colour called to mind the commandments of Yahweh (Num. 15:38-39), whilst the garment is also described, as we shall see, as having "mouth," and "head," and "lip."

The blue robe did not entirely cover the linen coat, for the white of the latter protruded below the blue of the former. This illustrated the lesson that there must first be a cleansing, purifying, or justification of flesh before a person can manifest the divine principles.

VERSE 32

"And there shall be a hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof" — The literal Hebrew reads: "And shall be the mouth of the head of him in the midst." What a significant statement! The very insignia of the high priest's office proclaimed the object of his ministry to Israel: to use his *mouth* to proclaim the will of



Yahweh to the people. Thus even the robe of the high priest illustrated to the people their need to hearken to, and heed his words on behalf of Yahweh.

“It shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent” — Literally: “A lip shall be to the mouth of him round about, the work of a weaver like the mouth of a habergeon.” “Lip” implies speech. This is appropriate to the insignia of the priest for it was his duty to expound the Law to the people.

The word “habergeon” is *tachara* in Hebrew, derived from a root *charah*, “to glow or grow warm,” and hence suggestive of a metallic, military garment. The Septuagint renders it by the word “fringe,” but the English word *habergeon* signifies a *coat of mail*. Kitto identifies the Hebrew word with the Arabic *ethpeal*, “to fight.” Perhaps the word (for its actual meaning is in doubt) signifies to be strengthened to fight. However, the description is appropriate to the work of priests in regard to the tabernacle, for their labours in connection therewith are likened to the fight of faith (see Num. 8:23-26; 1Tim. 6:12).

All these descriptive details show that the blue robe was a fitting insignia denoting the office of the high priest, and emphasising his duty. By its very colour it expressed the idea of heavenly standards of purity, for there is nothing purer, more calming, more relaxing than the deep, soft azure of heaven.

It was woven without seam (Exo. 28:32; John 19:23) expressing unity (Psa. 133; John 17:21-23). It had a mouth (the habergeon) with which to fight the battle of faith, and which would prevent the garment being rent, so destroying its unity. In this it pointed forward to the wonderful, peace-giving, unifying speech of the Lord (John 7:46; Luke 4:22).

It is significant that the coat, or vesture, worn by Christ, was “without seam, woven from the top throughout” (John 19:23). So strongly and beautifully was it made, that rather than divide it into four pieces, the soldiers, who claimed the garments of those executed by crucifixion,

preferred to cast lots for it (v. 24). This garment, so much like that of the high priest, formed part of the Lord’s insignia of office.



The Bells and the Pomegranates Around the Hem of the High Priest's Robe

VERSE 33

“And beneath upon the hem of it” — The A.V. margin renders hem as “skirts.” In the vision seen by Isaiah (Isa. 6:1) the word is rendered “train,” thus: “his *train* filled the temple.” As John identifies the vision as relating to the glory of Christ (John 12:41), the skirts of the garment doubtless relate to the multitude of saints who have “put on Christ,” and who, with him, constitute the true temple of Yahweh (2Cor. 6:16).

“Thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof” — No more significant fruit could be selected to symbolise the fruits of Christ’s offering: “When Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed” (Isa. 53:10). When cut open the pomegranate exudes a red juice, and is seen to be packed with seeds. The purplish colour of the skin of the pomegranate suggests God manifestation, the qualities of which Christ exhibited in life; but when he was figuratively cut in two (like the covenant victim), and “poured out his soul [*life*] unto death,” it was that ultimately there might be manifested a righteous seed brought nigh unto God. The pomegranates on the hem of the high priest’s garment were variegated: blue, purple, and scarlet, emphasising the spiritual principles of the Word (blue), God manifestation (purple), and Sacrifice (scarlet), through which the saving work of God is wrought.

“And bells of gold between them round about” — Gold is the symbol of a tried faith, so that “bells of gold” are representative of the voice of faith.

VERSE 34

“A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about” — Suggestive of words and deeds, for one without the other is incomplete. Indeed, words unmatched by deeds, lead to hypocrisy (Jas. 2:14-24).

VERSE 35

“And it shall be upon Aaron to minister” — The sound of the bells spoke of an essential part of the ministry of the high priest, and witnessed to what was required of those who would use the means of the mediation he represented.

“And his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before Yahweh, and when he cometh out, that he die not” — Aaron walked through the holy place to the sound of the tinkling bells, the rustle of his garments speaking of words and deeds. But as he represented the people, this constituted also a profound and beautiful allegory of the divine requirements in the Israel of God ministering in the holy place (Eph. 2:6). For who would hear the sound of tinkling bells and rustling garments of the high priest once he entered the tabernacle? Certainly not the people at the entrance of the court, some distance from the sacred tent itself, and certainly not the ordinary priests and Levites, even though they would be positioned closer to it, for such a gentle sound could not penetrate the thick walls of the holy dwelling place of Yahweh. Yahweh alone would hear it, as it is Yahweh alone who is able to properly assess the true “sound” of the activities of saints as they walk in the antitypical “holy place before Him.” Without a proper proclamation of the words of truth, and a genuine manifestation of divine qualities in action, those “called to be priests” will ultimately die. But when Yahweh hears and sees the Truth properly proclaimed in doctrine, and

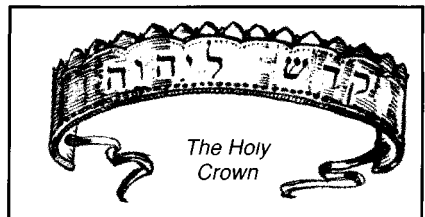
genuinely manifested in deeds, He will ultimately bestow upon those who do so life eternal in the age to come.

The Plate Of Pure Gold — vv. 36-38.

Upon the forehead of the high priest, close to the white mitre of righteousness, was affixed a band of gold displaying the simple declaration: “Holiness to Yahweh.” It was placed in such a position as to remind Israelites that “with the mind they should serve God” (Rom. 7:25), and therefore the mind should be separated unto Him. When this is done, a person’s life will conform more closely to the divine will. The mind exercises the most powerful influence in the body, and must be controlled by the Word, if the thinking of the spirit is to overcome that of the flesh (Rom. 8:6-8). The high priest wore the band of gold as a reminder of this. The Lord, our high priest, needed no such band, for his mind was constantly at one with that of his Father.

VERSE 36

“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold” — The word “plate” is a translation of *iseets* signifying “to glisten,” and it is generally rendered as “flower” (e.g. Psa. 103:15; Isa. 28:1; 40:6-8). This suggests that the band of gold represented the flower of Truth; a mind that unfolds to its beauty by being given over to Yahweh. It is possible to understand a doctrine academically, but it is not until it becomes part of a person’s mental process, and is manifested in action that it can be said that one has attained unto the full result of his understanding. The band of gold, representing a mind of faith, stood for the ultimate effect of the Word. It is elsewhere described as a “crown,” and is thus repre-



sentative of a crown of glory (Exo. 29:6; 39:30; Lev. 8:9). It was constantly worn by the high priest, being "fastened on high" (Exo. 28:37). So positioned, the gold would glisten with glory as it reflected either the light of the sun, the light of the lampstand, or the light of the *shekinah* glory in the Most Holy. These forms of light reflected thereon would bring out its beauty as the colours of a flower.

"And grave upon it like the engravings of a signet" — Such engravings are permanently etched, and cannot be erased. The inscription on the band of gold constituted the divine seal, indicating what Yahweh desires in His worshippers. The Lord declared that he was "sealed" by the Father (John 6:27), and the Word teaches that all who come unto Yahweh must likewise become "sealed" by the Truth (2Cor. 1:22). Persons thus "sealed" will do as though by nature, the things of the law, for they will "shew the work of the law written in their hearts" by the Truth (Rom. 2:14-15). Such are represented as being "sealed in the forehead" (Rev. 7:2-4; 14:1), the antitype of the band of gold on the forehead of the high priest.

"Holiness to Yahweh" — The words are *Kodesh Yahweh*. The former is from the root *kadash*, "to be clean," and implies separation and consecration. True Israelites are called upon to worship Yahweh "in the beauty of holiness," or in "holy array," as the Hebrew has it (1Chr. 16:29; 2Chr. 20:21; Psa. 29:2; 90:17). The white robes of the ordinary priests symbolised these divine principles set before Israelites, for "white linen is the righteous acts of saints" (Rev. 19:8). Their minds are to reflect the message inscribed on the plate of gold placed on the forehead of the high priest, which proclaimed the separation and consecration of a mind motivated by faith in Yahweh. In fact, the plate of gold proclaimed what the holy people, as a priestly community (Exo. 19:6), were called upon to be (see Jer. 2:3). As the temple of the future will be dedicated according to these requirements (Zech. 14:20-21), so saints, as the spiritual tem-

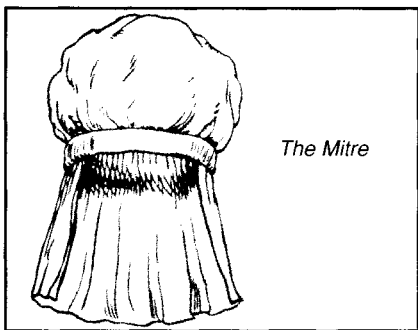
ple, should reflect divine characteristics in action. They are called upon to be sharers of His holiness (Heb. 12:10, 14; 1Pet. 1:15; Rev. 20:6).

VERSE 37

"And thou shalt put it on a blue lace" — The word "lace" is *pathyl*, the same word as is rendered "ribband" in Num. 15:38. This blue lace, therefore, matched the ribband of blue which every Israelite was called upon to wear, so that he might remember his heavenly obligations. The word is from a root *pathal*, "to twine" or "struggle," which is appropriate to the manifestation of righteousness. From Exo. 39:31 we learn that the plate of gold was tied into place by the blue ribband or lace: a significant colour as we have seen.

"That it may be upon the mitre" — It was probably affixed to both ends. The "mitre" was a turban of white linen (Exo. 39:28), representing a crown of righteousness. Thus the gold of faith, ascribing holiness to Yahweh, was connected by the blue lace, reminding one of the obligations of obedience, to the white linen mitre, the crown of righteousness. And all were connected with the forehead, which should be yielded unto Yahweh.

"Upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be" — Importantly connected to that prominent and significant place because, as Paul remarked, "With the *mind* I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:25).



The Mitre

VERSE 38

“And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts” — These “gifts” were the offerings of Israel, made holy because they were consecrated to Yahweh, but associated with “iniquity” because offered by an unclean people. As such, they were treated as unfit for presentation to Yahweh except through a cleansing medium which was the high priest. The defilement was neutralised by the constant assertion of the holiness of Yahweh. In the antitype, the Lord Jesus “bare our sins in his own body to the tree” (1Pet. 2:24) in that he possessed our nature which is the author or seat of sin (Mark 7:15-23). Thus, upon him was laid “the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6), in that he came in our fallen nature. But he was able to bear this, and yet render perfect obedience because of the holiness of his mind. He thereby set forth “the righteousness of God” for all to see (Rom. 3:25-26; see also Num. 18:1). The ability of the Lord to do this was through the heritage he received in his divine parentage. Therefore, he did not accomplish the victory in his own strength, but in the ability he derived from Yahweh; neither will we render acceptable obedience in our own strength, but only through that which comes to us in the Lord Jesus.

A contrast is shown between the plate of gold upon the forehead of the high priest ascribing holiness to Yahweh, and the mark of leprosy imposed on the forehead of Uzziah the king when he unlawfully attempted to force his way into the holy place. His action in so doing was primarily a sin of the mind, as is shown by the narrative, for it states that “when he was strong his heart (to the Hebrews, the seat of intelligence) was lifted up to his own destruction” (2Chr. 26:16-21). He was driven out of the temple a leper. In Christ, we are called upon to “bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2Cor. 10:5). That is the ideal, although, through weakness of the flesh, we fail to attain unto it.

“And it shall be always upon his forehead that they may be accepted before Yahweh” — The plate of gold must always remain on the forehead of the high priest as an incentive to the people. In that regard, it provided a contrast to the worst form of leprosy, the unrestrained carnal mind, the mark of which was found in the forehead of those so afflicted (Lev. 13:42-44). Leprosy is treated as a living death, and under the Law represented active sin.

The plate of gold also contrasted with the whore’s head (Jer. 3:3), and in that regard with the religious prostitute of Rev. 17:5 who likewise had an inscription upon her forehead: *Mystery, Babylon the Great: the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*. Earlier, the Apocalypse contrasts the “names of blasphemy” upon the heads of the beast (Rev. 13:1) with the Name of Yahweh, inscribed, or sealed, upon the foreheads of the redeemed (Rev. 7:3; 9:4; 14:1).

The Coat Of Fine Linen — v. 39.

The white coat of fine linen is now described. This was the innermost garment of the high priest, and therefore provided the foundation for the other garments — a covering of the flesh in white. It was a gown worn directly over the drawers. According to Josephus (Ant. 3.7.2) it reached to the feet, and had tightly-fitting sleeves.

VERSE 39

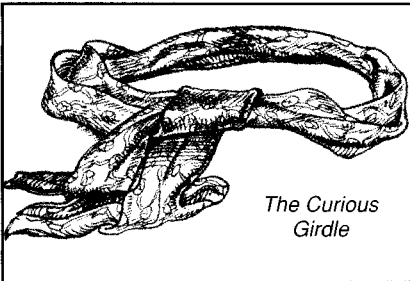
“And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen” — The word “coat” is *kethoweth* and signifies “to cover, to hide.” It is the same word as used in Gen. 3:21 relating to the coats provided Adam and Eve by the angel of Yahweh. Though this was the high priest’s undergarment, it was the only garment allocated to the ordinary priests (Exo. 39:27). In regard to this coat of covering see Isa. 61:10 mg; Gal. 3:26, 29; 1Pet. 1:16. It points to the covering obtained in Christ. It was made of “fine linen”; thus of outstanding quality such as cannot be produced today. It is claimed that its manufacture was a secret

art that died with the ancient Egyptians. J.G. Wilkinson in *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* states: "The Egyptians were always celebrated for their manufacture of linen and other cloths, and the produce of their looms was exported to, and eagerly purchased, by foreign nations. The fine linen and embroidered work, the yarn and woollen stuffs of the upper and lower country are frequently mentioned, and were highly esteemed... Nor was the praise bestowed upon that manufacture unmerited; and the quality of one piece of linen found near Memphis fully justifies it, and excites equal admiration at the present day, being to the touch comparable to silk, and not inferior in texture to our finest Cambric" (vol. 2, pp. 72, 75). Similarly, Christ, who was called out of Egypt (Mat. 2:15) was unique in the quality of his righteousness.

The material is described as being "embroidered." The Hebrew *shabats* signifies "interwoven." Rotherham thus renders: "Weave in checker work." A cognate word is rendered "wrought" (Psa. 45:13), being related to the Bride's resplendent clothing. The same word is translated "set" in v. 20, and there relates to an "embroidery" in gold, probably the filigree settings of the gems of the breastplate.

"And thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen" — See the reference to linen above.

"And thou shalt make the girdle of needlework" — See note, ch. 26:36. For a description of the girdle of the coat, see ch. 39:29.



The Curious
Girdle

Further Garments — vv. 40-43.

The garments of the lower order of priests, and the breeches are now described.

VERSE 40

"And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats" — Lacking the official dignity of the high priest, this lower order of priests appear only in white. See Rev. 3:4-5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 15:6; 19:8, 11, 14. The white-frocked priests of Israel contrasted with the black-frocked pagan priests of the Canaanites, described as *chemarim*, a word derived from the Hebrew *kamar*, signifying "black." Such attire is now recognised in the representatives of the church system — a stark contrast to the priests appointed of God in Israel.

"And thou shalt make for them girdles" — See note: ch. 29:9.

"And bonnets shalt thou make for them" — See note: ch. 29:9.

"For glory and for beauty" — Though lacking the resplendent glory of the high priest (as ordinary saints do that of their Lord), they had a glory of their own, contrasting with the garments, or coverings, of the people generally.

VERSE 41

"And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him" — This ceremony is later described in greater detail.

"And shalt anoint them" — See note Exo. 29:7; 30:30.

"And consecrate them" The word is *malath yad* and signifies "to fill the hands of" (see margin). After being clothed and anointed, the hands of the priests were filled with an offering, indicating that they were separated to such labour. See note, ch. 29:9.

"And sanctify them" — They were set apart for divine use, this being the significance of the word used.

"That they may minister unto Me in the priest's office" — To "minister" in this context signifies to act as a servant. The hands of the priests were "filled" with

an offering to indicate the channel of their service and labour.

VERSE 42

“And thou shalt make them linen breeches” — The Hebrew word *bad* is here used for “linen,” contrasting with *shesh* as used elsewhere in this chapter. However, both words are used in Exo. 39:28 for the same garment, and in Lev. 16:4, 23, 32 the linen of the atonement garments is described as the Hebrew *bad*. The angelic man, as seen by Ezekiel the prophet, is clothed in the same linen (Heb. *bad* — Eze. 9:2-3, 15; 10:2, 6-7).

The word is derived from the root *badad*, “to divide, be solitary,” and is translated “alone” in Lev. 13:46; Num. 23:9; Deu. 33:28. This, perhaps, implies that a quantity of linen was set aside for particular purposes. The use of both words (*bad* and *shesh* translated “linen” and “fine linen” respectively) in Exo. 39:28 suggests that *bad* denotes a different weave of the same basic material. Evidently the breeches were only put on when the priests ministered in the tabernacle of the congregation. They reached from the loins to the knees, but being hidden from human sight, the covering was only apparent to Yahweh. This suggests that sexual irregularities should be excluded even in thought (Mat. 5:27-28).

“To cover their nakedness” — The Hebrew is *the flesh of nakedness* (see mg.). It is so described to indicate the evil condition of the flesh in the sight of God, for as Adam and Eve recognised their nakedness following their transgression (Gen. 3:7, 10), so the principle of sin is seen in the nakedness of flesh (Exo. 32:25).

The purpose of this covering to be provided is described in ch. 20:26.

“From the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach” — Josephus says that

they reached to the knees.

VERSE 43

“And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation” — The Hebrew *mo'ade*, rendered “congregation” signifies *appointed meeting*. The term relates to the Tent of the Meeting, which was the place where priest and people met with Yahweh.

“Or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place” — In such statements as these, the “holy place” includes the court in which was placed the altar.

“That they bear not iniquity, and die” — To “bear iniquity” is to incur guilt, or to have sin imputed to a person. If the priest, through forgetfulness, entered the sanctuary without this necessary article of clothing, and so risked an unseemly exposure of his person, he was to be accounted guilty,

and risked the penalty of death. This taught that the greatest circumspection is necessary when approaching Yahweh in worship. Immodest dress, or the unseemly display of flesh, is most inappropriate, and believers should maintain the highest standards of attire when approaching the Deity.

The people were also commanded to abstain from even legitimate sexual intercourse at such times (cp. Exo. 19:15), and in the case of the priests, even the thought of it was to be excluded, and that part of the body completely hidden away. Sexual thoughts were to be entirely excluded when the priest was performing the ministry of Yahweh.

“It shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him” — This statute, and the provision of this clothing, made the prohibition of Exo. 20:26 unnecessary.



CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THE CLOTHING AND CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS

The priests were divided into several categories. The lower order, styled merely "priests," were members of the Aaronic family. Their claim for the office was by fleshly descent from Aaron. Above them were the high priests. Aaron was the first of this order, and was succeeded by his son, and so on, generation after generation. Then there is reference in the Scriptures to "the Great High Priest." There is only one of this description: the Lord Jesus Christ. His claim is not established through fleshly descent but by divine appointment. He is not of the Aaronic order, but after the order of Melchisedek. He inherited his priesthood from no one; he passed it on to no one. He remains, and supersedes all others, by reason of his endless life and changeless ministry. He is figuratively represented in the chapter before us, in the clothing and consecration of the Aaronic priests, whilst typically setting forth the principles of the Great High Priest. In that regard, we are invited to "consider the apostle and the high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1).

The appointment of the high priest was a fourfold process (Exo. 28:41). He was called (v. 1), cleansed (ch. 29:4), clothed (vv. 5-6), and consecrated (v. 9). He represented Yahweh to the people, and the people to Yahweh. But additionally in this chapter, Moses acts as priest, thus combining in his person the positions of lawgiver, ruler, prophet and priest (vv. 3, 11, 14, 16-18 etc.).

The Preparation Of The Priests

— vv. 1-3.

Sacrificial offerings are first made, then Aaron and his sons are washed, clothed, anointed and consecrated. All this is typical of what was accomplished in the Lord Jesus.

VERSE 1

"And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them" — The

consecration of the priests was a lengthy process lasting seven days (vv. 29-39), and was conducted in full view of the people (Lev. 8:3). The word "hallow" is from *qadash*, signifying "to make" or "pronounce clean." The priest was designed to be an object lesson to the people, emphasizing the moral qualities which they should endeavour to emulate.

"To minister unto Me in the priest's office" — The priest represented the peo-

ple to Yahweh, and Yahweh to the people. As Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests (Exo. 19:6), the symbolic significance of the work of the priest was designed to educate the people as to what they should endeavour to attain. As such, the offerings were both on behalf of the priest, and through him, on behalf of the nation as a priestly community. The consecration of the priests set forth parabolically what was expected of the people, and therefore the whole congregation was called together to witness it (Lev. 8:3).

The priests represented the nation in miniature, but their failings (cp. Lev. 10:1-2) brought home the grim reality that they fell short of the ideal. Further, in that a section of the priestly people only were permitted to minister at the altar and tabernacle, Israel was reminded that as yet it was unfit to assume the priestly privileges to which the nation had been called. The symbolism of the consecration service, was to teach the people their need for personal effort, as a check to pride. The consecration of the priests was on the same day as that of the tabernacle, etc. (Exo. 29:44), so that all were hallowed together.

“Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish” — The purpose of these animals is disclosed later in the chapter. Of the two rams, one was taken for a burnt offering (vv. 15-18), and the other for an offering of consecration (vv. 19-22). The bullock was used as a sin offering.

VERSE 2

“And unleavened bread” — The Hebrew is *matstsoth lechem*, “unleavened bread.” *Matstsoth* signifies that which is sweet, like milk; and as leaven denotes corruption, and therefore represents sin (1Cor. 5:8), unleavened bread symbolises a ritual abstinence from sin. The name is suggestive of the exhortation of Peter: “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings [i.e., leaven], as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby” (1Pet. 2:1-2).

“And cakes unleavened tempered

with oil” — The word “cakes” is the Hebrew *challoth*, derived from a root *challal*, to bore, and by implication, to wound. The word is suggestive of sacrifice. These cakes were mixed with oil, indicating a way of life governed by the Word, and hence a rejoicing in the Truth (Isa. 61:10; Heb. 1:9).

“And wafers unleavened anointed with oil” — The word *raqiqey* (“wafers”) is from *raqaq*, “to beat, pound, to spread thin by beating, and thus to make thin.” These three forms of food denote three developments. First, the unleavened bread suggests the repudiation of the antitypical leaven: malice and wickedness (1Cor. 5:8). Next the punctured cakes which allowed the oil to penetrate throughout, indicate one who permits the Word to penetrate to his innermost being. Thirdly, the wafers, anointed with oil, point to the divine approval of a faith made perfect under trial.

All these different forms of bread were put to special use in the ceremony, as we shall see.

“Of wheaten flour shalt thou make them” — Wheat was considered the best of the crops; and of this the finest flour was to be used. Only the best should be offered to Yahweh in sacrifice. Christ is the bread of life; he was impregnated with the oil of the Word; and was beaten thin by the pounding of trial (cp. Heb. 5:8).

VERSE 3

“And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams” — They were all brought together in the one basket, pointing forward to the Lord who figuratively united all the three aspects of bread, in his person.

Firstly, he is the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth in life; secondly, he was impregnated with the oil of the Word; thirdly, he reached unto perfection through suffering (Heb. 1:9). The basket of bread, with the bullock and the two rams having been brought close to the altar, all was ready for the consecration of Aaron and his sons.

First: Washed With Water — v. 4.

In order to become part of a holy priesthood, Aaron and his sons were ceremonially cleansed by washing.

VERSE 4

“And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” — The laver was placed between the altar and the door of the tabernacle itself, and most likely it was to that spot that Aaron and his sons were brought to be ceremonially washed.

“And shalt wash them with water” — As the burnt offering was washed with water, so were Aaron and his sons. This action indicated that they were to offer themselves as living sacrifices in the worship of Yahweh (cp. Lev. 1:13). The washing by the water of the laver figuratively pointed forward to the washing of the Word (Psa. 51:2; 119:9; John 15:3; 17:17; Eph. 5:26). This is the first essential for all acceptable service.

Then: Clothed with Divine Apparel — vv. 5-9.

Having been ceremonially washed, Aaron and his sons were now suitably clothed. A true worshipper is not only washed by the influence of the Word, and so has his past sins removed, but will develop a righteousness of action based upon that of the Lord, and shall thus become clothed with garments of glory and beauty: an acceptable appearance through sacrifice unto Yahweh.

VERSE 5

“And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod” — All these items have been outlined in Exo. 28. See also Lev. 8:7.

VERSE 6

“And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre” — The reference is to the golden crown with the inscription thereon,

Holiness unto Yahweh. This is here called *netzer ha-qodesh*. *Netzer* signifies “to set apart” in dedication as priest, or one under a Nazarite vow. See Exo. 39:30; Lev. 8:9.

The same word is used to describe the kingly crown in 2Sam. 1:10; 2Kings 11:12 — thus uniting the principles of priesthood.

VERSE 7

“Then shalt thou take the anointing oil” — For the composition of this, see Exo. 30:23-25. For the act of anointing and its importance, see Lev. 8:12, 30; 10:7; 21:10; Psa. 133.

“And pour it upon his head, and anoint him” — Aaron was anointed, in order that he might be sanctified, or set apart, for his high office (Lev. 8:12). At the same time the tabernacle, altar, laver, and so forth were also anointed (Lev. 8:10), so that all the means of worship were sanctified or set apart together. Concerning the anointing of Aaron, W.F. Barling wrote in *Law and Grace*: “Once robed in his official garb, Aaron was in need forthwith of anointing that he might be sanctified to discharge his duties before God; this anointing was strictly of the head only, but the head (being the directing agent of all the body’s actions) clearly stood for the whole man so that the anointing of it effectively and conspicuously intimated that he needed a rich endowment of God’s Spirit to qualify him to execute the priesthood in the way required by Him — a fact which the profusion of the anointing in his case served to emphasize, since it became proverbial that ‘the precious ointment upon the head... ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard’ and ‘ran down to the skirts of his garments’ (Psa. 133:2). The consecration of the priests was such that it entailed total separation to God — hence the strict injunction, ‘Ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days’ (Lev. 8:33). This time cycle of seven days (a symbolic period, as in the case of the feast of unleavened bread) taught the people that they were ever to remain spiritually in the very vicinity of God if they

were to be what they were meant to be, His priestly people, in covenant relationship to Him."

VERSE 8

"And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them" — As a lower order of priests, they were dressed only in the white coats. They lacked the splendour of the high priest, even as we lack the perfection of Christ.

VERSE 9

"And thou shalt gird them with girdles" — See notes at ch. 28:4, 39.

"Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them" — The RV renders this as "head tires." The Hebrew *migbaah*, is derived from a root, signifying "to be convex," suggesting, by analogy, the calyx of a flower.

The use of the word "bind" would suggest that it represents a turban; whilst the whiteness of this article of dress represents a crown of righteousness (Pro. 16:35; 20:29). White hair suggests the glory of wisdom and of mature righteousness (Dan. 7:9).

"And the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute" — The word "perpetual" is *olahm*, and signifies a *hidden period* of time; hence points to the millennium. Of itself it does not denote endlessness, but rather continuation without break for the undefined period of time appointed it.

"And thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons" — For "consecrate," see the note ch. 28:41. The word signifies, as in the margin, *to fill the hand of*. Aaron and his sons were not separated unto idleness, but unto labour in the field of God as priests.

Finally: Offerings are Made
— vv. 10-18.

The final act required for the consecration of the priests involves their association with the principle of sacrifice. A bullock is brought, and the priests are required to identify with its ceremonially atoning offering. By this means they typi-

cally enact the work of the Lord Jesus in his sacrifice.

VERSE 10

"And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation" — The Hebrew gives the definite article "*the* bullock," that is, the bullock mentioned in v. 3. It was a sin offering (v. 14), both the first and the largest of all offerings. Likewise, forgiveness is the people's first need as well as their greatest. And because of imperfection in the priesthood, it was also the need of Aaron and his sons. All the beauty of clothing availed nothing without the sin offering. Those onlookers, who observed this ritual aright, would be humbled in mind, seeing that even the priests, including their high priest, required such an offering.

As a sin offering the bullock pointed forward to the offering of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 13:12); Paul's comment shows that the Lord also benefitted from his offering, and that, therefore, it was essential to his salvation, being appointed of God to that end (v. 20). He had no sins for which to atone, yet the sin offering was required, even in his case (Heb. 7:27). Why? Because he came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" and so "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1Pet. 2:24). His offering ritually revealed what is necessary on the part of all those who would serve God in truth: namely, the putting to death of the "old man of the flesh" (Rom. 6:6). This, Christ did completely in life, so that when at last, he died as a sacrifice, his resurrection to eternal life was beyond doubt. "In that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Rom. 6:10).

However, at the consecration of Israel's priests, neither priests nor people were without sin, so that all were in need of the sin offering to which the bullock pointed forward.

"And Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock" — In this, they identified themselves with the sacrifice, so that it became

representative of what they would attempt to do: give their lives an offering unto Yahweh. They placed their hands on the head of the bullock because the head is the seat of intellect, and sin commences in the mind.

VERSE 11

“And thou shalt kill the bullock before Yahweh” — Thus the flesh was put to death; a principle that all must figuratively apply if they would please God. It was done “before Yahweh,” as the offerings of all worshippers must be presented.

“By the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” — The bullock was slain in a public place as a witness to all worshippers who congregated to observe the ceremony.

VERSE 12

“And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock” — The flesh and the blood comprise two parts of the offering. The former was put to death; the latter was given unto Yahweh. Blood represents “the life of the flesh” (Lev. 17:11), and blood poured out in sacrifice represents a life dedicated to God by denying (putting to death) the flesh, and positively offered. It therefore sets forth the principle of a life given unto Yahweh in active service.

The bread and wine of the Lord’s Table represent the negative and positive aspects of his offering: the first relates to the putting to death of the flesh; the second to the giving of a life in service to Yahweh.

“And put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger” — The four horns of the altar were representative of the four-fold encampment of Israel: an extension of the altar, and therefore of the true “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). The blood placed upon the horns of the altar was designed as a means of atonement for it, to “purify the altar” (Lev. 8:15), or, as Rotherham renders it, that he “cleansed the altar from sin.” The altar pointed forward to Christ our altar (Heb. 13:10). In what way was he “cleansed” by his own offering? Not from moral impurity, for he was guilty of no

sin, but he was cleansed from physical imperfection. He did no sin, nor in inheriting mortality did he incur the guilt of Adam’s sin, as is sometimes assumed. He inherited (as we all do) the result of Adam’s transgression, which might be a misfortune but certainly is no crime. He did this in that he came in the same nature as all men: that of mortality, condemned because of its proneness to sin. From that nature he needed redemption, and obtained it through his own sacrificial death. So he benefited from his death, as Paul teaches: “He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Phil. 2:8-10). It is most unjust to assume that Christ did not benefit from his own offering. Such teaching fails to comprehend the purpose of his death which taught the principle that eternal life is only possible through death. He put to death the promptings of the flesh in life, refused to give way to its proneness to sin, submissively praying: “Not my will, but Thine be done.” He completed that service of sacrifice in life by his sacrificial death, and in doing so, acted as our representative, showing what we must try to do in obedience unto God. He “bore our sins in his own body on the tree” (1Pet. 2:24), in that his nature was the same as ours, and is the seat of all sin (Mark 7:20-21; 1John 1:8). He therefore was tempted in all points like as we are, but was without sin (Heb. 4:15). Because of his perfect obedience he rose from the dead to life eternal, and so provides the means of the forgiveness of sins for those who would come unto God through him. This was typed in the bullock as a sin offering.

Though witnessing to the existence of sin and imperfection, the bullock, itself, had to be “without blemish” (Lev. 4:3, 23, 28, 32). Its physical perfection stood in sharp contrast to the moral imperfection revealed in the requirement of the offering. So it is with the Lord Jesus. His character was perfect; his nature was not. He was without sin; his brethren have sins to

be forgiven. His resurrection to eternal life was consequent upon his perfect obedience unto death; theirs is through the forgiveness of sins in his name.

“And pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar” — Portion of the blood had purified the altar, thus constituting it most holy. As Bro. Thomas remarks in *Eureka* vol. 2, p. 237: “It was now a *thusiasterion* — an Altar Most Holy; and all that touch it are holy; and without touching it none are holy.” This was represented by pouring the bulk of the blood beside the altar, for that blood represented the worshippers who are thus made “one with the altar.” This is obvious from the use of the symbolism in the Apocalypse. John saw “under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (Rev. 6:9). By “souls” is meant blood, for the life (or soul) “is in the blood” (Lev. 17:11 — the Hebrew *nephesh* translated “life” is rendered “soul” elsewhere).

So Bro. Thomas further comments (*Eureka*, vol. 2, p. 238): “From these premises, then, the reader will easily comprehend the phraseology of the fifth seal concerning ‘souls underneath the altar.’ When ‘the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus,’ and therefore ‘within the altar,’ die and return to their parent earth without violence, they are ‘underneath the altar,’ ‘sleeping in Jesus,’ ‘dwelling in the dust,’ ‘sleeping in the dust of the earth:’ but if they are made to lie ‘underneath the altar’ by the blood-shedding cruelty of the enemy, their souls are said, as in the language of the fifth seal, to cry with a great or loud voice for judicial vengeance on the murderers, who poured out their soul-blood unto death. Abel’s blood shed by Cain is said to have a *voice*, and to *speak*: ‘the voice of the bloods of thy brother cry to Me from the ground’ (Gen. 4:10); and the blood of Jesus, shed by his brethren of the flesh, ‘*speaks* better things than the blood of Abel’ speaks...”

Hence, when the blood of the bullock was poured out on the ground at the base of the altar, it witnessed that the lives of worshippers would be brought to death,

but not without hope, for there, above, on the horns of the altar, was blood also, speaking of a life of dedication that will rise to newness of life. The blood on the horns of the altar (its most prominent part) pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ; whereas that poured out at its base represented the lives of worshippers.

VERSE 13

“And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards” — The fat (*cheleb*) represents the stored-up riches of the animal; its choicest part. Fat is stored energy, which the law of the sacrifice taught had to be completely given unto Yahweh (cp. Lev. 7:23). Worshippers would recognise that they had to reserve for Yahweh the greatest energy of their being and the richest portion of their possessions.

“And the caul” — The Hebrew word *yothereth* is from a root signifying, to jut over, or to exceed, and by implication, to excel. It defines the lobe or flap of the liver (as if redundant or overhanging — see J. Strong), and thus relates to the liver net or stomach net which commences at the division between the right and the left lobes of the liver, and stretches on the one side across the stomach, and on the other to the regions of the kidneys (Unger). The caul, therefore, is a protection to these vital parts of the body. It is described as the *lesser omentum*, a layer of the inner lining of the cavity of the belly partly enveloping the liver. When such is removed, the vital organ of the liver is exposed. Removing the caul in sacrifice, therefore, suggests the need of worshippers to extend their energy at the expense of life itself: to dare something for God.

“That is above the liver” — The word for “liver” in Hebrew is *kabed*, as the heaviest of the viscera. The word is derived from a root that signifies in a bad sense, that which is dull and burdensome; and in a good sense, that which is generous, rich and honorable. The word is an apt one, for the liver largely governs the feelings of an individual: as “liverish,” or otherwise. It was to the Hebrew the very

source and centre of life.

The sacrifice taught that a person's feelings and very emotions, the source and centre of his happiness, had to be offered unto Yahweh. The liver inspects the food taken into the body and rejects that which is poisonous. It stores food, reserving sufficient to keep the body functioning for some days. Bile, which is a waste product, is converted by the liver into a fluid to aid digestion. All these functions of the liver can be applied spiritually..

"And the two kidneys" — The Hebrew word *kilyath*, is from a root signifying, to completely prepare a thing. In that regard, the kidneys help separate and expel poisons from the body. They are two in number, situated in the back part of the abdomen, one on each side of the vertebral column, surrounded by a mass of fat and areolar tissue. They are for the purpose of separating from the blood certain materials which, when dissolved in a quantity of water, also separated from the blood, constitute the urine. When the kidneys are referred to figuratively, they are rendered as "*reins*," quite a fitting description of these vital parts of the body, for as healthy kidneys govern the feelings of a person, and therefore frequently influence his desires and actions, so the man-made reins govern the direction of an animal. Because of their sensitiveness, the Hebrew looked upon the kidneys as the seat of desire. Thus when suffering deeply, a man is said to be "pricked in his kidneys" (Psa. 73:21); when fretting affliction overcomes him, his kidneys are said to be cloven asunder (Job 19:27). Yahweh is frequently called the *Trier of the heart and reins* (kidneys), and of the ungodly it is said, that He is *far from their reins* (Jer. 12:2).

The use of the word "reins" to describe the kidneys is appropriate, inasmuch that, as reins guide an animal along the pathway, so a person's life is largely governed by his kidneys in health and in sickness. The offering of the kidneys in sacrifice witnessed that the worshippers must give up their desires to Yahweh. Figuratively, their "kidneys" must expel the poison that would otherwise mar a life

of true worship and dedication.

"And the fat that is upon them" — As indicated above, fat represents stored energy. It denotes the general health, vigour, and excellence of an animal. Worshippers need to expend this in service to Yahweh; hence it was offered on the altar.

"And burn them upon the altar" — They formed part of the burnt offering, which was slowly consumed on the altar, the fire gradually devouring every part of the animal, causing it to ascend as smoke into heaven. It was not ordinary fire that did this, but fire provided by Yahweh (see Lev. 9:24). The burnt offering taught that worshippers must be consumed by the fire, or zeal, of the Word; it must consume their very beings. "Quench not the spirit," wrote Paul (1Thes. 5:19), likening the Spirit-Word to the fire upon the altar. When the Lord, full of righteous indignation at the way in which the mercenary-minded Jews were desecrating the temple, overthrew their tables, and drove out the animals they haggled over, the apostles remembered that it was written of him: "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17). A person consumed with the zeal of the Truth is a continual burnt offering in the sight of Yahweh.

VERSE 14

"But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin offering" — The remarkable spiritual significance of this is revealed by Paul in Heb. 13:11-13. So, in fulfilment of the type, Christ also "suffered without the gate," and we, also, are called upon to "go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Thus, the Mosaic system could not provide an effective sacrifice for sin, and, therefore, to obtain it one must go beyond the Law, unto the realm of Grace. The animal sacrifice was only a type, a shadow of that which was to come, for "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). The Law demonstrated this, and in so doing, acted as a "schoolmaster" to lead to Christ, that a person "might be justified

by faith" (Gal. 3:24). The flesh was set aside "as profiting nothing" (John 6:63), whilst the mind and the emotions were offered upon the altar to Yahweh. The details of this are outlined in Lev. 4:8-12.

The flesh and substance of the animal were to be taken out "unto a clean place" where they were consumed. The antitype was fulfilled in that the Lord, having given his mind and emotions completely to his Father, and so rendering perfect obedience to His will, was buried in a clean place" (John 19:41), prior to his flesh becoming a spirit body of glory and incorruptibility.

VERSE 15

"Thou shalt also take one ram" —

The word for "ram" is *ayil*, from a Hebrew root signifying *strength*. The sacrifice of the ram, therefore, denoted the strength of the body given in service unto Yahweh. This was in accordance with the requirements of the Law: "Thou shalt love Yahweh thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength" (Mark 12:30). But the only one who has ever accomplished this is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Protector of the flock — as was the ram of the sheep flock. The type of the ram, therefore, pointed to the Lord.

"And Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram" —

By so doing they identified themselves with the offering representatively, as their federal head, giving public witness that, like him, they would expend their strength in loving service to Yahweh. Typically, Aaron and his family pointed forward to Christ personal and multitudinous.

VERSE 16

"And thou shalt slay the ram" —

Representing the denial of flesh, the putting to death of the *diabolos* (Heb. 2:14), "the body of sin" (Rom. 6:6).

"And thou shalt take his blood" —

Representative of life offered to God (Lev. 17:11).

"And sprinkle it round about upon the altar" — Blood so used represented life given in service to Yahweh. The Soncino translation renders "sprinkle" as

"dash," and Jewish tradition states that the blood was thrown at two opposite corners of the altar, thus moistening all the four sides in a complete action.

VERSE 17

"And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces" — This is literally "*into its pieces*." The animal was divided into its several parts representative of "heart, soul, mind and strength."

"And wash the inwards of him" —

This taught the worshippers that mere externals of religion, its formalism, are not sufficient. True worship comes from within the mind and heart (Rom. 7:22), which likewise must be "clean" in the sight of Yahweh.

"And his legs" — The legs are the parts of the body that collect dust and dirt more than any other along the pathway of life. A worshipper might theorise upon the Truth without giving practical expression to it in a faithful "walk." In the symbolism of sacrifice, special attention was given to that facet of worship.

"And put them unto his pieces" —

After carefully washing them they were replaced with the other pieces of the carcass.

"And unto his head" — The margin renders this as "upon his head," thus demonstrating that true worship is first a matter of the mind, and of understanding. If "the mind of Christ" is in a worshipper, his actions will more perfectly conform to the walk of Christ. This was dramatised in the altar worship by giving special prominence in the placing of the pieces of the sacrifice to conform to the head.

VERSE 18

"And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar" — The whole carcass had to be consumed by the divine fire provided for the purpose. In like manner "true worshippers... worship the Father in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). Their actions conform to the Truth which motivates their being, and so they are consumed by zeal, as the sacrifice was by the fire.

"It is a burnt offering unto Yah-

weh” — As the pieces were placed on the altar so as to allow the fire to more easily consume them. So we should seek to make our walk and our ways conformable to the Word.

“It is a sweet savour” — The word “sweet” is *nichoach*, “restful, pleasant, delightful.” Such an offering was something in which Yahweh found pleasure: a giving of self in sacrifice (Phil. 4:18).

“An offering made by fire unto Yahweh” — A service in which the flesh is completely absorbed by the Word.

Aaron As Yahweh’s Representative For the People — vv. 19-28.

In Exodus 28, Aaron is revealed as a mediator on behalf of the people, bearing their burdens (v. 12), compassionate toward their weakness (v. 29), wisely guiding and judging them (v. 30), teaching them (v. 35), and constantly asserting the holiness of Yahweh as the ideal to which they should strive (vv. 36, 38). To that end, he must be properly prepared. This takes the form of calling, cleansing (washing), clothing and consecration.

VERSE 19

“And thou shalt take the other ram” — This is called “the ram of consecration” (cp. v. 31; Lev. 8:22).

“And Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram” — Cp. v. 10.

VERSE 20

“Then shalt thou kill the ram” — The ram seems to take the form of a peace offering (Lev. 3: 1-17), though differing from normal peace offerings inasmuch as its blood is applied to the persons of the priests. Such a sacrifice implies that peace with God involved the priests putting to death the flesh, and giving their lives and power in dedication to the service of Yahweh as His representatives to the people.

“And take of his blood” — The blood represented the life of the offerers. In this case, it was given back to them in order that it might be devoted to Yahweh’s service.

“And put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron” — Sacrificial blood applied to the organ of hearing consecrated it to Yahweh’s use: it must always be open to His instruction. Christ was foremost in that regard (John 8:47).

“And upon the tip of the right ear of his sons” — They too, were called of Yahweh. As Aaron typed the Lord, his sons typed his disciples, who are likened to “the children” of Christ (Heb. 2:13). It is their responsibility to give themselves to the study of the Word, and not merely to rely upon the intercessory work of their Redeemer in the absence of any such personal effort (Mat. 7:24).

“And upon the thumb of their right hand” — The blood of the ram of consecration sanctified their labour which was ministerial in scope.

“And upon the great toe of their right foot” — It sanctified their walk in life, their “going out” and “coming in.” It taught that their “walk” had to be consistent with their calling: with the instructions they heard, and the ministerial work that they performed.

“And sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about” — See note v. 16. The lessons above have application to all followers of the Lord, for they are called to be priests.

VERSE 21

“And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil” — This second anointing (cp. v. 7) seems to be the only one received by the ordinary priests (cp. Lev. 8:30), so that Aaron was “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows” (Heb. 1:9). The mixture of the blood with the oil symbolised the close connection existing between justification (through the blood) and sanctification (through the Spirit-Word) leading to life eternal.

But why should the high priest be anointed twice in comparison with the single anointing of the ordinary priest? Because of his status, which pointed forward to that of Christ. The unique conception of the Lord constituted him “that holy

thing," and his status as such was further endorsed by his "christing" (anointing) at the Jordan when he commenced his public ministry.

"And sprinkle it upon Aaron" — The verb is *nazar* instead of *zaraq* as in the previous verse. Here it does mean "to sprinkle."

"And upon his garments" — Aaron's garments were the insignia of his holy office, and therefore were sanctified, or set apart, to his exclusive use.

"And upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him" — The principle of holiness was to be continued in the generations of the family of Aaron. His sons would reflect the dedication of their father, as must the "children" of the greater high priest (Heb. 2:13).

"And he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" — All were consecrated to holy service, pointing forward "to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:24).

VERSE 22

"Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump" — For a comment on the use of fat in sacrifice, see v. 13. The word "rump" is *alyah*, from a root signifying "strength." It relates to the stout part of the ram, its fat tail. Sheep are not "tailed" in the Middle East as they are in Australia, and much of the "fat" or "strength" of the animal is stored in its tail. The RV renders the word "fat tail," representing stored energy and goodness.

"And the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them" — See note, v. 13.

"And the right shoulder" — The word in Hebrew is *showq*, from a root signifying *to run*, hence, here denoting the leg as a runner, implying activity, such as should be used in Yahweh's service.

"For it is a ram of consecration" — The word "consecration" is the plural *mil-luim*, fillings. The hands of the high priest were filled with the pieces of the offer-

ings, illustrating what he was called upon to do. The offerings were to be completely consumed; there was nothing to be left to corrupt (v. 34).

VERSE 23

"And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before Yahweh" — See notes on v. 2, and consider the development suggested by these three varieties of bread. Unleavened bread speaks of sincerity and truth (1Cor. 5:8); bread impregnated with oil suggests the influence of the Spirit-Word; whilst reference to "wafers" denotes the effect of discipline, a "learning of obedience" through suffering (Heb. 5:1-4, 7-9).

The word "wafer" is *raqiyq*, from *raq* "to beat, pound, spread out by beating," hence to make thin. The basket containing these significant forms of food is said to be "before Yahweh;" hence in His sight.

VERSE 24

"And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons" — The offerings were to be placed on the hands of Aaron and his sons, suggesting support, co-operation in fellowship in the work which was foreshadowed by them. The antitype is found in the labours of Christ and the believers, to the same end.

"And shalt wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh" — The Hebrew implies that Moses was to do this. Evidently he placed his hands under those of Aaron and his sons, guiding them in the action of waving to and fro, the portions of the offerings to which reference is made (see margin). The combined action of Aaron and his family, in conjunction with Moses, suggests co-operation and fellowship in the work of the Truth, guided by the revelation of the Law in awareness of Yahweh's living presence. The offerings were waved towards the altar to indicate they were Yahweh's, and then back to the priests to show that they were the medium of His manifestation to the people.

VERSE 25

"And thou shalt receive them of

their hands” — In this performance Moses acted as a priestly mediator (Gal. 3:19), combining in his person the roles of lawgiver, ruler, prophet, and priest (cp. vv. 3, 11, 14, 16, etc.), pointing forward to Christ who, likewise, combines in his person all such offices.

“And burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour before Yahweh: it is an offering made by fire unto Yahweh” — Moses was to continue to act as priest by placing the pieces of the offering in order upon the altar, so that they might be entirely consumed with fire. This taught that priestly ministrations were not enough in themselves: they must be governed by principles of divine revelation as represented by Moses and the Law.

The Law thus taught the need of a “great high priest” who, though not born to the priesthood, would, like Moses, act in this capacity.

Thus the Law became as a schoolmaster leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24). Consider what was offered on the altar: *bread*, the fruit of personal labour; *fat*, the best and richest portions of life; *the shoulder*, or leg, indicative of physical activity. All were to be given to Yahweh.

VERSE 26

“And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s consecration, and wave it for a wave offering before Yahweh: and it shall be thy part” — The breast is the seat of affection. Therefore, in this transaction, Moses represented Yahweh (cp. Exo. 4:16), and received the breast, as the seat of affection.

In subsequent transactions this was given to the high priest who represented Yahweh to the people (Lev. 7:31-34). Meanwhile, Moses typified Christ (Deu. 18:18).

VERSE 27

“And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave offering” — Vv. 27-28 comprise a short digression to explain future consecrations, when Moses would not be officiating. On such occasions the breast

and right shoulder were to go to the priests. As these parts of the sacrifice represented the emotions and the main support of the beast, and therefore of the offerer, they were to be given unto Yahweh.

“And the shoulder of the heave offering” — The Hebrew *terumah* is from a root *ruwm*, “to be high” or lifted up. The heave offering represented a gift as offered up to Yahweh, or lifted out of a person’s possessions. It was then ceremoniously lifted up and down to show that it had been given up to Yahweh, and that fellowship was enjoyed between Him in the heavens and His worshippers on earth, in the same way that Jacob saw angels “ascending and descending” between himself and heaven at a time of personal blessing (Gen. 28:12).

“Which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons” — The waving to and fro of the former portion of the offering denoted activity before Yahweh; whereas the “lifting up” of the other part indicated action in fellowship between Him and His priests on behalf of the people.

VERSE 28

“And it shall be Aaron’s and his sons” — As priests they represented Yahweh to the people; therefore what was lifted up to Him was given to them.

“By a statute for ever from the children of Israel” — The word “statute” signifies “enactment,” “appointment,” and was designed for perpetuity or for as long as the Mosaic order remained, as the word *olam* (“for ever”) denotes.

“For it is an heave offering; and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings even their heave offering unto Yahweh” — Wave and heave offerings are always connected with the portions of the priests, and with things dedicated to God’s service (see Exo. 25:2; 35:22, 24; 38:24, 29; Lev. 7:30-34; Num. 18:11, 19, 24, etc.).

Aaron's Successors — Vv. 29-30.

The appointment of future high priests in the Aaronic line which traces their genealogy from him, is now outlined. These verses indicate a second digression (see v. 27) to indicate the future use of the priests' garments.

VERSE 29

“And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons’ after him to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them” — The holy garments, representing the character of the high priest, were to be preserved after his death, so that there was a continuous representation of what was required of the “great High Priest” to come, and for whom the people should seek.

VERSE 30

“And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place” — At the time of consecration the priests were not to leave the tabernacle for seven days (Lev. 8:33). Thus worshippers would learn that priestly ministrations were always available (for *seven* represents completion), and were thereby reminded that Yahweh is always accessible (see Psa. 88:1; 134:1).

This verse completes the second digression as is shown in the AV by the paragraph sign at the beginning of v. 31.

The Partaking of the Offerings**— Vv. 31-35.**

Further instructions are now given to emphasize the fellowship principles of the sacrifices, in which Aaron and his sons represent the nation before God.

VERSE 31

“And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration” — See v. 19. The second ram was a peace offering, in contrast to the first ram which was a burnt offering (cp. v. 18). The size and value of both offerings were equal, suggesting that there needs to be a compensating response from

worshippers to justify the forgiveness of sins they expect from God. To the extent that they are prepared to give themselves up in His service (*as burnt offerings*), they can hope to enjoy the second (*peace with God*). Hence both were of equal value.

The narrative has now reverted to the actions of Moses at the consecration of Aaron.

“And seethe his flesh in the holy place” — This is in contrast to the Passover lamb that had to be roasted (Exo. 12:9). Seething is a slower, more thorough process of cooking than roasting. It is accomplished by immersion in water and by the application of heat. The word *basshal*, rendered “seethe” figuratively signifies *to ripen, to be done*, and hence *to bring to maturity*. The bubbling water is suggestive of zealous activity in the things of Yahweh (Psa. 119:139; 69:9; Gal. 4:18; Tit. 2:14). The meat was cooked in pots (1Sam. 2:13-14), and both the broth and the flesh were eaten (Jud. 6:19).

The “holy place” mentioned was not in the tabernacle itself, but in the court outside. The expression in the Hebrew is “in a holy place,” not “the holy place.” The sacrifice was eaten outside the door of the tabernacle (Lev. 8:31), in the sight of the Israelites gathered to witness the act.

VERSE 32

“And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket” — This was a token of fellowship. As such, the priests ate of it as representing the priestly nation.

“By the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” — As a public witness, representative of all the people.

VERSE 33

“And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them” — The word “atonement” is *kaphar*, “to cover.” Sins were “covered,” “hidden away,” or forgiven thereby. The same principle is illustrated in the atonement effected through Christ. The eating of the offering consecrated the priests to doing the work

of Yahweh, so separating or sanctifying them to that purpose.

“But a stranger shall not eat thereof” — The word “stranger” is *zuwr*, from a root, signifying to *turn aside*, hence a profane person, one not a priest. The latter alone were to partake of this offering; and that being the command, only one who *turned aside* from Yahweh would presume to break the command and eat of the offering.

“Because they are holy” — This taught that fellowship is exclusive. Israel was condemned because its leaders did not observe that exclusiveness (cp. Eze. 44:7). Holiness is a first principle of acceptable worship (Lev. 11:44; 1Pet. 1:14-16).

VERSE 34

“And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire; it shall not be eaten, because it is holy” — As with the Passover lamb, the offerings of consecration had either to be eaten, or burnt with fire; there must be no putrefaction (Exo. 12:10). This pointed forward to the offering of the Lord: his body saw no corruption in the grave (Acts 2:27), and, rising therefrom, his nature was changed from the state of mortality to that of immortality. Thus the type remarkably foreshadowed the antitype.

VERSE 35

“And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons according to all things which I have commanded thee” — As with the construction of the tabernacle, so with the appointment of the priests: all had to be done meticulously according to the divine requirements. The same close attention to detail should be given to the spiritual requirements of those who have been called to be immortal priests in the Age to come.

“Seven days shalt thou consecrate them” — The whole ceremony was repeated seven times, the number of the oath or completion. See the use of *seven* throughout Scripture of which the follow-

ing are examples: the seven encompassings of Jericho by Joshua (Josh. 6:3-4); the seven washings of Naaman (2Kgs. 5:14); the seven ascents of the servant of Elijah on Mount Carmel (1Kgs. 18:43-44), and so forth. The whole purpose of Yahweh with flesh shall be accomplished in seven millennia, at the close of which, a perfected earth, “filled with the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea,” shall be delivered unto Him that He might be “all and in all.” This will be brought about by effective priestly ministration: hence the sevenfold repeated ceremony of consecration.

A similar repetition is required in the age to come in the rehabilitation of Israel after the flesh (Eze. 43:26-27).

Sanctification of the Altar — Vv. 36-37.

Vital instructions are now outlined concerning the altar upon which are presented the various offerings. The basic need for atonement of all elements of man's relationship with God is emphasized.

VERSE 36

“And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement” — This was the same bullock as served for Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8:13-15). The ceremony was repeated seven times during successive days, emphasizing the need of setting aside the flesh, and of continuing priestly ministrations until the completion of the divine purpose with man upon the earth.

“And thou shalt cleanse the altar when thou hast made an atonement for it” — The literal Hebrew, according to the *New Old Testament* should be rendered “Thou shalt purify the altar in [or by] thy making atonement for it.”

The word for “cleanse” is *chata*, a word used elsewhere for “sin.” Accordingly, Rotherham renders the phrase: “and shalt make a sin-cleansing for the altar.” This was done through the blood of the offering. Moses smeared blood on the horns of the altar and poured the rest of the blood at its base (Lev. 8:15). The sig-

nificance of this we have discussed previously.

But why should the altar need "atonement," and why should the term "sin" be used in relation to it, seeing that it never transgressed in any respect? The altar was considered as "defiled" to identify it with a people who had sinned, and needed atonement therefrom. Therefore, it had to be cleansed first in order to provide the means of the forgiveness of sins on the behalf of actual transgressors, who desired to reach unto God through its means. So with Christ our altar (Heb. 13:10). He is our representative because he came in our sin-prone nature, a nature that resulted in transgression in all others who possessed it. Christ, however, rendered complete and perfect obedience unto the Father, *in spite* of the nature he bore. Therefore, though he never sinned, he was related to that which is the cause of sin in all others who possess it: human nature (see Mk. 7:18-23). From this he needed cleansing by a change of nature as we all do. And this was effected through his own blood (Heb. 13:20), by the shedding of which he was highly exalted, and "given a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9).

The cleansing of the altar by Moses, as well as the consecration of the priests, pointed forward to the physical cleansing of the Lord by his own sacrifice — not to his moral cleansing, for he was not in need of such. In the Age to come, the altar erected on Mt. Zion will also be "cleansed" by a similar ceremony (Eze. 43:18-27), although, in that case, it shall point *back* to the offering of the Lord, as in Moses' time it pointed *forward* to it.

"And thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it" — Actually the verses do not express the proper sequence by which the altar was cleansed. Moses first anointed the altar, actually doing this seven times before he anointed Aaron (Lev. 8:11-12). So Christ became our altar before he became our priest.

The altar was purified by the same blood which consecrated Aaron and his sons.

Its virtue was effected by smearing

some of the blood upon its horns, and pouring the remainder at its base. As we have seen previously, the former pointed forward to Christ's offering on his own behalf, the latter to those "in Christ." See the process explained in Lev. 8:10-17.

VERSE 37

"Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it"

— The word "sanctify" signifies, to set apart for special use and purpose. In John 17:19, Christ used the term to describe his own offering, his complete dedication to his Father's will. He was the altar in preparation for the offerings of his people subsequently to be made through him.

"And it shall be an altar most holy"

— The Hebrew is *kadesh kadeshim*: Holy of Holies. See also ch. 40:10. The altar of sacrifice constituted the way into the Holy of Holies, and therefore of itself was identified with that quality.

"Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy" — This rendition has been

challenged on the grounds that it can read: "must be holy," and, therefore, only those persons, or things, already constituted holy were to touch the altar. But the AV is sustained, not only by the Hebrew, but by subsequent interpretation of the verse (see Exo. 30:29). A person touching the holy things was made holy thereby, but such holiness was not transmittable from person to person (see Hag. 2:11-12). In confirmation of this, the Lord pointed out that "the altar sanctified the gift" placed upon it (Mat. 23:19) — thus, the altar made the gift "holy." This justifies the AV translation of the verse before us.

But such holiness is not transmittable to those who might make contact with such "gifts," or those who are thus accounted "holy." Therefore an individual must make personal contact with the Lord, in order to be accounted among the "holy brethren" (Heb. 3:1).

The Continual Burnt Offering

— vv. 38-44.

Following the consecration of the priests and the preparation of the altar,

Moses now is instructed regarding the continual burnt offering to be made thereon every morning and evening. Two young lambs, symbolising early surrender to God, were offered daily, one in the morning and the other in the evening, together with appropriate offerings of bread and wine. These were for a sweet savour to Yahweh, pleasant to Him, in contrast to the wickedness of evil men which is as smoke in His nostrils.

VERSE 38

“Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year” — Lambs of the *first year* speak of early surrender to God. They were a reminder of the Passover (Exo. 12:5), and therefore spoke of divine redemption from oppression and sin.

“Day by day continually” — The offerings constituted a constant reminder to the people that they must render unto Yahweh a daily living sacrifice of themselves (Rom. 12:1).

VERSE 39

“The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even” — Thus the day commenced and concluded with a reminder of what was due to Yahweh: the sacrifice, or denial, of flesh, and the dedication of self to His will. The words “at even” are literally “between the evenings” as in Exo. 12:6.

VERSE 40

“And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour” — This was a reminder of the manna, the bread of life received day by day in the wilderness wanderings (Exo. 16:33-36). Figuratively, it represented strength received through the Bread of life, and given back to Yahweh (Deu. 8:3; Mat. 6:11). The offering of the flour with the lamb reminded Israelites that there is a need to partake of the Word, as well as to sacrifice, and to pray. It constitutes the daily bread, or manna, of life.

In spiritual numerics, “ten” represents the whole.

“Mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil” — The *hin* was a measure of Egyptian origin, approximating to 3 litres (6 pints) according to *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*. “Four” is the number of national Israel, and “beaten oil” is suggestive of light manifested amidst trial (Phil. 2:15). These principles combined, speak of Israel as the nation drawn out of Egypt, manifesting the light of Truth in the midst of pressure and trial. This, all true Israelites are called upon to do.

“And the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering” — Wine is induced by fermentation, and therefore, a sign and symbol of a new life, capable of “cheering God and man” (Judges 9:13).

The reference to the “fourth part” suggests the foundation number of national Israel (Num. 23:10). This is appropriate, for it is the Israelitish hope that brings true joy, and cheers both God and man.

VERSE 41

“And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto Yahweh” — See Psa. 141:2 for the significance of the morning and evening sacrifices. As prayer was offered at these times, the former sacrifice commenced the day on a spiritual note; whilst the evening sacrifice and prayer brought it to a satisfactory conclusion. The former could be used as an opportunity to seek the guidance and help of Yahweh; the latter provided means to review the day and express thanks for the divine assistance and blessings received.

VERSE 42

“This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations” — The *New Old Testament* renders this “for your generations.” The command is made upon the basis that Israel is an eternal nation; that Yahweh finds pleasure in its members giving prayerful thought to Him every morning and evening. Those out of the Gentiles, who today claim iden-

tification with Israel, should keep this principle in mind in their daily lives.

“At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before Yahweh” — The word translated “congregation” is *mowade* in Hebrew, and denotes *an appointed or set time*. The translation, therefore, is faulty, and the RV renders it as a “tent of meeting.” The Law appointed set times

when Israelites were expected to come before Yahweh in worship, as well as defining the place where this should be done. But in this instance, the angel was speaking specifically to Moses, and this implies that there were set times appointed for him personally, to appear before Yahweh for further instruction.

“Where I will meet you, to speak

BURNT OFFERINGS AND PEACE OFFERINGS

Reference has been made to these forms of offerings, and from Exodus 24:5-8 it is obvious that they were made prior to the formal giving of the Law. In making the offering, it was required that the worshipper identified himself with it. The burnt offering, therefore, expressed the individual's self-surrender and complete devotion to God's will; in the peace offering he acknowledged fellowship with Yahweh on the basis of the former, and expressed his gratitude for mercies and bounties received.

Although the Law had not then been given, God had made known His will regarding sacrifices from the time of Adam (see Gen. 4:3-7; 8:20-21; 12:7; 13:4; 15:9-12; 22:13; 26:25; 31:54; 35:7; Exo. 8:26; 10:9, 26 and notes on Exo. 25:5-8).

The Burnt Offering

In presenting this offering, the offerer was conscious of the weakness of flesh; therefore blood was shed, confession was made, and the blood as the symbol of life offered on the altar. But the real purpose of the offering was the earnest desire to serve Yahweh to the fullest extent of one's being. Head (intellect), fat (strength), flesh (being) were placed in this order on the altar (Lev. 1:8-9). It thus expressed submission to Yahweh's will. The word “burnt” (Heb. *olah*, that which ascends — Lev. 1:3) expressed the offerer's desire to elevate his worship to such a degree of dedication as would please and glorify Yahweh (cp. 2Chr. 7:1; Psa. 20:1-3 mg.). But since communion with Yahweh is impossible to anybody tainted with sin (Isa. 59:2), and since no man could be sure of being sinless, the burnt offering was accounted as having an expiatory effect, first before the worshipper's yearning for fellowship with God was fulfilled (Lev. 1:4-5).

The Peace Offering

The Hebrew word *shelem* signifies “to bring as one,” and therefore suggests the idea of unity of fellowship. Portion of the peace offering was eaten by the worshipper, so that in the transaction, Yahweh, the priestly mediator, and the worshipper were united “as one” (Lev. 7:15). This was the cause of great rejoicing as the word suggests (cp. John 14:27; Acts 10:36; Rom. 3:17; 5:1; 10:15; Eph. 2:14-15; 4:3; 6:15; Col. 1:20; Heb. 7:2). There were three kinds of peace offerings: *Thanksgiving* — probably offered in gratitude for some token of divine favour received (Lev. 7:12); *Vow offerings* — probably offered in fulfilment of a pledge made in conjunction with a prayer for some token of divine favour (Lev. 7:16); *Voluntary offerings* — a spontaneous act of worship (Lev. 7:16). With normal peace offerings, the offerer had to bring unleavened bread, wafers, and cakes with oil (Lev. 7:12), as well as leavened bread (Lev. 7:13). This last as an acknowledgement of his consciousness of shortcomings.

there unto thee” — There is a play upon words in this verse. The Hebrew for “meet” is *ya’ad* which signifies *to fix upon*, and therefore suggests a set time for the purpose in mind. It is the root of the word *mowade*, an appointed, or set time. Already Yahweh had agreed to meet with and speak to Israel from the mercy seat (Exo. 25:21-22), but as this statement is made directly to Moses himself, it is obvious that he acted as mediator for the nation in such instances. Though not a priest, Moses had access to both the Holy and the Most Holy places when necessary, foreshadowing the work of Christ. See Exo. 30:6, 36; Num. 7:89; 17:4, and note the important observation of Heb. 7:14.

VERSE 43

“And there I will meet with the children of Israel” — Yahweh promised to meet with the nation. However, lay Israelites could not enter the tabernacle itself, and could only “meet Yahweh” at its entrance, when they brought their sacrifices before Him to the altar. Any closer approach had to be through a priestly mediator. Nevertheless, in this statement He graciously promises to meet them with favour and acceptance, thus inviting them to use the facilities that He would make available to them.

“And the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory” — The word “tabernacle” is not in the original, and the margin replaces it with “Israel.” Actually, both tabernacle and people were sanctified by the divine glory. Yahweh’s presence in the former, by which it was shown to be separated unto His use, was indicated by the *shekinah* glory in the Most Holy; whilst His presence in the people was revealed by their obedience to His will (Exo. 13:2). The separation of Israel from all other nations constituted them a “holy people.”

VERSE 44

“And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar” — The tabernacle was sanctified, or set apart for divine use, by the glory of Yahweh

taking possession of it on its erection (Exo. 40:34); and the altar was sanctified, or set apart, when, on the first occasion of sacrifice being offered thereon, “there came a fire out from before Yahweh, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat” (Lev. 9:24). By such open demonstration Yahweh claimed both as His own.

“I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me in the priests’ office” — This was done in the manner recorded in ch. 40:12-16. Aaron and his sons were publicly inducted into their high office by divine endorsement, for the subsequent filling of the tabernacle with divine glory confirmed the appointment (Exo. 40:34).

VERSE 45

“And I will dwell among the children of Israel” — The indwelling presence of Yahweh, evident in the *shekinah* glory in the physical tabernacle, foreshadowed His manifestation in the spiritual tabernacle of the multitudinous Christ (Heb. 8:2; 9:11-12). Yahweh dwelt among His people in His Son (Mat. 1:23; John 1:14), and His purpose ultimately is to dwell in the midst of all people in the glorified redeemed (Rev. 21:3).

“And will be their God” — Bro. Thomas renders this: “I will be to them *for Elohim*.” This promises that Yahweh is to reveal Himself in true Israelites constituting the Elohim of the Age to come (Luke 20:36). Thus, although these promises have been partially fulfilled, the final and complete fulfilment awaits the time when the “earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea” (Num. 14:21). The centre of that glory will be Jerusalem (Isa. 24:23; 32:1; Mat. 5:35).

VERSE 46

“And they shall know that I am Yahweh their God” — To “know,” in the sense used here, is to have an familiar knowledge that results in a response to the knowing. So “Adam *knew* Eve his wife, and *she conceived*” (Gen. 4:1). Thus to *know* Yahweh’s Name in proper perspec-

tive, is to manifest its attributes of goodness and severity in faithful actions (see Jn. 17:3; Rom. 11:22). It is to experimentally apply the characteristics of the family Name in life.

“That brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am Yahweh their God.” — This was for the purpose of God manifestation, and not merely for the salvation of flesh, that Israelites were drawn out of Egypt. Israelites were separated from the land of sin and death, not simply for their own comfort and convenience, but in order that “I, Yahweh, may dwell among them.” It is for the same purpose that the eternal God is “taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name” (Acts 15:14).

This demands separation, dedication and manifestation. As God was “in Christ” (2Cor. 5:19), so Christ must be in his followers (Eph. 3:16-21; Col. 1:27) in order to justify their status as the true Israel (Gal. 6:16). This demands action on the part of those who would be redeemed.

So Paul cited the Old Testament Scriptures to illustrate this responsible position: “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and

walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. *Therefore* come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing. And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2Cor. 6:16-18). True sonship is conditional upon so acting.

The call of the gospel is not a call to salvation in the absence of God manifestation, for the former is dependent upon the latter. The gospel is designed to transform believers (Rom. 12:1), to make them fit for eternal life. As they build into their lives the qualities of Yahweh as exhibited in the character of His Son, they develop characteristics that are divine and worthy of preservation, and which ultimately will be appropriately perpetuated in a body of incorruptible glory.

The tragedy of Israel is that so few of the many who left Egypt succeeded in entering the Land of promise; and the solemn and ominous warning is that such a failure is set down in Scripture as an exhortation to all to take heed to their own individual conduct (1Cor. 10:11).

THE SEVEN STAGES OF AARON'S CONSECRATION AND THEIR APPLICATION TO CHRIST

1. *Separated* (Exo. 28:1; Lev. 8:2). Thus he was called as a priest of Yahweh. See its application to Christ (Heb. 5:4-5; Isa. 42:1, 6; 49:1; Psa. 110:4).

2. *Brought* (Exo. 29:4; Lev. 8:6). Aaron was thus presented to Israel as Yahweh's representative; as also was Christ (John 1:31; Mat. 3:13-17).

3. *Washed* (Exo. 29:4; Lev. 8:6). The influence of the Word (Psa. 119:9; John 3:5; 15:3; Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5). For its application to Christ, see Luke 2:47, 52; Mat. 3:15; John 12:49-50. His death completed the process of washing (Rom. 6:10; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 1:5).

4. *Clothed* (Exo. 29:5-6). The clothing was appropriate to his service before Yahweh, typifying both the character and the immortal nature of the Lord (2Cor. 5:4).

5. *Anointed* (Exo. 29:7). Christ was anointed as priest by the bestowal of spirit-nature (Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:9). He was previously anointed as prophet (cp. Mat. 17:5, “*Hear ye him*”), and is yet to be publicly anointed as king (Psa. 2:6-7).

6. *Hands filled* (thus consecrated, Exo. 28:41). Aaron became a mediator labouring on the behalf of Yahweh's people, and the Lord Jesus completed this work (1Tim. 2:5; Heb. 4:15).

7. *Sanctified* (Exo. 28:41). Aaron was set apart, as Christ is set apart in the heavens (John 17:19; Heb. 7:26).

CHAPTER THIRTY

FURTHER ESSENTIALS
FOR TABERNACLE WORSHIP

This chapter continues the instructions of Yahweh to Moses regarding the construction of the tabernacle and its accessories. It treats with the altar of incense, the ransom of souls, the laver, the holy anointing oil, and the composition of the incense.

The Altar of Incense — vv. 1-10.

It was similar in appearance to the brazen altar, though smaller in size. Instead of being plated with brass or copper, it was covered with gold. Whereas sinners approach the brazen altar that they may be constituted saints; saints approach the altar of incense that they may commune with God.

VERSE 1

“And thou shalt make an altar” —

The word is *mizbeach* from *zabak*, to slaughter. Thus, although no animal was offered upon it, it was given the same name as the altar of sacrifice, being an extension of it. Only after an offering had been made on the brazen altar could the priest approach the golden altar. This teaches that true worship can only be offered in Christ. We must first make contact with him as the brazen altar, before we can properly enjoy the privilege and communion of complete prayer.

“To burn incense upon” — The word “incense” is *qetoreth* in Hebrew, from *qatar*, “to drive out, to smoke.” The word speaks of the purifying effect of prayer (see Psa. 141:2; Luke 1:9-10). In Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4, incense is used as a symbol for prayer, and represents the fulness of the incense principle.

“Of shittim wood shalt thou make it” — See note ch. 25:5. The *Oxford Gesenius* suggests that this was a loan word from Egypt. If so, it was a reminder of the Egyptian character of flesh. Strong

derives the word from the root *shotet*, “to pierce, scourge” (cp. Josh. 23:13). It is identified with the acacia, from its scourging thorns. W. Brown in *The Antiquities Of The Jews*, claims: “The original word comes from a root which signifies that which is ‘despised, hated, or persecuted.’” It thus represents human nature which must be pierced or crucified, or it will in turn pierce or crucify. See notes, Exo. 25:5.

VERSE 2

“A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof” —

Assuming the cubit is 45cm (18 in.), this altar was 56cm square. Therefore it was not large, and as it was related to prayer, we are warned against lengthy prayers consisting of empty words and vain repetition, expressed by those who “think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Mat. 6:5-13).

“Foursquare shall it be” — See note, ch. 27:1.

“And two cubits shall be the height thereof” — It was only about one metre (3 ft.) high.

“The horns thereof shall be of the same” — This description is similar to that of the brazen altar (see our notes on ch. 27:2). The blood of certain sin offerings was smeared on the horns of this altar (Lev. 4:7, 18). Horns are the symbol of power. Here they tell of the power of prayer reaching to the four corners of the earth.

VERSE 3

“And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold” — This is a contrast to the brazen altar. Gold is the symbol of a tried faith, and as the altar is identified with prayer, the symbolism speaks of the “prayer of faith” (James 5:16 — See our exposition in the book *Making Prayer Powerful*). Though there were close links between the two altars, there also were points of contrast. The brazen altar was outside, and the golden altar inside. The former was made of wood overlaid with brass; the latter of wood overlaid with gold. The first altar had no crown; the second had a crown. The first altar represented Christ in his humiliation, it was related to him as a sacrifice; the second represented him in his glory, at the right hand of the Father. The brazen altar was the place of suffering, and typified Christ as *Sacrifice* and *Saviour*. The golden altar was the place of glory, and typified Christ as *Mediator* and *Redeemer*. Sinners came to the first to be made saints; saints made their way into the second to worship Yahweh acceptably.

“The top thereof” — The Hebrew word is *gog* and represents the roof, the chief (see margin).

“And the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof” — It was entirely enclosed with gold, symbolising a tried faith (1Pet. 1:7). The word for “sides” is rendered “walls” in the margin; so that the altar of prayer had its roof and its walls. Hence it was a “house of prayer” (cp. Isa. 56:7).

“And thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about” — The crown of gold probably acted as an enclosure to keep the fire intact. It symbolised the victory of faith in prayer (see note, Exo. 25:25).

VERSE 4

“And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it” — The endless rings speak of eternity: the reward of faith.

“By the two corners thereof” — The *New Old Testament* renders “by” as “upon.” Hence the rings of the altar of

incense were upon its corners. But what were the corners? The word in the Hebrew is *tsalath* or sides; a cognate word to that rendered “ribs” in Genesis 2, and which likewise should be rendered as “side.”

“Upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it” — The word “sides” is *tsadi*, as in ch. 25:32.

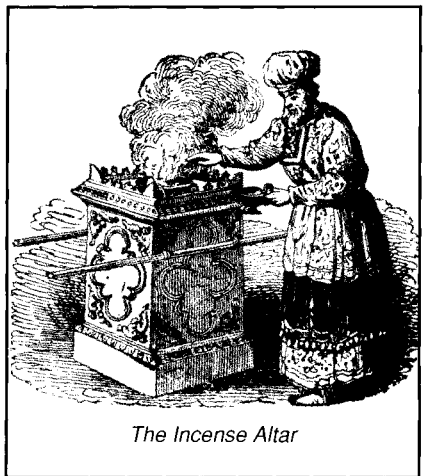
“And they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal” — The word “places” signifies “houses” in Hebrew; hence a dwelling place for the staves. See note, ch. 25:27.

VERSE 5

“And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold” — See notes above.

VERSE 6

“And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you” — The position of this altar was in the direct line of approach to the mercy seat which represented the dwelling place of Yahweh in Israel. It provided the means of personal approach to the throne on high. By means of prayer we can freely “enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10:19). This is “the new and living



The Incense Altar

way” opened up by Christ that enables believers to enter in beyond the veil (see Heb. 10:20). In the tabernacle, the veil closed off contact with the Most Holy, which Christ has now opened.

VERSE 7

“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning” — The Hebrew renders the phrase: *incense of spices* (see mg.), and the component spices are outlined in vv. 34-38. Incense was offered both morning and evening. It symbolised prayer (Psa. 141:2; Rev. 5:8) so that when the incense ascended, the people lifted up their voices to God (Lk. 1:10).

“When he dresseth the lamps” — The lamps of the golden lampstand were to be trimmed and cleaned, their wicks looked to, and fresh oil added, if necessary, every morning and evening (see comment on ch. 27:21). This duty devolved on the priests.

“He shall burn incense upon it” — The light of the lampstand symbolised the illumination of the Word of God, and the burning of incense symbolised prayer, so these enactments caused the *Word and Prayer* to be used in conjunction with each other (Rom. 8:26; Eph. 2:18; Jude 20). Whenever we study God’s Word, we should first seek His guidance, and continue to minister within the divine illumination.

VERSE 8

“And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it” — There is a close link between the lampstand and the altar. Instead of “lighteth,” the margin gives the literal meaning of the Hebrew: “causeth to ascend” (see note, 25:37). We *shine* best before men (lampstand) when our hearts *ascend* most to Yahweh (altar of incense).

Great things have happened at such a time, illustrating how powerful prayer can be. Consider Elijah on Mount Carmel (1Kgs. 18:36-38); Daniel before Gabriel (Dan. 9:21); Peter and John at the temple (Acts 3:1); Cornelius seeking help (Acts

10:30-31); the Lord upon the cross (Mat. 27:45-51). All took place at the appointed time of prayer.

“A perpetual incense before Yahweh throughout your generations” — The efficacy of prayer has not lessened because the altar of incense is not longer used. The principle remains for spiritual Israel to apply (see Luke 18:1; Phil. 4:6; 1Thes. 5:17).

VERSE 9

“Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon” — Specific details are given regarding the composition of the incense to be offered thereon (see vv. 34-38). Two of Aaron’s sons perished because they defied this ordinance (Lev. 10:1). Prayer should not be entered upon lightly, but offered with due consideration of its solemn importance. We must not use an easy familiarity in our approach to Yahweh, but manifest a respectful and reverent attitude as we approach before the eternal Deity.

“Nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon” — The service of the golden altar was to be distinct from that of the brazen altar in the court, though used in conjunction with it. Its sacrifices were those of the heart, the calves of the lips: in emotion and expression (Heb. 13:15).

VERSE 10

“And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year” — On the great day of atonement (the tenth day of the seventh month), after burning incense within the veil, and sprinkling the blood of a bullock and a ram towards the mercy seat, the high priest was to take of the blood, and put it on the horns of the altar of incense “to make an atonement for it; to cleanse and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel” (Lev. 16:18-19). This presents the same lesson as the “cleansing” of the brazen altar (cp. notes, Exo. 29:36).

Christ is the antitypical altar of sacrifice, and altar of incense. He had first to be “cleansed” of human nature before his

sacrifice became truly efficacious; and the same applies to prayer. Prayer was not offered through him until he had died and "was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). The Lord told the disciples: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name" (John 16:24), but he went on to say that this would be changed, and henceforth they should ask in his name as the medium of approach to the Father. As the antitypical altar of incense, atonement had been made, and now prayers are offered through him.

"With the blood of the sin offering of atonements" — The altar of incense became the channel of prayer, and the fact that it became so through sacrifice taught that prayer is unacceptable except through the sin offering. This was further impressed by another use which was made of this altar. When the high priest had sinned in his official character, and offered a sin offering for his cleansing (Lev. 4:3-12), or when the whole congregation had committed an offence through inadvertence, and offered the same (vv. 13-21), the high priest was to put the blood of the sacrifice on the horns of the altar of incense. This taught that confession of sin should be made in prayer.

"Once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto Yahweh" — The altar of incense acted as a link between the Holy and Most Holy places. It is most significant, that in describing these two sections of the tabernacle, Paul makes no mention of the altar of incense, but refers to the golden censer as being in the Most Holy (Heb. 9:3-4). Thus his exposition had relation to the tabernacle on a certain occasion: the day of atonement. On that solemn day a golden censer of burning incense was taken into the Most Holy itself (Lev. 16:12-13) as representing the altar of incense which, in consequence, is not mentioned by the writer. The symbolism taught that through prayer, we can enter the Most Holy itself "by the blood of Jesus," our sin offering (Heb. 10:19).

In consequence of this symbolism, the altar of incense is styled "the altar that

belonged to the oracle" (1Kgs. 6:22, RV). Christ, as our altar of incense, is "most holy unto Yahweh," as was the altar in the tabernacle. Whereas the brazen altar commenced acceptable worship by providing the means of atonement, the golden altar completed the process by providing a channel of communion.

The Ransom Of Souls — vv. 11-16.

There was to be no placing of confidence in flesh, no glorying in numbers, but a recognition that everyone was dependent upon Almighty God for salvation. Accordingly, whenever, for any purpose, a census of Israelites had to be taken, the principle that "the flesh profiteth nothing" was brought home by every individual paying a "ransom for his soul." The word "ransom" means expiation, and conveys the same idea as atonement (v. 15). Payment of this ransom was obligatory; failure to do so could result in a plague upon offenders. The payment also brought home to a person his real worth in the sight of Yahweh.

VERSE 11

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — Further important laws are now given for Israel follow.

VERSE 12

"When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number"

— Whenever a census was to be taken, this ransom money had to be paid. Examples of such numberings are recorded in Exo. 38:25 and Num. 1:2; 26:2.

"Then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto Yahweh, when thou numberest them" — The word "ransom" is *kopher*, "cover," from *kaphar*, "atonement" (see v. 15). The payment of this ransom reminded every Israelite that he owed his life unto Yahweh, and because of the consciousness of his own failings, there had to be a recognition of his personal unworthiness to be numbered among the people of God. The ransom money paid is contrasted by Peter to "the precious blood of Christ" (1Pet. 1:19).

“That there be no plague among them, when *thou* numberest them” — The payment of such a sum was calculated to humble each Israelite, to remind him that he was related to death, and, in need of Yahweh’s mercy and grace. If, through pride or presumption, the payment was not made, the plague of death would retain its power and destroy those guilty of such. Even forgetfulness would be so punished (see 2Sam. 24:15).

VERSE 13

“This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary” — The shekel so defined was a weight of silver (see Lev. 5:15), so that symbolically silver became the metal of redemption. The words of Yahweh, which reveal the means of redemption to a believer, are likened to pure silver refined in a furnace of earth (the flesh, Psa. 12:6). Solomon taught that divine wisdom which develops *faith* (true gold) and brings to light the principles of *redemption* (true silver) “is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold” (Pro. 3:14).

How much, in money value, did an Israelite have to pay as a ransom for his soul, and his life (as the word signifies)? What will a man give for his life when held to ransom? He will give everything, mortgaging every possession to keep his hold on life. And merely for a few short years of frustration and disappointment leading to death!

But what about the redemption of life by the bestowal of immortality? How much is that worth! All the wealth in the world cannot purchase it: “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches: None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever); That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption” (Psa. 49:6-9).

To bring that principle home to the people, and to humble them as to their real

value, in this age of inflation, the half shekel of silver has been rated at about 50 cents. A man could look at that coin in his hand, and consider that God so considers his worth as 50 cents! Or, on the other hand, he could view it as a mere token of a price beyond his ability to pay. He would then see, in the pitifully inadequate sum, a manifestation of the goodness and grace of Yahweh. As he contemplated the beneficence of Yahweh towards him, in the small amount that he was compelled to pay, he might be induced to manifest a similar beneficence and mercy towards his fellowmen. The parable of the unforgiving debtor (Mat. 18:23-35) is illustrative of our responsibilities towards each other in view of the mercy and forgiveness we receive from God. Compare the 50 cents in value, which we might render unto the Father in service and thanks for all He has done for us, in comparison with the great price that actually has been paid for our redemption (1Pet. 1:18)!

“(A shekel is twenty gerahs)” — A half shekel, therefore, represented ten gerahs, and ten is the number of fulness. If Israel provided one half shekel of redemption money, who completes the shekel? Surely Gentile believers, so making the shekel complete.

The word “shekel” comes from a root signifying *to suspend*, as though incomplete. The word “gerah” is the name given to a berry, like a bean, twenty of which made a shekel, being about 15 grams (half an ounce). It signifies “to drag or bring up; hence to ruminare,” and as such it is related to chewing the cud. What a significant word to use in this relationship!

Each Israelite had to bring ten gerahs, and the number “ten” has the spiritual significance of fulness. This taught that Yahweh did not merely want their ten gerahs of silver, or the redemption money. He sought their ten gerahs of thoughtful meditation on all that He had done for them.

“An half shekel shall be the offering of Yahweh” — The census revealed that some 603,550 men had to pay the half shekel of silver (Exo. 38:25-26). Though the amount paid was small in regard to

each individual, it made a good sum when accumulated. So with the Truth. Though an ecclesia may be small in number, its members will make up part of that great company of people "which no man could number" (Rev. 7:9), who, though humbled by Yahweh, have performed a useful service in His ministry.

The silver given was to be devoted to "the service of the tabernacle" (Exo. 30:16). It provided the means for the silver sockets of the tabernacle, and hooks for the pillars upon which was displayed the veil. Significantly, the silver sockets provided the foundation of the tabernacle, teaching that the basis of "the ecclesia in the wilderness" (whether in Old Testament times or now) is the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ; whilst the hooks, displaying the veil which set forth the work of Yahweh in Christ, are expressive of ecclesial members proclaiming the Truth set forth before men.

VERSE 14

"Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto Yahweh" — The age of twenty was considered the age of maturity, when an Israelite became liable for military duties (Num. 1:3), and Levites began their service in the temple (1Chr. 23:24). Likewise, young people in the ecclesias should reach forth to maturity in Christ, giving themselves to the fight of faith, assuming responsibilities for the service of the Brotherhood.

VERSE 15

"The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel" — A wealthy, successful man might imagine that he was worth more than his poor brother, and therefore seek to give more, but the Law reduced all to one common level. The king on his throne, the shepherd leading the sheep: both were equally in need of redemption, and the price of this for one was exactly the same as for the other. Each one had to pay for himself. The poor had to make his contri-

bution, and in doing so, reached equality with the wealthiest of the land; whilst the latter was brought down to a common level with his poorer brother. Thus, salvation in Christ illustrates that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Christ similarly paid the redemption money (Mat. 17:24-27). By then, payment of a yearly tribute had become a custom brought about, based upon the ransom money required under the Law. Originally, the instructions, as outlined in the chapter before us, provided that it should be paid only when a census was taken, but Jewish tradition had converted this into a kind of yearly temple tax. Therefore, there was no obligation according to the Law for the Lord to pay the tax, but in his humility he complied with the requirements of the time, "lest we should offend," as he told Peter. He did so voluntarily, generously (v. 27), and not out of necessity: and therefore, humbled himself to comply — a spirit we should learn to emulate.

"When they give an offering unto Yahweh, to make an atonement for your souls" — The lives of Israelites were forfeited if they failed to carry out the instructions completely.

VERSE 16

"And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" — The ransom money provided silver for the sockets that supported the boards of the tabernacle, and for the hooks, capitals and connecting rods of the pillars surrounding the court (Exo. 38:25-28). Thus every Israelite was represented in the tabernacle, doing service to the glory of Yahweh.

What does this mean to us today? What is the token money we offer back to Yahweh as payment for His grace and mercy? It is our humble service in the things of the Truth. In comparison to the blessings we receive from God, our sacrifices are like a mere "50 cents," in contrast

to the wealth of the world. But by the combined efforts of many they can become great in what is accomplished, and provide pleasure for Yahweh. The humble efforts of faithful men and women are not to be despised, and are not disdained by the Father and Son. By co-operation in the support (sockets) and display (hooks, etc.) of the Truth, fruit can be brought forth to the glory of Yahweh (see John 15:2, 5, 16). "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (v. 8). The co-operation of humble labourers in the things of God can produce great results through His blessing.

"That it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before Yahweh" — As a memorial, the payment of this money, and the terms that governed it, were designed to be thoughtfully considered by true Israelites, that they might see beyond the obvious facts to the underlying principles, and reach forth to the spiritual lessons intended to be revealed thereby.

It was a memorial *before Yahweh*. Israelites are called upon to consider its teaching in the light of His revelation.

"To make an atonement for your souls" — An "Israelite indeed" would see that this pointed forward to the true atonement in Christ (1Pet. 1:18-20). It is obvious that the Psalmist meditated upon this ordinance, and recognising the limitations of the Law, looked forward to the complete redemption to be brought about through the means of the Seed of the Woman promised at the very beginning (see Psa. 49). Notice that this Psalm 49 is "for the sons of Korah." Korah perished in the great revolt, as did his companions in crime, together with their families. But the sons of Korah were saved from that catastrophe, for in some way they were separated from the sin of their parent, and preserved from the disgrace and death that overcame him. This incident reveals that Yahweh is always just in His judgment and does not act causelessly toward His people (Eze. 14:23).

The Laver — vv. 17-21.

Very little is recorded concerning this

important piece of furniture. We are not told its shape or size, nor the manner in which it was covered or conveyed when taken from place to place. So much concerning it is enshrouded in mystery. But even this is appropriate. For the laver represents the Word of God upon which so many have stumbled. The gospel in Christ is described as "the revelation of the mystery [secret], which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25).

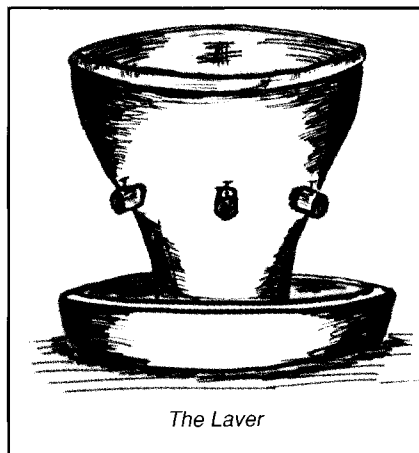
VERSE 17

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — Further instructions are now given concerning the laver in the outer court of the tabernacle.

VERSE 18

"Thou shalt also make a laver" — The word in the Hebrew is *kiyor*, and J. Strong gives its meaning as *something round*. It is from a root signifying to *excavate* or *dig*, which is most appropriate in view of the type. The laver represented the Word of God, shown beyond doubt by Paul's use of it in Eph. 5:26, "That he [Christ] might sanctify and cleanse it [the ecclesia] by the laver of water, by the Word."

The word "washing" in this verse is *loutron* in the Greek, and signifies *bath* or *laver*. The laver, therefore, relates not to



The Laver

baptism as such, but to the Word of God that makes baptism valid. The priests washed at the laver both before and after attending the altar of sacrifice (Exo. 40:30-33); before ministering at the altar, and before entering the tabernacle proper. The antitype is revealed in the influence and need of the Word both before baptism (i.e., in making contact with Christ as the altar of sacrifice), and after baptism (when walking in the holy place in the course of daily life). It is appropriate that the laver should be round (as the Hebrew intimates) for it reveals the way to life eternal, symbolised by the unending circle.

“Of brass” — Most likely copper or bronze (a mixture of tin and copper then in frequent use). The metal, having gone through the fire to purify it and make it malleable, represents the flesh purified by the trials of life upon the basis of the Word of Life (Num. 16:37-38).

The laver represents the Word of God, but by what means has it been given? Through the channel of flesh specially prepared for the purpose, for “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2Pet. 1:21; Heb. 1:1). The prophets were men of flesh, but through divine inspiration, they have given unto us the infallible Word.

“And his foot also of brass, to wash withal” — The word for “foot” is *ken*, from a root signifying, to stand erect, to be upright. It is rendered “faithfulness” (Psa. 5:9), “establish” (2Sam. 7:12; Psa. 89:2, 4), which the antitypical laver-washing is intended to accomplish.

Its shape is not given, but some have suggested that it was a wide shallow bowl into which the water from the large upper reservoir could pour. Eastern people do not wash in a bowl or basin, but always in running water, if at all possible. If a basin is used, the water is poured over the part of the body to be washed. Accordingly, in connection with the laver, Kitto writes:

“Our impression is that the laver, whatever were its shape, stood upon another basin, more wide and shallow, as a cup on a saucer; and that the latter received, from cocks or spouts in the

upper basin, the water, which was allowed to escape when the priests washed themselves with the water which fell from the upper basin. If by ‘under-basin’ we understand the ‘foot’ of the text, the sense is clear. The text does not say that the priests were to wash themselves *in* the basin, but *at* it. *In* it they could not well wash their hands and feet if the laver was of any height. The rabbis say the laver had several cocks, or ‘nipples’ as they call them, from which the water was let out as wanted. There were several such spouts, but the number is differently stated. How the priests washed their hands and feet at the laver seems uncertain. That they did not wash *in* either the laver or its basin seems clear, because then the water in which they washed would have been rendered impure by those who washed before or with them; and as we know that Orientals do not like to wash in a basin, after our manner, in which the water with which we commence washing is clearer than that with which we finish, but at a falling stream, where each successive effusion is of clean water, we incline to think that the priests either washed themselves with the stream as it fell from the spouts into the base, or else received in proper vessels so much water as they needed for the occasion. The Orientals, in their washings, make use of a vessel with a long spout, and wash at the stream which issues from thence, the waste water being received into a basin which is placed underneath. This seems to us to illustrate the idea of the laver and its base, as well as the ablutions of the priests. The laver had thus its upper-basin, from which the stream fell, and the under-basin for receiving the waste water; or it is quite compatible with the same idea and practice to suppose that, to prevent too great an expenditure of water, they received a quantity in separate vessels, using it as described, and the base receiving the water which in washing fell from their hands and feet. This explanation, although it seems to us probable, is, necessarily, conjectural. The Jewish commentators say that any kind of water might be used for the laver; but that

it was to be changed every day. They also state that ablution before entering the tabernacle was in no case dispensed with. A man might be perfectly clean, might be quite free from any ceremonial impurity and might even have washed his hands and feet before he left home, but still he could by no means enter the tabernacle without previously washing at the laver."

The evidence seems strong, that the laver was round in shape, and that it stood in a shallow base like a huge cup in a saucer, and that the water was received through spouts or taps. It certainly suggests the type. The circular form of the laver suggests immortality, for its rim is never ending; whilst running water speaks of living water, the water of life.

"And thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar" — The laver stood in this prominent position as an important lesson to all Israel. Placed between the altar and the tabernacle, it reminded worshippers that those who bear the vessels of Yahweh had to be clean (Isa. 52:11).

Therefore, before engaging upon any of the work set them to do, the priests were publicly seen to wash themselves in its water, representative of the Truth (Psa. 119:9; John 15:3; 17:17). The Word must be our guide, cleansing our actions: "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee" (Pro. 6:22).

"And thou shalt put water therein" — In itself, the laver was useless, an empty vessel, without the water; the Bible is of little use unless its message is understood. When this is heeded, and becomes the motivating influence of our lives, it will cleanse us of evil, and guide us in the way that Yahweh would have us go. The Word reveals sin for what it is (Rom. 3:20), enables a believer to recognise "what manner of person he is" (James 1:23-25), and teaches him of the way that is pleasing to God.

VERSE 19

"For Aaron and his sons shall wash

their hands and their feet thereat" — Aaron and his sons had been thoroughly washed at their consecration as priests (Exo. 29:4), but because of the proneness of flesh to go astray, additional periodic cleansing was required (Psa. 26:6; John 13:10; Eph. 5:26-27). Having been educated in the Word, believers are consecrated as priests in baptism (1Pet. 2:9). But can they henceforth ignore the Word? By no means! Constant study and meditation thereon, is necessary. There must be a continual "increase in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10) if they are to retain their virility in His service; otherwise they would become useless in the service of Yahweh.

Accordingly, the priests of Israel were seen to frequently wash at the laver; and our attention to the "washing of the Word" (Eph. 5:26) must be evident to others.

VERSE 20

"When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not" — This solemn warning emphasizes the importance of regular Bible study. In his last exhortation to Israel, Moses called upon the people to "set their hearts unto all the words" he had placed before them; for, said he, "it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life" (Deu. 32:46-47). The subsequent failure of the nation was due to their neglect of this essential quality (Jer. 13:11).

"Or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto Yahweh" — Worship in the absence of the cleansing influence of the Word avails nought. The washing at the laver before offering the burnt sacrifice demonstrated what the offerer should do: give himself completely to the will of God through the influence of the Word.

VERSE 21

"So they shall wash their hands and feet, that they die not" — Hands and feet symbolically point to *work* and *walk*. These must be according to the will of Yahweh, and not according to what we

assume would please Him. So stringent was the law, that the death penalty was the price paid for ignoring it. The preparation for service on the part of the priests therefore required:

[1] Their nakedness be properly covered (Exo. 28:43) — the antitype is the covering of Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:26-28). The principle of *preparation*.

[2] They constantly wash at the laver (Exo. 30:21) — the antitype is the constant reading of the Word (Eph. 5:26-27). The principle of *application*.

[3] Their sound to be heard in the Holy Place (Exo. 28:35) — the antitype is the constant preaching of the gospel by those in Christ. The principle of *activity and performance*.

There is an important progression of ideas thus set forth for believers to emulate today.

“And it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations” — The principles remain to be observed to this day.

The Holy Anointing Oil — vv. 22-23.

Moses is instructed to make a special anointing oil. It is to be used exclusively for those things and persons as Yahweh should direct. It consecrated them, set them apart from others for His special



use. It conferred divine authority upon them in the work set them to do. Its antitype is the Word of God, described also as the Truth (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1John 5:7). An understanding of the Word brings with it responsibility to obey, and therefore is the medium of sanctification (John 17:17).

VERSE 22

“Moreover Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — This statement introduces a new subject to the narrative.

VERSE 23

“Take thou also unto thee principal spices” — The word *besemin* signifies “fragrance.” There was to be a pleasing odour about the anointing oil which finds its antitype in actions motivated by the Spirit-Word (cp. Phil. 4:18).

“Of pure myrrh five hundred shekels” — The word *derowr* rendered “pure” actually signifies “free running,” hence suggestive of spontaneous reaction to an influence. The RV renders it as “flowing.” It is translated “liberty” in Lev. 25:10; Isa. 61:1; Jer. 34:8, 15, 17; Eze. 46:17. As to identification of the myrrh, *Zondervan’s Encyclopaedia of the Bible* states: “It is generally agreed that myrrh came from *Commiphora Myrrha*, which grows in Somaliland, Ethiopia, and Arabia. The trunk is large and carries numerous knotted branches, the outer bark of which is thin and papery. Small leaves grow in clusters on the wood. When the bark is pierced, a thick white gum appears, which hardens and turns reddish on exposure to the air. This aromatic gum is gathered and taken to market, where it has been sold as a spice or medicine from the earliest times.”

Though the gum exudes naturally from the branches, any artificial incision will produce an immediate supply. It then becomes “flowing myrrh.”

The word “myrrh” comes from a root signifying, *bitterness*. Indeed, the taste of the gum is bitter, but its smell is agreeable. It is, therefore, an apt ingredient for the anointing oil, related as it is to the Spirit-

Word. When Ezekiel and John were given scrolls of the Word of God to eat, they found the experience both sweet and bitter (Eze. 3:3, 14; Rev. 10:9). This first ingredient of the anointing oil spoke of the bitter-sweet experiences occasioned by viewing life from the standpoint of the Word.

The weight of *five hundred shekels* suggests the abundance of grace.

“And of sweet cinnamon” — In its Hebrew form the word “sweet” (*bedem*) suggests that which is fragrant or spicy, whilst the word “cinnamon” (*qinnamown*) signifies that which is erect or upright. This is appropriate to the symbol. The Spirit-Word will cause a person to become fragrant and upright. The spice was obtained from the inner bark of the *Cinnamomum Zeylanicum*, a tree that grows to about ten metres (30 ft.) high, and is native of Ceylon or India. Its presence in the anointing oil suggests the development of an inner life, “the man within.” When processed, it produces a golden oil suggestive of faith that comes through “hearing the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

“Half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels” — Only half as much cinnamon, as myrrh, is to be supplied, perhaps because fewer are prepared to dig deeper into the Word.

“And of sweet calamus” — This is a translation of the Hebrew *qanech* signifying *erect*, and relating to a fragrant cane whose root is highly prized as a spice. It is

said that the fragrance is more pronounced when the cane is bruised. This is also the reaction of those motivated by the Word, when subjected to trial. The same word is used for the measuring reed of Eze. 40:3.

“Two hundred and fifty shekels” — See note above. The cinnamon and calamus together add to the five hundred shekels: both elements being required to produce the “grace” here represented.

VERSE 24

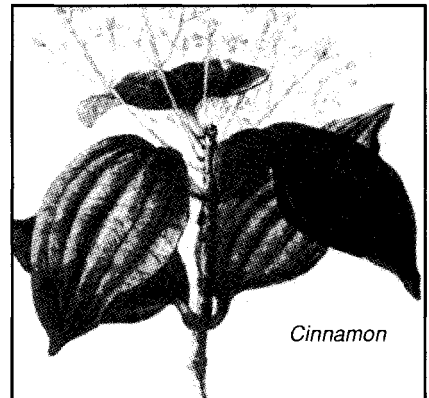
“And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary” — The Hebrew word *qiddah* is from a root signifying, to shrivel up, to bend the body or neck in deference. Cassia is a coarser variety of cinnamon.

“And of oil olive an hin” — The olive is used frequently as a symbol; see note on Exo. 27:20. The measure *hin* is of Egyptian origin, and is approximately 3.5 litres (6 pints).

VERSE 25

“And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment” — In v. 31 this is rendered as “an holy anointing oil.” It was holy because it was separated for exclusive use, with a specific prohibition against others using it (cp. v. 32).

Oil is a symbol of the Spirit of God. The Hebrew word, *shemen* has the idea of richness, such as seen in the flowing liquid. Being “holy,” the oil was to be



used solely for the divine purpose, and represents Yahweh's selection of a people who manifest His characteristics.

This principle was only perfectly fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was anointed with the Spirit, and so received the title of Christ (Heb. 1:9; Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38). But his true status as such was acknowledged after his resurrection to spirit-nature (Acts 2:36; Rom. 1:4).

A person or thing anointed by God's appointment was set apart for the office or purpose to which either he or it was called, whether it be as king, priest, prophet, place of authority, or of worship. Inanimate objects such as the tabernacle, and its furniture, were anointed to show that Yahweh laid claim to them, and that they, too, were separated for exclusive use as required by God. The anointing with oil as far as individuals were concerned was a symbol of endowment with the Spirit of God (1Sam. 10:1,6; 16:13; Isa. 61:1) by which a person received guidance in the execution of his high office.

The term "Holy Spirit," however, can apply to the Word of God (see John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1John 5:7). In his prayer to the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ referred to this as the medium of sanctification (John 17:17). It is sometimes called "the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16-17) because it was revealed through the spirit-power of God (Heb. 1:1; 2Pet. 1:21; 1Pet. 4:14; Rev. 2:11).

Having come to an understanding of the Spirit-Word, a person must allow its influence to motivate him, for, figuratively, he is anointed with it (see 1John 2:26-28).

Hence the special anointing oil has an application to the Word of God in its influence upon believers today.

The number of ingredients is also important. It was compounded, as we have seen, of four basic spices mixed with olive oil, making five ingredients in all. Five is the number of grace, and the purpose of anointing is that divine grace may be revealed for the edification and help of man. However, different quantities are given of the spices: twice as much myrrh and cassia than of cinnamon and calamus,

the whole being divisible into six parts of 250 shekels each.

PRINCIPLES OF THE ANOINTING OIL

Consider the five ingredients in regard to their application upon believers:

Free-flowing myrrh — *Bitter; fragrant*: the different experiences of life occasioned by the knowledge of the Truth.

Sweet Cinnamon — *The inner life of uprightness*: the mental development of the divine wisdom.

Sweet Calamus — *To be erect, upstanding*: such qualities stem from understanding, and develop a spiritual attitude in life. Hence, "Quit you like men, be strong" (1Cor. 16:13). "Endure hardness" (2Tim. 2:3). As calamus produces its best fragrance through bruising, so the disciple develops through the trials of life (Heb. 12:11).

Cassia — *to shrivel; bend over*: manifested in a responsive attitude. Thus, to bow the head in reverential worship, an aspect of maturity and respect to the holy things of Yahweh.

Olive Oil — *God manifestation and faith, suggested by the purple ripeness of the olive berry, and the golden colour of the pure oil*. When all spices are combined in the life of the believer, as the golden oil of faith (Zech. 4:12), a fulness of quality will be seen in the principles of God manifested in heart, mind and life.

THE ANOINTING OF CHRIST

Now consider the effect of the anointing upon the Lord who had poured upon him the Holy Spirit without measure (see Isa. 11:2).

Myrrh (500 shekels, or two parts): Wisdom and understanding. Thus life-giving words dropped freely from Christ's lips (John 18:20). Though he experienced bitterness, his life was blended with fragrance as he learned "obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

Cinnamon (250 shekels): Counsel, the inner thought, the mind of Christ which found reflection in the expression of his lips.

Calamus (250 shekels): Might. In spite of all opposition and bruising from

men, the Lord remained erect, upstanding, and strong in the work of his Father.

Cassia (500 shekels): Another double portion: the knowledge and fear of Yahweh, inducing reverential worship.

Olive Oil: The separating principle. The oil blended all the spices together and made them effective for anointing.

Thus of the Lord it was predicted: "The spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, the spirit of *wisdom* and *understanding* [500 shekels], the spirit of *counsel* [250 shekels], and of *might* [250 shekels], the spirit of *knowledge* and of the *fear* of Yahweh [500 shekels]."

In the composition of the anointing oil, the first and the last of the spices were related, for 500 shekels weight of each was contributed to the whole. So in the list of attributes of Christ, in Isa. 11:2, the first two (*wisdom and understanding*) are related to the last two (*knowledge and fear*). Again, in Pro. 1:7, those attributes are further listed in conjunction with each other: "The *fear* of Yahweh is the beginning of *knowledge*; but fools despise *wisdom and instruction*."

"An ointment compound after the art of the apothecary" — The word "apothecary" is from *raqach*, "perfumer." The anointing oil was not a simple mixture of the various ingredients, but a careful compounding of each by one skilled in the art. There is a need to develop skill in the use of the Spirit-Word. Its effect will then be revealed in all its fragrance: "By this shall all know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Christ taught the need of disciples being spiritually begotten from above (John 3:3 mg.), through the Truth (John 17:17) by the Word properly understood (1Pet. 1:23). So James taught: "The wisdom that is from above [a form of anointing through the Word] is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits" (James 3:17; 1:17). This wisdom comes from "rightly dividing the Word of Truth," involving study, meditation and prayerful communion.

The divinely inspired Bezaleel was

given the task of preparing this exclusive and important oil (Exo. 37:29).

"It shall be an holy anointing oil" —

This oil, used on anything or anyone, separated such for the purpose Yahweh determined. When the oil of the Word is poured out upon believers today, it constitutes them "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1). They are therefore "anointed" for the exclusive use of Yahweh, and become devoted to His will.

VERSE 26

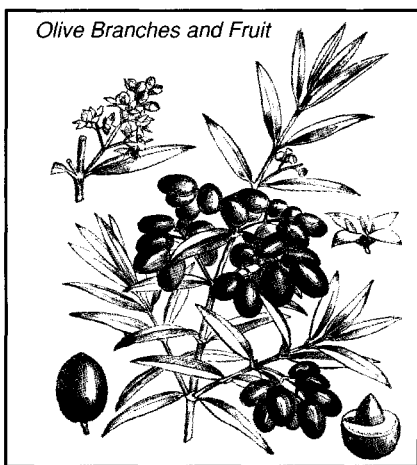
"And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony" —

The first application of the holy oil was to the inanimate objects designed for the form of worship delivered unto Israel. By so doing, it was shown that these objects were to be considered holy, separated unto exclusive use as defined by God.

VERSE 27

"And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense" —

The oil was now applied to all the furniture of the Holy Place. This represents the walk of the believers relating to the manifestations of Yahweh's worship.



VERSE 28

“And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot” — These articles are found in the court, identifying the principles of sacrifice and washing; both of which are Yahweh’s means of redemption through the anointing oil.

VERSE 29

“And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy” — See Exo. 29:37.

“Whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy” — See Exo. 29:37, and note that it is the contact of believers with the Anointed in baptism that constitutes them “holy” (Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:22; 3:12; Heb. 3:1). They were not “holy” before they made contact with the Christ-altar (Heb. 13:10), but because of it. And “holiness” so defined does not relate to moral qualities, but to status. A disciple is constituted holy not because of what he is in character, but because of his status “in Christ.”

VERSE 30

“And thou shalt anoint Aaron” — After the inanimate objects of the Mosaic worship had been anointed, the priests were set apart. Therefore the tabernacle and its furnishings were first prepared, and then those who would officiate therein.

The antitype provides the same order. Christ was first altar and sacrifice, then priest (see Heb. 9:22-24; 8:4; 7:11-26). Aaron’s anointing is described in Lev. 8:12 and Psa. 133, and types that of the Lord (Heb. 1:9), whose anointing was made complete by a change of nature (Rom. 1:3-4). That is the completion of the process as far as the call of the gospel is concerned. Thus believers must be subjected to two begettals and births: that of water, and then of the spirit (John 3:5). The first is at baptism; the second is through redemption to spirit nature at the Lord’s return.

“And his sons” — The mode of anointing the sons of Aaron differed from that of the father. The oil was poured on the head of Aaron (Lev. 8:12), but only

sprinkled on his sons (Lev. 8:30). Therefore, the high priest is sometimes styled the “anointed priest” (Lev. 4:5, 16; 6:22; 16:32), thus defining his higher status, though in fact, all priests were anointed. So with the antitype. Christ was anointed “above his fellows” (Heb. 1:9), given the Holy Spirit “without measure” (John 3:34); of greater status than that of “his sons” (Heb. 2:10; 2Cor. 1:21; 1John 2:20, 27-28). Therefore believers, being called to be priests today (1Pet. 2:9), are “anointed” in the sense that the Spirit-Word rests upon them (John 6:63), and separates them for the use of God. So Christ prayed for those who would believe on him: “Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17).

“And consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest’s office” — The word “consecrate” is from the Hebrew *qadash*, and signifies, to be set apart for divine use.

VERSE 31

“And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations” — The anointing oil was reserved for the most exclusive use, separating those “unto Yahweh,” those for whom it was ordained. So with the gospel. It is not designed for all, but for those only who are called (Acts 15:14). Christ therefore commanded his disciples: “Give not that which is *holy* unto the dogs” (Mat. 7:6).

VERSE 32

“Upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured” — The holy anointing oil was not to be used generally as a mere unguent, but was to be reserved wholly for sacred purposes.

“Neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it” — The Hebrew word for “composition” (*mathkuneth*) is better rendered “proportion.” The Israelites could use the various spices, but not in the proportions as prescribed for the anointing oil. There was to be no imitation of it in any circumstance.

In like manner, 1John 4:1-3 is a stringent warning against any who set forth a variation of the teaching of the Spirit-Word. They offered a "spirit," or teaching, but not in accordance with the Truth.

Notice, also, the extreme care that Moses had to exercise in the preparation of the anointing oil. It was to be blended together in its proper proportions. Thus, in the work of the Truth, the emphasis should not be on prophecy at the expense of doctrine; nor a glossing over of doctrine, to emphasize love; nor an ignoring of one's responsibilities of action in favour of mere academic study — but everything beautifully and skilfully blended in its proper proportion. See 2Tim. 1:12-15; 2Tim. 2:15.

"It is holy, and it shall be holy unto you" — Israelites were called upon to treat with proper respect that which Yahweh reserved for His own use. So the Word of God should be treated with the greatest care and reverence. It is holy, and should be so viewed by those who would come unto God through it.

VERSE 33

"Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people" — By "stranger" is meant anyone not of the family of Aaron. The wrong use of the anointing oil would result in excommunication (see note, Exo. 25:16). Those who bring others to a relationship with God through Christ, have a heavy responsibility to see that they are properly educated, and that they clearly understand the responsibilities associated therewith, before they are inducted into Christ.

The Composition Of The Incense

— vv. 34-38.

The incense to be burned on the altar was to be especially fragrant. The spices used, when mixed properly, constituted a well blended perfume. Put together so as to produce a solid mass, portions could be broken off as required for burning on the altar. Incense is the symbol of prayer (Psa. 141:2). It was wholly consumed by

fire (Exo. 30:7), teaching that prayer should comprise a complete absorption of one's hopes, desires, will and purpose in those of Yahweh.

It was offered morning and evening (Exo. 30:7-8), typifying that the day should both commence and end with God. It was burned in conjunction with the tending of the lamps, illustrating true communion with God, both hearing Him and speaking to Him. It was to be offered perpetually (Exo. 30:8), so "men should always pray and not faint" (Luke 18:1). The incense was ignited with coals taken from the brazen altar (Exo. 30:9), so acceptable prayer is offered through the Lord Jesus Christ. It was joined with faith, for its altar was of gold; and with works, for it was carried in spoons (Num. 7:14), and taken in handfuls (Num. 16:12). It was also properly compounded, for prayer should be a balance of praise and petition, of intellect and emotion. For further details see the book "Making Prayer Powerful."

VERSE 34

"And Yahweh said unto Moses" — The Deity now prefaces a new subject, the compilation of the incense.

"Take unto thee sweet spices" — The word for "spices" signifies that which is aromatic. Prayer can ascend as a sweet odour unto Yahweh.

"Stacte" — Stacte is translated from the Hebrew *nataph*, signifying a *liquid drop*, suggestive of a tear! Frequently prayer finds its real comfort, most tangible blessing, and greatest benefit when tears are in the eyes of the petitioner.

However, the Hebrew word is often used to define the utterance of prophecy, or the proclamation of the will of Yahweh (Eze. 20:46; 21:2; Amos 7:16). It is translated "prophecy" in Mic. 2:6, 11 and Zech. 13:3. This suggests that prayer must be governed by the teaching of the Spirit, according to the will of Yahweh: "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us" (1John 5:14). As stacte was prepared as a component of the incense, we should seek to learn the will of Yah-

weh from His Word that we might be guided thereby.

“And onycha” — Onycha (Heb. *shecheleth*, from *shachal*, a lion, from its roaring), was derived from a white seashell found on the shores of the Red Sea: suggesting deliverance! It was there that the Israelites saw evidence of Yahweh’s power to deliver, and His goodness towards them in particular. So they joyfully sung the song of deliverance, as the “roaring of a lion,” in its power and fervour.

When onycha is burnt, it gives forth a pleasant odour. So in life, God’s goodness is often manifested in its greatest degree in times of trouble, when the fires of affliction are felt. And, certainly, is it not as a pleasant odour when we ultimately find deliverance out of evil? Do not we then rejoice before our God? Let us recall such occasions in our communing with the Father, and “in everything give thanks.” Onycha speaks of the reality of God, the utter dependence of Israelites upon Him; their recognition of His ability to deliver in any circumstances of evil.

“And galbanum” — This is an acrid smelling preparation when burnt. It is said that its main use was to keep serpents away! Let us confess our failings before God, and seek His help to overcome the venomous effects of sin.

The word comes from the Hebrew *chelbenah*, from *cheleb*, fat. The fat was always burnt in sacrifice (Lev. 3:16-17), symbolising the worshipper’s energy consumed in divine service.

Prayer can become an outpouring of energy, “the sacrifice of praise to God... the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15). To become such, prayer needs to be a concentration of the mind; in it we need to make a conscious effort to “really feel the prayers that we utter.” Consider the agony of effort, the concentration of the mind given by the Lord, when engaged in prayer: “Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). By the concentration of mind in prayer, we can add galbanum to the spices

that make up the incense we offer Yahweh.

“These sweet spices with pure frankincense” — Frankincense is obtained from a spice tree which yields a white gum at the slightest scratch. It therefore speaks of the use of prayer for all occasions, and the ready response of the Father to the petitions of His people. Yahweh is never indifferent to the prayer of faith. He may not answer exactly as we would like, nor when we would desire; but the answer will come, even though it be a refusal of our petitions, as in the case of the apostle Paul (see 2Cor. 12:7-9). In such matters “His will is best.”

The Hebrew word translated “frankincense” is *lebonah*, signifying “whiteness,” the symbol of purity. Prayer should be pure, without wrong motives, or personal ostentation (Mat. 6:5-8).

“Of each there shall be a like weight” — All the elements, symbolised by the various ingredients, should find a place in prayer. There should be a balanced approach unto the great Majesty of the heavens. There is a place for thanksgiving as well as for confession; a need for praise as well as for petition. Prayer should not be one-sided, but completely balanced.

“And thou shalt make it a perfume” — Compelling and appropriate prayer is pleasing unto Yahweh. It can be offensive to Him otherwise: see Amos 5:21; Isa. 1:11; Mat. 6:5; James 4:3; Psa. 66:13; Pro. 28:9. When prayer is properly balanced, and when the actions of the petitioner conform thereto, prayer will become a perfume, pleasing to the nostrils of the Father.

The R.V. has: “Thou shalt make of it incense.” Incense was a blending of all the ingredients listed above.

“A confection after the art of the apothecary” — There is a play upon words in this statement, expressed by the RV as: “A perfume after the art of the perfumer.” The burning incense was sweet-smelling, and therefore pleasant to God. It was skilfully compounded by the art of the perfumer, teaching that worshippers should seek to become skilful in prayer.

This will result if proper thought is given to what is said, and the prayer is uttered in true sincerity. Skilfulness in prayer is not to be measured by the use of flesh-satisfying and thoughtless oratory, but to the extent that scriptural principles govern the words, and the manner in which priorities are placed in their proper order. Prayer should be an expression of intellectual, and not merely fleshly emotion.

“Tempered together” — The margin renders this as “salted together” (Heb. *malach*, to rub together, to salt). Salt is both a preservative and a flavouring. It was an element of sacrifice (Lev. 2:13). Prayer is the sacrifice of the lips, and must not be insipid. It needs to be flavoured with the Word. It should be linked with the preserving principles of the covenants of promise. Paul taught: “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6. See also Mat. 5:13; Mark 9:49).

“Pure and holy” — Yahweh refused to hear the prayers of those whose lives did not conform to His teaching (cp. Pro. 28:9; Jer. 7:16; 11:14; Psa. 50:16-17). On the other hand, James taught: “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Prayer needs to be sincere. Even in our failings we can be sincere, recognising them for what they are, seeking forgiveness, and strength to overcome (Psa. 51:5).

VERSE 36

“And thou shalt beat *some* of it very small” — When the incense was required, a small portion was broken off the whole lump, and prepared for the burning. This points to the quality of prayer; that it should not be verbose and longwinded. Christ warned: “Let thy words be few.” In a moment of great need, David cried: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Psa. 51:17). The word “contrite” is very expressive in this context. The Hebrew signifies to *beat* or *bruise*, as in beating out of metal. The process reduces thick masses of metal into thin, malleable plates, easily turned into any desired shape, as God may desire.

“And put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation”

— The incense was burnt on the golden altar that stood by the veil separating the Most Holy from the Holy. But Christ has opened the way into the Most Holy itself (Heb. 9:12), and made it possible for us to freely avail ourselves of the privileges thus granted (Heb. 10:19-21). Paul wrote: “Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

“Where I will meet with thee” — Thus Yahweh promised to heed the prayers that mingled with the ascending fragrance of the incense. He meets with us through the mediatorial work of the “Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb. 3:1).

“It shall be unto you most holy” — Prayer must not be entered into lightly, but with due respect unto the One to whom we pray, expressing the greatest reverence for His name. There should be no slovenly or disrespectful approach to God in prayer, such as is characteristic of many relationships today. Let us exercise the greatest care.

VERSE 37

“And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; it shall be unto thee holy for Yahweh” — Prayer is exclusive, and should be offered to Yahweh alone. He will not tolerate a mixture of worship (Mat. 6:24).

VERSE 38

“Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people”

— Excommunicated: thus the most serious injunction is applied to the principle of divine worship. See note, v. 33.



CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

WORKMEN APPOINTED AND A SIGN GIVEN

Claims have been made that the design of the tabernacle and of some of its furniture is such as to be beyond the ability of man to construct. But this is appropriate to the type, for it points forward to the Christ Tabernacle, both personal and multitudinous. It needed the imposition of the Holy Spirit to bring about the begetting of Christ, and it needs the motivation of the Spirit-Word to bring about the necessary change of character in his brethren to qualify them to be fitted into the antitypical tabernacle (see Eph. 2:10). So also in the construction of the Mosaic tabernacle "made with hands" (Heb. 9:11). To carry out the many details of construction required to make such a building, as well as all its furniture and furnishings, Moses needs skilled workmen. Their appointment is not left to chance. Yahweh endows certain men for such work, and places them over their fellow-workers. Thus He calls upon His people to help themselves in the tasks appointed them, whilst providing them with means to accomplish what He desires. Though the tabernacle is most difficult to construct, the Israelites are set to the task of building it. Yahweh will never do for His people what they can do for themselves. By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the natural ability of certain skilled workmen is increased, and they are appointed as supervisors over other labourers. Yahweh instructs Moses concerning the sign of the sabbath. This is appropriate at such a time, for its observance gives the lessons of the tabernacle service practical application in the lives of all true Israelites. By the sabbath law they are taught the true meaning of acceptable worship.

Workmen Of Wisdom Appointed

— vv. 1-11.

Bezaleel and Aholiab are selected to supervise the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture. They are specifically endowed for their work, and given various tasks to perform. When Yahweh desires a work to be done, He will provide the workmen capable of carrying it out.

VERSE 1

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — A preface to the instructions that follow.

VERSE 2

"See, I have called by name" — To know by name implies an intimate relationship (See Psa. 147:4).

“Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah” — His name is significant. As “son of” signifies *filled with*, it provides this sentence: *Under the shadow (protection) of El, filled with light (Uri), and of righteousness (Hur: white) from among those who praise (Judah).*

Bezaleel supervised the fashioning of the ark, the building of the tabernacle and so forth (Exo. 37:1). He was the grandson of Hur who had supported Moses’ arms when Amalek attacked (Exo. 17:10, 12).

VERSE 3

“And I have filled him with the spirit of God” — His construction of the tabernacle “made with hands,” prefigured the work of the apostles drawing many into the spiritual tabernacle (John 17:14, 20-21). Likewise the apostles were endowed with the Holy Spirit for that purpose (Acts 2:4; 4:8), and thus were equipped for the work before them (Acts 4:12-13).

“In wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” — Bezaleel was endowed in a practical manner. *Wisdom* gave him the ability to grasp what was required; *understanding* enabled him to apply his wisdom; his knowledge stemmed from his experience and acquaintance with facts; whilst the quality of his workmanship demonstrated that he could put the theory of construction into practical application. He typed those who “study to shew themselves approved unto God, workmen who have no need of shame, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2Tim. 2:15).

VERSE 4

“To devise cunning works” — The literal Hebrew expresses this as *to plan designs*. This suggests that Bezaleel could apply himself to the means whereby he accomplished the revealed plans of God.

“To work in gold, and in silver, and in brass” — See Paul’s comment on the various types of vessels used in the tabernacle, and their antitypical significance (2Tim. 2:20-21). Gold represents a tried faith; silver is the metal of redemption;

brass speaks of the quality of flesh in which the divine principles must be manifested.

VERSE 5

“And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship” —

Whereas Bezaleel supervised this part of the construction of the tabernacle, Aholiab appears to have had the charge of the textile fabrics. The Hebrew word rendered “carving,” is the same as that rendered “cutting.” No ornamental carving of the woodwork is anywhere indicated.

VERSE 6

“And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan” — Aholiab signifies *The Tent of His Father* which is an appropriate name for one who had charge of the textiles (cp. Exo. 38:23). Ahisamach signifies *Brother of Support*, and again is appropriate, for Aholiab had the support of his brethren in the work set him to do. And the tribe of Dan (*Judgment*) suggests discrimination, the ability to select the best. Hiram, who was also related to the tribe of Dan, assisted Solomon in a similar capacity in the construction of the temple (2Chr. 2:12-14). Possibly there were some of the tribe of Dan who were particularly skilled in textile work.

“And in the hearts of all that are wisehearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee” — Yahweh used the natural abilities of men and women to assist in the development of His plan. So in the construction of the spiritual tabernacle, there have been those who have been “wise hearted” enough to guard the divine charge and spiritual treasure, playing their part within the compass of their natural ability, to spread the Truth (see Mat. 25:14-30; John 17:20; 1Pet. 4:10).

VERSE 7

“The tabernacle of the congregation” — See notes, Exo. 27:21; 36:8-38.

“And the ark of the testimony” —

See notes, Exo. 25:10-16; 37:1-5;

“And the mercy seat that is thereupon” — See notes, Exo. 25:17-21; 37:6-9.

“And all the furniture of the tabernacle” — The Hebrew has *vessels*, as in the margin. See notes, Exo. 30:27-28; 39:33.

VERSE 8

“And the table and his furniture” — See notes, Exo. 25:23-30; 37:10-16.

“And the pure candlestick with all his furniture” — See notes, Exo. 25:31-40; 37:17-24.

“And the altar of incense” — See notes, Exo. 30:1-10; 37:25-28.

VERSE 9

“And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture” — See notes, ch. 27:1-8; 38:1-7.

“And the laver and his foot” — See notes, Exo. 30:17; 38:8.

VERSE 10

“And the cloths of service” — The Hebrew *begediy serad* denotes *garments of weaving*. The garments relate to the distinguishing vestments of office worn by the high priest. These were the blue robe, the ephod, the girdle of the ephod, and the breastplate. See Exo. 28:6-35; 35:19; 39:1,41.

“And the holy garments for Aaron the priest” — “Holy garments” is *begediy haqodesh*, “garments of holiness.” These comprised the rest of the high priest’s dress: the linen drawers, tunic, girdle and mitre which constituted his whole apparel on the great day of atonement (Exo. 28:39, 43).

“And the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest’s office” — These white garments, which constituted the uniform of the lower priests are described in Exo. 28:40-42.

VERSE 11

“And the anointing oil” — See notes, Exo. 30:23-25; 37:29.

“And the sweet incense for the holy

place” — See notes, Exo. 30:34-38; 37:29.

“According to all that I have commanded thee shall they do” — Bezaleel and Aholiab must conform strictly to the letter of the law in all that is commanded: there must be no deviation, in the construction of the tabernacle.

The Sabbath Sign — vv. 12-17.

The sign of the sabbath is exclusive to Israel. It is introduced at this place to remind Israelites that there must be on their part a practical illustration of all represented in the tabernacle. Worship was not to be confined to the sacrificing of animals, but should include the sacrifice of Self, represented by the animal. Hence the prohibitions and commandments of Sabbath observance brought the tabernacle service into the life of the individual as a practical observance.

VERSE 12

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — Again this familiar formula introduces a new subject.

VERSE 13

“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep” — See notes, Exo. 20:8; 23:12; 35:2. The constant reiteration of the Sabbath law emphasised its importance.

“For it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations” — The *sign* of the Sabbath sets the Jews apart from any other nation; for no other nation observes it. Previously, circumcision had was the only “sign” that the Israelites were under a special covenant with Yahweh; that they were constituted His people, bound to Him by special ties (Gen. 17:9-14; Acts 7:8). It still remained as such, constituting the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant in comparison with the Sabbath which now became the sign of the Mosaic covenant.

However, the adoption of circumcision by the Arabs and by other nations such as the Egyptians (Herodotus 2:104) made the “sign” no longer exclusive. It was still a

“sign of the covenant,” but not a distinguishing mark. The command to abstain from work on the Sabbath distinguished Israel as a nation from all other nations; some of whom were found mocking at the people because of the restrictions thus placed upon them (Lam. 1:7). See notes, Exo. 20:8-11, and Ezekiel’s comment on the Sabbath (Eze. 20:12,20).

“That ye may know that I am Yahweh that doth sanctify you” — The Hebrew is: *“I am Yahweh Meqaddishkim.”* This is revealed as a further title of the Deity, and here is first introduced in Scripture. See its use in Lev. 20:7-8; 21:8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32, and, frequently throughout Isaiah. It is significant that it is proclaimed in conjunction with instructions for the building of the tabernacle, and with the proclamation of the law of the Sabbath. This indicated that Yahweh would be sanctified in those who come nigh unto Him (Lev. 10:3), whilst the Sabbath law exhibited what was required of those who aim at sanctification. The Sabbath law established Yahweh’s claim upon the lives of His people. It demanded that the seventh day be entirely set apart for worship and spiritual meditation. This, rightly observed, would inevitably lead to a true knowledge of God, greater obedience to divine law throughout the week, and full fellowship with Him (Isa. 58:13-14).

Concerning the name and this title of the Deity, H.F. Stevenson writes: “To keep one day in seven really holy, however, is a standard few can attain. Men are lovers of self rather than of God; and even the zealously religious would rather be busy in what they consider to be God’s service, than quietly waiting upon Him, in worship and devotion. To meet this deficiency, this consequence of the Fall in human nature, God gave the promise contained within this name: ‘I am Yahweh that doth sanctify you.’ What He demands He will provide. He will give them the desire and enablement to obey, if only there is a true responsiveness to His will on their part. That is one of the most glorious truths of divine revelation, repeated in

many different ways and contexts, in both the Old Testament and the New. It is the thought underlying the use of this name of God, in its every appearance in the Bible.”

The word *sanctify* signifies to pronounce clean so as to set apart for special use. It is applied to persons and things set apart for holy service, as the priests were, and also the contents of the tabernacle and temple (Exo. 28:41; 29:36-37, 44; 40:10-11). Its basic meaning, therefore, is a state of separateness for a purpose: in this case, for divine use. Thus Yahweh, the God of covenant grace, separated His people from Egypt that He might dwell among them. He commenced to “work in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). He does not do this as an irresistible force, carrying them along in the channel of sanctification whether they will or not. His sanctifying power, like all His enabling grace, operates in and through those who respond to His truth (see John 17:17). However, Israelites are commanded to “sanctify yourselves” (Lev. 11:44), i.e., to play their part to that end. Paul taught: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1Thes. 4:3). So the challenge is issued repetitively: “Be ye holy [*sanctify yourselves*] in all manner of living” (1Pet. 1:15); “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Rom. 12:1); “lifting up holy hands” (1Tim. 2:8). But in recognition that flesh needs help to that end, Yahweh superimposed this name upon Himself: *Yahweh Meqaddishkim*, “I am Yahweh that doth sanctify you.”

However, to sanctify is not merely to set an object apart for a special use, but to see that it is worthy of such use. So Yahweh commands: “Ye shall be holy; for I Yahweh your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2). It is impossible for flesh unaided to reach the status of holiness thus suggested, hence the promise of God to help, as incorporated in this name. Thus: “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

Thus sanctification is effected by

God (Jude 1), in Christ (1Cor. 1:30; Heb. 10:10), through the Spirit-Word (1Pet. 1:2; Eph. 2:18). This is summed up by the Lord's prayer: "Sanctify them through thy Truth; thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17). In the same prayer, Christ declared that he sanctified himself, that "they also might be sanctified through the Truth" (v. 19). The Word cleanses mentally (John 15:3), leading to baptism which commences a moral cleansing, and this will be consummated by a physical cleansing at Christ's return through change of nature. The object of sanctification will then be complete.

The same word rendered *sanctify* is given as *hallow* in Lev. 22:32. Yahweh requires that true Israelites should "hallow His name," hence the prayer presented by the Master to his disciples: "Hallowed be Thy name" (Mat. 6:9-10).

VERSE 14

"Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you" — The word "holy" is *qodesh*, and therefore has the same significance as "sanctify." The sabbath was to be kept apart, as a special day unto true Israelites. Sabbath keeping required Israelites to rest from the works of sin, giving the day over entirely to doing the will of Yahweh (Isa. 58:13-14; Heb. 4:10). It was a token of the frame of mind required for every day of the week.

"Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death" — To "defile" the sabbath was to please oneself in its observance, and therefore to engage in the works of the flesh. Those found flagrantly breaking the sabbath were to be put to death (Num. 15:32-36). The penalty for a believer today pleasing himself, and refusing to do the will of Yahweh, is to be given over to the second death at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

"For whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people" — See Exo. 35:2. The prohibition is to performing unnecessary servile work. To work for God at His direction was permitted; necessary activity for the purpose of eating, etc., was also permitted (cp Mat. 12:1-7, 10-12). The

penalty "to be cut off from the people" does not necessarily signify to be put to death; rather excommunication. One guilty of infraction of the law of the sabbath, was first separated from the congregation whilst the seriousness of his action was examined, and if it were found to be a flagrant breaking, he would be put to death. Hence a man found breaking the sabbath was first "put in ward," and afterwards executed (Num. 15:32-36).

VERSE 15

"Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to Yahweh" — The "sabbath of rest" is *shabbath shabbathown* in Hebrew, "a sabbath, a special festival, a festival of rest." It was "holiness to Yahweh" (see mg.) in that it demonstrated what was necessary in order to be sanctified unto Him. The expression, "a sabbath of rest" is literally *a rest of resting*, giving thus the idea of completeness. It therefore could be rendered "a complete rest."

"Whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death" — See notes above.

VERSE 16

"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant" — A "perpetual covenant" is a "covenant of *olam*," one designed for continuity. Sabbath-keeping, a resting from the works of the flesh, was fundamental to the covenant established between Yahweh and Israel. If Israel had kept the covenant based upon the law, Yahweh would have kept His part. But Israel having "broken the everlasting covenant" (Isa. 24:5), there was of necessity "a change of the law" (Heb. 7:12). This was accomplished in Christ. Whilst its principles remain, they are now interpreted spiritually. Therefore, there is a sense in which the sabbath law is still binding on believers, in that they are expected to "rest" from the works of the flesh, and give themselves unto God, every day of the week, and therefore are

equivalent to the priests under the law (see 1Pet. 2:9) who were exempt from the sabbath law (Mat. 12:5). Their lives were entirely given to Yahweh, not one day in seven, but in every way. So it is in Christ: every day becomes a pilgrimage to the kingdom, a resting from the works of sin to serve Yahweh.

“It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever” — The keeping of the sabbath represented a threefold sign to Israel, separating that nation from all others.

As a “sign” it witnessed first to the basis of salvation (a resting from the works of the flesh), for defilers of it were put to death. Second, it was linked with the creation week, testifying to the unfolding purpose of Yahweh foreshadowed therein, pointing forward to the seventh millennium of rest. Finally, it commemorated the separation of Israel from Egypt through the national baptism, and the rest from the land of sin and death experienced in consequence (Deu. 5:15). Followers of the Lord, as the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), keep the sabbath in a spiritual sense, endeavouring to rest daily from the works of the flesh (Heb. 4:9-10), as did the priests under the law (Mat. 12:5). Their hope is typically set forth in the events of the creation week, anticipating the seventh millennial rest (cp. 2Pet. 3:8). In that way the sabbath law has an application today; and will be reinstated in the age to come (Eze. 44:24).

“For in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth” — God *created* the heavens and earth, or actually brought into existence, “in the beginning” — long before the six days’ work referred to in the verse before us. That fact is not contradicted by this verse. The verb *asah* (“made”) can signify “to appoint” (see note, Gen. 1:16).

God made or restored,

the heavens and earth again to a habitable state. This was done in six literal twenty-four hour days as required by the statement before us (see also Gen. 1:3-2:25).

“And on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed” — This is the language of anthropomorphism in which God uses human expressions as applying to Himself. Nevertheless, the Elohim found joy in the majesty of creation, when they looked upon it, and “behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). They sang for joy in that which had been accomplished (Job 38:7).

The Tables of Stone — v. 18.

As a fitting conclusion to this experience on the mount during forty days, Moses is given two tables of testimony, providing the basis of the covenant Yahweh entered into with Israel.

VERSE 18

“And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony” — The “testimony,” or witness, were the ten commandments which had been proclaimed verbally to Israel and accepted by them as the basis of the covenant with Yahweh (Deu. 5:22). The stone tablets were those referred to when Yahweh instructed Moses to ascend the mount (Exo. 24:12).

They were designed to be placed in the ark (Exo. 25:16), but they were broken by Moses in anger when he witnessed the extent of the national sin (Exo. 32:19). However, Yahweh later commanded Moses to replace them (Exo. 34:1-4), and Moses placed them in the ark (Exo. 40:20).

“Tables of stone” — However, though many Israelites obeyed Yahweh, in a national sense, the law remained largely



written on “tables of stone” and not upon the heart. It must be “written on the heart” of believers to be really effective (see 2Cor. 3:3), as with “true worshippers” in Christ (John 4:23-24). The time is coming when the nation of Israel will so respond to the Lord Jesus that the “writing” will be inscribed upon the hearts of its people (Jer. 31:31-34).

“Written with the finger of God” —

The expression signifies a divine writing as in Luke 11:20. However, there is no

reason to believe that the stones were not literally inscribed by the angel of God, and, indeed, the expression of this verse rather requires it.

Moses received the law “by the disposition of angels” (i.e., the *Elohim*, described here as “God”), so that evidently the angel who bore the name of Yahweh (Exo. 23:20-21), personally inscribed the two tablets of stone with the words of the Law, thus giving them greater authority in the sight of faithful Israelites.

(2) THE TABERNACLE RESISTED (Delayed)

Ch. 32:1 to 34:35

At this point comes the second division of the sixth section of Exodus (see p. 306). Though the design of the tabernacle has been given to the people, its construction is delayed through their idolatry, brought about through impatience and faithlessness. They tire of the delay of Moses in the mount, and having little to do, their idleness leads to mischief. Becoming restless through the absence of their visible leader, they seek from Aaron an object to represent God in order that they might have something tangible to worship Aaron, whether in an attempt to avert disaster, or in fear of the consequences if he refuses the request, produces the golden calf which is then worshipped.

Meanwhile, on the mount, Moses is warned as to what is taking place, and learns that Yahweh’s wrath is such that He will destroy the people. Moses pleads with God, and securing a promise of forgiveness, returns with Joshua to the people. As soon as he witnesses the full enormity of their conduct, his anger, rivalling God’s, he smashes the tablets of stone in wrath.

He instantly recognises the need to redeem the situation, and calling for support, his own tribe of Levi rallies to his side, to slay the most flagrant of the offenders of Israel. Again, Moses pleads with Yahweh on behalf of the people, seeking that He would continue with them. He prays that he may be permitted to view a greater manifestation of divine glory, and he is granted even this great privilege. Ascending again into the mount he continues his intercession. In consequence, the tables of stone are renewed, the divine Name is pronounced in greater detail, basic laws are listed and repeated, the covenant is restored, and Moses returns to the people, his face aglow with reflected glory. But as the glory begins to fade, Moses hides this fact with a veil. This leads Paul to show that the veil has remained so that the Jews of his generation, as those of ours, fail

to appreciate the design of the Mosaic constitution for a fading glory; to be supplemented by the covenant of grace through Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

THE BROKEN LAW: ISRAEL'S LAPSE INTO IDOLATRY

The people become impatient and restless at Moses' absence, and appoint a leader to demand of Aaron some visible object of worship that will lead them back to Egypt. The golden calf is supplied them, and they commence to adore it. Meanwhile, on the mount, Moses is warned that the people have so defiled themselves, that Yahweh threatens to destroy them. Without knowing the full extent of their sin, Moses intercedes on their behalf, pleading for the continued mercy of God. He is told to return to the camp, and he does so, joining up with Joshua on his way back. However, when he sees the full enormity of their action, he cannot restrain his anger, and, smashing the tablets of stone upon which were inscribed with the ten commandments, he destroys the golden calf, sternly rebukes Aaron, and calls for support to put down the national sin. His own tribe of Levi hastens to his side, and the men of that tribe execute judgment upon the leaders of the apostasy. Moses then calls for national repentance on the part of the survivors, and again eloquently intercedes on their behalf before Yahweh. He prays that if they are not forgiven, he, himself, be blotted out of the Book of Life. Yahweh rejects such a substitutionary offer. Unforgiven sinners will be blotted out of that book. Meanwhile, Moses must return to lead the people to the Land.

The events of this chapter are used by Paul to remind believers of their responsibilities to the Truth (1Cor. 10:6-7). Steps in backsliding on the part of the people are: [1] Their impatience in the absence of Moses (v. 1a); [2] Their craving for visible signs in worship (vv. 1b-4); [3] Their compromising of divinely established forms of worship (v. 5); [4] Their surrender to carnal passions (v. 6). Here, Christ is revealed in type in the actions of Moses, who

ascends into the heights, promising to return (Jn. 14:3; Acts 1:11). In his absence, some forget his promised return (2Pet. 3:3-4; Lk. 12:45), and make themselves gods (2Tim. 3:1-4; 4:3-4). Like Christ, Moses returns unexpectedly, in "an hour when they looked not for him" (Lk. 12:46), punishing evil doers (vv. 46-47) who are naked to their shame (Rev. 16:15), whilst gathering the faithful to himself.

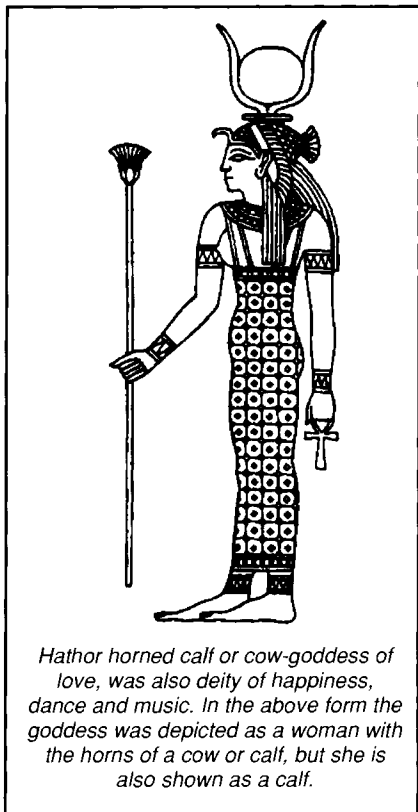
Israel Lapses Into Idolatry — vv. 1-6.

Impatient and restless at the unexpected length of Moses' absence, the people urge upon Aaron to supply some visible form of worship. Endeavouring to avert the disaster, he compromises with the people, and the golden calf is produced. This he introduces as a visible symbol of the invisible God, and proposes that a feast to Yahweh be held in conjunction with it.

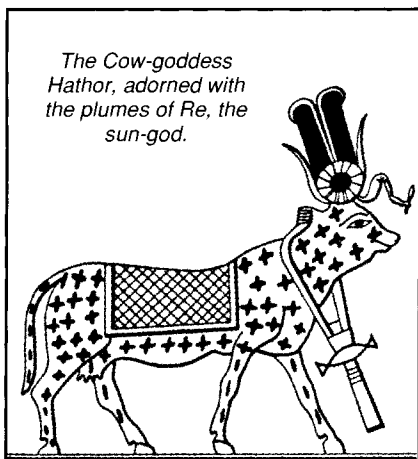
VERSE 1

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount" — How long before the people were moved by impatience is not revealed, but it must have been towards the end of his forty days' sojourn. In v. 5 it is stated that "tomorrow" would be the appointed time for the feast of fellowship. The calf

was then finished, and it could have been made in a day, with materials already gathered and ready. The day of the feast was the day Moses returned, though the agitation that finally led to this act of apostasy could have occupied some time. In his final speech to the people (Deu. 9:7-



Hathor horned calf or cow-goddess of love, was also deity of happiness, dance and music. In the above form the goddess was depicted as a woman with the horns of a cow or calf, but she is also shown as a calf.



The Cow-goddess Hathor, adorned with the plumes of Re, the sun-god.

21), Moses called upon them to “remember” their apostasy in order to avoid a repetition of it. Paul, also, brought home the lesson of this incident to the brethren at Corinth (1Cor. 10:1-11), declaring that these things “happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” Christ also issued a warning against those who might become impatient in his absence, and justify certain actions by claiming: “My Lord delayeth his coming” (Luke 12:45). Meanwhile, the people with Aaron had no visible evidence of divine activity. The cloud had removed from Horeb to cover Sinai some five kilometres (3 mls) distant (Exo. 25:15), and therefore would not be directly seen by the people who were under the shadow of the mount.

“The people gathered themselves together unto Aaron” — The people came in a bitter and seditious spirit, determined to have some visible object of worship (Acts 7:39-41). In fact, there was not any real delay in Moses’ return (Deu. 9:9), but it seemed so to the people who were without visible leadership. See the danger of this attitude: Mat. 24:43; 2Pet. 3:4; Rev. 16:15. *The claim of delay was the first step in their apostasy.*

“And said unto him, Up, make us gods” — The general feeling of impatience with the inactivity that Yahweh’s providence demanded at that time was *the second step in their backsliding*. The people wanted some visible form of worship, and were not prepared to manifest faith in what was invisible to them. The demand for something visible and tangible as an object of worship was *the third development in their backsliding*. In Hebrew the verb is in the imperative mood, implying a demand that will brook no denial.

“Which shall go before us” — They wanted some tangible evidence of God’s presence with them. In that regard, they were like the people in the days of Saul, who desired some visible leadership that they could follow, like the nations round about. The manufactured god would then become their shepherd.

“For as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him” — They claimed not to know what had become of Moses. Perhaps he was dead, perhaps he had gone back to Egypt, perhaps he would remain away for ever. Their attitude of unbelief was very much like that of “last-day-scoffers” against whom Peter warns, and who question the early return of the Lord (2Pet. 3:3-4).

VERSE 2

“And Aaron said unto them” — Aaron’s part in this sorry incident is unclear, and far from satisfactory. He does not seem to have remonstrated with the people at all, and yet it is inconceivable that a man of his standing and status, in charge of Israel in the absence of his brother, should have been swayed by the doubts that assailed the multitude. His explanation of the incident to Moses has caused some to conjecture that he sought to turn the people from their purpose by asking them to give up those possessions which he thought they valued most (their personal wealth), confident that they would refuse. But if that were his motive, he miscalculated the strength of their fanaticism. The people were determined on the course they were pursuing, and complied with his request.

“Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me” — The verb *paraq* signifies to *break off*, or *tear off*. It is rendered by the latter expression in some translations (see *A New Old Testament*). To carry this out suggests some difficulty in obtaining the rings, perhaps even pain; and it could well be that Aaron believed such a request would cause the people to hesitate to act. Instead, they were fully determined on their course of folly (cp. v. 22).

VERSE 3

“And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron” —

Fully determined in their way, the people, "following a multitude to do evil," against which they had been warned (Exo. 23:2), brought their wealth to Aaron. At least they were not niggardly in their services to this worship! They imitated the folly ridiculed by Isaiah: "They lavished gold, hired a goldsmith; and he made it a god; they fell down, yea, they worshipped" (Isa. 40:6).

VERSE 4

"And he received them at their hand" — If Aaron had thought to dissuade them by his demands for their golden ornaments, he was soon disillusioned. The people readily did as they requested. Now he had to either go along with them, or courageously reject their request out of hand. But Aaron, having made one false move found the next easier to do. He looked at the eager multitude, and recognised that their ready obedience to his request could soon turn to dangerous anger should he refuse their next demand, and so pressured, he compromised further. His next action was fatal.

"And fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf"

— This statement is contradictory. How could Aaron fashion the molten calf with a graving tool *after* it was made? Aaron's personal explanation is different from the statement of this verse. He told Moses "there came out this calf" (v. 24). The word "fashioned" is *yatsar* "to compress, squeeze, exert pressure," whilst "graving tool" is *chedret*, from the same root as *charit* rendered "bag" in 2Kings 5:23. The phrase, therefore, can be rendered "he squeezed it into a bag." Evidently the gold was melted down, and in its molten state was poured into a container like a mould, and so the calf was produced. This exonerates Aaron from the deliberate action of fashioning the gold with a tool as stated in the text of the AV.

"And they said" — The Septuagint has "*he said*," attributing the saying to Aaron; but the Hebrew text is in the plural as the AV, and applies the statement to the people.

"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" — The people, or at least their ringleaders, saw in the idol a visible representation of Egyptian gods whom, they now claimed, had exercised their power to deliver the nation from oppression. The golden calf was significant, for in Egypt, the goddess *Hathor* was often depicted as a woman with the horns of a calf, or as a cow or a calf. Hathor was the goddess of love, happiness, dance and music, and was celebrated with orgies such as the Israelites indulged during the absence of Moses. Therefore some at least, abandoned the worship of Yahweh, and turned back to the idolatry of Egypt. Stephen states that the people "in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us" (Acts 7:39-40). Ezekiel says that they "did not forsake the idols of Egypt" (Eze. 20:8; 23:8). The Psalmist laments that "they made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass" (Psa. 106:19-20).

VERSE 5

"And when Aaron saw it" — Aaron saw not merely the golden calf, but the enthusiasm that swept the people when they saw it. He became afraid to oppose the tumultuous throng who had so madly turned from Yahweh to serve the works of their hands, and compromised still further and fatally. He "followed a multitude to do evil," an action condemned by Yahweh (Exo. 23:2). He acted as a politician. He thought that by yielding a little he would gain much. He believed that by keeping in with the multitude set on evil, he could retain the leadership over the people in the absence of Moses, and guide them for good. Therefore, whilst compromising with their idolatrous actions, he did not abandon the worship of Yahweh, but tried to divert it into acceptable paths by proclaiming an impending festival to Yahweh.

"He built an altar before it" — Having commenced on a faithless course of

action, Aaron was led step by step into further actions of folly.

“And Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to Yahweh” — Aaron evidently tried to divert the people to the worship of Yahweh by compromise. He would treat the golden calf as a manifestation, or visible symbol, of the true worship. Lacking faith in the true God, the people had to have some visible form to worship. They were like the Papists who deck their churches with images; or the Protestants who worship a cross.

By calling the proposed celebration a *Feast of Yahweh*, Aaron evidently sought to bring good out of evil, and to divert idolatry into more acceptable forms of worship. Jeroboam did likewise. He made two golden calves, and proclaimed: “Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (1Kings 12:28), while he did not abandon the worship of Yahweh. Both Aaron and Jeroboam were like those early Christians who superimposed pagan ideas upon the doctrines of the Truth, such as the religious celebration of Christmas or Easter to make the Truth more palatable to pagans, but finally found the pure doctrine of Christ polluted by such means.

VERSE 6

“And they rose up early on the morrow” — The people revealed an eagerness, a zest, to give themselves over to this worship, worthy of the way in which Yahweh should have been adored.

“And offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings” — The former symbolised the dedication of self; the latter spoke of fellowship with the idol, and with one another in their folly.

“And the people sat down to eat and to drink” — In doing this they demonstrated their idolatry. If they had risen in the morning, turned from the golden calf, and offered the sacrifices unto Yahweh alone, they might have been accepted of Him, but instead they eagerly continued in the folly of the previous day. Perhaps Aaron thought that he might induce them

to turn from idolatry by proclaiming a “feast unto Yahweh.” If so, he was sadly disillusioned by the readiness with which the people engaged upon their idolatry.

“And rose up to play” — Hathor was the goddess of love, happiness, dance and music, and though Aaron may have designed a feast unto Yahweh, the people now abandoned themselves to the excesses of Hathor. The Hebrew for “play” is *let-sachag*, and denotes “wantonness.” The same word is rendered “sporting” in Gen. 26:8 and “mock” in Gen. 39:14, 17, and the use of it in those places obviously implies fornication or sexual depravity of some kind. Heathen festivities were noted for such excesses.

Moses' Intercession — vv. 7-14.

On Mount Sinai five kilometres (3 mls) distant from Horeb, Moses remains in total ignorance of the misdemeanour of the people, until it is revealed to him. God informs him that He will abandon Israel because of their action, and fulfil His promise to Abraham by raising up a “great nation” through Moses. This offer imposes a great test on Moses. He could, without sin, accept the proposition, and so find relief from the burdens attached to leading so unpredictable a people to the far-off Promised Land, or seek their forgiveness. To do the first would be to admit defeat in his life's work and desire. From the time he reached manhood, he had thrown in his lot with the people (Heb. 11:24-25), and sought the redemption of the nation. Being their appointed leader (Exo. 3:10); they accepted him as such (Exo. 4:31). To desert them at this time of greatest need would be to defeat the purpose of his appointment, and set aside his life's desire. He declines the honour, and instead intercedes for the nation.

VERSE 7

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Go, get thee down” — The crisis had reached such proportion such that there was need for quick and decisive action (cp. Deu. 9:12).

“For thy people, which thou

broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves" — The personal pronoun "*thy*" identifies Moses as the leader of the people, and therefore as responsible for their conduct. The nation had been "baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1Cor. 10:1-2), and thereby was made "one with him." Accordingly he, like the Lord, must assume responsibility for it. As its mediator (Gal. 3:19), he was its representative to Yahweh. The people constituted the multitudinous "body of Moses" (Jude 9), being by baptism "one in him." This transaction on Sinai, therefore, provides an insight into the responsibilities assumed by Christ on the behalf of his people. As their representative he identifies himself with them in heaven and pleads their cause.

The description of the people as having "corrupted themselves" illustrates how serious was their action, for the same word is used to describe the state of the antediluvians (Gen. 6:11-12) whom Yahweh blotted out of existence by the Flood (cp. Deu. 4:16). It suggests how careful Christ's people must be in these Noahic times whilst the Lord is still "in the mount," i.e., in heaven, awaiting the moment of return.

VERSE 8

"They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them" — See Exo. 20:3-4, 23.

"They have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" — See note, v. 1. With what incredulity Moses must have listened to this statement! Little did he realise how completely the leaders of the revolt had abandoned the covenant that they had previously entered into so willingly. When he left them, all had been well, but in his absence, moral deterioration had taken place!

So it also was with Christ and the ecclesia. See Paul's comment in Acts 20:29-30, showing that there is need for constant vigilance.

VERSE 9

"And Yahweh said unto Moses" — The introduction of this preamble in the narrative implies that there was a pause at the conclusion of the statement of v. 8, to allow the enormity of the action of the Israelites to sink in.

"I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiffnecked people" — This is the first time that this expression occurs in Scripture (cp. Deu. 9:6, 13), though it frequently finds place therein afterwards. Israel manifested the characteristics of a stubborn ass with stiffened neck refusing to do the bidding of its master. In consequence, it was in danger of having its neck broken as the Law warned (Exo. 13:13). See the use of the term in Exo. 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deu. 31:27, etc.

VERSE 10

"Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them" — The expression "let Me alone" (used also by the angel with whom Jacob wrestled — Gen. 32:26) suggests that Moses was about to speak in defence of the people. It is expressive of the power of prayer, by which we, too, can "wrestle with God." In some way, not stated, Moses indicated his intention to do likewise. Perhaps he "drew near" to the angel in order to plead more eloquently on behalf of the people, as Abraham did when pleading the cause of Lot in Sodom (see Gen. 18:23). The angel's words imply that unless Moses "let him alone," he could not destroy the people as threatened, and this illustrates the power of a righteous man to divert the threatened judgments of Yahweh in such circumstances (James 5:15-16). In a footnote, Rotherham observes: "that behind these words scarcely concealed, lies encouragement to intercession." Justice demanded that the people be punished; mercy sought some way whereby this could be done without entirely destroying them.

"And I will make of thee a great nation" — The promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:2) made the complete destruction

of the nation entirely inadmissible, but the threat of the angel revealed that the nation could be wiped out, and yet rebuilt by the remnant of righteous ones through Moses. In fact, the suggestion imposed a test on Moses. He knew that to fulfil it in the way suggested would make things much easier for him, but it also would appear to be inconsistent with Yahweh's declared purpose to deliver the people from Egypt. Then Egypt would triumph at the last, over an apparent failure of all Moses' hopes and aspirations. From the time he reached manhood (Exo. 2:11), he had thrown in his lot with the people, rejecting Egypt's honours as a consequence (Heb. 11:24-26). It was inconceivable that he would now abandon his work. He had been appointed their leader (Exo. 3:10), and they had accepted him as such (Exo. 4:31). Therefore, as a true shepherd-leader of his people, he refused to let the flock go. Placed under test as he was by Yahweh at this time, he revealed that he possessed all the characteristics of true leadership. At eighty years of age, the patriarch set aside the temptation of an easy way out of his difficult task, whilst, at the same time saving his family for a great destiny, he gave himself to an impassioned intercession for the people. This was a great moment, and a great decision, in Moses' life and development.

VERSE 11

“And Moses besought Yahweh his God” — In Hebrew, the verb signifies “to earnestly entreat,” and to continue to do so in the sense of Luke 18:1, “Men ought always to pray and not faint” (see 1Kings 13:6; 2Kings 13:4; Jer. 26:19 where the word occurs). Moreover, in Hebrew, the expression is “the *faces* of Yahweh his God” as rendered in the margin, though in the plural number. The “*faces* of Yahweh” is an expression used of the angels in their capacity as Yahweh's “ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). See notes on Gen. 4:14, where the expression occurs for the first time.

“And said, Yahweh, why doth Thy

wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?” — Whereas the angel described the people as Moses' people whom he had brought out (v. 7), Moses described them as Yahweh's people whom He had brought out. In the statement to Moses, Yahweh disclaimed identification with the people because they had corrupted themselves, and having thus broken the covenant were no longer His (see Isa. 24:5). But Moses refused to accept this, on the grounds that the greater covenant with Abraham was still in force (v. 13). This covenant is for all time, and is irrevocable. It epitomises God's purpose with the earth and mankind upon it; whereas the covenant based on law and established through Moses is but temporary. As Paul commented, the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are “without repentance” (i.e., are unchangeable — see Rom. 11:29).

VERSE 12

“Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?” — Moses mentions the disastrous effect that the destruction of the people would have upon other nations. It would seem to be a negation of Yahweh's purpose in delivering His people from the hands of the Egyptians. As Yahweh had tolerated the senseless stubbornness of Pharaoh “that His name might be declared throughout all the earth” (Exo. 9:16), it was appropriate that Moses should reason as he now does.

“Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people” — The word “repent” does not imply that Yahweh should be sorry for something He had done or intended to do, but signifies to change a determined course of action. Moses urged that Yahweh should change His intention to so dramatically punish the people as He threatened to do. Thus Moses' intercession comprised an earnest and impassioned “wrestling with God.” It

was no feeble plea, uttered in a timid, hesitating voice, but a forceful presentation of facts based upon the revealed purpose of God in the covenant He had made with the patriarchs of Israel. The confidence of Jacob's answer in his wrestling with the angel now rings in the words of Moses: "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Gen. 32:26).

VERSE 13

"Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own self" — Moses appeals to Yahweh on the basis of His promise and oath which He gave to illustrate "the immutability of His counsel" (Gen. 22:16; Heb. 6:13-18). It is most likely that the revelation of Genesis was given to Moses whilst he was in the mount, so that these wonderful facts of history and divine beneficence would have been fresh in his mind.

Certainly, Moses' prayer, which can become for us a pattern prayer for use in times of stress and trouble, is couched in clear, straightforward, unambiguous language, plainly and specifically setting forth his plea. He went "boldly," i.e., "freely" to the throne of grace, and we are invited to do likewise (Heb. 4:16). His prayer was well-reasoned, and was based upon the revelation of God to man. He urged his case on three main counts:

[1] Whilst not rejecting the fact that Israel was his responsibility, he also points out that the nation belongs to God:

[2] The destruction of the nation would have an adverse effect upon the world at large, so that the purpose of God would be discredited in their eyes, and Israel would no longer be an effective channel of divine grace to all who desired to seek God as was intended (Jer. 13:11);

[3] God's covenant with the fathers required the manifestation of mercy and forgiveness which Moses now pleaded, rather than it being channelled through Moses as God had suggested.

"And saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I

give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever" — Moses' plea included a general epitome of the promises made unto the patriarchs — See Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7, 18; 17:8; 26:4; 28:13; 35:11-12; 49:26. That Israel is to have the land forever was later again shown by Ezekiel in his prophecy of the apportioning into cantons (ch. 48). At no stage did Yahweh threaten to set aside His covenant with Abraham, but put forward the suggestion that He could fulfil it through Moses. He could have done this on the basis of Paul's comment in Rom. 9:7, "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children." So Jacob had been selected and Esau rejected. On that same principle, God could now reject the assembled children of Israel for the righteous Moses and his descendants, and so keep faith with His promise to Abraham, which is fulfilled on a basis of election (Rom. 9:11). But Moses pleaded that God should forgive the Israelites on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant: the covenant of faith and favour which was later confirmed through Christ (Rom. 15:8).

VERSE 14

"And Yahweh repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people" — This is an anthropomorphic expression, in which the actions of God are explained in language accommodated to human experience. In fact, God does not repent (Num. 23:19; 1Sam. 15:29), if by "repent" is meant to be sorry, or to regret something done, or a decision made; but He does change His purpose if His purpose is conditional and circumstances change to permit it. A study of passages such as Gen. 6:6; 1Sam. 15:11; Jer. 18:7-8; 26:3, 13, 19; Jonah 3:10 reveal that "repentance" in regard to Yahweh relates to changes in His dealings with man consequent upon man's change of relationship towards Him. As one writer has expressed it: "When holy anger is present with holy love, the tempering of wrath with the suffering of love, brings the offer of mercy." This is God's kind of

“repentance,” and it is especially revealed in the atonement in Christ. It is a parental quality, which Yahweh, as a Father, revealed towards His children at this time. Godly parents can experience a pained love that will overcome anger and reveal itself in mercy towards a child who rebels against them and commits wilful sin. And Yahweh as the Father can do the same.

The Return of Moses And Joshua — vv. 15-18.

The conference between Yahweh and Moses having concluded, Moses anxiously hastens to descend the mount in order to interpose in the crisis that has arisen. He bears with him the two tablets of stone upon which are inscribed the Ten Commandments as the basis of the covenant. As yet he is in ignorance of the full enormity of Israel's sin.

Sinai is one of two peaks on a plateau about five kilometres (3 mls) distant from the other peak, Horeb, at the foot of which the people are encamped. On the way he meets up with Joshua who had remained at the foot of Sinai, and together they make their way back along the plateau. As they near Horeb the sounds of revelry are heard. Joshua, the man of war, interprets it as an enemy attack on the camp; but Moses the shepherd-leader, sorrowfully recognises it as the sound of song and revelry.

VERSE 15

“And Moses turned and went down from the mount” — This is the fifth descent that Moses made (see note on Exo. 19:3). For the distinction between Horeb and Sinai see the description of both peaks on pp. 246-247.

“And the two tables of the testimony were in his hand” — See note Exo. 31:18. Moses carried one in each hands (see Deu. 9:15). He returned in trepidation at what might have taken place, with the mount behind him burning with fire: a token of Yahweh's anger (Deu. 9:15). The tablets are called “tablets of testimony” or *witness* because they formed the basis of the covenant into which Israel had entered,

and now witnessed or testified against the people.

“The tables were written on both their sides, on the one side and on the other were they written” — The commandments were probably repeated in full on both the tablets, and so displayed on both sides for ease of reference (cp. Hab. 2:2).

VERSE 16

“And the tables were the work of God” — The tablets themselves were prepared and shaped by God to emphasise the divine origin of the commandments thereon which comprised the basis of the covenant He had entered into with the nation.

“And the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables” — Paul comments upon this, contrasting the Mosaic covenant of command and law as “graven upon stones,” with the new covenant of grace and faith as “written upon the heart” (2Cor. 3:3). It is the intention of Yahweh that His new covenant of grace and faith, promised to Abraham and confirmed in Christ (Rom. 15:8), shall yet be inscribed upon the hearts of Israelites as a nation (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10).

VERSE 17

“And when Joshua heard the noise of the people when they shouted” — Joshua had accompanied Moses from Horeb to the foot of Sinai (Exo. 24:13), a distance of about five kilometres (3 mls). Here Joshua remained whilst Moses ascended the peak (over 2,000 mtrs or 7,000 feet, above sea level, but only a little over 600 mtrs, or 2,000 ft, above the plateau), and as Moses returned, he met up again with Joshua, and together they made their way towards Horeb.

If Sinai and Horeb were twin names for the one peak, as most assume, and if Ras Sufsafeh were that mount as is generally taught, this description of Moses and Joshua, and the conversation they had as they moved along, would be inexplicable. The camp was at the foot of Horeb on the large plain that spread out before it, and it

would have been in full view of Moses from its peak if Horeb and Sinai were one and the same mount; but it was hidden from view when he descended from Sinai and met up with Joshua, clearly showing that they are names for two different peaks.

“He said unto Moses, *There is a noise of war in the camp*” — Joshua, as a warrior of faith, interpreted the noise of the people (who were still hidden from view) as the noise of battle. Because of the peculiar geological construction of the terrain, sound echoes strongly throughout the area of Sinai, and would become somewhat blurred and distorted when heard from the plateau.

VERSE 18

“And he said, *It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear*” — Moses the shepherd-leader, had greater knowledge of the flock than did Joshua the warrior, and sadly gave his opinion of what he heard. In this statement, “mastery” and “overcome” can be rendered “victory” and “defeat” respectively. The latter word is *chaluwshah* in Hebrew, and denotes “defeat” from *chalah*, “to be prostrate, weak.” In the Hebrew, the three words *shout*, *cry*, and *sing*, are all one word *anath*, and in this context suggest a confused noise without its cause being determined. Moses’ words can be rendered: “It is not a voice of a cry of victory, and not a voice of a cry of defeat, but a voice of a cry I am hearing.” He confessed that he did not know the cause of the noise, even though he had been told that Israel had sinned. There was concern and a feeling of anxious foreboding in his worried reply to Joshua, even though he was unable to define the cause of the confused noise that he heard.

Typically, Moses’ return from the mount foreshadows that of the Lord from heaven. As he found the people unprepared to receive him, the Lord implied that likewise many shall be taken off their guard at his return (Luke 12:45; 2Tim.

3:1-7; 2Pet. 3:3-9; Rev. 3:14-22).

Moses’ Anger: He Breaks The Tablets — vv. 19-24.

As Moses and Joshua reach Horeb and begin their descent to the plain, the full enormity of the sin of the people opens out before their amazed eyes. They see now the cause of the confusion: the gross profligacy of the people. Many of them are dancing and singing with the utmost abandonment, completely naked, before the stupid face of the golden calf. Moses’ anger arises as he witnesses the extent to which the people have departed from the ways of God. Furious at the shameful scene, he smashes the God-given tablets at the foot of the mount. Then to demonstrate Israel’s folly in turning from the living God to worship an inanimate idol, he casts it into the fire where the heat causes it to lose its shape. Afterwards he grinds it to powder, and scattering it on the drinking water of the people, forces them to consume their own god! Aaron is then called to account, and in fear attempts to minimise his own part in the sorry transaction.

VERSE 19

“And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp” — When Moses and Joshua reached Horeb, the full enormity of Israel’s sin was revealed to them for the first time.

“That he saw the calf and the dancing” — In Deu. 9:16-21, Moses records his reaction at the sight that met his eyes. In the Hebrew there is no article in connection with dancing: “He saw the calf and dancing.” He saw how completely the people had departed from out of the way commanded them, by their nakedness and the lewd dancing to which they had given themselves with complete abandonment (see v. 25).

“And Moses’ anger waxed hot” — There is such a thing as a righteous anger (Mark 3:5; Eph. 4:26) which flares up as the result of indignation at affronts offered to God. When the Lord drove the money-making Jews from the precincts of the temple, he was motivated by such feel-

ings. The record says that the “disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up” (John 2:15-17). Moses now learned that it was “not without cause” that Yahweh’s anger had waxed hot (v. 10; cp. Eze. 14:18). Before witnessing the full enormity of Israel’s sin, Moses had wondered at the extent of His wrath, and had sought to appease it (v. 11); but now, as he personally views the same incidents that aroused the divine anger, he also is moved to the same feelings. He now recognises the justice of Yahweh’s action, and himself organises a form of punishment that brings about the death of three thousand of the ringleaders.

“And he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount” — Moses did not do this in a fit of uncontrolled anger, but acted deliberately to dramatise what the people had done. The tablets bearing the ten commandments, represented the covenant into which the nation had entered. But it had “broken the covenant” (Isa. 24:5), and only Yahweh could restore it. Therefore Moses breaks the tablets “before their eyes” (Deu. 9:17). He did this “beneath the mount” because Horeb and Sinai represented the covenant of Law (Heb. 12:18; Gal. 4:25).

VERSE 20

“And he took the calf which they had made” — In Deu. 9:21, Moses describes the calf as “your sin.”

“And burnt it in the fire” — Moses thus turned it into liquid gold so that it no longer had the appearance of a calf. Thus its uselessness as a god was demonstrated by what he did to it. He then “stamped” upon it, beating it into thin plates: most undignified for a god!

“And ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water” — Moses ground the gold into fine dust, so fine that apparently it floated upon the stream which supplied Israel with its drinking water.

“And made the children of Israel drink of it” — By compelling them to

drink of the water, Moses forced the people to swallow their sin, to consume their god! He thus brought home to them that they had turned from the living God to worship a god that could not save itself, much less its besotted worshippers (Isa. 44:9-20; 46:1-2; 1Cor. 8:4).

VERSE 21

“And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?” — Moses reproached Aaron with responsibility for the sin that Israel had committed. He recognised a weakness in the character of his brother that showed up only under pressure. A little more determined resistance on the part of Aaron, and the sin may have been averted.

VERSE 22

“And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief” — Aaron replied to Moses with the greatest humility. Though older in years than his brother, he recognised his superior status, and addressed him as “*my lord*.” This is the only time recorded in Scripture that he does so. At the same time he reminded his brother of the notorious stubbornness of the people. This was to excuse the extent of his offence.

VERSE 23

“For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him” — See note, v. 1. Aaron claimed that he was compelled to give in to the demands of the people.

VERSE 24

“And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf” — Aaron glossed over his part in the sordid transaction so as to minimise the extent of his guilt. Possibly the calf was very crudely shaped, and bore little resem-

blance to the artistry of the gods of Egypt. Aaron's statement appears quite ridiculous, and was certainly inadequate in view of the seriousness of the folly perpetrated. The weakness of his defence emphasised the enormity of the guilt of the nation, as he himself recognised, indicated by the humility in which he addressed Moses.

Levi Slays The Disobedient — vv. 25-29.

Having displayed his just indignation against the sin of Israel by breaking the tablets, destroying the calf, and humbling Aaron in the sight of the people, Moses now proceeds to deal with those among the people who were more directly responsible for the gross folly of the nation. The feasting and dancing of the people were soon turned to fear and trembling as Moses turns to deal with them. Those who had been foremost in their fierce demands on Aaron to initiate the new worship, now appeared spiritually as well as physically naked. But many remain unrepentant, and Moses calls for help to execute punishment on the guilty, that Yahweh may be vindicated. His own tribe of Levi rallies to his cause. The Levites are commanded to slay those known to have been more active in the making and worshipping of the golden calf, even though they be near relations or close friends. On that terrible day of judgment and mourning, used by Paul to bring home to Gentile believers their responsibilities to Christ, three thousand people were slain.

Let us, by this incident, recognise the gross folly of idolatry, and learn the lesson that it is the most common characteristic of modern times. For, wrote Paul, "covetousness is idolatry" (Col. 3:5), and the sin of covetousness is widespread today.

The time is coming when the judge "like unto Moses" shall return to punish in indignation a world that has rejected God (2Thes. 1:6-10). In that day, mankind will, through fear, cast "its idols of silver, and of gold, which they made each one for himself," to the owls and to the bats (Isa. 2:20). In that day of judgment, the actions of Moses at the foot of Horeb will be re-

enacted by the prophet like unto him (see Luke 12:45-46).

VERSE 25

"And when Moses saw that the people were naked" — The statement can be interpreted literally, figuratively, and militarily. Literally, because the people had cast away their clothes to give themselves up to the lewd dancing which was a feature of pagan worship (see v. 6). Figuratively, because nakedness is a symbol of sin (Rev. 16:15). Militarily, for they were reduced to a state of defencelessness against attack.

"For Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies"

— It would appear that the warning words of the Lord in Rev. 16:15 are drawn from this description. The Hebrew word *para* signifies "to loosen." Accordingly, the RV renders it *to break loose*: "Moses saw that the people were broken loose." He saw that some among them were completely abandoned in their licentiousness, having broken loose from every form of law and restraint. The Hebrew word rendered "shame" signifies *whispering*. The action of these abandoned Israelites would cause sniggering and whispering by such opponents who might witness, or hear about their conduct. The Syriac Version has: "that they might be an offensive name among their descendants." Their action was calculated to cause the adversaries of Israel to look upon the nation with contempt. The *Targum of Onkelos* has: "to defile themselves with an evil name in their generations." The shocking action of the Israelites at the foot of Horeb had to be shown up in all its wickedness, and expunged by severe judgment, in order to demonstrate to following generations that sin brings death. By such action, a repetition might be avoided.

VERSE 26

"Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp" — Moses took his place at the principal entrance of the camp, for there were many such (v. 27). He did so as ruler and judge (see comment Gen. 19:1).

“And said, Who is on Yahweh’s side? Let him come unto me” — The literal Hebrew is: *Who for Yahweh? Unto me!* The statement is expressed in three words in Hebrew emphasising the peremptory note of the command. Those three words became the rallying cry for reformation in Israel.

“And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him” — Moses was of the tribe of Levi, so that his own tribe answered the call. Perhaps they did so to atone for the lapse of Aaron, the principal man of their tribe!

VERSE 27

“And he said unto them, Thus saith Yahweh Elohim of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour” — The Levites were commanded to ruthlessly bring the idolatrous worship and licentious rites to an end. They were to visit every part of the camp destroying those who had so wantonly departed from the true worship; slaying those who had so flagrantly led the way to idolatry, and who had persisted in their evil conduct — whether brother, neighbour or companion (Deu. 33:8-9). The occasion was treated as a day of national judgment (Eze. 9:4-6), anticipating that which is to come (Luke 12:45-46; 2Thes. 1:7-12). Later, the Levites were ordained to duties connected with worship that included “warring the warfare of the service” (Num. 8:24, mg.). It anticipated a feature of the warfare of faith that forms part of the service of God in Christ today (1Tim. 1:18; Eph. 6:11-18).

VERSE 28

“And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men” — This terrible slaughter evidently took toll of the ring-leaders, and soon caused those who might have been inclined to follow them, to desist.

VERSE 29

“For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to Yahweh, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother” — With their commission (v. 27), Moses instructed the Levites that their zeal in executing it constituted an act of consecration to a higher service and appointment unto Yahweh. Reference to this is made in Deu. 33:8-11, which commemorates the zeal of the Levites in executing the judgment of Yahweh at this time, in consequence of which they were appointed to “teach Jacob God’s judgments, and Israel His law.”

Christ demands of his followers a similar dedication: a service to him which takes precedence over nearest and dearest (Mat. 10:37), by which they attain unto the status of “the ecclesia of firstborns” (Heb. 12:23, *Diaglott*).

In the age to come, the revulsion against sin will be so great as to cause the parents of those who deliberately and wilfully repudiate God’s ways to put them to death (Zech. 13:3).

“That he may bestow upon you a blessing this day” — The blessing bestowed upon them was the position of privilege that they thence-forward enjoyed (Num. 3:6-13). By this act of consecration, Levi replaced the semi-priestly position previously held by the firstborn of each family in Israel.

When the firstborn of Egypt were slain, blood on the lintels and side door posts were required to protect the Israelite firstborn from a similar fate. By that means the firstborn became the special property, the “purchased possession” of Yahweh, and were consecrated unto Him as a memorial (Exo. 13:11-16). Now, however, by this act of consecration, the tribe of Levi was chosen for the work of the sanctuary. The people had broken the covenant by making and worshipping the golden calf, but Levi had voluntarily returned to their allegiance to Yahweh, and exhibited zeal for His cause (see Num. 3:9, 11-13, 40, 45; 8:16-18. See note, Gen. 4:7; 49:5-6).

Moses Returns To Intercede

— vv. 30-35.

Moses has successfully interceded to save Israel from complete destruction such as was threatened (v. 11), but the tablets of stone, with the ten commandments inscribed thereon, which comprise the very basis of Yahweh's covenant with the nation, remain broken. Therefore the broken covenant must be renewed if Israel is to receive the grace and mercy of Yahweh. With a penitent Israel, mourning the death of three thousand people, anxiously awaiting the outcome, Moses returns to Sinai to plead their cause. In treating with Moses, Yahweh clearly lays down the terms upon which He is prepared to again enter into covenant with His people. Death has already struck down a large number of sinners, but because of the enormity of the national sin, many who remain, feel the result of their personal misdemeanour: the nation is plagued by Yahweh.

VERSE 30

“And it came to pass on the morrow” — With three thousand slain, Israel would have been in deep mourning. Three thousand funerals would have impressed the people with the reality of the statement: *“By sin is death...”*

“That Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Yahweh; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin”

— It must have been a most sombre conference that Moses conducted with the people. His epitaph for the three thousand funerals was: *“Ye have sinned a great sin!”* However he also comforted them with the statement that he would again ascend into the mount to seek atonement, or *covering*, for their sin.

VERSE 31

“And Moses returned unto Yahweh” — In Deu. 9:18-20 Moses describes the extent of Yahweh's anger; the first he endured for forty days, during the difficult task that faced him to intercede on behalf of the people in view of the enormity of the transgression, also he prayed for

Aaron, to avert the danger in which he stood due to his folly. As at the first giving of the Law, he spent a further forty days on this occasion.

“And said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold” — Moses frankly confessed the sin of the people. He expressed his complete detestation of their action by describing it as a *great sin*. The language suggests that he was overwhelmed at the depths of depravity to which they had fallen. In describing them as *“this people”* he implied that they were unworthy of being inscribed as *“God's people.”*

VERSE 32

“Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin” — The statement is left unfinished and the ellipsis is to be supplied: *...well and good!* Similar sentence constructions in which the conclusion is implied but left unstated are found in Gen. 30:27; Dan. 3:15; Luke 13:9. Despite the wickedness of the people, which Moses frankly admits, he still pleads their cause.

“And if not, blot me, I pray Thee out of Thy book which Thou hast written”

— Both Moses and Paul (Rom. 9:2-3) were prepared to sacrifice their lives as substitute offerings for the sins of Israel, but such is rejected. Yahweh makes provision for all that is required. In Moses' case, God had promised from the beginning (Gen. 3:15) a Redeemer able to provide the required atonement; in Paul's case, the Redeemer had already appeared and made the necessary offering. The justice of Yahweh, therefore, could not accede to Moses' request, whilst His mercy is ever ready to accept those who come unto Him in the correct attitude of repentance.

Nevertheless, the appeal of Moses illustrates the extent of his feelings for his people. Yahweh had threatened to destroy the nation as then constituted and promised to rebuild it through Moses. Moses replied that he would prefer to be blotted out of the Book of Life if the nation was to perish in the manner described. The great objective of his life

was to redeem the people he loved, but whose sins he deplored, even though they failed to adequately respond to the warmth of his feelings. As a type of the “prophet to come whom the people would hear” (Deu. 18:18-19), Moses pleaded their cause in the mountain above.

In his plea, Moses makes reference to *The Book of Life*. This is a figurative book of remembrance (Mal. 3:16) in which are recorded the characters of those who are to be saved. See comments on Rev. 20:12 in *Eureka* and *Expositor: Revelation*.

VERSE 33

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book” — Yahweh rejected the substitutionary offering suggested by Moses. His justice requires that the sinner personally bear the consequence of his sin (Eze. 18:20).

VERSE 34

“Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee” — The mercy of Yahweh was revealed in that He did not abandon Israel to its fate. In view of the genuine repentance of the people, and the eloquent and fervent pleading of Moses, God revoked His previous threat of death (v. 10). The action of the Levites supplemented by the appeal of Moses had secured this much for the nation.

“Behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee” — By this decision Yahweh showed that the people were not worthy of His presence among them, in consequence of which it would be withdrawn, and their care given unto the charge of a lesser angel. However, subsequent pleading by Moses secured the revocation of this also (Exo. 34:4-6, 14-17). Thus “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous” Moses “availed much” (James 5:16).

“Nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them” — The death of three thousand of the most prominent of the rebel Israelites was not sufficient to make the nation aware of the full enormity of their idolatry. Hence further punishment was deemed necessary, and this came upon them as plague swept the nation.

VERSE 35

“And Yahweh plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made” — The word “plague” is from the Hebrew *nagaph* and denotes “to strike; inflict.” The manner in which this was done is not disclosed. It was not necessarily by pestilence as the English word implies; it could have been some other affliction of sickness according to the Hebrew. Whatever it was, it again brought home to the people the enormity of their senseless folly.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

THE JOURNEY TO BE RESUMED: GOD’S PRESENCE ASSURED

Moses is commanded to lead the people to the land promised to the patriarchs, and is given an assurance that an angel will assist to drive out its present inhabitants. However, because the people have shown themselves to be stiffnecked and sinful, Yahweh refuses to go with them, but announces that the supervision of Israel will be given into the charge of a subordinate angel. Though these

tidings are a modification of the complete abandonment of the people that was previously threatened, they are still considered as evil news. The people can recall the protective pillar of cloud (Exo. 13:21); the comforting presence of Yahweh (v. 22); the guidance of divine counsel when needed (Exo. 15:25); the encouragement of His assistance in battle (Exo. 17:8-13). People of the world may seem able to do well without communication with God, but His people suffer a great loss when cut off from it. Therefore Moses erects a temporary tabernacle outside the camp which becomes a place of communion with Yahweh. But Moses does not cease to intercede on behalf of the people, and finally secures a further act of grace in that Yahweh promises to restore them to favour once again. He will go with the people. On receiving this assurance, Moses asks one final petition: that he be permitted to personally view the divine glory. In measure, this also is granted him.

Yahweh Refuses To Go With The People — vv. 1-3.

Moses is commanded to lead the people to the Promised Land. He is told that an angel will supervise the effort to do so, though Yahweh's presence will be withdrawn from the nation.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh said unto Moses” — In Deu. 9:18-19, Moses summarised his experience on the mount, and disclosed that on this occasion he again remained there for forty days and forty nights, the second occasion that he did so for that length of time. His description concludes with the statement: “Yahweh hearkened unto me at that time also.”

“Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it” — Moses had based his intercessory prayer on the promises made to the patriarchs (Exo. 32:13). Now Yahweh responded in kind, implying that He had not overlooked that covenant (cp. Rom. 11:28-29).

VERSE 2

“And I will send an angel before thee” — The reference is to a subordinate angel, not the one referred to in Exo. 23:20-23 upon whom the name of Yahweh had been placed, and in whom the presence of the invisible God was revealed to Moses and to Israel.

This teaches that there are gradations of rank in the host of heaven, some angels exercising higher status than others. *Gabriel*, for example, stood “in the presence of God” (Luke 1:19), and seems to have been His chief messenger. Others exercised various duties. For example, *Palmoni* had charge of the timing of prophecies, and therefore was questioned, by other angels who lacked this knowledge, as to when they would be fulfilled (Dan. 8:13; 1Pet. 1:11-12).

Similarly there will be gradations of rank in the family of God in the age to come. Though all will be granted immortality, some will have higher status and authority than others (Lk. 19:17-19; Col. 1:15-16).

“And I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite” — Though Israel had not kept its agree-

ment (Exo. 23:22), Yahweh, in grace renewed His (v. 23) at the pleading of Moses. For comments on the nations referred to, see Gen. 15:18-20.

VERSE 3

“Unto a land flowing with milk and honey” — Figurative of great fertility and plenty. See note at Exo. 3:8 where this expression occurs for the first time in Scripture.

“For I will not go up in the midst of thee” — As the people had revealed themselves as unfit for Yahweh’s close presence, this would be withdrawn, and their affairs largely placed into the charge of a subordinate angel.

“For thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way” — Because of the stiffnecked attitude of the people, Yahweh claimed that it would be best for Israel if He withdrew His presence and His glory from their midst. The privilege of such a presence demanded greater adherence to His commands than Israel had given. If He was thus to continue with the nation, His glory must be manifested by the people, else He would exact the punishment that sin demanded. However, this decision was countermanded at the request of Moses (vv. 14-15).

Though it would be safer for Israel while it remained stiffnecked, for the divine presence to be withdrawn, there was no future for the nation under such conditions. The presiding angel might bring them into the land in fulfilment of the promises, but the nation would lack the glory which every true Israelite desired to see manifested.

Moses Again Intercedes For The People — vv. 4-13.

As requested, Moses informs the people of Yahweh’s decision, and this causes them to mourn in distress. In view of the withdrawal of Yahweh’s presence from Israel, a tent is set up outside the camp where Moses communes with Yahweh. This pointed forward to the present status of Israel: the divine glory has departed from the nation, and Yahweh must be

sought outside the camp, among the Gentiles.

VERSE 4

“And when the people heard these evil tidings” — Yahweh’s decision to withdraw His presence from the nation comprised “evil tidings” to the people, comparable to His rejection of Israel following their crucifixion of Christ. Those who have the benefit of the nation at heart pray for the restoration of the glory as in the past, which will be accomplished through the new covenant by which Israel is to be bound again unto Yahweh. Meanwhile, thoughtful Israelites might well mourn the departure of the divine glory, recalling Yahweh’s guidance in the cloud (Exo. 13:21), His close presence by day and night (v. 22), His counsel when needed (Exo 15:25), His aid in times of danger (Exo. 17:8-13). Gentiles may be able to continue without God, but it is impossible for true Israelites to do so.

“They mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments” — The people, hearing these tidings, and recognising their failings as their cause, “sorrowed unto repentance” (2Cor. 7:9-10). As a token of this they left off wearing their ornaments, thus demonstrating their inward sorrow by their external appearance (cp. Eze. 24:17, 23; 26:16). Before the glory is restored to Israel in the age to come (Zech. 2:8), the nation will be caused to express its sorrow in a great national mourning ceremony (Zech. 12:10-12).

VERSE 5

“For Yahweh had said unto Moses” — This statement should read: “*And Yahweh said unto Moses*” (See *The Interlinear Bible*). The words that follow were spoken after the people had revealed their sorrow in the way described in the previous verse. By mourning and removing their ornaments, the people demonstrated their desire that Yahweh’s presence should continue with them. Yahweh responded to this action by warning the people as to what His continued presence with them

would require of them.

“Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee” — The people were clearly warned as to the consequences if they should flout His laws by following their natural, stiffnecked attitude, and sin in the manner they had recently done. No intercession would save them: He would destroy them utterly in a moment.

“Therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee” — This request seems strange in view of the statement that they had already done what is here commanded them (v. 4). But the Hebrew is somewhat different in the two statements. The word for “put” in v. 4 is *shiyth*, “to place,” whereas here it is *yarad*, “to descend; put down.” The *Interlinear Bible* renders it as *lay off*. The command to the Israelites was to remove their ornaments permanently as a perpetual mourning for the sin of which they had been guilty. By doing this they would bring their sin constantly to mind, and thus better avoid a repetition.

“That I may know what to do unto thee” — This was in view of their evident genuine sorrow and mourning.

VERSE 6

“And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb” — The Hebrew (see *The Interlinear Bible*) has “from Mt. Horeb.” This is endorsed by the RV which renders: “from Mount Horeb onwards.” From this time, the Israelites left off wearing ornaments as a permanent reminder of their sin.

VERSE 7

“And Moses took the tabernacle” — The word used here is not *mishkan* as in Exo. 26:1, but the much more common word *ohel*, which denotes a tent. The use of the definite article in this place *ha ohel*, “the tent” would suggest that it was a special, though temporary, structure used for sacrifice until the proper tabernacle was built, for as yet, the latter had not been constructed.

“And pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp” — Yahweh had told Moses that He would not go with the people, but as Moses wished to commune with Him, it was necessary to remove this tent outside the camp where it became a *Tent of Meeting*. His action, and the circumstances which motivated it, were a type of the present dispensation, for when the nation rejected the Lord at his first advent, Yahweh refused to continue with the people. Since then the only way to meet with Him is through the temporary dwelling, the ecclesia, which has been set up, separate from Israel, as it were, “outside the camp.”

In placing the tent outside the camp, Moses emphasised the seriousness of Israel’s sin, and the uncertainty of the people’s relationship with Yahweh. The rabbis claim that it was removed from the camp about 2000 cubits. This is significant, for the time that the antitype has existed in that state is almost 2,000 years. At the return of the Lord the centre of worship will again be set up in the midst of Israel as it was in the days of Moses. Meanwhile, Paul exhorts: “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb. 13:13).

Things done or taken “outside the camp” include the following: The bullock for a sin offering (Lev. 4:12); the ashes of the burnt offering (Lev. 6:11); the dwelling place and cleansing of the leper (Lev. 13:45-46; 14:1-3); the scape goat (Lev. 16:26); the condemned criminal for execution (Lev. 24:14); those ceremonially defiled (Num. 5:2-4); the red heifer to be slain (Num. 19:3); the ashes of the red heifer (Num. 19:9); warriors defiled with death (Num. 31:19); the ceremonially unclean (Num. 5:2-4; Deu. 23:10-14); proselytes on probation (Josh. 6:23). All so treated were related to sin in some way, and they could only be atoned for on principles beyond the power of Law.

The verse before us is the first place in Scripture where the term is used.

“And called it the tabernacle of the

congregation” — The word “congregation” is *mowade* as in Exo. 27:21 (see comment) and the phrase therefore signifies *The Tent of Meeting*. This implies that set times were appointed for the purpose of necessary gatherings.

“And it came to pass that everyone who sought Yahweh went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp” — Though there were set times for worship, not all observed them. However, those who genuinely desired to seek Yahweh could do so at the set times established.

VERSE 8

“And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle” — Moses probably made his way to the tabernacle at set times as indicated by the use of the word *mowade*.

“That all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle” — The people referred to in v. 7 thus engaged in a form of worship “outside the camp” as Gentile believers have done since God temporarily “cast off His people” at the first advent of the Lord Jesus. The worshipping Israelites stood in reverence when Moses made his way to the tent realising the solemn nature of his purpose, and knowing that he made his way thither to intercede on their behalf. We, too, can look towards the heavenly tabernacle “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1) to intercede for us. In a camp the size of Israel’s, it would not be possible for all to see Moses as he made his way to the temporary tabernacle, but all could turn their faces in its direction at the set times appointed for the purpose, whilst they silently united their prayers with his. The fact that the narrative states that “all the people rose up” indicates that there was a widespread desire in the nation as a whole to seek Yahweh, and find a way back to the restoration of the Covenant. We must similarly “rise up” in prayer, worship and service in fellowship with our leader, the Lord Jesus.

VERSE 9

“And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle” — By “tabernacle” is meant the tent. Moses probably did this each day, for prayer and communion with Yahweh.

“The cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and Yahweh talked with Moses” — The people had a visible demonstration of Yahweh’s endorsement of Moses, as we have of Christ “outside the camp” (Heb. 13:12-13). Inside the tent, Moses communed with Yahweh. The Psalmist spoke of this (Psa. 99:7-8):

*“He spake unto them [Moses and others] in the cloudy pillar:
They kept His testimonies, and the ordinance that He gave them.
Thou answeredst them, O Yahweh our God;
Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
Though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.”*

VERSE 10

“And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door” — They saw it descend from the mount to the door of the tent that Moses had pitched outside the camp. So, in Gentile times, the glory of Yahweh rests upon the ecclesias, “without the camp.”

“And all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door” — The action of the people in standing each at his tent door and worshipping with his face turned towards Moses his redeemer, is similar to the action of ecclesias during Gentile times. Each ecclesia, on its own behalf, has worshipped Yahweh at its “tent door,” with faces turned to the Redeemer, as he intercedes on their behalf with God.

VERSE 11

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” — Yahweh spoke to Moses through His angel personally and plainly (see Num. 12:8). This was a tremendous privilege as is indicated in Deu. 34:10.

“And he turned again into the camp” — The tent had been placed “afar off” (v. 7), and after communing with Yahweh, Moses returned to the camp in order to superintend matters there.

“But his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle” — The word for “servant” is *sharath*, “minister,” and is so rendered in the RV. It denotes an assistant, not a bondservant. Joshua watched over the tent “without the camp” (v. 7; Heb. 13:13) during the absence of Moses, as the Lord Jesus, the antitypical Joshua, does today. The fact that Joshua ministered unto Moses at this time prefigures that the mediation of Moses was dependent upon the antitypical Joshua, the efficacy of whose sacrifice reached back in time as well as forward (Heb. 9:15).

Yahweh thus provisionally forgave sins during the Mosaic era for “Christ’s sake” even though the Lord was yet unborn; for Yahweh treats those things that be not, but which are essential to His purpose, as “though they are” (Rom. 4:17). The intercession of Moses, therefore, was made effective through Christ, who, in this transaction, was represented by Joshua, the Hebrew form of “Jesus,” *Yahshua*.

VERSE 12

“And Moses said unto Yahweh” — This intercession was Moses’ third approach on behalf of the people. The first time (ch. 32:11-14) he obtained an abatement of God’s wrath against the people. The second time (vv. 30-35) he obtained forgiveness for them and a modified promise to lead them to Canaan. Now (ch. 33:12-17) Moses seeks full restoration for the people of Yahweh’s favour, and His restored presence with them. Moses’ intense and persistent pleading thus bore results, underlining the Lord’s statement that “men ought always to pray and not to faint” (Luke 18:1).

“See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people” — Moses availed himself of the privilege of responding to the intimate way in which God had addressed him (cp.

v. 11) by speaking to Yahweh as to a friend.

“And Thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me” — Yahweh had declared that He would not go with Israel (v. 3), and therefore Moses sought to know who should be a successor.

“Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name; and Thou hast also found grace in My sight” — Moses reasoned with Yahweh that if he were to be treated as a friend, and, in fact, had found favor in God’s sight, he should be given the privilege of a friend, and informed of Yahweh’s plan in regard to the nation.

For the privilege of friendship in the light of his comment, see John 15:15.

VERSE 13

“Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people” — Moses pleaded with God to show him the way He intended to help him lead Israel unto Canaan, since He had resigned the direct oversight of the journey. At the same time Moses pleaded that God should take Israel back into favour by forgiving the people, returning to the camp, and leading them by His Presence, as He had done before (vv. 13-17). Because of the sin of Aaron and Israel (Exo. 32:7-28), Yahweh had ordered the removal of the tent to outside of the camp (Exo. 33:7-11), and had threatened to completely abandon such a sinful people (Exo. 33:1-3).

But now, because of His love for a man who had not failed Him, and upon whom He looked as a friend (v. 11), God declared Himself willing to move back into the camp and continue with the nation (vv. 14-17).

It was for this benefit that Moses prayed: “Show me Thy way that I may know Thee.” For the significance of “*God’s Way*,” and references in relation to it, see note on Gen. 3:24. To walk in God’s way is to “know” Him. See John 17:3.

Moses Is Given Reassurance

— vv. 14-17.

Moses receives the reassuring reply from Yahweh: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." This is satisfactory, except that it does not explicitly include the people. So Moses seeks more definite assurance. Identifying himself with the people, he declares that he will not personally continue unless he receives confirmation that the divine grace will embrace the people as well as himself. Yahweh yields to this request: "I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken." In these transactions, Moses types the work of Christ as Mediator of his people.

VERSE 14

"And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" —

The word "presence" is *panim* and signifies "faces." The "faces" of Yahweh are the Elohist host, who comprise "ministering spirits" who act for those who are "heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). Moses is assured that the "angel of Yahweh's Presence" (Isa. 63:9) shall be with him in his future journeyings and shall assure "rest" for him. The Hebrew denotes a place to rest; to settle down in peace (see its use in Deu. 3:20; Josh. 21:44; 22:4; 23:1).

But what of the statement of Paul that Israel did not enter into His rest (Heb. 3:18)? That "rest" is described in Psa. 95:11, "I sware in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest." A different word is used: *menuchah*, denoting permanent repose. A bride's home, her permanent dwelling, was her *menuchah*. When Naomi told Ruth: "I will seek rest for thee" (Ruth 3:1), she used this word *menucha*, and sought a marriage, a permanent home, and security, for her daughter-in-law where she as a bride could settle down.

But that is not what Moses is promised at this time. Moreover, the promise of Yahweh does not specifically incorporate the people, but is expressed in the singular number which can be interpreted as relating to Moses only.

VERSE 15

"And he said unto Him, If Thy Presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" — Notice that the words *with me* are in italics, and therefore can be removed from the text. Moses had the assurance that God would go with him, but was not sure of the divine intentions in regard to the people. He was not satisfied with this, and desired complete reassurance that the promise included the whole nation. Yahweh had said: "I will give *thee* [singular] rest," not "I will give *you* [plural] rest." Moses now desired that Israel as a nation should be specifically included in the promise, so he declared: "If Thy presence go not, carry *us* not up hence."

VERSE 16

"For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated" —

As mediator, Moses identified himself completely with the nation as a whole, and so requested that Yahweh continue with the nation as He proposed to do from the beginning. The presence of Yahweh in a community is necessary for the success of any venture, and that, alone, constitutes such a separated people (cp. Exo. 31:13; 2Cor. 6:14-18). The word "separated" is *palah*, "distinguished." A separated people are clearly distinguishable from all others.

"I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth"

— A separated people, whether it constitutes a nation or an ecclesia, are called to be a unique people in characteristics, and not merely in segregation or in isolation from others. Their characteristics: habits, fashions, motives, and so forth, distinguish them from all others. Even today, Israel is a unique nation in the earth, and the ecclesia is a unique people among the Gentiles.

VERSE 17

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken" — Yahweh granted Moses' request in full, illustrating the truth of

James' statement: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). As a result of much personal effort and striving in persistent prayer, Israel was fully restored to grace. Yahweh promised to be with the nation, and to distinguish it above all other people, by going up with it to the Promised Land. The covenant, therefore, was renewed with the people through the mediatorship of Moses, as it will be again in the future, through the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus (Jer. 31:31-34).

"For thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name" — The covenant was renewed "for Moses' sake," as it will be in the future "for Christ's sake." Yahweh claimed to "know Moses by name." To know one "by name" is to know him personally, intimately. In His great goodness, Yahweh condescended to treat with Moses as with a friend (v. 11), and now, because He had found him worthy of help, He was prepared to do this for his sake. Yahweh will do much for a man whose ways please Him (Pro. 16:7). Thus there is great efficacy in the prayers of righteous men (Mat. 17:20-22; Mark 9:23; 11:22-24; John 15:7, 16; 16:23-26. Cp. Heb. 11:5).

Moses Promised A Revelation Of Divine Glory — vv. 18-23.

Having been granted much, Moses seeks even more. His action illustrates a principle, in that the closer one draws near to God, the more one desires to experience the blessing. Having obtained the full restoration of the people to Yahweh's favour, Moses feels emboldened to ask something great for himself. He has already been admitted to close communion with Yahweh, but instead of this satisfying him, he desires to personally view the divine glory. Hitherto the angel representing Yahweh had spoken face to face with Moses, but with veiled glory. Now Moses seeks to view the fulness of glory. He is not granted this request in full, for to do so would have brought about his death (1Tim. 6:16). But he is promised a partial granting of his petition, and preparations are made for him to receive it.

VERSE 18

"And he said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory" — Moses already had seen the glory of Yahweh in measure (Exo. 19:18; 24:18), but he desired to witness it in its fulness. He asked to see that which mortal flesh cannot see and live: the unveiled divine splendour (1Tim. 6:16). When the soldiers of the Roman guard witnessed a measure of this, they could not bear it and fell into a faint (Mat. 28:4).

VERSE 19

"And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee" — The Hebrew for "goodness" in this place denotes that which is superlatively good, the best of a person or thing. This beauty relates to the character of God as set forth in the gospel as well as to His nature. Paul commends the consideration of this quality, exhorting: "Behold the goodness and the severity of God" (Rom. 11:22). Moses already had experienced both severity and goodness in that order, inasmuch as Yahweh had condemned the sinfulness of Israel, but through his intercession, had restored the nation to grace. Now God, at the request of Moses, promises to reveal all His goodness to His servant (cp. Psa. 31:19; Jer. 31:14).

"And will proclaim the name of Yahweh before thee" — Yahweh's goodness or grace, and His severity are bound up in His name (see Exo. 34:5-7; John 17:26). The former was revealed to Moses in the favourable answers he received to his prayers on behalf of Israel (Psa. 99:7).

"And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" — Graciousness and mercy are two different divine qualities. The former is expressive of the lovingkindness of Yahweh extended towards His children, as manifest in the many blessings that they receive from Him; the latter is revealed in His acts of mercy in forgiving sins. These qualities are reserved by Yahweh for those whom He deems are worthy of them. There is a warning note in this statement upon which Paul draws an exhortation in citing it

(Rom. 9:15). In proclaiming that He will reveal these characteristics to "whomsoever He will," Yahweh declared that He is not bound by flesh. Though Israel had been restored to favour, Yahweh refused to be bound to the people unless they elected to obey Him. If they refused that condition, He would turn to others. So Paul adds: "So then it is not of him that willeth (in this case, Moses), nor of him that runneth (in this case, Israel), but of God that sheweth mercy."

In summarising this matter, Paul adds: "Behold then, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but towards thee goodness, *if thou continue* in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:22). He thus related Yahweh's "goodness" to the gospel of salvation.

VERSE 20

"And He said, Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me and live" — The word for "man" is *adam*, mortal flesh. Such cannot look upon unveiled divine glory and live, even though it be manifested through an angel (1Tim. 6:16).

VERSE 21

"And Yahweh said, Behold there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock" — The word is *tzur*, and denotes a craggy rock, such as may provide a place of shelter, or a sure foundation upon which to build. Sinai is a such a place of mighty granite mountains, the craggy outcrops and peaks of which provide fitting symbols of eternity and unchangeableness. *Tzur* is a title used by Yahweh as a symbol of Himself (Deu. 32:4, 13, 15, 18, 30, 31).

VERSE 22

"And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by" — Through His angel, Yahweh thus proposed that there should be a full manifestation of glory as was seen in the Lord of glory at his first advent (John 1:14).

"That I will put thee in a clift of the rock" — The rock upon which Moses

stood was emblematic of Yahweh, and the cleft in which he was sheltered was emblematic of the divine presence in sacrificial manifestation. This was seen in Christ in whose person, character and salvation alone is revealed the glory of Yahweh (see John 17:5-6, 26). It, doubtless, was this glory that Moses desired to see, and which, in type, was revealed to him, for he saw the invisible (Heb. 11:27). All who look upon the the Lord Jesus in the proper light, see the glory of Yahweh, and shelter in the cleft rock (see Song 2:14).

"And will cover thee with My hand while I pass by" — Moses was protected from the effect of the fulness of glory, for it is impossible for sinful flesh to look upon it and live. For the pure glory of Yahweh emphasises the fact of sin, revealing personal shortcomings of which all, but Christ, are guilty. All, therefore, need such a cover (Deu. 33:29; Psa. 91:1-4). In Christ, who was represented by the cleft rock, it is possible to view the glory of Yahweh; though at present it is muted to our perspective.

VERSE 23

"And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts" — This is literally expressed as *"My back"* (see *The Interlinear Hebrew English Bible*). Moses was permitted to see only as much of the divine glory as he was able to bear: the fulness is manifested in Christ (2Cor. 4:6-7), to be revealed in the earth in due time (Eze. 43:1-2).

"But My face shall not be seen" — See v. 20; John 1:18; 1Tim. 6:16; 1John 4:12.



CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

SECOND TABLES OF LAW SUPPLIED: A NEW VISION AND COMMISSION GRANTED

The fervent and prolonged intercession of Moses has been rewarded by Yahweh pardoning the people's sins. Moreover, their repentance and prayers are accepted as a desire for the renewal of the covenant they have broken. However, it yet remains for Yahweh to confirm it on His part. The first step to this end is the renewing of the tablets containing the ten commandments. To indicate the changed conditions, however, Moses is instructed to hew the new tablets himself, whereas previously they had been prepared by God. Now, with these tablets in his hands, Moses ascends the mount for the seventh time, and Yahweh's glory descends upon it. Sheltered in the cleft rock, Moses is granted a vision of the divine glory, and hears the proclamation of the divine name. He formally seeks a renewal of the covenant, and in granting it, Yahweh proclaims a further name that He superimposes upon Himself, as a warning of the consequence of breaking the covenant again. It is the name of Jealous. Complete and undivided loyalty is demanded of the people in a command even more demanding than that given previously. Then basic principles of the renewed covenant are outlined to Moses.

Moses Again Invited Into The Mount — vv. 1-4.

Moses is commanded to hew two tablets of stone, and to return to the mount; this time entirely on his own.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first” — Yahweh had made the first tablets (Exo. 32:16), but Israel having broken the covenant, the nation, through Moses, had to take steps to restore it. For this purpose, Moses had to return to the people and, on behalf of the people, prepare two tablets of stone.

“And I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest” — The “words” comprised the ten commandments. In Deu. 10:4, these are described as “ten words,” for “commandments” in Hebrew is *debarim*, “words.” Psalm 119, which can be described as *The Alphabet of Grace*, is significantly built upon ten words, all of which are expressive of the ten commandments, and one of each of which is found in every verse of the Psalm, excepting vv. 122 and 132. The ten words are: saying (*imrah*), word (*dabar*), testimony, way, judgment, precepts, commandments, law, statutes, righteousness.

VERSE 2

“And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me in the top of the mount” — This comprised the seventh ascent of Moses (see p. 248).

VERSE 3

“And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount” — For this most solemn purpose of renewing the broken covenant, and proclaiming the divine name, God ordered that Mount Sinai be completely separated and isolated as most holy. On this occasion, not even Joshua was to ascend with Moses. The orders given were even more stringent than those issued previously (see Exo. 19:12-13).

VERSE 4

“And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as Yahweh had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone” — Moses obeyed to the letter all the directions given him. In the early morning, when all was still, and the light of a new dawn spread abroad from the east, with fresh tokens of the divine presence and goodness, and when everywhere evidence of God’s omnipotence could be felt, Moses made his solitary way above into the harsh, craggy heights of Sinai.

The Glory Revealed In The Name

— vv. 5-9.

In the mount, Yahweh fulfils the promise He made to Moses. He reveals to His faithful servant some of His glory, and proclaims in greater detail the attributes of His Name. The first is described in the brief statement: “Yahweh passed by before him” (v. 6), and the second is shown to be made up of the two divine principles of goodness and severity. Thus Moses is encouraged to “Behold the goodness and severity of God” (Rom. 11:22). However, in spite of the listing of the latter qualities, Moses still prays that Yahweh would accept the people completely, and permit His presence to be with them during their wilderness wanderings.

VERSE 5

“And Yahweh descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of Yahweh” —

The cloudy pillar which stood at the door of the Tent of Meeting (Exo. 33:10), had withdrawn when Moses ascended Sinai, and appeared again upon the mount when he had made his way there. Thus Moses ascended in faith, and Yahweh descended in condescension, so as to meet him at that holy place. Then the voice of the angel of His presence (Isa. 63:9) proclaimed the attributes of the Name as recorded in the verses that follow. These attributes can be classified into two categories: *goodness* and *severity*.

Because of the nature of flesh, all the dealings of God with man reveal these two aspects. In fact, the manifestation of divine goodness is impossible without the manifestation also of severity. For example, the goodness shown towards Noah required severity towards a world given over to wickedness; the deliverance of Israel was at the expense of Egypt; the settling of the Israelites in Canaan required the elimination of its inhabitants with their lewd and evil forms of worship, and so forth. God’s purpose to establish His glory throughout the earth is only possible by the suppression of flesh, and so will require a blending of goodness and severity.



VERSE 6

“And Yahweh passed by before him” — This was in fulfilment of His promise to allow Moses to view a measure of the divine glory (Exo. 33:22). Moses sheltered in the cleft rock, and Yahweh covered his face as the fulness of glory passed by him. Afterwards, with the hand withdrawn, Moses saw the back of the angel, and so was granted a wondrous vision of divine glory: a vision so bright, radiant and real, that its light settled on his face with such power as to be reflected therefrom. That glory was expressive of the revelation made to the people through Moses, but its fulness was to be manifested in Christ. In Moses was seen only the farther side of the divine glory: the *severity* of the law; in Christ is revealed its *goodness*. The apostles saw the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they also witnessed the fading glory as of Moses (Luke 9:32, 35-36). Of the Lord, John declared: “We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:14, 17). The glory faded from Moses’ face, but there was no fading of the Lord’s glory.

“And proclaimed, Yahweh” — See Exo. 3:14. *Yahweh* is the family name of God, proclaiming His intention to reveal Himself in those whom He will call unto Himself to make them His own.

“Yahweh God” — The word “God” is *El* and denotes power or strength. Bro. Thomas wrote (*Phanerosis*, p. 49): “As often as this word *ail [el]* passed before his [a Jewish mind], the idea of *power, might, strength*, would stand out in bold relief.” “It always,” says Gesenius, “presented to the Hebrews the idea of strength and power.”

The name *Yahweh El* signifies: *He Who will be Strength*, and its fulfilment is revealed in the Lord Jesus who is described as the “Son of Man whom Yahweh made strong for Himself” (Psa. 80:17). Moreover, that Strength flows through Christ to us by the Spirit-Word (John 6:63; Eph. 3:17; Phil. 4:13). The

attributes that follow in this declaration to Moses find their perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is their channel to “whosoever” is prepared to ascend to Yahweh through him.

“Merciful” — The Hebrew *racham* denotes lovingkindness, compassion and tenderness, and therefore relates to one who is easily moved to help another. The word is rendered “mercy” or “merciful” (Deu. 5:10; Neh. 9:17; Psa. 103:8); “compassion” (2Chr. 30:9; Psa. 86:15; 111:4; 112:4). The compassionate character of Yahweh is among His foremost attributes (cp. Rom. 2:4), and therefore is one upon which believers can rely, though they should not presume upon it. John declares that “God is love” (1John 4:8), and grammarians declare that the construction of the Greek indicates that this signifies that love is a quality of His very nature. Love is incidental to God, and permeates all His work. *Agape* love is only derived from Him; it is not a natural characteristic of man. Even chastisement can be a manifestation of His love (Rev. 3:19), for it demonstrates that He is interested in our development and welfare.

“And gracious” — The Hebrew *channuwn* denotes Yahweh’s readiness to condescend to help those in need. It is from a root signifying *to stoop*, i.e., in kindness so as to assist an inferior. See how Israelites were instructed to manifest this characteristic in their dealings with those not so fortunate as they, on the ground that they are Yahweh’s children, and He is gracious — therefore they should manifest such qualities in themselves (Exo. 22:27; 1Pet. 2:3). The use of the word suggests the gracious act of a person of strength coming to the aid of a weaker party who stands in need of it because of his condition or circumstances. We need the merciful help of Yahweh because of our inherent weakness, and He is ready to extend this to those who seek it. A typical expression used to describe such assistance is the formula *to find favour* in God’s eyes: i.e., to acquire His favour, liking, sympathetic interest, benevolence, condescension and understanding.

To do that we need to recognise our weakness, and seek His help in the way appointed.

“Longsuffering” — This is a rendition of two Hebrew words: *arech*, “long” and *aph*, a word that comes from a root signifying “to contain; to hold in.” In the context of the verse before us, it denotes the Being who, because of His goodness and tenderness, is not easily irritated, but is merciful and kind. Examples of Yahweh’s longsuffering are recorded in regard to the antediluvians (1Pet. 3:20); towards Israel in Egypt (Rom. 9:22), and so forth. This divine patience is manifested in recognition of the weakness of humanity. It provides opportunity for repentance and reformation (cp. 2Pet. 3:9, 15). The Lord Jesus Christ is the channel of this longsuffering (1Tim. 1:16). All true children of God should strive to develop this characteristic of God and extend it to others (Col. 1:11; 3:12).

“And abundant in goodness” — The word “abundant” is *rab*, and signifies “great.” “Goodness” is *chesed*, a word frequently rendered “mercy” in the Psalms, so that the RV translates the phrase here as *plenteous in mercy*. Dr. Strong, however, gives the meaning as *kindness*, and others as *lovingkindness*, which seems more appropriate to the context before us. The attribute of “mercy” as we understand the term signifies *forgiveness* rather than *kindness*, whereas *chesed* relates to the lovingkindness that Yahweh manifests toward His own. John declares that “God is love” (1John 4:8). The word is *agape*, a word unique to Scripture, implying a special kind of love. It denotes a love that is drawn out, not by desire for another, but rather a kindness that seeks the greatest good of others whether or not they are deserving of it (see Rom. 5:8, 10). Thus even anger, rebuke and discipline can become manifestations of that love (2Cor. 12:15; Heb. 12:5-7; Mark 3:5).

“And truth” — The word *emeth* signifies stability, faithfulness, trustworthiness, and denotes One who will neither deceive, nor can be deceived; Who is the fountain of Truth, and from Whom all true

knowledge and wisdom is derived. *Emeth* is related to the word *amen*, “so be it!” which establishes a matter. In Isa. 65:16, Yahweh is styled “*the God of Truth*.” Here the word is *aman*, derived from a common root with *emeth*, and so expressing the idea of faithfulness, stability and certainty. This attribute associated with the name of God, shows that what Yahweh proposes will be fulfilled beyond doubt. The certainty of this is witnessed in the Lord Jesus Christ, “for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2Cor. 1:20). Therefore, in addressing the ecclesia at Laodicea, Christ introduced himself as “the *Amen*, the faithful and true witness” (Rev. 3:14). See also Psa. 91:4; 108:4; 111:8; 138:2; 146:6; John 1:17). Note how the idea of certainty, faithfulness, and stability are expressed in these verses rather than “the Truth,” as we might use the term — expressive of a statement of faith.

VERSE 7

“Keeping mercy for thousands” — The Hebrew word *natser* signifies “to guard, protect, or preserve.” “Mercy” is *chesed* as in v. 6, whilst “thousands” is *alephim*, the plural of the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet *aleph*. In its numerical sense, *aleph* does duty for “one” or a “thousand,” the latter, of course, being a multiplicity of the former. In Judges 6:15, *aleph* is rendered “family;” in Num. 1:16; 10:4 and elsewhere, it is rendered “thousands,” but obviously in the sense of “families.” In the verse before us, Yahweh is revealed as the Preserver of Bountifulness, of Lovingkindness. One whose beneficence is inexhaustible, preserving mercy for His families (Israel after the flesh and spirit) showing lovingkindness and mercy whilst the world endures. See also Deu. 5:9-10; Jer. 32:18; Dan. 9:4.

“Forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin” — These words describe three aspects of wickedness.

“Iniquity” is *avon*, and denotes that which is crooked and perverse, and hence a reference to human nature that inevitably goes astray, except when strengthened as

was the Lord.

"Transgression" is *pasha* and signifies "rebellion," a further development from the crookedness of human nature.

"Sin" is *chattath*, a "missing of the mark," the result of transgression and iniquity.

The statement used in regard to Yahweh reveals that He is the One who bears away iniquity, transgression and sin by arranging for the forgiveness of these perversities (1John 1:9). He is the One whose prerogative alone it is to forgive sin and save life. Reference elsewhere is made to this divine characteristic (Num. 14:19; Psa. 103:3, 11, 14; 130:4; Dan. 9:9; Mic. 7:18). However, the forgiveness of sins is conditional (see Mat. 6:14-15; 18:32-35; Rom. 4:7-8) and is only granted through Christ (Eph. 1:7; 4:32; 1John 1:9). In his time of greatest need, David made reference to this divine characteristic in pleading his own cause (Psa. 51:1-2).

"And that will by no means clear the guilty" — The Hebrew *rakkeh lo yenekkeh* has been rendered, "by no means acquitting him who is not innocent." The statement reveals that Yahweh is just, as well as merciful — a righteous Judge who distributes justice and mercy, but also with an impartial hand. Before Him no innocent person can be condemned; but at the same time, sinners will be revealed as such. Israel had recent evidence of this characteristic when found guilty of worshipping the golden calf (see Exo. 32:33; 23:7, 21; Num. 14:18-23; Rom. 2:4-9; Heb. 12:29). The significance of the statement is summed up in the atonement which illustrates Yahweh as being both just and merciful. Paul taught that the atonement "declared God's righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" — This declaration reveals that Yahweh is One who is not only merciful, but just, and who reveals sin for what it is, so that no sinner can escape His justice. Such must seek

forgiveness or suffer the consequence, for Yahweh is the God of retributive justice. The declaration is several times invoked (see Num. 14:18; 2Chr. 30:9; Neh. 9:17; Psa. 103:8-13; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). It is summed up in the statement of Paul: "Behold the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22).

In the citation of this declaration in Deu. 5:9-10, an important addition is attached to it, namely: "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of *them that hate Me.*" The statement underlines the responsibility resting upon both parents and children. The former, by their folly, can involve their families in disaster; though the latter can escape it by avoiding the evil example of their parents.

A case in point is the punishment brought upon the nation of Israel when it was taken into captivity: a punishment that involved both parents and children; both of whom were directly responsible for it, namely those who followed in the example of folly to which they had become accustomed.

An example of the opposite kind involves the children of Korah who escaped the punishment of their father, though the families of his collaborators did not (see Num. 16:27-33; 26:9-11). Ezekiel emphasised the justness of Yahweh by declaring that a son "who seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like... shall not die for the iniquity of his father, but shall surely live" (Eze. 18:14,17). The important addition of Deu. 5:9-10 "of them that hate Me" should be attached to the statement in the verse before us.

VERSE 8

"And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped" — Moses bowed his head in grateful appreciation of the great honour paid him in all that he had received from Yahweh, and acknowledged the righteousness of Yahweh in all that had been heard proclaimed, comprising the divine "virtues" which those called out of Gentile

darkness are called upon to reveal (1Pet. 2:9 mg.). They are expressive of the principles of God manifestation.

VERSE 9

“And he said, If now, I have found grace in Thy sight, O Yahweh” — On the ground of Yahweh’s declaration of mercy, Moses again presented the case of the nation, and sought forgiveness on its behalf. He virtually repeated his prayer of Exo. 33:16, using the divine title of *Adonai* (my Lords) as suggestive of the authority wielded by Yahweh through the mighty Elohim.

However, it is claimed that this is one of the 134 places where the *Sopherim* changed the original from *Yahweh* to *Adonia*, and that it should be restored.

“Let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin” — Moses frankly acknowledged Israel’s failing, and pleaded that God should ever keep their weakness in mind as He continued with the people. In referring to “*our iniquity*” and “*our sin*,” he, like Daniel (Dan. 9:5-6), and the Lord Jesus (Psa. 69:5) in their roles as mediators, identified himself with the people he desired to save.

“And take us for Thine inheritance” — Moses pleaded with Yahweh to restore the nation into favour as His purchased possession (Exo. 15:16; 19:5). As such they are accounted as Yahweh’s inheritance (Psa. 28:9; 33:12; 78:62). Today that status has been conferred upon the ecclesia (1Pet. 2:9), and the members thereof are urged to consider “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph. 1:18).

The Separateness Demanded Of The People — vv. 10-17.

At the pleading of Moses, Yahweh formally renews the covenant with Israel, promising not only to go up with the people, but also to drive out their enemies before them. However, He reminds Moses that the covenant demands separateness on the part of the people, and that it is essential that they observe this.

VERSE 10

“And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of Yahweh” — Yahweh renews His covenant with Israel, as He will do so through the antitypical Moses at his coming (Jer. 31:31-40). Among the “marvels” promised (see Psa. 77:14) are the reversal of the waters of the Jordan, the overthrow of Jericho, and the extension of the length of the day in the defeat of the Gibeonites. Some of the “marvels” performed caused the people of Jericho to fear as they were threatened by Joshua (Josh. 2:9-11).

“For it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee” — The Hebrew *yare* signifies that which can cause fear and dread so as to lead to reverence in worship. See Deu. 10:21; Psa. 106:22; 145:6; Isa. 64:3. The marvels that Yahweh performed on behalf of Israel illustrated that He is above flesh, and therefore “is worthy to be feared, adored by all His hands have wrought.”

VERSE 11

“Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite” — There is constant repetition of Yahweh’s intention to do this (Exo. 3:8,17; 6:4,8; 13:5,11; 33:2) underlining the fact that there was no lasting future for the nations of Canaan. This, by implication, highlighted the folly of Israel identifying itself with a doomed people. The same principle holds good for the ecclesia today. The nations about us are doomed, and believers are foolish to become too involved with their way of life.

VERSE 12

“Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest” — This was part of the conditions upon which

Yahweh was prepared to enter into covenant relationship with the nation again, as requested by Moses. Israel was commanded to maintain a state of strict separateness from the nations of Canaan (Jud. 2:2); to utterly destroy them (Deu. 7:2). In a typical sense those nations represented sin in the flesh which, in believers, must be put to death, and with which there should be admitted no league or compromise. In 2Cor. 6:14-18 Paul taught that membership of the family of God is strictly conditional, and can only be claimed by those who have separated themselves from the world about them. Then the Father will acknowledge those who sincerely do so.

“Lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee” — See note on Exo. 23:33, and Christ’s warning that modern civilisation can be a snare unto the people of God in the time of the end (Luke 21:35-36).

VERSE 13

“But ye shall destroy their altars, break, their images, and cut down their groves” — The Israelites were to engage in unremitting warfare against both pagans and paganism in the land. It was to constitute a holy war, in which no quarter was to be given, and in which complete destruction of all those who remained pagan, as well as their objects of worship, was demanded. Any Israelite who dared question this provision had only to look back to the tragedy of the golden calf to recognise its wisdom.

The word, “images” is the Hebrew *matstsebah*, “a memorial image” (see note, Exo. 23:24). “Groves” is *asherim*, as in the RV, which, in its preface contains this note: “The Hebrew word *Asherah*, which is uniformly and wrongly rendered *grove*, most probably denotes the wooden symbol of a goddess, and the Revisers, therefore, have not hesitated to introduce it as a proper noun in the singular (Jud. 6:25, etc.) with the plural *Asherim* (Exo. 34:13 etc.) and *Asheroth* (Jud. 3:7 etc.), following the analogy of Baalim (Jud. 3:7) and *Ashtaroth* (Jud. 2:13) which are already familiar.”

Canaanitish worship was coarse and lewd, and prostitution was common to it.

Nothing is more calculated to draw a person away from the purity of divine worship than sexual impurity. It coarsens the mind and blunts the mental perception. It formed the basis of the worship of the groves. The *Asherah* and *Asherim* were pillars or images of wood, worshipped by libidinous rites and lascivious practices. The word is derived from the root *ashar*, “to be straight, upright, erect.” The pillar was set upright and erect like a totem pole. It was either a living tree with the top cut off and the trunk fashioned into a shape designed to incite licentious desire, or a log similarly shaped and set erect in the ground (1Kings 14:15; 16:33; Isa. 17:8). Though usually made of wood (Jud. 6:26), they were in some cases made of stone. Such poles could be cut down (Exo. 34:13), burnt (Deu. 12:3), broken in pieces (2Chr. 14:3), and plucked up (Mic. 5:14). That they were not groves of trees is clear from 2Kings 17:10 where they are forbidden to be set up “under any green tree.”

Some believe that originally the idol was worshipped as a symbol of the Tree of Life; and later was perverted to signify the origin of life, and pictured with the male organs of procreation (Eze. 16:17). Such symbols became the objects of a worship carried on with all forms of impurity, perversion, licentiousness, and the most obscene orgies. It was centred in the Canaanitish nations, and from there spread to others. The first mention of the idols in the Bible is in the verse before us, and the comment stamps it as the special object of Yahweh’s abhorrence expressed in the new name He proclaimed for Himself: that of *Jealous*.

The nature of the form of worship is implied in Jer. 5:7; 7:30-31; 19:4-5; 32:34-35; Hos. 4:12-14; Amos 2:7-9.

Reference to the idol or its phallic worship is made in: Exo. 34:13; Deu. 7:5; 12:3; 16:21; Jud. 3:7; 6:25-30; 1Kings 14:15,23; 15:13; 16:13; 2Kings 13:6; 17:10, 16; 18:4; 21:3,7; 23:4-15; 2Chr. 14:3; 15:16; 19:3; 24:18; 31:1; 34:3-7; Isa. 17:8; 27:9; Jer. 17:2; Mic. 5:14. The curse

on Canaan probably was in anticipation of the form of worship the Canaanites would incorporate in their religion.

VERSE 14

“For thou shalt worship no other god: for Yahweh, whose Name is Jealous, is a jealous God” — Bro. Thomas renders this verse: “Thou shalt worship for *El* (strength) not other; for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, a jealous *El* is He.” This is the first place in the Bible that the name *Qanna* (Jealous) is given as a name of Deity, and superimposed on that of Yahweh. It is significant that it should be so done in a context that demands the ruthless extirpation of Canaanitish paganism. Earlier, in Exo. 20:5 (see note), God applied the attribute to Himself as an adjective, but now He adopted the term as His name, thus identifying Himself more completely with it.

That Yahweh should select the term *quanna* (Jealous) as a Name, and not merely an attribute as in Exo. 20:5, taught Israel (and teaches us) that He demands of His people an undivided loyalty such as Israel had failed to display when at the foot of Horeb. The command now issued that they should do so, is more sweeping than the corresponding one given previously and recorded in Exo. 23:24, emphasizing that in renewing the covenant with Israel, Yahweh would not tolerate any such disloyalty again. Mention is made of “the groves” for the first time in conjunction with this divine Name suggesting that such worship may have formed part of the adoration of the golden calf. This lewd form of worship may have comprised part of that associated with the image of jealousy mentioned by Ezekiel (Eze. 8:3, 5).

In assuming the name of *Jealous* (Exo. 20:5; Josh. 24:19), Yahweh showed that He will not tolerate spiritual adultery — and that includes “friendship with the world” (James 4:4).

But Yahweh is also jealous for His name (Eze. 39:25), His land (Joel 2:18), Jerusalem and Zion (Zech. 1:14; 8:2), for the virgin ecclesia (2Cor. 11:2). His jealousy for His own incites His opposition to

their enemies (Nah. 1:2), toward those who lead others astray (Deu. 29:18-20), against false worship (Deu. 32:16, 21; Psa. 78:58). His jealousy is manifested in judgments of fire designed to purify, and which are revealed against Israel (Eze. 36:5-6; 38:19; Zeph. 3:8). But Yahweh’s “jealousy” is limited (Psa. 79:5; Eze. 16:42), and will not “burn” forever.

The significance of this title is revealed further in the Law of Jealousy set forth in Num. 5:11-31. This should be considered in the light of Israel’s spiritual adultery (Jer. 3:2-5), and the symbolism that represents the nation as the wife of Yahweh (Isa. 54:5. See also Eze. 16:26-32).

VERSE 15

“Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land” — The Hebrew *karath berith* reads “cut a covenant.” That is, to enter into a binding and irrevocable agreement on the basis of a sacrifice of a covenant victim (see notes on Gen. 15). Such a covenant unites the two parties as one, whereas sonship in relationship to God is predicated upon a family separateness (see 2Cor. 6:16).

“And they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice” — As the verse implies, such a covenant is as binding as a marriage bond (see Eze. 16:8; Isa. 54:5), and is treated by Yahweh in that fashion: as a breach of the marriage covenant that is established between Him and His people, and, therefore, as adultery (James 4:4; Rev. 2:20; 17:2 etc.; ct. 2Cor. 6:14-18). Yahweh treats with those whom He has called by His Truth, as a bridegroom does a bride. He enjoins principles of strict separateness. It is interesting to note that this is the first time in Scripture that apostasy is described as “whoring,” though the figure is frequently used thereafter.

In that relationship, Ezekiel describes the Passover as a betrothal festival (ch. 16:8), and the Lord refers to it in a similar way in his parable of Luke 12:35-37. Hence the strictness of this prohibition of

making covenant with the inhabitants of Canaan.

VERSE 16

“And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods” — The worship of the golden calf had been accompanied by abandoned sexual licence; hence the warning against any repetition of such conduct.

VERSE 17

“Thou shalt make thee no molten gods” — Worship was to be exclusive to Yahweh; the tragedy resulting from the worship of the golden calf was to them a warning to remain faithful.

Feast Of Unleavened Bread Must Be Kept — v. 18.

The Passover comprised the very basis of the covenant, so that the keeping of it was obligatory to true Israelites; as the keeping of the Lord's memorials is essential to believers today.

VERSE 18

“The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt” — The Passover, dramatising the deliverance from Egypt, emphasised the call to separateness imposed on all true Israelites. See notes, Exo. 12.

The Firstborn Must Be Yahweh's — vv. 19-20.

The ceremony by which firstborn sons were given unto Yahweh taught Israel that they were not their own, but were bought with a price, and therefore belonged to Him.

VERSE 19

“All that openeth the matrix is Mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male” — See note, Exo. 13:12-13.

VERSE 20

“But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty” — See notes, Exo. 13:12-13; 23:15. These ordinances are repeated because of the “new covenant” entered into through Moses.

The Sabbath Must Be Observed — v. 21.

There must be periodic resting from the works of the flesh.

VERSE 21

“Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest” — See notes, Exo. 20:8-10. It is profitable to note these points in regard to sabbath keeping:

[1] It was a sign between Yahweh and Israel alone. That means that resting from the works of the flesh is an exclusive Israelitish characteristic. Only those who were “Israelites indeed” (John 1:47) could properly keep it. In fact, Gentiles mocked at Israel's sabbaths (Lam. 1:7). Of course, there “remains a keeping of the sabbath” for the people of God today (Heb. 4:9 mg.).

[2] The sabbath was a memorial of the Passover (Deu. 5:15), reminding Israelites of the deliverance from Egypt, and of the exclusive status of privilege that they enjoyed in consequence.

(3) It was related to creation (Exo. 20:11). As such it was a token of Yahweh's omnipotence and purpose, for the six days of creation terminating in the seventh day rest, anticipated the six millennial days of sin and death culminating in the millennium of rest for which today we await.

Harvest Festivals Must Be Maintained — v. 22.

The harvest festivals are to figuratively remind Israelites of a spiritual harvest to be reaped; and part of the new

covenant arranged through Moses is that they must be strictly maintained.

VERSE 22

“And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks” — The “feast of weeks” was the Pentecost of the NT. See notes, Exo. 23:14, 16. Reference to the command is again made in this place because of the new covenant that Moses was able to negotiate with Yahweh, on the basis of the terms of the old.

“Of the firstfruits of wheat harvest”

— This was the “feast of weeks” when the wheat harvest was gathered in. See Lev. 23:17; Num. 28:26.

“And the feast of ingathering at the year’s end” — The Hebrew is *at the circuit, or revolution of the year*. As the religious year was appointed to begin with Abib (Exo. 12:2), the seventh month of the religious year synchronised with the beginning of the civil year, and therefore constituted the circuit of the year (see mg.). It was in that month that the last of the ingathering (the vintage) was brought in, and the Feast of Tabernacles or of Ingathering was held.

The Three Annual Feasts Must Be Celebrated — vv. 23-24.

Yahweh guarantees protection for Israel against its enemies if the people faithfully carry out His commandments to keep the three annual festivals.

VERSE 23

“Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord Yahweh, the God of Israel” — See notes, Exo. 23:14, 17. The divine Name as given in this verse, *Adonai Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel*, signifies: *The Lord, He Who Will be the Mighty Ones of Israel*. Yahweh’s *mighty ones* comprise that generation of true Israelites (Gal. 6:16) who embrace the hope of Israel and acknowledge the Lordship of Yahweh by manifesting His attributes in action.

VERSE 24

“For I will cast out the nations

before thee, and enlarge thy borders” — See Deu. 4:38; 7:1; Psa. 78:55; 80:8. Moses later again reminded the Israelites of this promise to enlarge their borders when they were on the eve of entering the land (Deu. 12:29; 19:8).

“Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before Yahweh thy God thrice in the year” — The promise that there would be no desire in any to take advantage of the Israelites’ absence from their homes as they obeyed the injunction to meet three times in a year as commanded, recalls the promise of Proverbs 16:7, “When a man’s ways please Yahweh, He will make even his enemies to be at peace with him.” Those who give themselves to God’s commands need never fear any adverse result from so doing, even though it may restrict their activities in the pursuit of the material blessings of life.

Leaven Must Be Excluded From Sacrifices — v. 25.

Leaven is a symbol of malice and wickedness (1Cor. 5:7-8), and as such must be excluded from sacrifices (Mat. 5:23-24).

VERSE 25

“Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven” — See note, ch. 23:18.

“Neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning” — See note, Exo. 12:10.

Regulation Concerning Firstfruits And Seething A Kid — v. 26.

The instructions of this verse place things in their proper perspective: God first, family next.

VERSE 26

“The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of Yahweh thy God” — See note, Exo. 23:19.

“Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk” — See note, Exo. 23:19.

The Ten Commandments — vv. 27-28.

Moses is instructed to write the terms of the renewed covenant even as he had recorded those of the original one (Exo. 24:4). Both writings were only part of the whole which was added to from time to time, until it was completed. The renewed covenant did not need to be endorsed by blood as the original (Exo. 24:3-9), for the re-acceptance of Israel by Yahweh meant that the original covenant had been restored. The invitation to Moses to write down its fundamental conditions was endorsement of its restoration.

VERSE 27

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Write thou these words” — See note, Exo. 24:3-4, 7, and comment on *The Ten Commandments*, p. 299.

“For after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel” — “Tenor” is *peh* in Hebrew, and signifies *mouth*. The idea is that the commands should be observed according to their full meaning and significance as expressed by word of mouth. Note that the covenant is made with Israel through Moses the Mediator, and observe Paul’s comment in Gal. 3:19.

VERSE 28

“And he was there with Yahweh forty days and forty nights” — See Exo. 24:18; Deu. 9:9,18. Moses was in the mount on two occasions of forty days each. Thus the “patience and faith” of the people were again put to the test; but with the mourning for so many dead still fresh in memory when Moses returned on the second occasion, he found the people expectant and obedient (vv. 30-32). So, on the Lord’s return from heaven, he will find some unprepared, believing “My Lord delayeth his coming” (Luke 12:45) as on Moses’s first return, whilst others will be ready and waiting for the Lord, as on Moses’ second return.

“He did neither eat bread, nor drink water” — This also was the case during his previous ascent as recorded in Deu. 9:9, though it is not stated in Exodus. Evi-

dently the close presence of Yahweh so sustained Moses’s vital powers as to make food unnecessary. In similar fashion, Elijah (1Kings 19:8) and the Lord (Mat. 4:2) sustained fasts of equal duration.

Moses’ experience typified that of the Lord when he ascended up to be with his Father in the spirit-energised body of immortality, no longer dependent upon the food of mortal sustenance.

“And He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments” — Yahweh wrote upon the tables in accordance with His promise made previously, as recorded in v. 1. In Deu. 10:1-4, Moses confirmed that God had done this.

The Hebrew rendered “commandments” is *debarim*, “words,” as in Deu. 4:13. It also should be noted in the verse before us, that Moses identified the covenant made through him with the *ten commandments*. Hence, when Paul wrote that the first covenant had “decayed, waxed old, and was ready to vanish away,” he had in mind the Mosaic covenant based on the ten commandments. That covenant was a covenant of condemnation, which was designed to illustrate the reality of sin (Rom. 7:13) without providing for its removal, except in type and shadow.

It therefore continuously illustrated the work and need of the promised Redeemer, and in doing so, acted as a schoolmaster leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24). The covenant (though not the principles upon which its laws were based) was done away with in Christ, to be replaced by the new covenant of grace built on faith in the promises made to Abraham and the fathers.

Though the new covenant endorsed the fundamental elements of the old, it nevertheless supplanted it, which is contrary to the teaching of Seventh Day Adventists, who claim that the covenant in Moses did not relate to the ten commandments but only to the rest of the Law. The statement of the verse before us is conclusive that the opposite expresses the truth.

The Shining Face Of Moses — vv. 29-35.

Having been shown the glory of Yahweh in measure, Moses returns to the people, his face glowing with its reflection. This causes fear, so that they withdraw from his presence. However, he bids them draw near, for this reflected glory witnesses to the presence of the invisible God, and the authority conferred on Moses by Him. However, the glory begins to fade, causing Moses to place a veil over his face. He wears this veil whilst talking with the people, removing it when he makes his way into the Most Holy where the glory is replenished. Nevertheless, the people, gazing upon the veiled face of Moses, fail to recognise its purpose a fading glory; a fact upon which Paul comments in 2Cor. 3:7-18.

VERSE 29

“And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him” — The literal Hebrew is “*through his speaking with Him*” (see *The Interlinear Hebrew-English Bible*). The RV renders: “By reason of his speaking with Him.” Though Moses’ face shone as a result of this, he was unconscious of it. His experience anticipated the transfiguration of the Lord when his face also shone with divine glory (Mat. 17:2). But the very glory of Moses’ countenance caused the people to fear and withdraw from him. So Paul comments: “If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance...” (2Cor. 3:7). Paul acknowledged that even though the Mosaic covenant brought death to the people because of the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3), it nevertheless had a glory that was divine. In Rom. 7:12 he declared that “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” But though the law was such, and was “ordained to life”

(v. 10), it became a “ministration of death” because of the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3). It set forth the prospect of life, revealing the means to it, and in that sense was “glorious;” but because man invariably failed to keep it, it delivered him over to death. Faith then stepped into the breach with its promise of a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15), so that the Law became a schoolmaster leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24). In Christ, the curse of the Law-covenant is done away, and believers are thereby delivered from the curse of death which was invariably pronounced upon those who failed to keep it (Gal. 3:13).

VERSE 30

“And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him” — Moses had been in the presence of the Yahweh-manifesting angel so long that his face was transfigured with divine glory. However, he was unconscious of this, and unaware that his visage shone (2Cor. 3:7-10). His appearance caused an awesome fear to his contemporaries as is inevitably the case when flesh comes into the presence of divine glory (see Eze. 1:28; Mat. 28:3-4; Rev. 1:17). Thus Christ’s companions were “sore afraid” at his transfiguration (Mark 9:6).

In the verse before us, the word “shone” is a translation of the Hebrew *qaran*, “to push, to shoot out, to send forth rays.” This suggests that the glory of God in the face of Moses was active, appearing as rays of light shooting forth. It was this that made the people fearful.

VERSE 31

“And Moses called unto them” — Moses invited Aaron and his companions to return to him, probably reassuring them that there was no cause for fear. In this he prefigured the Lord’s reassurance to his apostles (Luke 24:38-39).

“And Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him” — They had withdrawn themselves in alarm on the approach of Moses, perhaps believ-

ing that his appearance indicated divine wrath, possibly recalling the three thousand who had previously died as a result of this.

“And Moses talked with them” — He reassured them by speaking of his experience with God that had led to the covenant being restored.

VERSE 32

“And afterwards all the children of Israel came nigh” — This foreshadowed the experience of the Lord following his resurrection. He revealed himself to his apostles, stilling their fears, and afterwards showed himself to the rest of the disciples (1Cor. 15:3-6).

“And he gave them in commandment all that Yahweh had spoken with him in mount Sinai” — Moses proclaimed the good news that the nation was forgiven, and that the covenant had been renewed. This anticipates the future restoration of Israel under Messiah, and the forgiveness of the nation’s sins (Micah 7:19). The final restoration of Israel to favour shall be under the terms of the new covenant (Jer. 31:27-40). This shall be in accordance with the revival of the Law (Mal. 4:4; Deu. 30:6), but on a basis of grace whereby sins are forgiven (Jer. 31:27-40).

VERSE 33

“And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face” — This is a poor translation of the original. It implies that Moses spoke to the people with his face covered. The Hebrew text does not sustain this rendering. Accordingly the R.V., supported by almost all other renditions, gives the meaning as: “And when Moses had done speaking...” This agrees with the context. Moses first delivered his speech to the people with face unveiled. Then, realising that the glory was fading, he veiled himself, and continued so, with face covered, except when he sought communion with the divine presence in the tent of meeting, that is, the tabernacle. This dramatised the fading glory of the covenant according to the

Law, and demonstrated that it was not designed for all time. “It was,” explained Paul, “added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Moses — Gal. 3:19). Paul, alluding to this very incident, wrote that “the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away” (2Cor. 3:7). The Israelites were dazzled by the reflected glory in the face of Moses, but did not recognize that the glory was fading because of the veil over his face, illustrating this truth to them, prophetically. The fading of glory, therefore, typed the “waxing old” of the Mosaic covenant to be supplanted by the covenant of grace. So the apostle Paul concludes: “Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13). Unfortunately the “veil” remained on the hearts of the Jews so they “could not see to the end of that which was to be abolished.”

VERSE 34

“But when Moses went in before Yahweh to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded” — Moses took off the veil when he made his way into the divine presence which dwelt between the cherubim, where shone forth the *shekinah* glory. He did so in order that the light of his countenance might be renewed thereby. Accordingly, when he returned to the children of Israel they saw his face aglow with the reflected light of the *shekinah* glory.

VERSE 35

“And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him” — As the glory began to fade, Moses veiled his face to hide the fact. Paul draws upon this incident to show that it

typed the manner in which Jewry failed to appreciate that the glory of the Mosaic covenant would fade away, to be replaced by one more glorious. He stated that "Moses put a veil over his face" with the result that "the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished; but their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old covenant, which veil is done away in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts. Nevertheless when it [rather, *a man*] shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away" (2Cor. 3:13-18).

The veiled face of Moses, therefore, prophetically foreshadowed the veiled state of Israel after the flesh when Christ appeared in their midst. The people did not comprehend that the glory of the Mosaic ordinance was a fading glory, destined to pass away. Because of that lack of comprehension, the veil remains to this day upon the hearts of natural Israel. That state will continue until the return of the Lord when the veils of ignorance that obscure the understanding of both Jews and Gentiles will be removed (Rom. 11:25-26; Isa. 25:7).



CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

THE WILLING OFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE

Moses returns with the good news that the sins of the people are forgiven and Yahweh has consented in mercy to renew His covenant with the nation. They respond with hearty willingness to the request for materials to construct the tabernacle. All classes co-operate to that end. The rulers bring gems; the more wealthy offer their gold, silver and copper; others provide blue, purple, scarlet, fine twined linen; the poorer gather the shittim wood; the women give up their copper mirrors, and labour with their spinning wheels in manufacturing linen thread. All are united in the common work of the Lord, and all are drawn closer together as a result. The one condition, applying to all, is that whatever is given must be done with "a willing heart" (v. 5). That attitude sanctifies the gift (whether it be gold or wood) as acceptable to Yahweh. Paul makes the point that "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2Cor. 9:7). In endorsing this statement, the apostle observes that "he which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (v. 6). Let us show a bountiful willingness in the service of Yahweh, and our reaping will be likewise.

(3) — DEDICATION ACCOMPLISHED

Tabernacle Completed

Chapters 35:1 to 40:38

Our Introduction shows that each of the six sections of Exodus is divided into three parts (see pp. 27-28), in which something is [1] Proposed; [2] Restricted; and finally [3] Accomplished. Chapter 35 commences the final section of the sixth division. Through the mediatorial services of Moses, the people are forgiven their lapse, and Yahweh agrees to return to them in favour. On the basis of this forgiveness and the proclamation of a renewed covenant, the people are moved to respond by giving their wealth to the building of the tabernacle. They do so with such enthusiasm that there is a need, finally, for them to be restrained. Appointed workmen give their labour with equal enthusiasm to the construction of the sacred tent with the result that it is soon completed and inspected by Moses for worship. Everything is approved, everything put in its place, and an expectant people watch as Yahweh's glory, covered by a cloud, enters into His dwelling place in the midst of the nation.

All this is typical of Yahweh's future purpose as outlined in prophecy. Through the mediatorial services of the antitypical Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ, the sin of natural Israel is to be washed away (Rom. 11:26; Micah 7:19-20), and the nation received back into favour through the terms of a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). The result will be that the people will "show themselves willing" in the day of the Lord's power (Psa. 110:3) as they did under Moses. Moreover, that day will witness once more "the sanctuary in the midst of Israel," for "My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Eze. 37:27).

Therefore, contained within the chapters before us, are both instruction concerning the form of worship decreed by Yahweh, as well as a foreshadowing of His future purpose.

The Spiritual Obligations Of The People — vv. 1-3.

The people are reminded of some of the terms necessary in regard to the renewal of the covenant. Foremost is the sabbath observance. They must learn that there is a need to rest from their own works and dedicate time to doing the will of Yahweh.

VERSE 1

"And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together" — The word for "congregation" is *edah*, the feminine form of *ed*, "witness." The nation was treated as Yahweh's Bride (Isa. 54:5). Ezekiel takes up the same figure of speech, and describes how the foundling child in Egypt grew up to

become a bride (Eze. 16:6-14). Yahweh is represented as saying: "Yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest Mine" (v. 8). "Thy Maker," declared Isaiah, "is thine husband" (Isa. 54:5). Israel in covenant relationship with God, was as the ecclesia today is in its relationship to the Lord (2Cor. 11:1-2).

"And said unto them, These are the words" — The Hebrew is *dabarim*, "the words." See note, Exo. 34:28.

"Which Yahweh hath commanded thee that ye should do them" — For the Hebrew *tsavah*, see note, pp. 100, 323.

VERSE 2

"Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day" — Or, as the margin, "It shall be holiness," or a day of separateness.

"A sabbath of rest" — See note, Exo. 16:22-26.

"To Yahweh" — See the instruction of Isa. 58:13. The day was to be dedicated to Yahweh.

"Whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death" — Death was the penalty for violating the sabbath, and death will be the fate of all who rest not from the works of flesh: the significance of the true sabbath (see Heb. 4:3).

VERSE 3

"Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day" — See note, Exo. 16:23. This seemingly trivial appendage to the sabbath law, relating to the cooking, boiling, or roasting of food, showed how meticulously the law was to be kept.

Free Gifts Solicited For The Tabernacle — vv. 4-19.

The people are invited to make their voluntary offerings for the construction of the tabernacle.

VERSE 4

"And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Yahweh

commanded, saying" — For "congregation" see note v. 1. "Thing" in Hebrew is *dabar*, and denotes "word" or "matter."

VERSE 5

"Take ye from among you an offering unto Yahweh" — The word "offering" is *terumah*, "heave offering" or "contribution." See note, Exo. 25:2.

"Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of Yahweh; gold, and silver, and brass" — See Paul's allusion in 2Cor. 5:12. Note the three commands given: [1] Take an offering of Israel for Yahweh; [2] Let those of a willing heart bring gold, silver, copper, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goat's hair, red rams' skins, badger skins, shittim wood, oil, spices and precious stones (vv. 5-9); [3] Let the wise-hearted come and make the tabernacle, its furniture, the shewbread, the anointing oil, the sweet incense, cloths of service, and garments for the priests (vv. 10-19).

VERSES 6-9

These verses are a repetition of Exo. 25:3-7 (see notes).

VERSE 10

"And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that Yahweh hath commanded" — Natural ability was used in the service of Yahweh. See note, Exo. 28:3.

VERSE 11

"The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets" — As listed in Exo. 26:1-30.

VERSE 12

"The ark, and the staves thereof, with the mercy seat, and the vail of the covering" — See notes, Exo. 25:10-16; 26:31-33.

VERSE 13

"The table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread" — See notes, Exo. 25:25-30.

VERSE 14

“The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light” — See notes, Exo. 25:31-39; 27:20.

VERSE 15

“And the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering of the tabernacle” — See notes, Exo. 30:1-10, 23-25, 34-35; 26:36.

VERSE 16

“The altar of burnt offering, with his brasen grate, his staves, and all his vessels” — See note, Exo. 27:1-8.

“The laver and his foot” — See notes, Exo. 30:18-21.

VERSE 17

“The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court” — See notes, Exo. 27:9-18.

VERSE 18

“The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords” — No previous mention has been made of these. They were evidently the tent pegs to which were attached the cords holding the covering of the tent over the tabernacle, helping to firm the pillars to which the hangings of the court were fastened.

VERSE 19

“The cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest’s office” — See the comments on Exo. 31:10.

The People Willingly Respond — vv. 20-29.

Moved by Yahweh’s grace in forgiving their lapse by restoring the covenant, the people respond with enthusiastic willingness to the command of Moses. The nation reaches a high point of spiritual keenness as the people occupy their time in gathering materials for the tabernacle. A joyful

activity and sense of objectiveness permeates the whole nation. The camp rings with happiness, excitement and praise of Yahweh as the people give themselves to the work.

VERSE 20

“And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses” — “Congregation” is *mwade* in Hebrew, and denotes a meeting, at a set time. Rotherham renders: “So all the assembly of the sons of Israel went forth.” The phrase indicates that the meeting dispersed in order to prepare the offerings.

VERSE 21

“And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing” — The people seem to have departed from the presence of Moses in order to consider the proposition. If so, the subsequent response was gratifying. Having considered the goodness of God towards them, they were moved to respond as described.

“And they brought Yahweh’s offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation” — Rotherham renders “to the work” as “for the construction of the tent of Meeting.” The people brought their offerings to Moses for that purpose.

“And for all his service, and for the holy garments” — In this statement, the personal pronoun “his” is better rendered in the neuter gender as “its.”

VERSE 22

“And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted” — Willingness of heart makes a gift great in the sight of God: “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (2Cor. 8:12). The hearts of the people were stirred by the appeal of Moses, and their spirits made willing by recognizing the greatness of the work before them (v. 21, cp. 2Cor. 9:7); and they gave according to their ability to do so (v. 24). Men were chosen for the work of the tabernacle

according to their special skills they were expected to use in such service (vv. 30-35; cp. 1Pet. 4:10-11). Accordingly, these gifts for Yahweh:

- [1] Originated in a willing heart — Exo. 35:21-22, 26.
- [2] Were supplied according to the ability of the giver to do so — Exo. 35:10, 24-25, 35; 36:1-4.
- [3] Resulted in abundance — Exo. 36:5-7.

Exhortations to enthusiastic and willing service to the Lord are set forth negatively and positively in Hag. 1:6-15; Mal. 3:8-11; 1Cor. 15:58.

“And brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered an offering of gold unto Yahweh” — Such ornaments were worn by men as well as by women in those times (Exo. 3:22) Indeed, some had been used to construct the golden calf (Exo. 32:2), but others now brought forth their ornaments for the construction of the tabernacle.

As indicated in the R.V., this included bracelets or broaches, rings or signet-rings, tablets or armlets. It was the *willingness* with which this was offered that was pleasing unto Yahweh.

In the *Law of Moses*, p. 96, Bro. Roberts writes: “God has caused a proclamation to be sounded through the world (though its force is now almost spent): ‘Speak unto the children of Adam that they bring Me an offering. Of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering... and let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.’ The rearing of the sanctuary will not be accomplished till the age to come, but the materials are meanwhile being brought in: ‘gold, silver, and precious stones: wood, hay, and stubble.’ They will all be inspected at the Judgment Seat, and assorted. When matters have reached this pass — when Christ is actually in the earth, and it is patent to all men that the work of God by him is a reality and not a delusion — there will be sure to be a rush of participants. ‘Lord, Lord, open unto us.’ But by that time, the num-

ber has been made up that is needful for the organization of the Kingdom of God: and we may then see the antitype of what happened in Israel’s camp after the issue of the invitation to bring in materials. ‘The people brought much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man or woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much’ (Exo. 36:5-7).

“The materials having been brought to Moses, Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: and they received of Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal.’ And so the work of construction proceeded. ‘According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them’.” (Exo. 39:42-43).

VERSE 23

“And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers’ skins, brought them” — See notes, Exo. 25:2-7.

VERSE 24

“Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought Yahweh’s offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service brought it” — It was compulsory for every adult male to pay a half-shekel of silver as redemption money to Yahweh (Exo. 30:11-15) and the amount paid answers exactly to the requirements of the tabernacle (Exo. 38:24-29). The state-

ment before us suggests that some offerings in addition to the stated compulsory rate may have been made voluntarily. If that were the case, the amount of the additional is not supplied, nor are we told as to what was done with it.

VERSE 25

“And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen” — The term “wise hearted” denotes women who were intelligent as well as being skilful in spinning. The flax itself was dyed, so that the thread produced was coloured already.

VERSE 26

“And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goat’s hair” — The expression “whose heart stirred them up in wisdom” implies that special skill was required for spinning goats’ hair.

VERSE 27

“And the rulers” — The reference probably is to those leaders appointed as the result of Jethro’s suggestion. See Exo. 18:25.

“Brought onyx stones” — Josephus states that only the stone in the breastplate was onyx, whereas those on the shoulders were sardonyx. “Onyx” signifies *finger-nail*. The gem displays layers of different colours which alternate with each other, and bear some resemblance to the white and flesh coloured bands of the fingernail. A sardonyx is more sharply defined with bands of dark red and white. These colors, flashing with the gleam of fire from the sun would suggest the reflection of divine glory which a true Israelite is called upon to manifest. This requires sacrifice (red) and righteousness (white), the colours of the gem.

“And stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate” — It was appropriate that the heads of the tribes should supply these gems, for they represented

the tribes in the breastplate.

VERSE 28

“And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense” — See notes, Exo. 27:20-21; 30:2-38.

VERSE 29

“The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto Yahweh, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which Yahweh had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses” — Note the constant reiteration of the condition of willingness, required for divine acceptance. The people answered to it. There was a willing response and co-operation on the part of all classes of the community. This was pleasing to Yahweh, and mutually stimulating.

What a pity it was not sustained during the wilderness wanderings! The experiences of Israel witness to the need of a consistent and constant manifestation of such characteristics.

Workmen Called To Labour

— vv. 30-35.

Outstanding workmen are needed for special labour. This is a principle insisted upon throughout Scripture, and one which should be applied today. The democratic idea that one is as good as another in any field of endeavour is not found therein. When Yahweh wants a particular work to be done, he arranges for unique workmen. Therefore, in constructing the tabernacle, Bezaleel and Aholiab are separated from the congregation and employed to supervise the task because of their outstanding skills. But even outstanding personal ability is not sufficient for the work then in hand. The two men are endowed with the spirit of God to guide them in wisdom, both to perform on their own account, and to educate others in essential labour. So the need of the nation for teachers and labourers is supplied; as it was also when the time later came for ecclesias to be established.

VERSES 30-33

These are a repetition of Exo. 31:2-5, merely noting that Moses passed on to the children of Israel the instructions God had previously given them. See notes there supplied.

VERSE 34

“And He hath put in his heart that he may teach” — Rotherham renders this: “He hath put into his heart to teach...” Bezaleel was given the ability not only to labour skilfully himself, but also to teach others to do so. Such instruction is needful today, in order that workmen may be recruited for building the spiritual tabernacle. See 2Tim. 2:2.

“Both he and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan” — See note, Exo. 31:6.

VERSE 35

“Them hath He filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work” — Recognising the need of skill in the important work that He had set the people to do, Yahweh provided specially skilled men competent to instruct others in the labour required. He has done the same for the ecclesia in every age. In the grace of God, Paul became one such, and instructed others so that they might continue to build in an improved manner (cp. 1Cor. 3:9-15; 2Cor. 6:1).

It is important that those who today

aim to “labour together with God” heed the instructions clearly laid down, otherwise “they will suffer loss.”

“Of the engraver” — Artificers in metals, gems and so forth. Bezaleel particularly, was skilled in that art.

“And of the cunning workman and of the embroiderer” — The expression denotes a skilled weaver. Aholiab was particularly adept at such. See Exo. 38:23.

“In blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of them that devise cunning work” — There was room for all kinds of labour connected with the tabernacle, and by instruction from the teachers, Bezaleel and Aholiab, the ordinary Israelite could add to his natural talents in his service to Yahweh: as we are all called upon to do (Mat. 25:15-16, 20).

**CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX****THE WORK BEGUN: CURTAINS, SOCKETS, BARS AND VEIL COMPLETED**

The example and instruction of Bezaleel and Aholiab so increase the skill of the Israelites, that they give themselves enthusiastically to the work before them. Willingness to spend and be spent in the work is manifested by them, providing an example of dedication in labour such as should be displayed by labourers in God's service in every age.

The Work Commenced — vv. 1-3.

Bezaleel and Aholiab commence their labour and instruction, and are enthusiastically supported by other Israelites.

VERSE 1

“Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom Yahweh put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that Yahweh had commanded” — This verse introduces the description of labour completed, which extends to the end of Exo. 39. “Wisdom” is *chokmah* and denotes skill, talent, genius. “Understanding” is *tebunnah* and signifies intelligence, discretion, the ability to make the best use of one’s skill. Faith, ability and discretion are all valuable attributes in the work of the Truth.

VERSE 2

“And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wisehearted man, in whose heart Yahweh had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it” — See note, Exo. 35:21. Having received sufficient materials to commence the work, Moses called Bezaleel, Aholiab and their helpers, and publicly appointed them to their duties. With the authority imposed on them by Yahweh, Israelites recognised that if they would labour acceptably unto God, it had to be in accordance with the instructions and guidance of the men thus appointed. Those who responded to the appeal are described as those “in whose heart Yahweh had put wisdom.” This God-imposed wisdom came as a result of the men hearkening to His counsel and instruction. So also with ourselves. We need to recognise the status of the apostles, appointed to provide spiritual wisdom and divine exposition, and carefully heed their guidance and instruction if we would labour effectively in the service of the Truth.

VERSE 3

“And they received of Moses all the

offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it *witah*” — Moses delivered to the care of the overseers all the materials received from the people so that it might be passed on to the various workers.

“And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning” — The people continued to bring their gifts, so that at the opening of each day, when there were fresh evidences of Yahweh’s goodness, and after they had been stimulated by the benefits of morning prayer and communion, fresh supplies continued to pour in to be added to the stores already received. The enthusiasm of the people was great. It was the tragedy of Israel’s experience that this early response was not maintained, and so many of those who here so willingly supplied materials for the tabernacle, later perished before reaching the Promised Land.

The People Restrained From Giving — vv. 4-7.

So enthusiastically do the people respond that finally their gifts become an embarrassment to the workers. Their labour is hindered by having to spend time accounting for the material that pours in. The people are asked to cease from giving.

Similar enthusiasm will follow in response to the Lord at his coming, so that the gold and the silver of the Gentiles will be given freely that the temple of the Age to come might be appropriately glorified (Hag. 2:8-9; Isa. 60:5,9).

VERSE 4

“And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made” — The workmen who used their skill in labouring under Bezaleel and Aholiab found it necessary to leave their duties, in order to make a general deputation to Moses requesting that the flow of material cease.

VERSE 5

“And they spake unto Moses, say-

ing, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which Yahweh commanded to make” —

The workmen found themselves hampered by the abundance of gifts made by the people. The time taken in listing and storing these materials limited their activity in the actual work of construction. In the superabundance of materials given, a selection of the best was made for the tabernacle, for only the best is good enough for Yahweh.

VERSE 6

“And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing” —

The proclamation made by Moses throughout the camp, putting a stop to the offering of further gifts, indicated that the day of opportunity for the ordinary Israelite to contribute to the tabernacle was at an end. In like manner, there is a day of opportunity for all saints to labour in the things of God, and they should take hold of it, for it does not last forever.

VERSE 7

“For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much” — Antotypically this will have its application at the Judgment Seat, for a selection will be made of the best results, and the rest set aside. Paul shows that we can become “labourers together with God.” However, the quality of the material we might offer, or the work we might do, shall be tested in that day, and if found to be imperfect, it will be rejected. We then will suffer loss, even though we, ourselves, may be saved (1Cor. 3:9-15). Let us labour while we can, giving of our best, recognising that our day of opportunity is limited, and that the greatest care should be exercised in what we offer to God.

Curtains, Coverings, Veils, Hangings For The Door — vv. 8-38.

These verses repeat the details given

earlier, merely noting that the work ordered was faithfully completed. Therefore, there is no need for specific expository comment at this place. The repetition shows that Moses so supervises the construction of the tabernacle that it answers exactly to the requirements of the pattern provided. All the work is meticulously carried out according to requirements. The repetition serves to emphasise the importance of observing details in the carrying out of the will of Yahweh. As Moses completes the work, so also will the Lord Jesus in the construction of the Tabernacle “not made with hands” (Heb. 8:2; 9:11).

VERSES 8-18

See notes, Exo. 26:1-11.

VERSES 19-34

See notes, Exo. 26:14-29. The statement of v. 22, that “one board had two tenons, equally distant from another” is rendered in the RV as “joined one to another,” as in Exo. 26:17.

VERSES 35-36

See notes, Exo. 26:33-34. The statement of v. 33: “He made the middle bar to shoot through the boards,” should be rendered as in Exo. 26:28: “to reach from end to end.”

VERSE 37

See note, Exo. 26:36.

VERSE 38

“And the five pillars of it with their hooks” — See note, Exo. 26:37.

“And he overlaid their chapters and their fillets with gold: but their five sockets were of brass” — The chapters and connecting rods of the five pillars at the door of the tabernacle have not been previously mentioned. The word for “fillets” is *chashuwq* and is from a root signifying “to attach.” Strong gives the meaning as *connecting rods*, so that the pillars were joined together, and found mutual support, strength and stability by so being connected.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

MAKING OF THE ARK, MERCY SEAT, TABLE OF SHEWBREAD, LAMPSTAND, AND ALTAR OF INCENSE

This chapter describes how the instructions for the fashioning of the items specified were meticulously carried out.



The Tabernacle Furniture Completed — vv. 1-38:31.

Bezaleel supervises the making of the various parts of the tabernacle as described. Aided by the Holy Spirit granted him, the

work is successfully completed.

For his appointment to this labour and his qualifications for it, see Exo. 31:2; 35:30. The exact repetition of that which was commanded, and that which was done, indicates the scrupulous attention to detail shown by Moses in carrying out everything commanded him. See the comment in Heb. 3:1-2, and connect with John 4:34; 17:4.

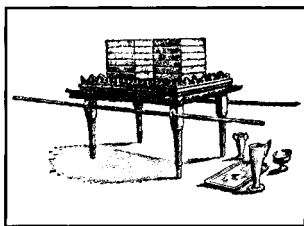
VERSES 1-9

For notes on this section see comments on Exo. 25:10-20.

“And Bezaleel made the ark” — Apparently Bezaleel was the more skillful of the two master-artisans, and therefore the construction of this most difficult of all the objects to fashion was placed into his care. In regard to the taber-



nacle, the order of construction follows the order of description. The most sacred



sections are made first (see ch. 25). This follows the divine order. Christ was provided before the ecclesia is glorified.

The statement of v. 7, that the two cherubim were “beaten out of one piece” is rendered in the R.V. “beaten work” as in Exo. 25:18.

VERSES 10-16

See notes, Exo. 25:23-29.

VERSES 17-24

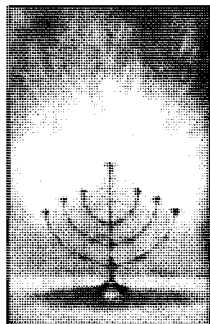
See notes, Exo. 25:31-39.

VERSES 25-28

See notes, Exo. 30:1-5.

VERSE 29

“And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary” — For details see Exo. 30:23-35.



CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ALTAR, LAVER AND COURT: AND THE SUM OF THE PEOPLE'S OFFERINGS

The work of construction is completed by the workmen especially endowed for the purpose. A correct accounting of the people's offerings is made.

VERSES 1-7

See notes, Exo. 27:1-8.

VERSE 8

“And he made the laver of brass” —

The instructions concerning the laver are briefly given in Exo. 30:18-21, and further details are now supplied. Before attending at the altar, or before entering the Holy Place, the priests were required to wash hands and feet in the laver (Exo. 40:30-31). Paul identifies the laver with the Word of God (see Eph. 5:26 where “washing” from the Gr. *loutron*, can be rendered “laver.” and see Tit. 3:5; John 15:3; Psa. 119:9). The action of the priests, therefore, demonstrated the constant need of application to the Word as a cleansing agent.

“And the foot of it of brass” — See notes, Exo. 30:18-19.

“Of the looking glasses of the women” — “Looking glasses” is better rendered as *mirrors*. They comprised highly polished bronze or copper plates, circular or oval in shape, with long handles. Illustrations of these have been found on Egyptian monuments, and samples are displayed in the Cairo Museum.

Normally these were items of vanity, but the women sacrificed their interest in mere display, so as to donate the metal for the construction of the laver at which the priests would wash. The action of these women set an example that sisters today can follow in the strengthening of the hands of brethren in their work in the Truth. Let them also sacrifice some of

their objects of vanity that the latter may be served. This is in accordance with the instructions of Paul to Timothy in which he calls upon brethren to act as priests (1Tim. 2:8), whilst he exhorts sisters to set aside objects of vanity in order to give themselves to useful service in Christ (vv. 9-10). Peter does likewise (1Pet. 3:3-4). When these instructions are carried out, many a heart-break in the home will be avoided, for the home in which both parents are devoted to the work of the Truth, is the one in which true happiness is found.

“Assembling, which assembled” — The Hebrew is given in the margin, *assembling in troops*. The expression denotes the enthusiasm for religious reform which swept Israel at that time, and in which the women played an important part.

“At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” — This “tabernacle” was the temporary tent set up by Moses pending the building and erection of the proper tabernacle. However, it is obvious from such expressions as are found in 1Sam. 1:9-12; 2:22 that the practice of gathering at such places of worship was followed by godly Israelitish women even after the tabernacle proper was set up.

VERSES 9-20

See notes, Exo. 27:9-19. However there is an addition supplied in v. 17, in that the pillars surrounding the court are

described as having chapters of silver. The Hebrew for "chapters" is *roshti*, signifying "heads." They were made of silver which is the metal of redemption, for redemption money was paid in silver (Exo. 30:15; Lev. 5:15; 1Pet. 1:18-20). Hence the sixty pillars surrounding the court of the tabernacle had their heads lifted high in proclaiming redemption, illustrating the exhortation of the Lord: "Lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Again in v. 18, there is a further addition in regard to the hanging for the gate of the court, in that it is stated that "the height in the breadth was five cubits answering to the hangings of the court" (cp. with Exo. 27:18). This implies that the material was woven in pieces exactly this width, so that the linen fence was made in four-square sections, again illustrating the Israelitish nature of the worship established (see Acts 28:20).

Summary Of The Metals Used

— vv. 21-31.

The various metals willingly provided by the Israelites, and used in the construction of the tabernacle, are now listed. While the total cost is large, it is difficult to ascertain what it would be in view of changing values in this age of constant inflation. Actual values of gold and silver can be estimated only approximately. A talent of gold was once estimated to be worth \$30,000 and a talent of silver at about \$2,000; a shekel of gold at \$10, and a shekel of silver at 65 cents. But today it would be considerably in excess of that, emphasising the preciousness of redemption in Christ (see 1Pet. 1:18-20).

VERSE 21

"This is the sum of the tabernacle, even of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses" — Meticulous accounting was made of all contributions given to the work of Yahweh. This is a wise provision at any time.

"For the service of the Levites" — Note that "for" is in italics and substitute it

with "as." The accounting of the materials supplied was a work, or service, performed by the Levites.

"By the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest" — Ithamar supervised this work, or service, performed by the Levites (see note, Exo. 6:23). He acted as treasurer.

VERSE 22

"And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that Yahweh commanded Moses" — See note, Exo. 31:2, 6. Bezaleel was the chief overseer, and Aholiab acted as his assistant. Thus the direction of the whole work was under the charge of Bezaleel, though he did not personally construct every item.

VERSE 23

And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan — See note, Exo. 31:2, 6. As stated above, he acted as assistant to Bezaleel.

"An engraver" — The word signifies an artificer without any special application as to metals or cloth.

"And a cunning workman" — More correctly, "a skilled weaver."

"And an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen" — Aholiab's particular duties in regard to the tabernacle were in relation to textile fabrics.

VERSE 24

"All the gold that was occupied for the work in all the work of the holy place, even the gold of the offering" — Whereas the instruments and furniture of the court were constructed of brass or bronze, gold was freely used in the Holy Place.

"Was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary" — In his translation Berkeley (over thirty years ago) estimated this as 3800 lb at a cost of \$877,300. But the inflationary spiral of recent years would add considerably to this total. With gold at \$200 per ounce, the

gold of the tabernacle would exceed \$32m in cost!

VERSE 25

“And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation” — See note, Exo. 30:12-16, for the half shekel of silver demanded as the ransom cost of atonement.

“Was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary” — This, according to Berkeley is about 12,000 lb, and then represented \$201,000 in monetary value. To provide for modern inflation that sum could be increased ten times!

VERSE 26

“A bekah for every man” — Berkeley rates this as about 65 cents per male. See comment on Exo. 30:12-16.

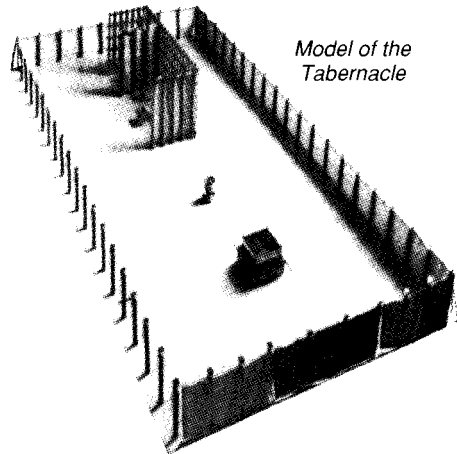
“That is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered” — See note, Exo. 30:12-16.

“From twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men” — See also Num. 1:46. It has been computed that this number of adult males of such an age would provide for a total population (with children) of approximately two million. We have discussed this previously. The number agrees exactly with the sum total of the tribes as listed in Numbers 2 (cp. v. 32), which was exclusive of the 22,000 Levites who were not numbered with the others.

VERSE 27

“And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket” — See notes, Exo. 26:14-29, 33-34. For the use of the talents, see note on Exo. 26:19. Consider how beautiful is the symbology of the tabernacle. In the numbering of the people, each man had to pay a half shekel of silver as a ransom for his life. It was a very small

amount for such a purpose, and demonstrated that each individual Israelite, according to the flesh (cp. John 6:63), was of little real value. But Yahweh took hold of all those half shekels and made them of value in His tabernacle. It taught that though the flesh “profits nothing” in itself, God can make it of value in His service (Rom. 6:13). So whereas Israelites were humbled when they considered that Yahweh only put a value of 65 cents on their lives, they were encouraged to consider, by the use Yahweh made of the payment, that they could become of value to Him.



*Model of the
Tabernacle*

VERSE 28

“And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapters, and filleted them” — For the pillars and their hooks see vv. 10-17; for the chapters that were evidently made of wood and overlaid with silver, see note, ch. 27:19. The “fillets” were connecting rods that linked the pillars one with the other (cp. ch. 38:19).

VERSE 29

“And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels” — See note, Exo.

35:24. There was an exact and correct accounting of all materials supplied, as there should be in the things of the Truth. In that regard, ecclesial treasurers and arranging brethren have a great responsibility to do likewise in the use of money "given to Yahweh." It should be used to the best advantage. Careful accounting in ecclesial activities creates confidence in the general management of ecclesial affairs, and is an encouragement to giving and working in co-operation. It prevents squandering money on the part of those who may have no personal responsibility in regard to it. Money given to the service of the Truth is the Lord's money, and should be treated with extreme care.

VERSE 30

"And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the

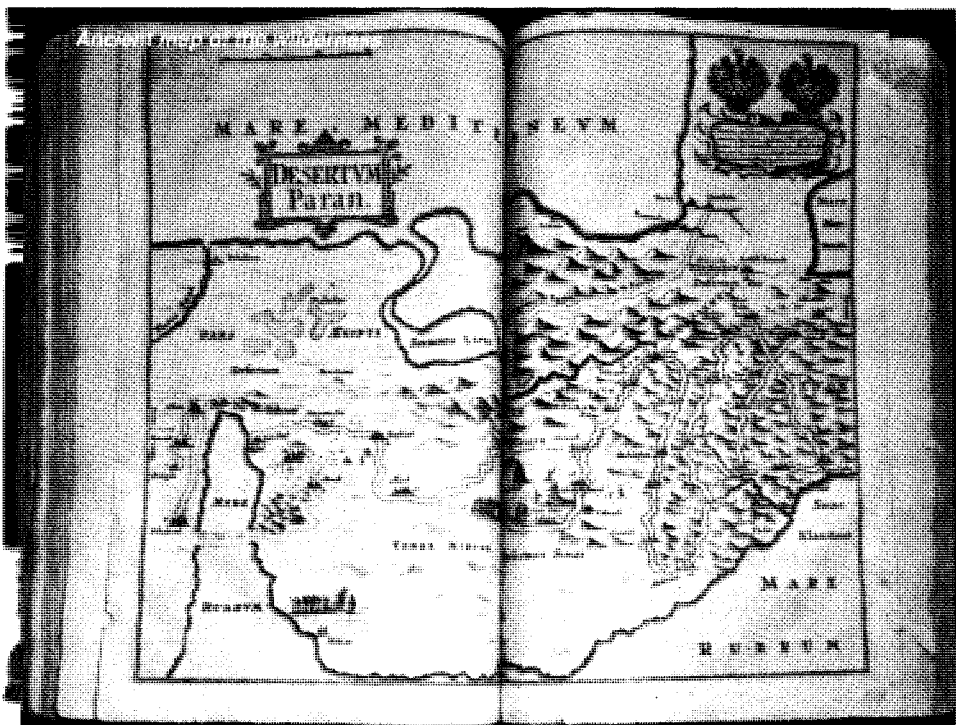
brasen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar" — See notes, Exo. 27:1-8; 26:37; 36:38.

VERSE 31

"And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about" — See note, Exo. 38:11-20. Nothing is said concerning the pillars of the outer court which apparently were made of shittim wood in conformity with those of the tabernacle.

The reference in Exo. 27:1, 10, therefore, evidently signifies that the pillars were of shittim wood, and only the sockets were of brass.

The "pins" were tent pins which were used to give added strength to the tabernacle and outer court by connecting the uprights therewith by cords.



CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

GARMENTS FOR AARON

The holy garments for Aaron were made carefully in accordance with the instructions given to Moses. The constant repetition of the statement, "As Yahweh commanded Moses..." (vv. 1, 5, 7, etc.), not only shows that close attention was given to the commands received, but also that God heeds and records when this is done. Finally, all the garments were inspected and approved by Moses.

**The Priestly Garments Completed —
vv. 1-31.**

All the parts of the tabernacle having been made, Bezaleel and Aholiab take in hand the priestly garments which already have been described.

VERSE 1

"And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet" — The reference is to the threads spun by the women (Exo. 35:25), and which had been given to Moses. No mention is made of the fine linen, though this also was manufactured by the women. Perhaps, as linen formed the basic material, reference is only made to the dyed threads which formed the pattern of the various entrances, and the ceiling of the tabernacle.

"They made cloths of service to do service in the holy place" — The *Berkeley Bible* renders this as "garments for ministering in the sanctuary," or as translated literally in the *English-Hebrew Interlinear Bible*, "the vestments for office." See note, Exo. 31:10.

"And made the holy garments for Aaron; as Yahweh commanded Moses" — See note, Exo. 28:2.

VERSE 2

"And he made the ephod of gold, blue and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen" — See note, Exo. 28:6.

VERSE 3

"And they did beat the gold into

thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work" — This method of producing the fine gold thread to work into the ephod, not previously mentioned, required remarkable skill, which was divinely bestowed on craftsmen to produce this special item.

VERSES 4-7

See notes, Exo. 28:7-12.

VERSES 8-21

See notes, Exo. 28:15-28.

VERSES 22-26

See notes, Exo. 28:31-34.

VERSES 27-29

See notes, Exo. 28:39-40.

VERSES 30-31

See notes, Exo. 28:36-37.

VERSES 32-41

These verses contain a recapitulation of the work completed, and therefore have already been discussed. However, v. 37 states that the lamps are to be "set in order." The Hebrew *ma'arakah* provides a literal rendition "lamps of arrangement" or of *military array*. Each of the seven lamps contributes its portion of the general illumination, thus assisting each other. It should be the objective of each ecclesia to co-operate with its sister-ecclesias in

mutual co-operation that the Truth might shine forth more brightly in giving forth one light (see Num. 8:2). The supervision of the high priest assisted to that end (Lev. 24:1-3), as that of our High Priest does today (cp. Rev. 1:20; 2:1). Each lamp was so replenished with oil that it shone forth consistently with its fellows — a symbol of inter-ecclesial fellowship and co-operation.

VERSE 42

“According to all that Yahweh commanded Moses” — This statement is constantly repeated, indicating that the work was meticulously completed according to the instructions given.

“So the children of Israel made all the work” — Obviously, if any of the work submitted to Moses’ scrutiny had not conformed “to the pattern shown him in the mount” (Exo. 25:40; 26:30), it would have been rejected and replaced. This may have been the case, for the order of enumeration of the work completed is not quite the same as the original listing of the order required.

VERSE 43

“And Moses did look upon all the work” — Moses acted carefully, and closely examined the work to see that it

conformed to the letter of the instructions given. He thus acted in the capacity of judge, foreshadowing the future status of Christ who will closely scrutinise the various parts of the tabernacle “not made with hands,” as they are brought before him at his second coming.

Hence, in examining each part, and passing it as fit, Moses acted as judge, knowing the “pattern” already clearly revealed to him in the mount (Exo. 25:40). Similarly, those to be redeemed by the Master, will be fashioned by the Word according to the “pattern” demonstrated in him (cp. 1Tim. 1:16; Heb. 8:5).

“And, behold, they had done it as Yahweh commanded, even so they had done it” — Whether or not some parts were rejected and replaced, the tabernacle was finally completed and approved by the judge. No parts were missing. There was a completeness about the work, even as there will be when the spiritual tabernacle of God is completed in the Age to come (Rev. 21:3).

“And Moses blessed them” — The benediction he pronounced upon the workers not only expressed his own approval but that of Yahweh whom he represented (Exo. 7:1). Christ, also, will proclaim a blessing upon the completed work of the spiritual tabernacle at his second coming (Mat. 25:34-40).

See this typed in Lev. 9:22-23. The people were blessed “and the glory of Yahweh appeared unto all the people.” It was an outstanding moment of joy. So it shall be in the age to come when the blessed will be given divine nature, and the glory of Yahweh shall appear unto all.



CHAPTER FORTY

THE TABERNACLE SET UP: YAHWEH'S GLORY TAKES POSSESSION

All being ready, a particular time is appointed for the setting up of the tabernacle and the initial worship thereat. This is by specific God-given orders to Moses. The various parts of the tabernacle are anointed; the different items of furniture are put in their places. And Moses and Aaron commence to minister thereat on behalf of the people. As they do so, the glory of Yahweh descends and fills the sanctuary. So powerful is the theophany that the priests are not able to minister therein. The cloud covers the tabernacle, and the glory takes up its position in the most holy. Thence afterwards, the movements of the children of Israel are governed by Yahweh as manifested in the cloud. While it remains stationary over the tabernacle, Israel remain encamped; when it moves, they follow.

The Command To Set Up The Tabernacle — vv. 1-8.

Though all parts of the tabernacle are completed, Moses does not presume to set it up but awaits the command of Yahweh to do so. There is a set time appointed for this, as there is a set time for the consummation of the divine purpose in the earth (Psa. 102:13). At last, Moses receives specific directions to assemble the tabernacle, and is instructed as to the order in which the various parts are to be set up.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses saying” — How much time elapsed between the completion of the work (Exo. 39:42-43) and the command to set up the tabernacle is not stated.

VERSE 2

“On the first day of the first month” — See Exo. 12:2. The tabernacle was set up 11½ months after leaving Egypt. It must have thrilled the people, and filled them with awe, to see the results of their

gifts and labours taking shape in the beautiful and typically arranged sanctuary before them. They had responded liberally in their freewill offerings of goods and services. Skilled workmen had fashioned the materials into quality furniture and other crafted items of outstanding art and beauty. Moses had inspected and accepted the finished products, and, following the instructions of Yahweh, placed them in proper order for the erection of God's dwelling place in Israel.

“Shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the congregation” — The tabernacle was first set up, and then the tent (the coverings of goats' hair, rams' skins reddened, and badgers' skins) was placed over it (see vv. 18-19). “Congregation” is *mowade* in the Hebrew, signifying “meeting at a set time.” See previous notes.

VERSE 3

“And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony” — The first piece of furniture put in its place is the ark. It is described as *the Ark of the Testimony*, for

the ten commandments, comprising the testimony, formed the basis of the covenant Yahweh made with Israel (see Exo. 34:27-28; Deu. 4:11-14). In fulfilment of this, the antitypical ark and mercy-seat, the Lord Jesus Christ, was first perfected and the covenant of grace established, before the completion of the entire antitypical tabernacle: Christ and the redeemed.

“And cover the ark with the vail” —

With awe and appropriate ceremony the ark would have been put in its place, and the veil hiding it from the common view, and separating the most holy from the holy, hung in place.

VERSE 4

“And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it” — The table of shewbread (Exo. 25:23-30) is next placed in the holy. Upon it were arranged the loaves of bread, the frankincense and the various vessels as prescribed (see Lev. 24:5-7).

It was appropriate that the table of shewbread should precede the lampstand, for the latter was designed to illustrate the former.

In fulfilment of the type, the Hope of Israel was first proclaimed before the completed revelation of God (the whole of the Bible) was given unto man.

“And thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof” — The lamps having been lit, the table of shewbread would be clearly illuminated (Exo. 37:17-24; see notes, ch. 25:31-39).

VERSE 5

“And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony” — See Exo. 30:1-10; 37:25-28. The altar of gold was in the holy place, stationed just before the veil that hid the most holy (Exo. 30:6).

“And put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle” — The reference is to the heavy curtain door that closed the eastern end of the tabernacle. See Exo. 26:36; 36:37.

VERSE 6

“And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation” — See ch. 38:1-7; and notes, ch. 27:1-8.

VERSE 7

“And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein” — See notes, Exo. 30:18; 38:8. The water was required for the ablutions of the priests (Exo. 30:19-21; 40:12,31; Lev. 8:6) and for washing the sacrifices (Lev. 8:21).

VERSE 8

“And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate” — See notes, Exo. 27:9-18; 38:9-20. The “hanging” was the door to the enclosure (Exo. 27:16; 38:18).

The Tabernacle Anointed — vv. 9-11.

The instructions for anointing are given at this place, but it is doubtful whether they were carried out immediately. Most likely the ceremony was delayed until the special induction of the priests was carried out as described in Lev. 8.

VERSE 9

“And thou shalt take the anointing oil” — See notes, Exo. 30: 22-33.

“And anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof, and it shall be holy” — By this anointing Yahweh claimed the tabernacle as His. It anticipated the anointing of the Lord and “his fellows” with the Holy Spirit and a change of nature (Mat. 3:16-17; John 3:34; Heb. 1:9; Rom. 1:4). See Lev. 8:10.

VERSE 10

“And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy” — In Exo. 30:29 the whole tabernacle and its contents are

described as "most holy," but as the altar opened the way to entrance thereat, it is here given a special status as "most holy." It was then anointed, sanctified, and cleansed so as to receive the offerings of Israelites. In this it foreshadowed the Lord Jesus as our altar (John 17:19; Heb. 9:11-12,23; 13:10, 20). By these ceremonies Israelites were taught to treat these objects of worship with the highest respect. Undue familiarity towards such can breed carelessness, and this was discouraged by drawing attention to the holiness of the way of approach to Yahweh. See the marginal references for things described as "most holy."

VERSE 11

"And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it" — See notes, Exo. 30:28.

The Priests Are Sanctified — vv. 12-16.

The inanimate objects associated with the worship having thus been prepared, the active participants are now inducted into their high office: Aaron and his sons are dressed and anointed.

VERSE 12

"And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water" — Aaron and his sons were conducted by Moses to the site of the laver and washed in full view of the people. This was designed to impress Israelites with the cleansing power of the Word as represented by the laver. The ceremony appears to have been conducted at some time subsequent of the erection of the tabernacle. See Lev. 8:1-13.

VERSE 13

"And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office" — It was appropriate that the inanimate objects be first anointed, and then the priests; for it is normal for Yahweh to first arrange spheres of activity for His servants before

calling them to work therein. In ministering unto Yahweh in the priest's office, Aaron represented God to the people and the people to God. See notes, Exo. 30:30-32.

VERSE 14

"And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats" — First Aaron then his sons; first Christ then *his* sons (Heb. 2:13).

VERSE 15

"And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office" — The sons of Aaron were all anointed by Moses, but not in the same way. Aaron was first anointed by oil being poured upon his head (Psa. 133:2), and later by being sprinkled therewith; his sons were merely sprinkled with oil (Lev. 8:12,30). The latter was a lesser form of anointing, illustrating the higher status of the high priest who thus was sometimes named "*the anointed priest*" (Lev. 4:5; 6:22, etc.).

As high priest, Christ was anointed above his brethren, and has a higher name than that to which they can attain (Heb. 1:9; Phil. 2:9).

"For their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations" — As such it was representative of the work to be accomplished by the "firstborn of Yahweh," so that in the Lord Jesus Christ, this instruction is fulfilled.

VERSE 16

"Thus did Moses: according to all that Yahweh commanded him, so did he" — Moses meticulously carried out to the letter all instructions delivered him. The phrase "Thus did... so did he" is repeated to emphasize the careful attention to detail required of Moses.

The Tabernacle Is Set Up — vv. 17-19.

In strict obedience to the commands he receives, Moses sets up the tabernacle.

VERSE 17

“And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up” — See note, v. 2. As a prefabricated building (see Eph. 2:21), the tabernacle could be set up in one day.

VERSE 18

“And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars” — The word “fastened” is better given as “placed.” The sockets were heavy pieces of metal that were placed on the ground; so that there was no need for actual “fastening.”

As each piece of the tabernacle was put into place, the watching Israelites would see the building slowly take shape. Each individual family would thrill to the fact that it had personally contributed to the beautiful, wondrous structure before them.

VERSE 19

“And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above it; as Yahweh commanded Moses” — The three parts of the tabernacle are here clearly defined. The tabernacle (*mishkan*) or *separate place* comprised the tabernacle proper with its tapestry ceiling of cherubim; the tent (*ohel*) was the goats' hair covering that was spread above it; the final “covering” were reddened rams' skins and badgers' skins. See notes, Exo. 26:14.

The Most Holy Set In Order

— vv. 20-21.

The furniture of the most holy is next placed into position.

VERSE 20

“And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark” — See notes, Exo. 25:10-22.

VERSE 21

“And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as Yahweh commanded Moses” — See notes, Exo. 25:10; 26:31-32.

The Table of Shewbread Set In Order — vv. 22-23.

The table of shewbread is placed in position, and the bread set in order upon it.

VERSE 22

“And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil” — The table was on the right-hand side of the priest as he entered the tabernacle.

VERSE 23

“And he set the bread in order upon it before Yahweh; as Yahweh had commanded Moses” — See note, v. 4; Lev. 24:6-8. The term “shewbread” signifies *Bread of His Presence*.

The Lamps Are Lit — vv. 24-25.

With the installing and lighting of the lamps the dark interior of the tabernacle is illuminated.

VERSE 24

“And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward” — The word “candlestick” (Heb. *menowrah* from *manowr*, a yoke; a frame), signifies a lampstand.

See note, v. 4.

VERSE 25

“And he lighted the lamps before Yahweh; as Yahweh commanded Moses” — In these arrangements, Moses anticipated the work of the priests, and acted typically as the greater prophet-priest who was to come (Deu. 18:15-19; Heb. 7:12-14).

The Altar of Incense Put In Place

— vv. 26-27.

With the placing of the altar of incense

in the holy place, its furniture is complete.

VERSE 26

“And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil” — As the place of prayer, the golden altar of incense provided the means of access to the most holy during the ministry of saints in mortality. It, therefore, was placed immediately before the veil.

VERSE 27

“And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as Yahweh commanded Moses” — For the component parts of the incense and what they represented, see the notes on Exo. 30:34-38.

The Hangings And Altar Of Burnt Offerings — vv. 28-29.

The tabernacle completed, Moses now turns his attention to the outer court.

VERSE 28

“And he set up the hangings at the door of the tabernacle” — Moses first arranged for the outside curtain door of the tabernacle to be suspended from its five pillars of grace. See notes, Exo. 36:37.

VERSE 29

“And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as Yahweh commanded Moses” — Moses offered the first evening sacrifice in the priestly character he assumed at this time, by the appointment of Yahweh. Christ did likewise by divine appointment when his earthly ministry was completed, and he ascended to the Right Hand of Power. Paul states that Christ was appointed high priest “after the order of Melchizedek,” even though “our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood” (Heb. 7:12-17). Therefore, to do what he did, Moses went beyond the restrictions of the Law. He did so at the appointment of Yahweh, who has selected

faith and grace as the means of His favour. See Exo. 29:38-42 for a description of the meat (meal) offering.

The Laver And Court Set Up

— vv. 30-33.

The final portions of the place of worship are now completed.

VERSE 30

“And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal” — Moses set up the laver as directed. See v. 7; Exo. 30:18.

VERSE 31

“And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat” — The action described in this verse was not necessarily done at this time, but most likely when the tabernacle had been set up, and the formal worship commenced thereat. As noted above, in all these particulars, Moses acted as a God-appointed priest, after the order of Melchizedek.

VERSE 32

“When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as Yahweh commanded Moses” — For the importance attached to these ablutions see notes, Exo. 30:20-21.

VERSE 33

“And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate” — As directed in v. 8.

“So Moses finished the work” — There must have been a sense of satisfaction to Moses in viewing the completed work, particularly after the delay occasioned by the Israelites in worshipping the golden calf. One can imagine him standing back and viewing the completed sanctuary with the utmost pleasure, rejoicing in its beauty of construction, and its glory of precious metals, colours, and, above all, its symbology.

The words, "Moses *finished* the work" are similar to those which the Lord uttered from the cross at the completion of his earthly ministry. As death drew near, he declared: "It is finished" (John 19:30). His ministry on earth was completed, the initial work was over — a guarantee that the final glory would be brought to completion. According to *The Companion Bible* the last words of Psalm 22, which is descriptive of all the labours of the Lord, can be rendered likewise. His sacrifice was an essential element in bringing the spiritual tabernacle to completion (see Heb. 8:2; 9:8).

The Cloud Covers The Tabernacle

— vv. 34-35.

With the work complete, and doubtless as Moses and the people observing it with satisfaction, the cloud of glory, emblematic of the divine presence gracefully and impressively moves down to overshadow the tabernacle, entering it so as to fill it. Thus Yahweh takes possession of it, filling it with His glory, so that, for a time, Moses is not able to enter thereat.

VERSE 34

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation" — The Hebrew supplies the definite article: "the cloud." This is the cloud that had led the people to the mount, and which had been so active since their arrival (Exo. 13:21-22; 14:19-20, 24; 19:9; 24:15-18; 33:9-10). It was the hiding place of the divine glory (Hab. 3:4), and now completely covered the tent.

"And the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle" — Evidently the glory was manifested by an extremely brilliant breaking forth of light that, under normal conditions, was hidden from general view by the covering cloud. By this sign, Yahweh took possession of His dwelling place in the midst of Israel. A similar theophany took place at the dedication of the temple of Solomon (1Kings 8:11) when it also was taken over by Yahweh. However, during the reign of Zedekiah, when the temple and city were given over to the Babylonians, Ezekiel in vision saw the glory

leave the city by way of the eastern gate (Eze. 10:19) and then via the Mount of Olives (Eze. 11:23). This anticipated the final movements of the Lord Jesus Christ who left the city by way of the east, and finally, as the glory of the Yahweh (John 1:14), "stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Eze. 11:23). From there he ascended into heaven being received up in a cloud (Acts 1:10-11). In the future, surrounded by a cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12:1), he is to return to that city (Rev. 1:7) by way of the east (Zech. 14:4). Then, when the city is rebuilt "to Yahweh" (Jer. 31:38-40) as a great temple (Zech. 14:16; Isa. 56:7), the Messiah shall again enter "by way of the east" (Eze. 43:2). However, he then shall not be on his own but shall be accompanied by a multitude in whom he will be glorified (2Thes. 1:10), constituting "the glory of the Elohim (Mighty Ones) of Israel" whose voice will be that of a multitude "like a noise of many waters" coming from the east (Eze. 43:1-3), as the rays of the morning sun.

Accordingly, the glory that entered the tabernacle, and, later, the temple in Jerusalem, was manifested in greater degree in the Lord Jesus; whilst in the future, the fulness of that glory will be revealed to all (Col. 2:9).

Meanwhile, the tabernacle was so covered with the cloud, and filled with the glory of Yahweh, that Moses could not enter therein for a time. This foreshadowed the future when the antitypical temple (Christ and the saints) will be manifested in the political heavens (Rev. 15:5). Then, again, for a time, it will be closed to priestly intercession for the nations, though individuals may "elect" to come out of them (Rev. 15:8). The immortalised saints, though they shall constitute a royal priesthood (Rev. 5:9-10), shall not be able to minister on a national basis as such until the final vials of judgment are completed.

Until that time the glory of Yahweh manifested in the saints is hidden. See notes in *The Christadelphian Expositor: Revelation*.

VERSE 35

“And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation because the cloud abode thereupon” — This suggests that Moses had tried to enter but had been prevented by the cloud which, leaving the temporary tent (Exo. 33:9), had now settled on the outer covering of the tabernacle. In doing so, it indicated the divine approval of the building (see Num. 9:15).

“And the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle” — The glory is yet to be manifested in the earth in the future. See Num. 14:21; Isa. 66:19. Moses’ experience at the tabernacle anticipated that glorious future.

The Cloud Leads The People

— vv. 36-38.

The cloud, indicating the presence of Yahweh, becomes His guiding presence to the people. These verses comprise an epilogue to the narrative of Exodus.

VERSE 36

“And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys” — See Num. 9:17; 10:11; Neh. 9:12. The cloud was the token of the divine presence, and therefore of divine guidance. Its action was direct, continuous, unmistakable, infallible. All plans, all routes, all marching, all camping was sub-

ject to the principle of “If the Lord will...” (James 4:15). To watch the guiding pillar was all the people were required to do. On that guidance they were entirely dependent, and, in following it, they were absolutely safe. We must seek such a guidance, and we can find it in the Word. In turning towards it our eye will ever be towards His eye, which is constantly upon us (Num. 32:12; Psa. 32:8).

VERSE 37

“But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up” — All movement was governed by the cloud, so that they were constantly under divine direction. See Num. 9:18-23.

VERSE 38

“For the cloud of Yahweh was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” — See Exo. 13:21-22; 14:20-24; Num. 9:15-16. The cloud by day appeared as fire by night, so that Israelites were conscious of the presence of Yahweh both day and night. He “never slumbers nor sleeps” (Psa. 121:4); by night or day Israelites could turn to Him for help (Psa. 134:1).

The presence of the cloud was thus a comfort as well as a protection, providing a cover from the heat of the sun (Psa. 105:39; Rev. 7:16).

Summary

The last few verses of Exodus are parenthetic, and its real end is v. 35. The close of the book, therefore, is worthy of the greatness of its subject. It ends where the history of the world will end: with the glory of Yahweh filling the earth as the waters cover the sea (Num. 14:21). Thus the book of Revelation declares: *“I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful”* (Rev. 21:3-5).

This will be the completion of God’s purpose with humanity, a process from bondage to deliverance, advancing by stages from visitation to separation, education, consecration and dedication as in the book of Exodus. All the efforts and strivings of the people in the days of Moses were brought to a final, wonderful completion. So it shall be, to a greater extent, in Christ. May we be with him in that day to share this wonderful glory.

CHRONOLOGY OF EXODUS

Our exposition of Genesis traced the chronology of the world from the creation described in Genesis 1 to the death of Joseph in the year A.C. 2369.

From the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses represents a period of 64 years, computed as follows:

Date of the Call of Abram	A.C.2083
Israel left Egypt 430 years after the call of Abram (Exo. 12:40-41)	2513
Joseph died.....	2369
Period between death of Joseph and Exodus	144
Moses' age at the Exodus (Acts 7:29-30)	80
Birth of Moses after the death of Joseph	64

This provides for the following chronology

Death of Joseph.....	A.C. 2369
Birth of Moses 64 years later	+64
.....	2433
Flight of Moses (Acts 7:29).....	+40
.....	2473
Exodus from Egypt (Acts 7:29-36)	+40
.....	2513

Left Egypt for Succoth Thursday 15th Abib (Exo. 12:37)

Arrived at Pi-hahiroth on Saturday 17th (Exo. 14:2)

Sunday morning rejoiced (Exo. 14:30)

Wed. 21st arrived at Marah (Exo. 15:23)

Saturday 15th (2nd month) arrived at the Wilderness of Sin (Exo. 16:1)

Saturday 22nd — Sabbath first celebrated (Exo. 16:23)

1st day, 3rd month (a Monday) at Sinai (Exo. 19:1)

2nd day (Tuesday) Moses ascends Sinai (Exo. 19:3)

3rd day (Wednesday) People reply (Exo. 19:8)

4th day (Thursday) Moses ascends Mount (Exo. 19:8)

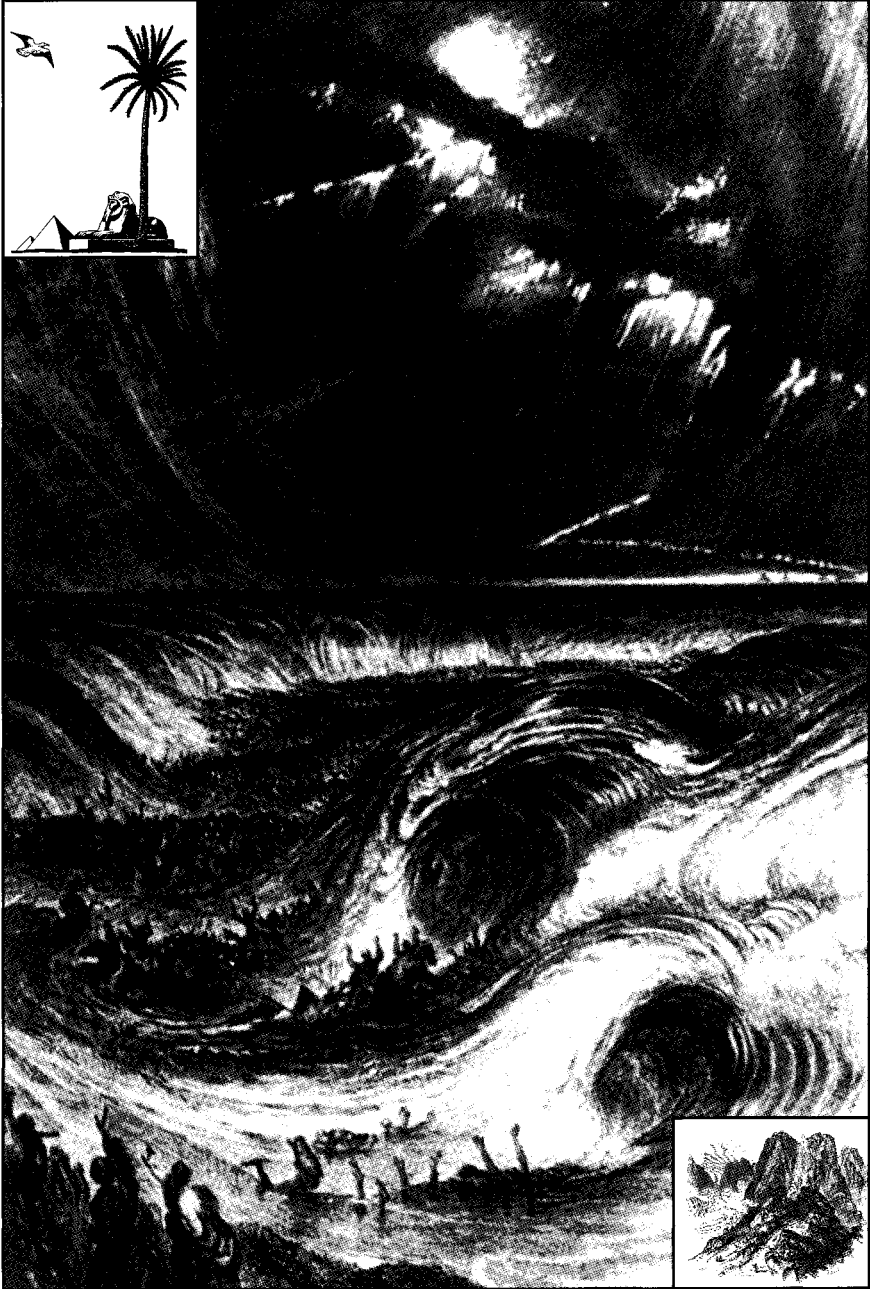
7th day (3rd day feast — Sunday) (Exo. 19:11)

8th day (Law given — Pentecost)

(Moses' forty days in the mount on two separate occasions — Deu. 9:18)

1st day 1st month 2nd year: Tabernacle erected (Exo. 40:2)

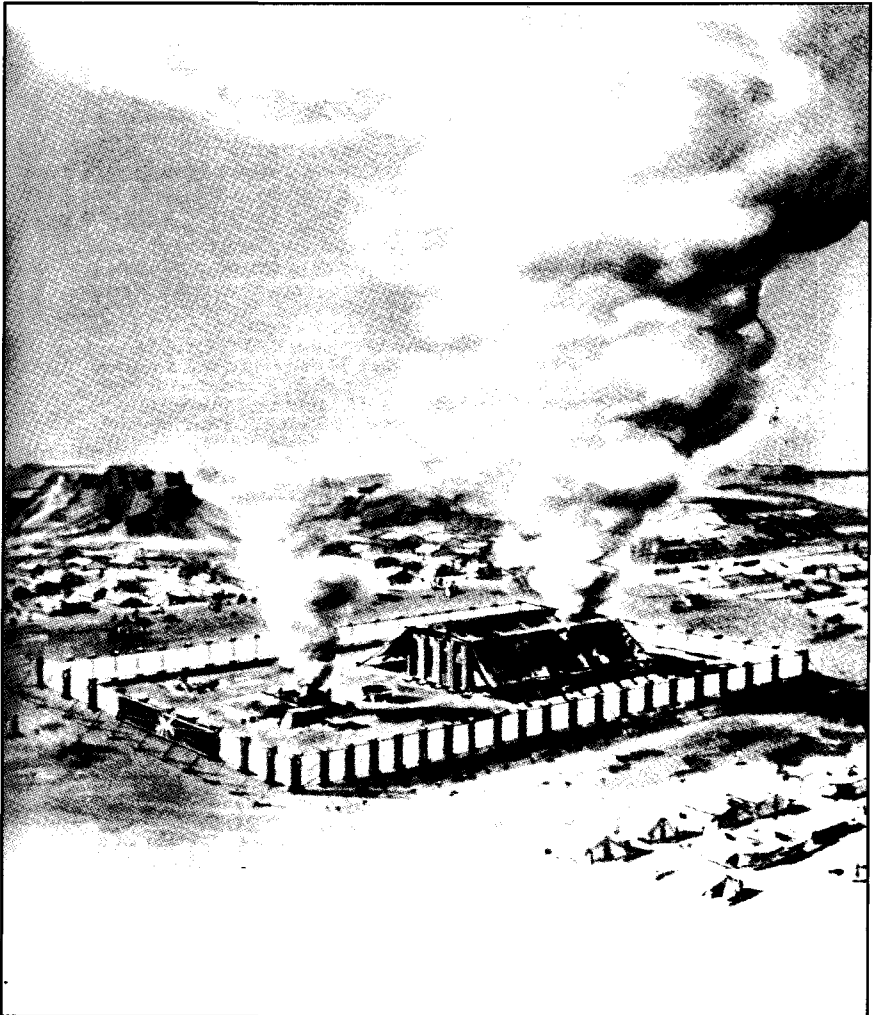
(Israel at Sinai ten months).

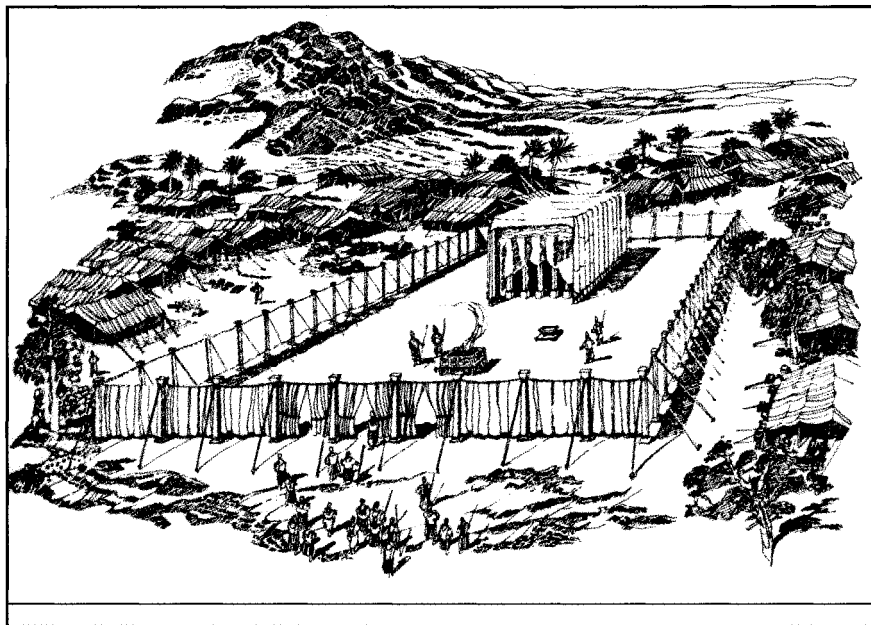


THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

THE TABERNACLE

IN PARABLE





THE TABERNACLE: *Centre of Divine Worship in Israel*

A SUMMARY

The tabernacle was the appointed centre of worship in Israel. The plans for its construction came from God (Exo. 25:40), the workmen that formed it were specially endowed with wisdom and skill (Exo. 35:30-35), and the materials were taken "out of" Egypt, as Israel left to be baptised in the Red Sea (1Cor. 10:1-2), on the way to the Promised Land.

All this was of the greatest significance, for the tabernacle was more than a centre for divine worship: it was a parable of what God desired to see developed in those who came before Him in worship. He had revealed His name to Israel as *Yahweh* (Exo. 3:14-15) — a Name that means *He will become*, but which is rendered LORD or GOD over 7,000 times in the Bible, and this Name is expressive of

His purpose to reveal His characteristics in people of His choice. The tabernacle, therefore, was a parable, "a figure for the time then present" (Heb. 9:9), foreshadowing the principle of God-manifestation in flesh.

The word "tabernacle" comes from the Hebrew *mishkan* and signifies *Dwelling Place*. It was separated in a place of its own in Israel, and there Yahweh figuratively dwelt in the midst of His people. It was not a place *in* which to worship, but one *at* which to do so, for the various appointments were designed to teach spiritual lessons.

Its Three Sections

The tabernacle was divided into three parts: the *outer court*, the *holy place*, and

the *most holy*, answering to the three stages of God manifestation. The further one penetrated into the tabernacle, the fewer people were seen. Outside of the wall of white linen that separated it from the tents of the people, were the thousands of Israel, answering to the countless number of those to whom salvation is offered. In the outer court, however, were found the actual worshippers, anticipating those who *learn* of Christ. Beyond the altar only priests and Levites were permitted, signifying those who *embrace* Christ.

The *outer court* therefore, denotes a state of **PREPARATION**, a *mental* approach to the things of God, developed by an understanding of the Word of God (Eph. 5:26; John 15:3).

Into the *holy place*, only the priests could go. It prefigured the **APPLICATION** of the things of God, and denoted a *moral* walk in the light (lampstand), eating the bread of divine fellowship (shewbread), and continuing "instant in prayer" (incense altar). Figuratively ministering in the holy place is the present status of Christ's followers (Rev. 1:20; cp. Eph. 1:3; 2:6 with Heb. 9:23).

The *most holy* was reserved for the high priest only. It points forward to those who ultimately attain unto the glory (Luke 13:24; Rom. 5:2), being made "like unto" Christ (1 John 3:2), possessing divine nature (1 Pet. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:4), of immortality. The *most holy*, therefore suggests **GLORIFICATION**, the *physical* manifestation of God.

In that way, the tabernacle sets forth a progression: from Preparation (mental understanding), to Application (moral manifestation), to Glorification (physical revelation) of God-manifestation.

THE OUTER COURT

Made up of the wall of white linen, the entrance curtains, the brazen altar, and the laver. They symbolise the requirements of God as follows:

The Wall of White Linen (Exo. 27:9-10). A symbol of separation from external matters, and justification by forgiveness of sins. See Rom. 3:23-31; 5:1; 10:17; Heb.

11:16. The wall of white linen reminded Israelites that they could only acceptably worship Yahweh through the righteousness of faith. It was hung on pillars and sockets of brass (representing the flesh purified by fire — Num. 16:37-38; 1 Cor. 3:15), topped by silver (representing redemption — Exo. 30:13).

The Entrance (Exo. 27:16). This was formed of a curtain of blue (God manifestation — Num. 15:38; Deu. 22:12), scarlet (the sacrifice of sinful flesh — Isa. 1:18), purple (the harmonising colour, a blending of blue and scarlet, representing God manifest in the flesh, — Mark 15:17; Est. 8:15; Dan. 5:7, marg.). The entrance represented the Lord Jesus (John 10:9), who manifested the qualities depicted in the colours.

The Brazen Altar (Exo. 27:1-8). Christ in sacrificial manifestation (Heb. 13:10). All who touched the altar were made holy (Exo. 29:37); in its antitype, all who make contact with Christ through baptism are constituted holy (Rom. 6:1-3). The priests first washed at the laver before attending to the altar (Exo. 30:18), teaching that a person must be washed by the Word (by understanding) before baptism is valid (Mark 16:16).

The Laver. Here the priests washed hands and feet before and after engaging upon their daily duties in the holy place. It represents the cleansing agent of the Word (Eph. 5:26) where "washing" is "laver" in Greek). See Psa. 119:9; John 15:3. There is a constant need of the Word after baptism that we might walk (feet) and work (hands) acceptably in the sight of Yahweh.

THE HOLY PLACE

This symbolised the application of the doctrine of Christ. It was part of the tabernacle styled "the patterns of things in the heavens" (Heb. 9:23), pointing forward to that state in which baptised believers walk (Eph. 2:6).

The Lampstand (Exo. 25:31). The lampstand was fed with oil, and had seven lamps, speaking of perfect light (Psa. 119:105). As the specifications of the tabernacle did not provide for windows,

the lamps were the only form of light in the holy place, and therefore presented a contrast to natural light (Rev. 1:20; Phil. 2:15). The lamps in the tabernacle were kept burning by oil supplied by all Israel (Exo. 27:20-21), so it is the responsibility of each member of an ecclesia to contribute to the general light of knowledge applied. If the light went out, the priest walked in darkness.

The Table of Shewbread (Exo. 25:23-30). Literally, the word "shewbread" signifies *His presence*. It was illuminated by the light of the lampstand which revealed the presence of a gold-covered table upon which were placed each sabbath twelve loaves of bread together with frankincense (Lev. 24:5-9). These loaves were a memorial of the twelve tribes of Israel and are styled the bread of their God (Lev. 21:6). The twelve loaves represented the Hope of Israel (Acts 28:20), the partaking of which will give life. The priests were required to eat these loaves in the holy place each sabbath, typifying fellowship with Yahweh through the Hope of Israel.

The Golden Altar of Incense (Exo. 30:1-8). Each morning and evening incense was burnt on this altar from coals

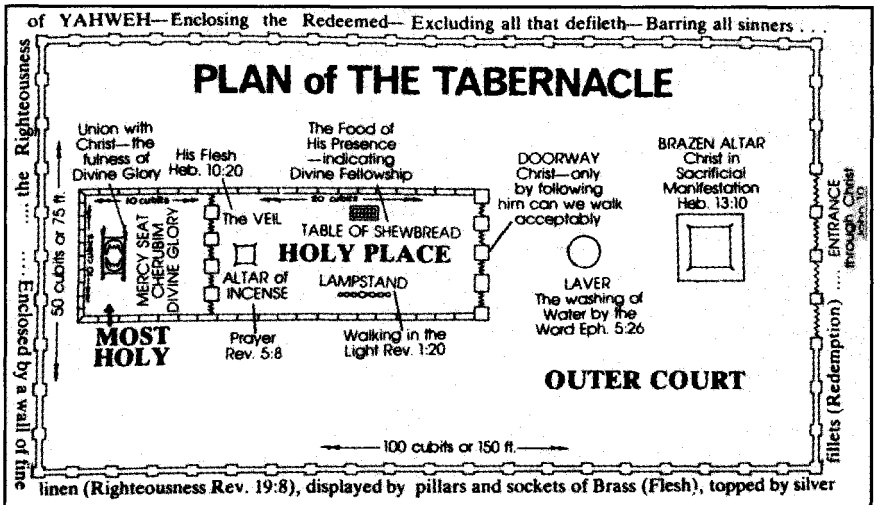
taken from the brazen altar in the outer court, thus the two altars were connected. Incense represents prayer — Psa. 141:2; Rev. 5:9-10 (mg.); Luke 1:10. Acceptable prayer must be offered through Christ our Sacrifice and Altar (Heb. 13:10).

THE MOST HOLY

The most holy was half the size of the holy place (Exo. 26; cp. Mat. 25:2-3) and formed a cube, which to the Hebrews was the symbol of perfection. (For the symbolism of the cube see Eph. 3:17-19).

The Veil (Exo. 26:31-33) — Similar in colour to the entrance curtain, but with cherubim inscribed upon it. It represented flesh dedicated to Yahweh (Heb. 10:20). The Lord penetrated beyond the veil (of flesh) when he rose from the dead, and was clothed upon with divine nature. Thus, to enter the most holy is to penetrate beyond the veil to the divine nature (2Pet. 1:3-4).

The Ark of the Covenant (Exo. 25:10-16). The ark was symbolic of salvation in Christ. It was called the "Ark of the Covenant" because the ten commandments, the basis of the Mosaic covenant (1Kings 8:9, 21), were placed inside of it. The ark was



of wood (human nature) covered with gold (a tried faith — 1Pet. 1:7). In addition to the tables of the covenant (divine law — Heb. 9:4), it also contained a golden pot of manna (representative of Christ as the food of faith leading to life eternal — John 6:48-51; Rev. 2:17), and Aaron's rod that flourished (representative of divine selection and authority demonstrated by resurrection — Num. 17:5-10; Rom. 1:1-3). The ark taught that those "in Christ" must live by the law of God, must eat the food of faith, and must seek life through a resurrection from the dead.

The Mercy Seat (Exo. 25:17). A sheet of gold representing Christ (Rom. 3:25—where "propitiation" from the Gr. *hilasterion*, should be rendered "mercy seat"). The word in Hebrew (*kaphar*) signifies "cover," and Christ is our "covering" (Rom. 4:7; Gal. 3:26-28), the means of purging or cleansing from sin (Heb. 9:23-24). He was a man of faith (gold), who suffered (purified with fire) and revealed the character of his Father (beaten into shape).

The Cherubim (Exo. 25:18-22). They were made of the same piece of gold as the mercy seat, and were so constructed that their faces gazed upon the blood-spattered mercy seat. They represent the multi-

tudinous Christ (cp. Eze. 1:10 with Rev. 4:7; 5:9-10) when, in glory, they will be united with Christ (John 17:20-23). Between them the glory of Yahweh shone forth. See Psa. 80:1; Rom. 5:2.

The Boards of the Tabernacle (Exo. 26:15-25). Formed out of selected trees (Acts 15:14), cut down (humbled in the dust), shaped according to divine specification (changed in character) made to stand upright upon two feet, set in silver sockets (redemption), and covered in gold (faith). The redeemed are likened to trees of righteousness (Psa. 1).

The Coverings (Exo. 26:1-14). The ceiling of the tabernacle was made of a curtain of fine twined linen embroidered with cherubim in scarlet, purple and blue. Over this there was a tent, or covering, made of [1] Beaver's skin, [2] Ram's skin dyed red, [3] Goat's hair. All point forward to Christ. The beaver's skin was blue in colour, reminding Israel of their holy calling (Num. 15:38; Deu. 22:12). The ram's skin pointed forward to the "Lamb of God" sacrificed to take away the sin of the world. The cover of goat's hair points to the sin-offering which likewise was typical of Christ (Rom. 8:3). He is our covering, our redeemer, our tabernacle (Gal. 3:26-28).



