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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Exodus**

From Commentary on the Old Testament

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

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## EXODUS

### Contents and Arrangement of the Book of Exodus

The second book of Moses is called **ואלה**

**שמות** in the Hebrew Codex from the opening words; but in the Septuagint and Vulgate it has received the name *Ἐξοδος*, *Exodus*, from the first half of its contents. It gives an account of the first stage in the fulfilment of the promises given to the patriarchs, with reference to the growth of the children of Israel into a numerous people, their deliverance from Egypt, and their adoption at Sinai as the people of God. It embraces a period of 360 years, extending from the death of Joseph, with which the book of Genesis closes, to the building of the tabernacle, at the commencement of the second year after the departure from Egypt. During this period the rapid increase of the children of Israel, which is described in Exodus 1, and which caused such anxiety to the new sovereigns of Egypt who had ascended the throne after the death of Joseph, that they adopted measure for the enslaving and suppression of the ever increasing nation, continued without interruption. With the exception of this fact, and the birth, preservation, and education of Moses, who was destined by God to be the deliverer of His people, which are circumstantially related in Exodus 2, the entire book from Exodus 3 to Exodus 40 is occupied with an elaborate account of the events of two years, viz., the last year before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and the first year of their journey. This mode of treating the long period in question, which seems out of all proportion when judged by a merely outward standard, may be easily explained from the nature and design of the sacred history. The 430 years of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt were the period during which the immigrant family was to increase and multiply, under the blessing and protection of God, in the way of natural development; until it had grown into a nation, and was ripe for that covenant

which Jehovah had made with Abraham, to be completed with the nation into which his seed had grown. During the whole of this period the direct revelations from God to Israel were entirely suspended; so that, with the exception of what is related in Exodus 1 and 2, no event occurred of any importance to the kingdom of God. It was not till the expiration of these 400 years, that the execution of the divine plan of salvation commenced with the call of Moses (Exodus 3) accompanied by the founding of the kingdom of God in Israel. To this end Israel was liberated from the power of Egypt, and, as a nation rescued from human bondage, was adopted by God, the Lord of the whole earth, as the people of His possession.

These two great facts of far-reaching consequences in the history of the world, as well as in the history of salvation, form the kernel and essential substance of this book, which may be divided accordingly into two distinct parts. In the *first* part, Exodus 1–15:21, we have seven sections, describing (1) the preparation for the saving work of God, through the multiplication of Israel into a great people and their oppression in Egypt (Exodus 1), and through the birth and preservation of their liberator (Exodus 2); (2) the call and training of Moses to be the deliverer and leader of Israel (Exodus 3 and 4); (3) the mission of Moses to Pharaoh (Exodus 5–7:7); (4) the negotiations between Moses and Pharaoh concerning the emancipation of Israel, which were carried on both in words and deeds or miraculous signs (Exodus 7:8–11); (5) the consecration of Israel as the covenant nation through the institution of the feast of Passover; (6) the exodus of Israel effected through the slaying of the first-born of the Egyptians (Exodus 12–13:16); and (7) the passage of Israel through the Red Sea, and destruction of Pharaoh and his host, with Israel's song of triumph at its deliverance (Exodus 13:17–15:21).—In the *second* part, Exodus 15:22–40, we have also seven sections, describing the adoption of Israel as the people of God; viz., (1) the march of Israel from the Red Sea to the mountain of God (Exodus 15:22–17:7); (2) the attitude of the heathen towards

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Israel, as seen in the hostility of Amalek, and the friendly visit of Jethro the Midianite at Horeb (Exodus 17:8–18); (3) the establishment of the covenant at Sinai through the election of Israel as the people of Jehovah’s possession, the promulgation of the fundamental law and of the fundamental ordinances of the Israelitish commonwealth, and the solemn conclusion of the covenant itself (Exodus 19–24:11); (4) the divine directions with regard to the erection and arrangement of the dwelling-place of Jehovah in Israel (Exodus 24:12–31); (5) the rebellion of the Israelites and their renewed acceptance on the part of God (Exodus 32–34); (6) the building of the tabernacle and preparation of holy things for the worship of God (Exodus 35–39); and (7) the setting up of the tabernacle and its solemn consecration (Exodus 40).

These different sections are not marked off, it is true, like the ten parts of Genesis, by special headings, because the account simply follows the historical succession of the events described; but they may be distinguished with perfect ease, through the internal grouping and arrangement of the historical materials. The song of Moses at the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1–21) formed most unmistakably the close of the first stage of the history, which commenced with the call of Moses, and for which the way was prepared, not only by the enslaving of Israel on the part of the Pharaohs, in the hope of destroying its national and religious independence, but also by the rescue and education of Moses, and by his eventful life. And the setting up of the tabernacle formed an equally significant close to the second stage of the history. By this, the covenant which Jehovah had made with the patriarch Abram (Gen. 15) was established with the people Israel. By the filling of the dwelling-place, which had just been set up, with the cloud of the glory of Jehovah (Exodus 40:34–38), the nation of Israel was raised into a congregation of the Lord and the establishment of the kingdom of God in Israel fully embodied in the tabernacle, with Jehovah dwelling in the Most Holy Place; so that all subsequent legislation, and the further

progress of the history in the guidance of Israel from Sinai to Canaan, only served to maintain and strengthen that fellowship of the Lord with His people, which had already been established by the conclusion of the covenant, and symbolically exhibited in the building of the tabernacle. By this marked conclusion, therefore, with a fact as significant in itself as it was important in the history of Israel, Exodus, which commences with a list of the names of the children of Israel who went down to Egypt, is rounded off into a complete and independent book among the five books of Moses.

## Exodus 1

### Increase in the Number of the Israelites. Their Bondage in Egypt.—Ch. 1

The promise which God gave to Jacob in his departure from Canaan (Gen. 46:3) was perfectly fulfilled. The children of Israel settled down in the most fruitful province of the fertile land of Egypt, and grew there into a great nation (vv. 1–7). But the words which the Lord had spoken to Abram (Gen. 15:13) were also fulfilled in relation to his seed in Egypt. The children of Israel were oppressed in a strange land, were compelled to serve the Egyptians (vv. 8–14), and were in great danger of being entirely crushed by them (vv. 15–22).

**Exodus 1:1–7.** To place the multiplication of the children of Israel into a strong nation in its true light, as the commencement of the realization of the promises of God, the number of the souls that went down with Jacob to Egypt is repeated from Gen. 46:27 (on the number 70, in which Jacob is included, see the notes on this passage); and the repetition of the names of the twelve sons of Jacob serves to give to the history which follows a character of completeness within itself. *“With Jacob they came, every one and his house,”* i.e., his sons, together with their families, their wives, and their children. The sons are arranged according to their mothers, as in Gen. 35:23–26, and the sons of the two maid-servants stand last. Joseph, indeed, is not placed in the list, but brought into special prominence by the words,

“for Joseph was in Egypt” (v. 5), since he did not go down to Egypt along with the house of Jacob, and occupied an exalted position in relation to them there.

**Exodus 1:6ff.** After the death of Joseph and his brethren and the whole of the family that had first immigrated, there occurred that miraculous increase in the number of the children of Israel, by which the blessings of creation and promise were fully realised. The

words **יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ** (*swarmed*), and **יָרְבוּ** point back to Gen. 1:28 and 8:17, and **יַעֲזְמוּ** to **גֹי**

**עֲצוּם** in Gen. 18:18. “The land was filled with them,” i.e., the land of Egypt, particularly Goshen, where they were settled (Gen. 47:11). The extra-ordinary fruitfulness of Egypt in both men and cattle is attested not only by ancient writers, but by modern travellers also (vid., *Aristotelis hist. animal.* vii. 4, 5; *Columella de re rust.* iii. 8; *Plin. hist. n.* vii. 3; also *Rosenmüller a. und n. Morgenland* i. p. 252). This blessing of nature was heightened still further in the case of the Israelites by the grace of the promise, so that the increase became extraordinarily great (see the comm. on Exodus 12:37).

**Exodus 1:8–14.** The promised blessing was manifested chiefly in the fact, that all the measures adopted by the cunning of Pharaoh to weaken and diminish the Israelites, instead of checking, served rather to promote their continuous increase.

**Exodus 1:8.** “There arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph.” **וַיָּקָם** signifies he came to

the throne, **קָם** denoting his appearance in history, as in Deut. 34:10. A “new king” (LXX: βασιλεὺς ἕτερος; the other ancient versions, *rex novus*) is a king who follows different principles of government from his predecessors. Cf.

**אֱלֹהִים חֲדָשִׁים**, “new gods,” in distinction from the God that their fathers had worshipped, Judg. 5:8; Deut. 32:17. That this king belonged to a new dynasty, as the majority of

commentators follow *Josephus*<sup>1</sup> in assuming, cannot be inferred with certainty from the predicate *new*; but it is very probable, as furnishing the readiest explanation of the change in the principles of government. The question itself, however, is of no direct importance in relation to theology, though it has considerable interest in connection with Egyptological researches.<sup>2</sup> The new king did not acknowledge Joseph, i.e., his great merits in

relation to Egypt. **לֹא יָדַע** signifies here, not to perceive, or acknowledge, in the sense of not wanting to know anything about him, as in 1 Sam. 2:12, etc. In the natural course of things, the merits of Joseph might very well have been forgotten long before; for the multiplication of the Israelites into a numerous people, which had taken place in the meantime, is a sufficient proof that a very long time had elapsed since Joseph’s death. At the same time such forgetfulness does not usually take place all at once, unless the account handed down has been intentionally obscured or suppressed. If the new king, therefore, did not know Joseph, the reason must simply have been, that he did not trouble himself about the past, and did not want to know anything about the measures of his predecessors and the events of their reigns. The passage is correctly paraphrased by

*Jonathan* thus: *non agnovit (חֲכִים) Josephum nec ambulavit in statutis ejus.* Forgetfulness of Joseph brought the favour shown to the Israelites by the kings of Egypt to a close. As they still continued foreigners both in religion and customs, their rapid increase excited distrust in the mind of the king, and induced him to take steps for staying their increase and reducing their strength. The statement that “the people of the children of Israel” (**עַם בְּנֵי**)

**יִשְׂרָאֵל** lit., “nation, viz., the sons of Israel;” for

**עַם** with the dist. accent is not the construct

state, and **בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** is in apposition, cf. *Ges.*

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§ 113) were “more and mightier” than the Egyptians, is no doubt an exaggeration.

**Exodus 1:10.** “Let us deal wisely with them,” i.e., act craftily towards them. **הַתְּחִבָּם**, *sapiensem se gessit* (Eccl. 7:16), is used here of political craftiness, or worldly wisdom combined with craft and cunning (κατασοφισώμεθα, LXX), and therefore is altered into **הַתְּנַבְּל** in Ps. 105:25 (cf. Gen. 37:18). The reason assigned by the king for the measures he was about to propose, was the fear that in case of war the Israelites might make common cause with his enemies, and then remove from Egypt. It was not the conquest of his kingdom that he was afraid of, but alliance with his enemies and emigration.

**עֲלֵה** is used here, as in Gen. 13:1, etc., to denote removal from Egypt to Canaan. He was acquainted with the home of the Israelites therefore, and cannot have been entirely ignorant of the circumstances of their settlement in Egypt. But he regarded them as his subjects, and was unwilling that they should leave the country, and therefore was anxious to prevent the possibility of their emancipating themselves in the event of war.—In the form

**תִּקְרְאֵנָה** for **תִּקְרְיֵנָה**, according to the

frequent interchange of the forms **לִ”ה** and

**לִ”א** (vid., Gen. 42:4), **נָה** is transferred from the feminine plural to the singular, to distinguish the 3rd pers. fem. from the 2nd pers., as in Judg. 5:26, Job 17:16 (vid., *Ewald*, § 191c, and *Ges.* § 47, 3, Anm. 3). Consequently there is no necessity either to understand

**מִלְחָמָה** collectively as signifying soldiers, or

to regard **תִּקְרְאֵנָה**, the reading adopted by the LXX (στυμβῆ ἡμῶν), the Samaritan, Chaldee, Syriac, and Vulgate, as “certainly the original,” as *Knobel* has done.

The first measure adopted (v. 11) consisted in the appointment of taskmasters over the

Israelites, to bend them down by hard labour.

**שָׂרֵי מַסִּים** bailiffs over the serfs. **מַסִּים** from

**מַס** signifies, not feudal service, but feudal labourers, serfs (see my Commentary on 1

Kings 4:6). **עָנָה** to bend, to wear out any one’s strength (Ps. 102:24). By hard feudal labour

(**סְבִלוֹת** burdens, burdensome toil) Pharaoh

hoped, according to the ordinary maxims of tyrants (*Aristot. polit.*, 5, 9; *Liv. hist.* i. 56, 59), to break down the physical strength of Israel and lessen its increase,—since a population always grows more slowly under oppression than in the midst of prosperous circumstances,—and also to crush their spirit so as to banish the very

wish for liberty.—**וַיִּבְנֶן**, and so Israel built (was compelled to build) provision or magazine cities vid., 2 Chron. 32:28, cities for the storing of the harvest), in which the produce of the land was housed, partly for purposes of trade, and partly for provisioning the army in time of war;—not fortresses, πόλεις ὄχυραί, as the LXX have rendered it. *Pithom* was Πάτουμος; it was situated, according to Herodotus (2, 158), upon the canal which commenced above Bybastus and connected the Nile with the Red Sea. This city is called *Thou* or *Thoum* in the *Itiner.*

*Anton.*, the Egyptian article *pi* being dropped, and according to *Jomard (descript.* t. 9, p. 368) is to be sought for on the site of the modern *Abassieh* in the Wady Tumilat.—*Raemeses* (cf. Gen. 47:11) was the ancient *Heroopolis*, and is not to be looked for on the site of the modern *Belbeis*. In support of the latter supposition, *Stickel*, who agrees with *Kurtz* and *Knobel*, adduces chiefly the statement of the Egyptian geographer *Makrizi*, that in the (Jews’) book of the law *Belbeis* is called the land of Goshen, in which Jacob dwelt when he came to his son Joseph, and that the capital of the province was *el Sharkiyeh*. This place is a day’s journey (for as others affirm, 14 hours) to the north-east of Cairo on the Syrian and Egyptian road. It served as a meeting-place in the middle ages for the

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caravans from Egypt to Syria and Arabia (*Ritter, Erdkunde* 14, p. 59). It is said to have been in existence before the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt. But the clue cannot be traced any farther back; and it is too far from the Red Sea for the *Raemeses* of the Bible (vid., Exodus 12:37). The authority of *Makrizi* is quite counterbalanced by the much older statement of the Septuagint, in which Jacob is made to meet his son Joseph in *Heroopolis*; the words of Gen. 46:29, "and Joseph went up to meet Israel his father to *Goshen*," being rendered thus: εἰς συνάντησιν Ἰσραὴλ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ καθ' Ἡρώων πόλιν. *Hengstenberg* is not correct in saying that the later name *Heroopolis* is here substituted for the older name *Raemeses*; and *Gesenius*, *Kurtz*, and *Knobel* are equally wrong in affirming that καθ' Ἡρώων πόλιν is supplied *ex ingenio suo*; but the place of meeting, which is given indefinitely as *Goshen* in the original, is here distinctly named. Now if this more precise definition is not an arbitrary conjecture of the Alexandrian translators, but sprang out of their acquaintance with the country, and is really correct, as *Kurtz* has no doubt, it follows that *Heroopolis* belongs to the γῆ Παρμεσσῆ (Gen. 46:28, LXX), or was situated within it. But this district formed the centre of the Israelitish settlement in *Goshen*; for according to Gen. 47:11, Joseph gave his father and brethren "a possession in the best of the land, in the land of *Raemeses*." Following this passage, the LXX have also rendered אֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן in Gen. 46:28 by εἰς γῆν Παρμεσσῆ, whereas in other places the land of *Goshen* is simply called γῆ Γεσέμ (Gen. 45:10; 46:34; 47:1, etc.). But if *Heroopolis* belonged to the γῆ Παρμεσσῆ, or the province of *Raemeses*, which formed the centre of the land of *Goshen* that was assigned to the Israelites, this city must have stood in the immediate neighbourhood of *Raemeses*, or have been identical with it. Now, since the researches of the scientific men attached to the great French expedition, it has been generally admitted that *Heroopolis* occupied the site of the modern *Abu Keisheib* in the Wady Tumilat, between *Thoum* = *Pithom* and the *Birket Temsah* or Crocodile

Lake; and according to the *Itiner.* p. 170, it was only 24 Roman miles to the east of *Pithom*,—a position that was admirably adapted not only for a magazine, but also for the gathering-place of Israel prior to their departure (Exodus 12:37).

But Pharaoh's first plan did not accomplish his purpose (v. 12). The multiplication of Israel went on just in proportion to the amount of the oppression (כָּבֵד = כְּבִיבָה *prout, ita*; פָּרַץ as in Gen. 30:30; 28:14), so that the Egyptians were dismayed at the Israelites (קִוּוּ to feel dismay, or fear, Num. 22:3). In this increase of their numbers, which surpassed all expectation, there was the manifestation of a higher, supernatural, and to them awful power. But instead of bowing before it, they still endeavoured to enslave Israel through hard servile labour. In vv. 13, 14 we have not an account of any fresh oppression; but "the crushing by hard labour" is represented as enslaving the Israelites and embittering their lives. פָּרַץ hard oppression, from the Chaldee

פָּרַץ to break or crush in pieces. "They embittered their life with hard labour in clay and bricks (making clay into bricks, and working with the bricks when made), and in all kinds of labour in the field (this was very severe in Egypt on account of the laborious process by which the ground was watered, Deut. 11:10), אֶת

כָּל-עֲבֹדָתָם with regard to all their labour, which they worked (i.e., performed) through them (viz., the Israelites) with severe

oppression." אֶת כָּל-ע' is also dependent upon

יְמַרְרוּ, as a second accusative (*Ewald*, § 277d).

Bricks of clay were the building materials most commonly used in Egypt. The employment of foreigners in this kind of labour is to be seen represented in a painting, discovered in the ruins of Thebes, and given in the Egyptological

works of *Rosellini* and *Wilkinson*, in which workmen who are evidently not Egyptians are occupied in making bricks, whilst two Egyptians with sticks are standing as overlookers;—even if the labourers are not intended for the Israelites, as the Jewish physiognomies would lead us to suppose. (For fuller details, see *Hengstenberg's Egypt*, and the Books of Moses, p. 80ff. English translation).

**Exodus 1:15–21.** As the first plan miscarried, the king proceeded to try a second, and that a bloody act of cruel despotism. He commanded the midwives to destroy the male children in the birth and to leave only the girls alive. The midwives named in v. 15, who are not Egyptian but Hebrew women, were no doubt the heads of the whole profession, and were expected to communicate their instructions to their

associates. וַיֹּאמֶר in v. 16 resumes the address

introduced by וַיֹּאמֶר in v. 15. The expression

עַל־הָאֲבָנִים, of which such various renderings have been given, is used in Jer. 18:3 to denote the revolving table of a potter, i.e., the two round discs between which a potter forms his earthenware vessels by turning, and appears to be transferred here to the vagina out of which the child twists itself, as it were like the vessel about to be formed out of the potter's discs. *Knobel* has at length decided in favour of this explanation, at which the Targumists hint with

their מִתְבָּרָא. When the midwives were called in to assist at a birth, they were to look carefully at the vagina; and if the child were a boy, they were to destroy it as it came out of the womb.

וַחֲתִיָּהּ for חֲתִיָּהּ from חַיִּי, see Gen. 3:22. The ו takes kametz before the major pause, as in Gen. 44:9 (cf. *Ewald*, § 243a).

**Exodus 1:17.** But the midwives feared God (*ha-Elohim*, the personal, true God), and did not execute the king's command.

**Exodus 1:18.** When questioned upon the matter, the explanation which they gave was, that the Hebrew women were not like the

delicate women of Egypt, but were חַיִּוֹת

“vigorous” (had much vital energy: *Abenezra*), so that they gave birth to their children before the midwives arrived. They succeeded in deceiving the king with this reply, as childbirth is remarkably rapid and easy in the case of Arabian women (see *Burckhardt, Beduinen*, p. 78; *Tischendorf, Reise* i. p. 108).

**Exodus 1:20, 21.** God rewarded them for their conduct, and “made them houses,” i.e., gave them families and preserved their posterity. In this sense to “make a house” in 2 Sam. 7:11 is interchanged with to “build a house” in v. 27

(vid., Ruth 4:11). לָהֶם for לָהֶן as in Gen. 31:9,

etc. Through not carrying out the ruthless command of the king, they had helped to build up the families of Israel, and their own families were therefore built up by God. Thus God rewarded them, “not, however, because they lied, but because they were merciful to the people of God; it was not their falsehood therefore that was rewarded, but their kindness (more correctly, their fear of God), their benignity of mind, not the wickedness of their lying; and for the sake of what was good, God forgave what was evil.” (*Augustine, contra mendac.* c. 19.)

**Exodus 1:22.** The failure of his second plan drove the king to acts of open violence. He issued commands to all his subjects to throw every Hebrew boy that was born into the river (i.e., the Nile). The fact, that this command, if carried out, would necessarily have resulted in the extermination of Israel, did not in the least concern the tyrant; and this cannot be adduced as forming any objection to the historical credibility of the narrative, since other cruelties of a similar kind are to be found recorded in the history of the world. *Clericus* has cited the conduct of the Spartans towards the helots. Nor can the numbers of the Israelites at the time of the exodus be adduced as a proof that no such murderous command can ever have been issued; for nothing more can be inferred from this, than that the command was neither fully executed nor long regarded, as the Egyptians

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were not all so hostile to the Israelites as to be very zealous in carrying it out, and the Israelites would certainly neglect no means of preventing its execution. Even Pharaoh's obstinate refusal to let the people go, though it certainly is inconsistent with the intention to destroy them, cannot shake the truth of the narrative, but may be accounted for on psychological grounds, from the very nature of pride and tyranny which often act in the most reckless manner without at all regarding the consequences, or on historical grounds, from the supposition not only that the king who refused the permission to depart was a different man from the one who issued the murderous edicts (cf. Exodus 2:23), but that when the oppression had continued for some time the Egyptian government generally discovered the advantage they derived from the slave labour of the Israelites, and hoped through a continuance of that oppression so to crush and break their spirits, as to remove all ground for fearing either rebellion, or alliance with their foes.

## Exodus 2

### Birth and Education of Moses; Flight from Egypt, and Life in Midian

**Exodus 2:1–10.** Birth and Education of Moses.—Whilst Pharaoh was urging forward the extermination of the Israelites, God was preparing their emancipation. According to the divine purpose, the murderous edict of the king was to lead to the training and preparation of the human deliverer of Israel.

**Exodus 2:1, 2.** At the time when all the Hebrew boys were ordered to be thrown into the Nile, "there went (יִלְדָּה) contributes to the pictorial character of the account, and serves to bring out its importance, just as in Gen. 35:22, Deut. 31:1) a man of the house of Levi—according to Exodus 6:20 and Num. 26:59, it was Amram, of the Levitical family of Kohath—and married a daughter (i.e., a descendant) of Levi," named Jochebed, who bore him a son, viz., Moses. From Exodus 6:20 we learn that Moses was not the

first child of this marriage, but his brother Aaron; and from v. 7 of this chapter, it is evident that when Moses was born, his sister Miriam was by no means a child (Num. 26:59). Both of these had been born before the murderous edict was issued (Exodus 1:22). They are not mentioned here, because the only question in hand was the birth and deliverance of Moses, the future deliverer of Israel. "When the mother saw that the child was beautiful"

(יָבִיט as in Gen. 6:2; LXX ἀστεῖος), she began to think about his preservation. The very beauty of the child was to her "a peculiar token of divine approval, and a sign that God had some special design concerning him" (Delitzsch on Heb. 11:23). The expression ἀστεῖος τῷ Θεῷ in Acts 7:20 points to this. She therefore hid the new-born child for three months, in the hope of saving him alive. This hope, however, neither sprang from a revelation made to her husband before the birth of her child, that he was appointed to be the saviour of Israel, as Josephus affirms (Ant. ii. 9, 3), either from his own imagination or according to the belief of his age, nor from her faith in the patriarchal promises, but primarily from the natural love of parents for their offspring. And if the hiding of the child is praised in Heb. 11:23 as an act of faith, that faith was manifested in their not obeying the king's commandment, but fulfilling without fear of man all that was required by that parental love, which God approved, and which was rendered all the stronger by the beauty of the child, and in their confident assurance, in spite of all apparent impossibility, that their effort would be successful (vid., Delitzsch *ut supra*). This confidence was shown in the means adopted by the mother to save the child, when she could hide it no longer.

**Exodus 2:3.** She placed the infant in an ark of bulrushes by the bank of the Nile, hoping that possibly it might be found by some compassionate hand, and still be delivered. The *dagesh dirim*. in הַצִּפְיִנוּ serves to separate the consonant in which it stands from the syllable which follows (vid., Ewald, § 92c; Ges. § 20, 2b).

תַּבַּת גֹּמָא a little chest of rushes. The use of the word תַּבָּה (ark) is probably intended to call to mind the ark in which Noah was saved (vid., Gen. 6:14). גֹּמָא, *papyrus*, the paper reed: a kind of rush which was very common in ancient Egypt, but has almost entirely disappeared, or, as *Pruner* affirms (*ägypt. Naturgesch.* p. 55), is nowhere to be found. It had a triangular stalk about the thickness of a finger, which grew to the height of ten feet; and from this the lighter Nile boats were made, whilst the peeling of the plant was used for sails, mattresses, mats, sandals, and other articles, but chiefly for the preparation of paper (vid., *Celsii Hierobot.* ii. pp. 137ff.; *Hengstenberg, Egypt and the Books of Moses*, pp. 85, 86, transl.). וַתַּחְמְרָהּ, for תַּחְמְרָהּ with mappik omitted: *and cemented* (pitched) *it with חֶמֶר bitumen*, the asphalt of the Dead Sea, to fasten the papyrus stalks, *and with pitch*, to make it water-tight, *and put it in the reeds by the bank of the Nile*, at a spot, as the sequel shows, where she knew that the king's daughter was accustomed to bathe. For "the sagacity of the mother led her, no doubt, so to arrange the whole, that the issue might be just what is related in vv. 5-9" (*Baumgarten*). The daughter stationed herself a little distance off, to see what happened to the child (v. 4). This sister of Moses was most probably the Miriam who is frequently mentioned afterwards (Num. 26:59). תַּתְּצַבּ for תַּתְּצֵבּ. The infinitive form יָעַב as in Gen. 46:3.

**Exodus 2:5.** Pharaoh's daughter is called *Thermouthis* or *Merris* in Jewish tradition, and by the Rabbins על־הַיָּאָר בַּת־יִשְׂרָאֵל is to be connected with תָּרַד, and the construction with עַל to be explained as referring to the descent into (upon) the river from the rising

bank. The fact that a king's daughter should bathe in the open river is certainly opposed to the customs of the modern, Mohammedan East, where this is only done by women of the lower orders, and that in remote places (*Lane, Manners and Customs*); but it is in harmony with the customs of ancient Egypt,<sup>3</sup> and in perfect agreement with the notions of the early Egyptians respecting the sanctity of the Nile, to which divine honours even were paid (vid., *Hengstenberg's Egypt*, etc. pp. 109, 110), and with the belief, which was common to both ancient and modern Egyptians, in the power of its waters to impart fruitfulness and prolong life (vid., *Strabo*, xv. p. 695, etc., and *Seetzen, Travels* iii. p. 204).

**Exodus 2:6ff.** The exposure of the child at once led the king's daughter to conclude that it was *one of the Hebrews' children*. The fact that she took compassion on the weeping child, and notwithstanding the king's command (Exodus 1:22) took it up and had it brought up (of course, without the knowledge of the king), may be accounted for from the love to children which is innate in the female sex, and the superior adroitness of a mother's heart, which co-operated in this case, though without knowing or intending it, in the realization of the divine plan of salvation. *Competens fuit divina vindicta, ut suis affectibus puniatur parricida et filiae provisione pereat qui genitricem interdixerat parturire* (*August. Sermo 89 de temp.*).

**Exodus 2:9.** With the directions, "Take this child away (הוֹלִיכִי for הֵלִיכִי) used here in the sense of leading, bringing, carrying away, as in Zech. 5:10, Eccl. 10:20) *and suckle it for me*," the king's daughter gave the child to its mother, who was unknown to her, and had been fetched as a nurse.

**Exodus 2:10.** When the child had grown large, i.e., had been weaned (יָגַדְלָהּ as in Gen. 21:8), the mother, who acted as nurse, brought it back to the queen's daughter, who then adopted it as

her own son, and called it *Moses* (מֹשֶׁה): “for,” she said, “out of the water have I drawn him” (מִשִּׁיתָהוּ). As Pharaoh’s daughter gave this name to the child as her adopted son, it must be an Egyptian name. The Greek form of the name, Μωϋσῆς (LXX), also points to this, as *Josephus* affirms. “Thermuthis,” he says, “imposed this name upon him, from what had happened when he was put into the river; for the Egyptians call water Mo, and those who are rescued from the water Uses” (Ant. ii. 9, 6, Whiston’s translation). The correctness of this statement is confirmed by the Coptic, which is derived from the old Egyptian.<sup>4</sup> Now, though we find the name explained in the text from the Hebrew מֹשֶׁה, this is not to be regarded as a philological or etymological explanation, but as a theological interpretation, referring to the importance of the person rescued from the water to the Israelitish nation. In the lips of an Israelite, the name *Mouje*, which was so little suited to the Hebrew organs of speech, might be involuntarily altered into *Moseh*; “and this transformation became an unintentional prophecy, for the person *drawn out* did become, in fact, the *drawer out*” (*Kurtz*). Consequently *Knobel’s* supposition, that the writer regarded מֹשֶׁה as a participle *Pool* with the ם dropped, is to be rejected as inadmissible.—There can be no doubt that, as the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter, Moses received a thoroughly Egyptian training, and was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, as Stephen states in Acts 7:22 in accordance with Jewish tradition.<sup>5</sup> Through such an education as this, he received just the training required for the performance of the work to which God had called him. Thus the wisdom of Egypt was employed by the wisdom of God for the establishment of the kingdom of God.

**Exodus 2:11–20.** Flight of Moses from Egypt to Midian.—The education of Moses at the Egyptian court could not extinguish the feeling that he belonged to the people of Israel. Our

history does not inform us how this feeling, which was inherited from his parents and nourished in him when an infant by his mother’s milk, was fostered still further after he had been handed over to Pharaoh’s daughter, and grew into a firm, decided consciousness of will. All that is related is, how this consciousness broke forth at length in the full-grown man, in the slaying of the Egyptian who had injured a Hebrew (vv. 11, 12), and in the attempt to reconcile two Hebrew men who were quarrelling (vv. 13, 14). Both of these occurred “in those days,” i.e., in the time of the Egyptian oppression, when Moses had become great (יָגִדֵּל as in Gen. 21:20), i.e., had grown to be a man. According to tradition he was then forty years old (Acts 7:23). What impelled him to this was not “a carnal ambition and longing for action,” or a desire to attract the attention of his brethren, but fiery love to his brethren or fellow-countrymen, as is shown in the expression, “One of his brethren” (v. 11), and deep sympathy with them in their oppression and sufferings; whilst, at the same time, they undoubtedly displayed the fire of his impetuous nature, and the ground-work for his future calling. It was from this point of view that Stephen cited these facts (Acts 7:25, 26), for the purpose of proving to the Jews of his own age, that they had been from time immemorial “stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears” (v. 51). And this view is the correct one. Not only did Moses intend to help his brethren when he thus appeared among them, but this forcible interference on behalf of his brethren could and should have aroused the thought in their minds, that God would send them salvation through him. “But they understood not” (Acts 7:25). At the same time Moses thereby declared that he would no longer “be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt” (Heb. 11:24–26; see *Delitzsch in loc.*). And this had its roots in faith (πίσται). But his conduct

presents another aspect also, which equally demands consideration. His zeal for the welfare of his brethren urged him forward to present himself as the umpire and judge of his brethren before God had called him to this, and drove him to the crime of murder, which cannot be excused as resulting from a sudden ebullition of wrath.<sup>6</sup> For he acted with evident deliberation. "He looked this way and that way; and when he saw no one, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand" (v. 12). Through his life at the Egyptian court his own natural inclinations had been formed to rule, and they manifested themselves on this occasion in an ungodly way. This was thrown in his teeth by the man "in the wrong" (הַרְשָׁע, v. 13), who was striving with his brother and doing him an injury: "Who made thee a ruler and judge over us" (v. 14)? and so far he was right. The murder of the Egyptian had also become known; and as soon as Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses, who fled into the land of Midian in fear for his life (v. 15). Thus dread of Pharaoh's wrath drove Moses from Egypt into the desert. For all that, it is stated in Heb. 11:27, that "by faith (πίστει) Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." This faith, however, he manifested not by fleeing—his flight was rather a sign of timidity—but by leaving Egypt; in other words, by renouncing his position in Egypt, where he might possibly have softened down the king's wrath, and perhaps even have brought help and deliverance to his brethren the Hebrews. By the fact that he did not allow such human hopes to lead him to remain in Egypt, and was not afraid to increase the king's anger by his flight, he manifested faith in the invisible One as though he saw Him, commending not only himself, but his oppressed nation, to the care and protection of God (vid., *Delitzsch* on Heb. 11:27).

The situation of the land of Midian, to which Moses fled, cannot be determined with certainty. The Midianites, who were descended from Abraham through Keturah (Gen. 25:2, 4), had their principal settlements on the eastern side of the Elanitic Gulf, from which they spread

northwards into the fields of Moab (Gen. 36:35; Num. 22:4, 7; 25:6, 17; 31:1ff.; Judg. 6:1ff.), and carried on a caravan trade through Canaan to Egypt (Gen. 37:28, 36; Isa. 60:6). On the eastern side of the Elanitic Gulf, and five days' journey from Aela, there stood the town of *Madian*, the ruins of which are mentioned by *Edrisi* and *Abulfeda*, who also speak of a well there, from which Moses watered the flocks of his father-in-law *Shoeib* (i.e., Jethro). But we are precluded from fixing upon this as the home of Jethro by Exodus 3:1, where Moses is said to have come to Horeb, when he drove Jethro's sheep behind the desert. The Midianites on the eastern side of the Elanitic Gulf could not possibly have led their flocks as far as Horeb for pasturage. We must assume, therefore, that one branch of the Midianites, to whom Jethro was priest, had crossed the Elanitic Gulf, and settled in the southern half of the peninsula of Sinai (cf. Exodus 3:1). There is nothing improbable in such a supposition. There are several branches of the Towara Arabs occupying the southern portion of Arabia, that have sprung from Hedjas in this way; and even in the most modern times considerable intercourse was carried on between the eastern side of the gulf and the peninsula, whilst there was formerly a ferry between *Szytta*, *Madian*, and *Nekba*.—The words "and he sat down (וַיֵּשֶׁב, i.e., settled) in the land of Midian, and sat down by the well," are hardly to be understood as simply meaning that "when he was dwelling in Midian, he sat down one day by a well" (*Baumg.*), but that immediately upon his arrival in Midian, where he intended to dwell or stay, he sat down by the well. The definite article before בְּאֵר points to the well as the only one, or the principal well in that district. *Knobel* refers to "the well at *Sherm*;" but at *Sherm el Moye* (i.e., water-bay) or *Sherm el Bir* (well-bay) there are "several deep wells finished off with stones," which are "evidently the work of an early age, and have cost great labour" (*Burckhardt*, Syr. p. 854); so that the expression "the well" would be quite unsuitable. Moreover there is but a very weak

support for *Knobel's* attempt to determine the site of Midian, in the identification of the *Μαρανῖται* or *Μαρανεῖς* (of *Strabo* and *Artemidorus*) with *Madyan*.

**Exodus 2:16ff.** Here Moses secured for himself a hospitable reception from a priest of Midian, and a home at his house, by doing as Jacob had formerly done (Gen. 29:10), viz., helping his daughters to water their father's sheep, and protecting them against the other shepherds.—

On the form *יוֹשֶׁעַן* for *יוֹשֶׁעַן* vid., Gen. 19:19;

and for the masculine suffixes to *יְגֵרְשׁוּם* and

*צֹאֲנִים*, Gen. 31:9. *תְּדַלְיָנָה* for *תְּדַלְיָנָה*, as in

Job 5:12, cf. *Ewald*, § 198a.—The flock of this

priest consisted of nothing but *צֹאֵן*, i.e., sheep

and goats (vid., Exodus 3:1). Even now there are no oxen reared upon the peninsula of Sinai, as there is not sufficient pasturage or water to be found. For the same reason there are no horses kept there, but only camels and asses (cf. *Seetzen*, R. iii. 100; *Wellsted*, R. in Arab. ii. p. 66).

In v. 18 the priest is called *Reguel*, in Exodus 3:1 *Jethro*. This title, "the priest of Midian," shows that he was the spiritual head of the branch of the Midianites located there, but hardly that he was the prince or temporal head as well, like Melchizedek, as the Targumists have indicated

by *רבא*, and as *Artapanus* and the poet *Ezekiel*

distinctly affirm. The other shepherds would hardly have treated the daughters of the Emir in the manner described in v. 17. The name

*רְעוּאֵל* (*Reguel*, friend of God) indicates that

this priest served the old Semitic God *El* (אֵל).

This *Reguel*, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses, was unquestionably the same person as

*Jethro* (יֵתְרוֹ) the חֹתֵן of Moses and priest of

Midian (Exodus 3:1). Now, as *Reguel's* son

*Chobab* is called Moses' חֹתֵן in Num. 10:29 (cf.

Judg. 4:11), the Targumists and others

supposed *Reguel* to be the grandfather of

Zipporah, in which case *בֶּת* would mean the

grandfather in v. 18, and *בֵּת* the

granddaughter in v. 21. This hypothesis would undoubtedly be admissible, if it were probable on other grounds. But as a comparison of Num. 10:29 with Exodus 18 does not necessarily prove that *Chobab* and *Jethro* were the same persons, whilst Exodus 18:27 seems to lead to

the very opposite conclusion, and *חֹתֵן*, like the

Greek *γαμβρός*, may be used for both father-in-law and brother-in-law, it would probably be more correct to regard *Chobab* as Moses' brother-in-law, *Reguel* as the proper name of his father-in-law, and *Jethro*, for which *Jether* (*praestantia*) is substituted in Exodus 4:18, as either a title, or the surname which showed the rank of *Reguel* in his tribe, like the Arabic *Imam*, i.e., *praepositus*, *spec. sacrorum antistes*. *Ranke's* opinion, that *Jethro* and *Chobab* were both of them sons of *Reguel* and brothers-in-law of Moses, is obviously untenable, if only on the ground that according to the analogy of Num. 10:29 the epithet "son of *Reguel*" would not be omitted in Exodus 3:1.

**Exodus 2:21–25.** Moses' Life in Midian.—As *Reguel* gave a hospitable welcome to Moses, in consequence of his daughters' report of the assistance that he had given them in watering their sheep; it pleased Moses (וַיֵּזְאֵל) to dwell

with him. The primary meaning of הוֹאֵל is

*voluit* (vid., *Ges. thes.*). קָרְאָנָה for קָרְאָן: like

שְׂמֵעָן in Gen. 4:23.—Although Moses received

*Reguel's* daughter Zipporah as his wife, probably after a lengthened stay, his life in Midian was still a banishment and a school of bitter humiliation. He gave expression to this feeling at the birth of his first son in the name

which he gave it, viz., *Gershom* (גֵּרְשׁוֹם), i.e.,

banishment, from שָׁרַף to drive or thrust away); “for,” he said, interpreting the name according to the sound, “*I have been a stranger (גֵּר) in a strange land.*” In a strange land he was obliged to live, far away from his brethren in Egypt, and far from his fathers’ land of promise; and in this strange land the longing for home seems to have been still further increased by his wife Zipporah, who, to judge from Exodus 4:24ff., neither understood nor cared for the feelings of his heart. By this he was urged on to perfect and unconditional submission to the will of his God. To this feeling of submission and confidence he gave expression at the birth of his second son, by calling him *Eliezer* (אֱלִיעֶזֶר God is help); for he said, “*The God of my father* (Abraham or the three patriarchs, cf. 3:6) *is my help, and has delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh*” (Exodus 18:4). The birth of this son is not mentioned in the Hebrew text, but his name is given in Exodus 18:4, with this explanation.<sup>7</sup> In the names of his two sons, Moses expressed all that had affected his mind in the land of Midian. The pride and self-will with which he had offered himself in Egypt as the deliverer and judge of his oppressed brethren, had been broken down by the feeling of exile. This feeling, however, had not passed into despair, but had been purified and raised into firm confidence in the God of his fathers, who had shown himself as his helper by delivering him from the sword of Pharaoh. In this state of mind, not only did “his attachment to his people, and his longing to rejoin them, instead of cooling, grow stronger and stronger” (*Kurtz*), but the hope of the fulfilment of the promise given to the fathers was revived within him, and ripened into the firm confidence of faith.

**Exodus 2:23–25.** Verses 23–25 form the introduction to the next chapter. The cruel oppression of the Israelites in Egypt continued without intermission or amelioration. “*In those many days the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the service*”

(i.e., their hard slave labour). The “*many days*” are the years of oppression, or the time between the birth of Moses and the birth of his children in Midian. The king of Egypt who died, was in any case the king mentioned in v. 15; but whether he was one and the same with the “*new king*” (Exodus 1:8), or a successor of his, cannot be decided. If the former were the case, we should have to assume, with *Baumgarten*, that the death of the king took place not very long after Moses’ flight, seeing that he was an old man at the time of Moses’ birth, and had a grown-up daughter. But the greater part of the “*many days*” would then fall in his successor’s reign, which is obviously opposed to the meaning of the words, “It came to pass in those many days, that the king of Egypt died.” For this reason the other supposition, that the king mentioned here is a successor of the one mentioned in Exodus 1:8, has far greater probability. At the same time, all that can be determined from a comparison of Exodus 7:7 is, that the Egyptian oppression lasted more than 80 years. This allusion to the complaints of the Israelites, in connection with the notice of the king’s death, seems to imply that they hoped for some amelioration of their lot from the change of government; and that when they were disappointed, and groaned the more bitterly in consequence, they cried to God for help and deliverance. This is evident from the remark, “*Their cry came up unto God,*” and is stated distinctly in Deut. 26:7.

**Exodus 2:24, 25.** “*God heard their crying, and remembered His covenant with the fathers: “and God saw the children of Israel, and God noticed (them.)”* “This seeing and noticing had regard to the innermost nature of Israel, namely, as the chosen seed of Abraham” (*Baumgarten*). God’s notice has all the energy of love and pity. *Lyra*

has aptly explained עָיַן thus: “*ad modum cognoscentis se habuit, ostendendo dilectionem circa eos;*” and *Luther* has paraphrased it correctly: “He accepted them.”

### Exodus 3

Call of Moses, and His Return to Egypt.—Ch. 3 and 4

**Exodus 3:1–4:18.** Call of Moses.—Whilst the children of Israel were groaning under the oppression of Egypt, God had already prepared the way for their deliverance, and had not only chosen Moses to be the saviour of His people, but had trained him for the execution of His designs.

**Exodus 3:1.** When Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, he drove them on one occasion behind the desert, and came to the

mountains of Horeb. הָיָה רֹעֵה, *lit.* “he was feeding:” the participle expresses the

continuance of the occupation. אַחַר הַמִּדְבָּר does not mean *ad interiora deserti* (Jerome); but Moses drove the sheep from Jethro’s home as far as Horeb, so that he passed through a desert with the flock before he reached the pasture land of Horeb. For “in this, the most elevated ground of the peninsula, you find the most fertile valleys, in which even fruit-trees grow. Water abounds in this district; consequently it is the resort of all the Bedouins when the lower countries are dried up” (Rosenmüller). Jethro’s home was separated from Horeb, therefore, by a desert, and is to be sought to the south-east, and not to the north-east. For it is only a south-easterly situation that will explain these two facts: *First*, that when Moses returned from Midian to Egypt, he touched again at Horeb, where Aaron, who had come from Egypt, met him (Exodus 4:27); and, *secondly*, that the Israelites never came upon any Midianites on their journey through the desert, whilst the road of Hobab the Midianite separated from theirs as soon as they departed from Sinai (Num. 10:30).<sup>8</sup> Horeb is called the Mount of God by anticipation, with reference to the consecration which it subsequently received through the revelation of God upon its summit. The supposition that it had been a holy locality even before the calling of Moses, cannot be sustained. Moreover, the name is not restricted

to one single mountain, but applies to the central group of mountains in the southern part of the peninsula (vid., Exodus 19:1). Hence the spot where God appeared to Moses cannot be precisely determined, although tradition has very suitably given the name *Wady Shoeib*, i.e., Jethro’s Valley, to the valley which bounds the *Jebel Musa* towards the east, and separates it from the *Jebel ed Deir*, because it is there that Moses is supposed to have fed the flock of Jethro. The monastery of Sinai, which is in this valley, is said to have been built upon the spot where the thorn-bush stood, according to the tradition in *Antonini Placent. Itinerar.* c. 37, and the annals of *Euty chius* (vid., *Robinson, Palestine*).

**Exodus 3:2–5.** Here, at Horeb, God appeared to Moses as the Angel of the Lord (vid., p. 118f.) “in a flame of fire out of the midst of the thorn-bush” (סִנְיָה, βάλτος, *rubus*), which burned in the fire and was not consumed. אֲכָל, in

combination with אֵינְנוּ, must be a participle for מֵאֲכָל. When Moses turned aside from the road or spot where he was standing, “to look at this great sight” (מִרְאָה), i.e., the miraculous vision of the bush that was burning and yet not burned up, Jehovah called to him out of the midst of the thorn-bush, “Moses, Moses (the reduplication as in Gen. 22:11), draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground”

(אֲדָמָה). The symbolical meaning of this miraculous vision,—that is to say, the fact that it was a figurative representation of the nature and contents of the ensuing message from God,—has long been admitted. The thorn-bush in contrast with the more noble and lofty trees (Judg. 9:15) represented the people of Israel in their humiliation, as a people despised by the world. Fire and the flame of fire were not “symbols of the holiness of God;” for, as the Holy One, “God is light, and in Him is no

darkness at all" (1 John 1:5), He "dwells in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16); and that not merely according to the New Testament, but according to the Old Testament view as well, as is evident from Isa. 10:17, where "the Light of Israel" and "the Holy One of Israel" are synonymous. But "the Light of Israel became fire, and the Holy One a flame, and burned and consumed its thorns and thistles." Nor is "fire, from its very nature, the source of light," according to the scriptural view. On the contrary, light, the condition of all life, is also the source of fire. The sun enlightens, warms, and burns (Job 30:28; Sol. Song 1:6); the rays of the sun produce warmth, heat, and fire; and light was created before the sun. Fire, therefore, regarded as burning and consuming, is a figurative representation of refining affliction and destroying punishment (1 Cor. 3:11ff.), or a symbol of the chastening and punitive justice of the indignation and wrath of God. It is in fire that the Lord comes to judgment (Dan. 7:9, 10; Ezek. 1:13, 14, 27, 28; Rev. 1:14, 15). Fire sets forth the fiery indignation which devours the adversaries (Heb. 10:27). He who "judges and makes war in righteousness" has eyes as a flame of fire (Rev. 19:11, 12). Accordingly, the burning thorn-bush represented the people of Israel as they were burning in the fire of affliction, the iron furnace of Egypt (Deut. 4:20). Yet, though the thorn-bush was burning in the fire, it was not consumed; for in the flame was Jehovah, who chastens His people, but does not give them over unto death (Ps. 118:18). The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had come down to deliver His people out of the hand of the Egyptians (v. 8). Although the affliction of Israel in Egypt proceeded from Pharaoh, yet was it also a fire which the Lord had kindled to purify His people and prepare it for its calling. In the flame of the burning bush the Lord manifested Himself as the "jealous God, who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate Him, and showeth mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments" (Exodus 20:5; Deut. 5:9, 10), who cannot

tolerate the worship of another god (Exodus 34:14), and whose anger burns against idolaters, to destroy them (Deut. 6:15). The "jealous God" was a "consuming fire" in the midst of Israel (Deut. 4:24). These passages show that the great sight which Moses saw not only had reference to the circumstances of Israel in Egypt, but was a prelude to the manifestation of God on Sinai for the establishment of the covenant (Exodus 19 and 20), and also a representation of the relation in which Jehovah would stand to Israel through the establishment of the covenant made with the fathers. For this reason it occurred upon the spot where Jehovah intended to set up His covenant with Israel. But, as a jealous God, He also "takes vengeance upon His adversaries" (Nahum 1:2ff.). Pharaoh, who would not let Israel go, He was about to smite with all His wonders (Exodus 3:20), whilst He redeemed Israel with outstretched arm and great judgments (Exodus 6:6).—The transition from the *Angel of Jehovah* (v. 2) to *Jehovah* (v. 4) proves the identity of the two; and the interchange of *Jehovah* and *Elohim*, in v. 4, precludes the idea of Jehovah being merely a national God. The command of God to Moses to put off his shoes, may be accounted for from the custom in the East of wearing shoes or sandals merely as a protection from dirt. No Brahmin enters a pagoda, no Moslem a mosque, without first taking off at least his overshoes (*Rosenm. Morgenl.* i. 261; *Robinson*, Pal. ii. p. 373); and even in the Grecian temples the priests and priestesses performed the service barefooted (*Justin*, Apol. i. c. 62; *Bähr*, Symbol. ii. 96). when entering other holy places also, the Arabs and Samaritans, and even the Yezidis of Mesopotamia, take off their shoes, that the places may not be defiled by the dirt or dust upon them (vid., *Robinson*, Pal. iii. 100, and *Layard's Nineveh and its Remains*). The place of the burning bush was holy because of the presence of the holy God, and putting off the shoes was intended to express not merely respect for the place itself, but that reverence which the inward man (Eph. 3:16) owes to the holy God.

**Exodus 3:6.** Jehovah then made Himself known to Moses as the God of his fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, reminding him through that name of the promises made to the patriarchs, which He was about to fulfil to their seed, the children of Israel. In the expression, “thy father,” the three patriarchs are classed together as one, just as in Exodus 18:4 (“my father”), “because each of them stood out singly in distinction from the nation, as having received the promise of seed directly from God” (*Baumgarten*). “And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.” The sight of the holy God no sinful man can bear (cf. 1 Kings 19:12).

**Exodus 3:7–10.** Jehovah had seen the affliction of His people, had heard their cry under their taskmasters, and had come down (יָרַד, vid., Gen. 11:5) to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up to a good and broad land, to the place of the Canaanites; and He was about to send Moses to Pharaoh to bring them forth. The land to which the Israelites were to be taken up is called a “good” land, on account of its great fertility (Deut. 8:7ff.), and a “broad” land, in contrast with the confinement and oppression of the Israelites in Egypt. The epithet “good” is then explained by the expression, “a land flowing with milk and honey” (זָבַת, a participle of זָבַח in the construct state; vid., *Ges.* § 135); a proverbial description of the extraordinary fertility and loveliness of the land of Canaan (cf. v. 17, Exodus 13:5; 16:14, etc.). Milk and honey are the simplest and choicest productions of a land abounding in grass and flowers, and were found in Palestine in great abundance even when it was in a desolate condition (Isa. 7:15, 22; see my Comm. on Josh. 5:6). The epithet broad is explained by an enumeration of the six tribes inhabiting the country at that time (cf. Gen. 10:15ff. and 15:20, 32).

**Exodus 3:11, 12.** To the divine commission Moses made this reply: “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” Some time before he had

offered himself of his own accord as a deliverer and judge; but now he had learned humility in the school of Midian, and was filled in consequence with distrust of his own power and fitness. The son of Pharaoh’s daughter had become a shepherd, and felt himself too weak to go to Pharaoh. But God met this distrust by the promise, “I will be with thee,” which He confirmed by a sign, namely, that when Israel was brought out of Egypt, they should serve

(עָבַד, i.e., worship) God upon that mountain.

This sign, which was to be a pledge to Moses of the success of his mission, was one indeed that required faith itself; but, at the same time, it was a sign adapted to inspire both courage and confidence. God pointed out to him the success of his mission, the certain result of his leading the people out: Israel should serve Him upon the very same mountain in which He had appeared to Moses. As surely as Jehovah had appeared to Moses as the God of his fathers, so surely should Israel serve Him there. The reality of the appearance of God formed the pledge of His announcement, that Israel would there serve its God; and this truth was to till Moses with confidence in the execution of the divine command. The expression “serve God” (λατρεύειν τῷ Θεῷ, LXX) means something more than the *immolare* of the *Vulgate*, or the “sacrifice” of *Luther*; for even though sacrifice formed a leading element, or the most important part of the worship of the Israelites, the patriarchs before this had served Jehovah by calling upon His name as well as offering sacrifice. And the service of Israel at Mount Horeb consisted in their entering into covenant with Jehovah (Exodus 24); not only in their receiving the law as the covenant nation, but their manifesting obedience by presenting free-will offerings for the building of the tabernacle (Exodus 36:1–7; Num. 7).<sup>9</sup>

**Exodus 3:13–15.** When Moses had been thus emboldened by the assurance of divine assistance to undertake the mission, he inquired what he was to say, in case the people asked him for the name of the God of their fathers. The supposition that the people might

ask the name of their fathers' God is not to be attributed to the fact, that as the Egyptians had separate names for their numerous deities, the Israelites also would want to know the name of their own God. For, apart from the circumstance that the name by which God had revealed Himself to the fathers cannot have vanished entirely from the memory of the people, and more especially of Moses, the mere knowledge of the name would not have been of much use to them. The question, "What is His name?" presupposed that the name expressed the nature and operations of God, and that God would manifest in deeds the nature expressed in His name. God therefore told him His name, or, to speak more correctly, He explained the name **יהוה**, by which He had made Himself known to Abraham at the making of the covenant (Gen. 15:7), in this way, **אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר** **אֲהִיָּה**, "I am that I am," and designated Himself by this name as the absolute God of the fathers, acting with unfettered liberty and self-dependence (cf. pp. 46–47). This name precluded any comparison between the God of the Israelites and the deities of the Egyptians and other nations, and furnished Moses and his people with strong consolation in their affliction, and a powerful support to their confidence in the realization of His purposes of salvation as made known to the fathers. To establish them in this confidence, God added still further: "This is My name for ever, and My memorial unto all generations;" that is to say, God would even manifest Himself in the nature expressed by the name *Jehovah*, and by this He would have all generations both know and revere Him. **שֵׁם**, the *name*, expresses the objective manifestation of the divine nature; **זִכָּר**, *memorial*, the subjective recognition of that nature on the part of men. **דֵּר דֵּר**, as in Exodus 17:16 and Prov. 27:24. The repetition of the same word suggests the idea of

uninterrupted continuance and boundless duration (*Ewald*, § 313a). The more usual expression is **דֵּר וְדֵר**, Deut. 32:7; Ps. 10:6; 33:11; or **דֵּר דְּרִים**, Ps. 72:5; 102:25; Isa. 51:8.

**Exodus 3:16–20.** With the command, "Go and gather the elders of Israel together," God then gave Moses further instructions with reference to the execution of his mission. On his arrival in Egypt he was first of all to inform the elders, as the representatives of the nation (i.e., the heads of the families, households, and tribes), of the appearance of God to him, and the revelation of His design, to deliver His people out of Egypt and bring them to the land of the Canaanites. He was then to go with them to Pharaoh, and make known to him their resolution, in consequence of this appearance of God, to go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to their God. The words, "I have surely visited," point to the fulfilment of the last words of the dying Joseph (Gen. 50:24). **נִקְרָה עָלֵינוּ** (v. 18) does not mean "He is named upon us" (LXX, *Onk.*, *Jon.*), nor "He has called us" (*Vulg.*, *Luth.*). The latter is grammatically wrong, for the verb is *Niphal*, or passive; and though the former has some support in the parallel passage in Exodus 5:3, inasmuch as **נִקְרָא** is the verb used there, it is only in appearance, for if the meaning really were "His name is named upon (over) us," the word **שָׁמוּ (שֵׁם)** would not be omitted (vid., Deut. 28:10; 2 Chron. 7:14). The real meaning is, "He has met with us," from **נִקְרָה**, *obruam fieri*, ordinarily construed with **אֵל**, but here with **עַל**, because God comes down from above to meet with man. The plural *us* is used, although it was only to Moses that God appeared, because His appearing had reference to the whole nation, which was represented before Pharaoh by Moses and the elders. In the words **נִלְכְּה־נָא**, "we will go,

then," equivalent to "let us go," the request for Pharaoh's permission to go out is couched in such a form as to answer to the relation of Israel to Pharaoh. He had no right to detain them, but he had a right to consent to their departure, as his predecessor had formerly done to their settlement. Still less had he any good reason for refusing their request to go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to their God, since their return at the close of the festival was then taken for granted. But the purpose of God was, that Israel should not return. Was it the case, then, that the delegates were "to deceive the king," as *Knobel* affirms! By no means. God knew the hard heart of Pharaoh, and therefore directed that no more should be asked at first than he must either grant, or display the hardness of his heart. Had he consented, God would then have made known to him His whole design, and demanded that His people should be allowed to depart altogether. But when Pharaoh scornfully refused the first and smaller request (Exodus 5), Moses was instructed to demand the entire departure of Israel from the land (Exodus 6:10), and to show the omnipotence of the God of the Hebrews before and upon Pharaoh by miracles and heavy judgments (Exodus 7:8ff.). Accordingly, Moses persisted in demanding permission for the people to go and serve their God (Exodus 7:16, 26; 8:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3); and it was not till Pharaoh offered to allow them to sacrifice in the land that Moses replied, "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Jehovah our God" (Exodus 8:27); but, observe, with this proviso, "as He shall command us," which left, under the circumstances, no hope that they would return. It was an act of mercy to Pharaoh, therefore, on the one hand, that the entire departure of the Israelites was not demanded at the very first audience of Moses and the representatives of the nation; for, had this been demanded, it would have been far more difficult for him to bend his heart in obedience to the divine will, than when the request presented was as trifling as it was reasonable. And if he had rendered obedience to the will of God in the smaller, God

would have given him strength to be faithful in the greater. On the other hand, as God foresaw his resistance (v. 19), this condescension, which demanded no more than the natural man could have performed, was also to answer the purpose of clearly displaying the justice of God. It was to prove alike to Egyptians and Israelites that Pharaoh was "without excuse," and that his eventual destruction was the well-merited

punishment of his obduracy.<sup>10</sup> וְלֹא בְיָד

חֲזָקָה, "not even by means of a strong hand;"

"except through great power" is not the true

rendering, for וְלֹא does not mean ἐὰν μὴ, *nisi*.

What follows,—viz., the statement that God would so smite the Egyptians with miracles that Pharaoh would, after all, let Israel go (v. 20),—is not really at variance with this, the only admissible rendering of the words. For the meaning is, that Pharaoh would not be willing to let Israel depart even when he should be smitten by the strong hand of God; but that he would be compelled to do so against his will, would be forced to do so by the plagues that were about to fall upon Egypt. Thus even after the ninth plague it is still stated (Exodus 10:27),

that "Pharaoh would (אֲבֵה) not let them go,"

and when he had given permission, in consequence of the last plague, and in fact had driven them out (Exodus 12:31), he speedily repented, and pursued them with his army to bring them back again (Exodus 14:5ff.); from which it is clearly to be seen that the strong hand of God had not broken his will, and yet Israel was brought out by the same strong hand of Jehovah.

**Exodus 3:21, 22.** Not only would God compel Pharaoh to let Israel go; He would not let His people go out empty, but, according to the promise in Gen. 15:14, with great substance. "I will give this people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians;" that is to say, the Egyptians should be so favourably disposed towards them, that when they solicited of their neighbours clothes and ornaments of gold and silver, their request

should be granted. “So shall ye spoil the Egyptians.” What is here foretold as a promise, the Israelites are directed to do in Exodus 11:2, 3; and according to Exodus 12:35, 36, it was really carried out. Immediately before their departure from Egypt, the Israelites asked (יִשְׁאַלוּ) the Egyptians for gold and silver

ornaments (כְּלִים) not vessels, either for sacrifice, the house, or the table, but jewels; cf. Gen. 24:53; Exodus 35:22; Num. 31:50) and clothes; and God gave them favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, so that they gave them to them. For שְׂאֵלָה אִשָּׁה, “Let every woman ask of her (female) neighbour and of her that sojourneth in her house” (גֵּרַת בֵּיתָהּ), from which it is evident that the Israelites did not live apart, but along with the Egyptians), we find in Exodus 11:2, “Let every man ask of his neighbour, and every woman of her (female) neighbour.”—וּשְׂמַתָּם, “and put them upon

your sons and daughters.” שׂוּם עַל, to put on, applied to clothes and ornaments in Lev. 8:8 and Gen. 41:42. This command and its execution have frequently given occasion to the opponents of the Scriptures to throw contempt upon the word of God, the asking being regarded as borrowing, and the spoiling of the Egyptians as purloining. At the same time, the attempts made to vindicate this purloining from the wickedness of stealing have been in many respects unsatisfactory.<sup>11</sup> But the only meaning of שְׂאֵל is to ask or beg,<sup>12</sup> and

הִשְׂאִיל, which is only met with in Exodus 12:36 and 1 Sam. 1:28, does not mean to lend, but to suffer to ask, to hear and grant a request.

יִשְׂאָלוּם (Exodus 12:36), lit., they allowed them to ask; i.e., “the Egyptians did not turn away the petitioners, as not wanting to listen to them, but received their petition with good-will,

and granted their request. No proof can be brought that הִשְׂאִיל means to lend, as is commonly supposed; the word occurs again in 1 Sam. 1:28, and there it means to grant or give” (Knobel on Exodus 12:36). Moreover the circumstances under which the שְׂאֵל and הִשְׂאִיל took place, were quite at variance with the idea of borrowing and lending. For even if Moses had not spoken without reserve of the entire departure of the Israelites, the plagues which followed one after another, and with which the God of the Hebrews gave emphasis to His demand as addressed through Moses to Pharaoh, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me,” must have made it evident to every Egyptian, that all this had reference to something greater than a three days’ march to celebrate a festival. And under these circumstances no Egyptian could have cherished the thought, that the Israelites were only borrowing the jewels they asked of them, and would return them after the festival. What they gave under such circumstances, they could only give or present without the slightest prospect of restoration. Still less could the Israelites have had merely the thought of borrowing in their mind, seeing that God had said to Moses, “I will give the Israelites favour in the eyes of the Egyptians; and it will come to pass, that when ye go out, ye shall not go out empty” (v. 21). If, therefore, it is “natural to suppose that these jewels were festal vessels with which the Egyptians furnished the poor Israelites for the intended feast,” and even if “the Israelites had their thoughts directed with all seriousness to the feast which they were about to celebrate to Jehovah in the desert” (Baumgarten); their request to the Egyptians cannot have referred to any borrowing, nor have presupposed any intention to restore what they received on their return. From the very first the Israelites asked without intending to restore, and the Egyptians granted their request without any hope of receiving back, because God had made their hearts favourably

disposed to the Israelites. The expressions נִצְלָתָם אֶת־מִצְרַיִם in v. 22, and וַיִּנְצְלוּ in Exodus 12:36, are not at variance with this, but rather require it. For נִצַּל does not mean to purloin, to steal, to take away secretly by cunning and fraud, but *to plunder* (2 Chron. 20:25), as both the LXX (σκυλεύειν) and *Vulgate* (*spoliare*) have rendered it. *Rosenmüller*, therefore, is correct in his explanation: “*Et spoliabitis Aegyptios, ita ut ab Aegyptiis, qui vos tam dura servitute oppresserunt, spolia auferetis.*” So also is *Hengstenberg*, who says, “The author represents the Israelites as going forth, laden as it were with the spoils of their formidable enemy, trophies of the victory which God’s power had bestowed on their weakness. While he represents the gifts of the Egyptians as spoils which God had distributed to His host (as Israel is called in Exodus 12:41), he leads us to observe that the bestowment of these gifts, which outwardly appeared to be the effect of the good-will of the Egyptians, if viewed more deeply, proceeded from another Giver; that the outwardly free act of the Egyptians was effected by an inward divine constraint which they could not withstand” (*Dissertations*, vol. ii. p. 431).—Egypt had spoiled Israel by the tributary labour so unjustly enforced, and now Israel carried off the spoil of Egypt—a prelude to the victory which the people of God will one day obtain in their conflict with the power of the world (cf. Zech. 14:14).

#### Exodus 4

**Exodus 4:1–9.** Moses now started a fresh difficulty: the Israelites would not believe that Jehovah had appeared to him. There was so far a reason for this difficulty, that from the time of Jacob—an interval, therefore, of 430 years—God had never appeared to any Israelite. God therefore removed it by giving him three signs by which he might attest his divine mission to his people. These three signs were intended indeed for the Israelites, to convince them of the reality of the appearance of Jehovah to

Moses; at the same time, as even *Ephraem Syrus* observed, they also served to strengthen Moses’ faith, and dissipate his fears as to the result of his mission. For it was apparent enough that Moses did not possess true and entire confidence in God, from the fact that he still raised this difficulty, and distrusted the divine assurance, “They will hearken to thy voice,” Exodus 3:18). And finally, these signs were intended for Pharaoh, as is stated in v. 21; and to him the אֲתוֹת (σημεῖα) were to become

מִפְתִּיִם (τέρατα). By these signs Moses was installed as the servant of Jehovah (Exodus 14:31), and furnished with divine power, with which he could and was to appear before the children of Israel and Pharaoh as the messenger of Jehovah. The character of the three signs corresponded to this intention.

**Exodus 4:2–5.** The First Sign.—The turning of Moses’ staff into a serpent, which became a staff again when Moses took it by the tail, had reference to the calling of Moses. The staff in his hand was his shepherd’s crook (מִזְוָה v. 2, for

מִהֲזָה, in this place alone), and represented his calling as a shepherd. At the bidding of God he threw it upon the ground, and the staff became a serpent, before which Moses fled. The giving up of his shepherd-life would expose him to dangers, from which he would desire to escape. At the same time, there was more implied in the figure of a serpent than danger which merely threatened his life. The serpent had been the constant enemy of the seed of the woman (Gen. 3), and represented the power of the wicked one which prevailed in Egypt. The explanation in *Pirke Elieser*, c. 40, points to this: *ideo Deum hoc signum Mosi ostendisse, quia sicut serpens mordet et morte afficit homines, ita quoque Pharaon et Aegyptii mordebant et necabant Israelitas.* But at the bidding of God, Moses seized the serpent by the tail, and received his staff again as “the rod of God,” with which he smote Egypt with great plagues. From this sign the people of Israel would necessarily

perceive, that Jehovah had not only called Moses to be the leader of Israel, but had endowed him with the power to overcome the serpent-like cunning and the might of Egypt; in other words, they would “believe that Jehovah, the God of the fathers, had appeared to him.” (On the special meaning of this sign for Pharaoh, see Exodus 7:10ff.)

**Exodus 4:6, 7.** The Second Sign.—Moses’ hand became leprous, and was afterwards cleansed again. The expression *מִצְרַעַת כַּשֶּׁלֶג*, covered with leprosy like snow, refers to the white leprosy (vid., Lev. 13:3).—“Was turned again as his flesh;” i.e., was restored, became healthy, or clean like the rest of his body. So far as the meaning of this sign is concerned, Moses’ hand has been explained in a perfectly arbitrary manner as representing the Israelitish nation, and his bosom as representing first Egypt, and then Canaan, as the hiding-place of Israel. If the shepherd’s staff represented Moses’ calling, the hand was that which directed or ruled the calling. It is in the bosom that the nurse carried the sucking child (Num. 11:12), the shepherd the lambs (Isa. 40:11), and the sacred singer the many nations, from whom he has suffered reproach and injury (Ps. 89:50). So Moses also carried his people in his bosom, i.e., in his heart: of that his first appearance in Egypt was a proof (Exodus 2:11, 12). But now he was to set his hand to deliver them from the reproach and bondage of Egypt. He put (*הִבִּיֵא*) his hand into his bosom, and his hand was covered with leprosy. The nation was like a leper, who defiled every one that touched him. The leprosy represented not only “the servitude and contemptuous treatment of the Israelites in Egypt” (Kurtz), but the ἀσέβεια of the Egyptians also, as *Theodoret* expresses it, or rather the impurity of Egypt in which Israel was sunken. This Moses soon discovered (cf. Exodus 5:17ff.), and on more than one occasion afterwards (cf. Num. 11); so that he had to complain to Jehovah, “Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant, that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? ... Have I conceived all this

people, that Thou shouldest say to me, Carry them in thy bosom?” (Num. 11:11, 12). But God had the power to purify the nation from this leprosy, and would endow His servant Moses with that power. At the command of God, Moses put his hand, now covered with leprosy, once more into his bosom, and drew it out quite cleansed. This was what Moses was to learn by the sign; whilst Israel also learned that God both could and would deliver it, through the cleansed hand of Moses, from all its bodily and spiritual misery. The object of the first miracle was to exhibit Moses as the man whom Jehovah had called to be the leader of His people; that of the second, to show that, as the messenger of Jehovah, he was furnished with the necessary power for the execution of this calling. In this sense God says, in v. 8, “If they will not hearken to the voice of the first sign, they will believe the voice of the latter sign.” A voice is ascribed to the sign, as being a clear witness to the divine mission of the person performing it. (Ps. 105:27).

**Exodus 4:9.** The Third Sign.—If the first two signs should not be sufficient to lead the people to believe in the divine mission of Moses, he was to give them one more practical demonstration of the power which he had received to overcome the might and gods of Egypt. He was to take of the water of the Nile (the river, Gen. 41:1) and pour it upon the dry land, and it would become blood (the second

*וְהָיָה* is a resumption of the first, cf. Exodus 12:41). The Nile received divine honours as the source of every good and all prosperity in the natural life of Egypt, and was even identified with Osiris (cf. *Hengstenberg*, *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, p. 109 transl.). If Moses therefore had power to turn the life-distributing water of the Nile into blood, he must also have received power to destroy Pharaoh and his gods. Israel was to learn this from the sign, whilst Pharaoh and the Egyptians were afterwards to experience this might of Jehovah in the form of punishment (Exodus 7:15ff.). Thus Moses as not only entrusted with the word of God, but also endowed with the

power of God; and as he was the first God-sent prophet, so was he also the first worker of miracles, and in this capacity a type of the Apostle of our profession (Heb. 3:1), even the God-man, Christ Jesus.

**Exodus 4:10–18.** Moses raised another difficulty. “*I am not a man of words,*” he said (i.e., I do not possess the gift of speech), “*but am heavy in mouth and heavy in tongue*” (i.e., I find a difficulty in the use of mouth and tongue, not exactly “stammering”); and that “*both of yesterday and the day before*” (i.e., from the very first, Gen. 31:2), “*and also since Thy speaking to Thy servant.*” Moses meant to say, “I neither possess the gift of speech by nature, nor have I received it since Thou hast spoken to me.”

**Exodus 4:11, 12.** Jehovah both could and would provide for this defect. He had made man’s mouth, and He made dumb or deaf, seeing or blind. He possessed unlimited power over all the senses, could give them or take them away; and He would be with Moses’ mouth, and teach him what he was to say, i.e., impart to him the necessary qualification both as to matter and mode.—Moses’ difficulties were now all exhausted, and removed by the assurances of God. But this only brought to light the secret reason in his heart. He did not wish to undertake the divine mission.

**Exodus 4:13.** “*Send, I pray Thee,*” he says, “*by whom Thou wilt send;*” i.e., carry out Thy

mission by whomsoever Thou wilt. שְׁלַח בְּיַד:

to carry out a mission through any one, originally with *accus. rei* (1 Sam. 16:20; 2 Sam. 11:14), then without the object, as here, “to send a person” (cf. 2 Sam. 12:25; 1 Kings 2:25).

Before תְּשַׁלַּח the word אֲשֶׁר is omitted,

which stands with בְּיַד in the construct state (vid., Ges. § 123, 3). The anger of God was now excited by this groundless opposition. But as this unwillingness also arose from weakness of the flesh, the mercy of God came to the help of his weakness, and He referred Moses to his brother Aaron, who could speak well, and

would address the people for him (vv. 14–17).

Aaron is called הַלֵּוִי, the Levite, from his lineage, possibly with reference to the primary signification of לָוָה “to connect one’s self” (*Baumgarten*), but not with any allusion to the future calling of the tribe of Levi (*Rashi* and *Calvin*). הוּא יְדַבֵּר יְדַבֵּר הוּא *speak will he*. The inf. abs. gives emphasis to the verb, and the

position of הוּא to the subject. He both can and will speak, if thou dost not know it.

**Exodus 4:14, 15.** And Aaron is quite ready to do so. He is already coming to meet thee, and is glad to see thee. The statement in v. 27, where Jehovah directs Aaron to go and meet Moses, is not at variance with this. They can both be reconciled in the following simple manner: “As soon as Aaron heard that his brother had left Midian, he went to meet him of his own accord, and then God showed him by what road he must go to find him, viz., towards the desert” (*R. Mose ben Nachman*).—“Put the words” (sc., which I have told thee) “into his mouth;” and I will support both thee and him in speaking. “*He will be mouth to thee, and thou shalt be God to him.*” Cf. 7:1, “Thy brother Aaron shall be thy prophet.” Aaron would stand in the same relation to Moses, as a prophet to God: the prophet only spoke what God inspired him with, and Moses should be the inspiring God to him. The Targum softens down the word “God” into “master, teacher.” Moses was called *God*, as being the possessor and medium of the divine word. As *Luther* explains it, “Whoever possesses and believes the word of God, possesses the Spirit and power of God, and also the divine wisdom, truth, heart, mind, and everything that belongs to God.” In v. 17, the plural “*signs*” points to the penal wonders that followed; for only one of the three signs given to Moses was performed with the rod.

**Exodus 4:18.** In consequence of this appearance of God, Moses took leave of his father-in-law to return to his brethren in Egypt, though without telling him the real object of his

journey, no doubt because Jethro had not the mind to understand such a divine revelation, though he subsequently recognised the miracles that God wrought for Israel (Exodus 18). By the “brethren” we are to understand not merely the nearer relatives of Moses, or the family of Amram, but the Israelites generally. Considering the oppression under which they were suffering at the time of Moses’ flight, the question might naturally arise, whether they were still living, and had not been altogether exterminated.

**Exodus 4:19–31.** Return of Moses to Egypt.—Vv. 19–23. On leaving Midian, Moses received another communication from God with reference to his mission to Pharaoh. The word of Jehovah, in v. 19, is not to be regarded as a summary of the previous revelation, in which case **וַיִּאמֶר** would be a pluperfect, nor as the account of another writer, who placed the summons to return to Egypt not in Sinai but in Midian. It is not a fact that the departure of Moses is given in v. 18; all that is stated there is, that Jethro consented to Moses’ decision to return to Egypt. It was not till after this consent that Moses was able to prepare for the journey. During these preparations God appeared to him in Midian, and encouraged him to return, by informing him that all the men who had sought his life, i.e., Pharaoh and the relatives of the Egyptian whom he had slain, were now dead.

**Exodus 4:20.** Moses then set out upon his journey, with his wife and sons. **בְּנָיו** is not to be altered into **בְּנֵי**, as *Knobel* supposes, notwithstanding the fact that the birth of only one son has hitherto been mentioned (Exodus 2:22); for neither there, nor in this passage (v. 25), is he described as the only son. The wife and sons, who were still young, he placed upon *the ass* (the one taken for the purpose), whilst he himself went on foot with “the staff of God”—as the staff was called with which he was to perform the divine miracles (v. 17)—in his hand. Poor as his outward appearance might be, he had in his hand the staff before

which the pride of Pharaoh and all his might would have to bow.

**Exodus 4:21.** “In thy going (returning) to Egypt, behold, all the wonders which I have put into thy hand, thou doest them before Pharaoh.” **מוֹפֵת**,

**τὸ τέρας**, *portentum*, is any object (natural event, thing, or person) of significance which surpasses expectation or the ordinary course of nature, and excites wonder in consequence. It is frequently connected with **אוֹת**, σημεῖον, a sign (Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 7:19, etc.), and embraces the

idea of **אוֹת** within itself, i.e., wonder-sign. The expression, “all those wonders,” does not refer merely to the three signs mentioned in Exodus 4:2–9, but to all the miracles which were to be performed by Moses with the staff in the presence of Pharaoh, and which, though not named, were put into his hand potentially along with the staff.—But all the miracles would not induce Pharaoh to let Israel go, for Jehovah

would harden his heart. **אֲנִי אֶחֱזַק אֶת־לְבָבוֹ**, lit., I will make his heart *firm*, so that it will not move, his feelings and attitude towards Israel will not change. For **אֲנִי אֶחֱזַק** or **וְחִזַּקְתִּי**

(Exodus 14:4) and **אֲנִי מְחִזַּק** (Exodus 14:17),

we find **אֲנִי אֶקְשֶׁה** in Exodus 7:3, “I will make Pharaoh’s heart *hard*, or unfeeling;” and in

Exodus 10:1, **אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי** “I have made his heart *heavy*,” i.e., obtuse, or insensible to impressions or divine influences. These three words are expressive of the hardening of the heart.

The *hardening of Pharaoh* is ascribed to God, not only in the passages just quoted, but also in Exodus 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:8; that is to say, ten times in all; and that not merely as foreknown or foretold by Jehovah, but as caused and effected by Him. In the last five passages it is invariably stated that “Jehovah

hardened (יִחְזֹק) Pharaoh's heart." But it is also stated just as often, viz., ten times, that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, or made it heavy or firm; e.g., in Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:15; 9:35, וַיִּחְזַק לֵב "and Pharaoh's heart was (or

became) hard;" Exodus 7:14, כָּבֵד לֵב "Pharaoh's heart was heavy;" in Exodus 9:7, וַיִּכְבֵּד לֵב; in Exodus 8:11, 28; 9:34, וַיִּכְבֵּד לֵב; in Exodus 13:15, כִּי וַיִּחְזַק לֵב or וַיִּכְבֵּד לֵב;

וַיִּחְזַק לֵב "for Pharaoh made his heart hard."

According to this, the hardening of Pharaoh was quite as much his own act as the decree of God. But if, in order to determine the precise relation of the divine to the human causality, we look more carefully at the two classes of expressions, we shall find that not only in connection with the first sign, by which Moses and Aaron were to show their credentials as the messengers of Jehovah, sent with the demand that he would let the people of Israel go (Exodus 7:13, 14), but after the first five penal miracles, the hardening is invariably represented as his own. After every one of these miracles, it is stated that Pharaoh's heart was firm, or dull, i.e., insensible to the voice of God, and unaffected by the miracles performed before his eyes, and the judgments of God suspended over him and his kingdom, and he did not listen to them (to Moses and Aaron with their demand), or let the people go (Exodus 7:22; 8:8, 15, 28; 9:7). It is not till after the sixth plague that it is stated that Jehovah made the heart of Pharaoh firm (Exodus 9:12). At the seventh the statement is repeated, that "Pharaoh made his heart heavy" (Exodus 9:34, 35); but the continued refusal on the part of Pharaoh after the eighth and ninth (Exodus 10:20, 27) and his resolution to follow the Israelites and bring them back again, are attributed to the hardening of his heart by Jehovah (Exodus 14:8, cf. vv. 4 and 17). This hardening of his own heart was manifested first

of all in the fact, that he paid not attention to the demand of Jehovah addressed to him through Moses, and *would* not let Israel go; and that not only at the commencement, so long as the Egyptian magicians imitated the signs performed by Moses and Aaron (though at the very first sign the rods of the magicians, when turned into serpents, were swallowed by Aaron's, 7:12, 13), but even when the magicians themselves acknowledged, "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19). It was also continued after the fourth and fifth plagues, when a distinction was made between the Egyptians and the Israelites, and the latter were exempted from the plagues,—a fact of which the king took care to convince himself (Exodus 9:7). And it was exhibited still further in his breaking his promise, that he would let Israel go if Moses and Aaron would obtain from Jehovah the removal of the plague, and in the fact, that even after he had been obliged to confess, "I have sinned, Jehovah is the righteous one, I and my people are unrighteous" (Exodus 9:27), he sinned again, as soon as breathing-time was given him, and would not let the people go (Exodus 9:34, 35). Thus Pharaoh would not bend his self-will to the will of God, even after he had discerned the finger of God and the omnipotence of Jehovah in the plagues suspended over him and his nation; he would not withdraw his haughty refusal, notwithstanding the fact that he was obliged to acknowledge that it was sin against Jehovah. Looked at from this side, the hardening was a fruit of sin, a consequence of that self-will, high-mindedness, and pride which flow from sin, and a continuous and ever increasing abuse of that freedom of the will which is innate in man, and which involves the possibility of obstinate resistance to the word and chastisement of God even until death. As the freedom of the will has its fixed limits in the unconditional dependence of the creature upon the Creator, so the sinner may resist the will of God as long as he lives. But such resistance plunges him into destruction, and is followed inevitably by death and damnation. God never allows any man to scoff at Him. Whoever will not suffer himself to

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be led, by the kindness and earnestness of the divine admonitions, to repentance and humble submission to the will of God, must inevitably perish, and by his destruction subserve the glory of God, and the manifestation of the holiness, righteousness, and omnipotence of Jehovah.

But God not only permits a man to harden himself; He also produces obduracy, and suspends this sentence over the impenitent. Not as though God took pleasure in the death of the wicked! No; God desires that the wicked should repent of his evil way and live (Ezek. 33:11); and He desires this most earnestly, for "He will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4, cf. 2 Pet. 3:9). As God causes His earthly sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45), so He causes His sun of grace to shine upon all sinners, to lead them to life and salvation. But as the earthly sun produces different effects upon the earth, according to the nature of the soil upon which it shines, so the influence of the divine sun of grace manifests itself in different ways upon the human heart, according to its moral condition.<sup>13</sup> The penitent permit the proofs of divine goodness and grace to lead them to repentance and salvation; but the impenitent harden themselves more and more against the grace of God, and so become ripe for the judgment of damnation. The very same manifestation of the mercy of God leads in the case of the one to salvation and life, and in that of the other to judgment and death, because he hardens himself against that mercy. In this increasing hardness on the part of the impenitent sinner against the mercy that is manifested towards him, there is accomplished the judgment of reprobation, first in God's furnishing the wicked with an opportunity of bringing fully to light the evil inclinations, desires, and thoughts that are in their hearts; and then, according to an invariable law of the moral government of the world, in His rendering the return of the impenitent sinner more and more difficult on account of his continued resistance, and eventually rendering

it altogether impossible. It is the curse of sin, that it renders the hard heart harder, and less susceptible to the gracious manifestations of divine love, long-suffering, and patience. In this twofold manner God produces hardness, not only *permissive* but *effective*; i.e., not only by giving time and space for the manifestation of human opposition, even to the utmost limits of creaturely freedom, but still more by those continued manifestations of His will which drive the hard heart to such utter obduracy that it is no longer capable of returning, and so giving over the hardened sinner to the judgment of damnation. This is what we find in the case of Pharaoh. After he had hardened his heart against the revealed will of God during the first five plagues, the hardening commenced on the part of Jehovah with the sixth miracle (Exodus 9:12), when the omnipotence of God was displayed with such energy that even the Egyptian magicians were covered with the boils, and could no longer stand before Moses (Exodus 9:11). And yet, even after this hardening on the part of God, another opportunity was given to the wicked king to repent and change his mind, so that on two other occasions he acknowledged that his resistance was sin, and promised to submit to the will of Jehovah (Exodus 9:27ff., 10:16ff.). But when at length, even after the seventh plague, he broke his promise to let Israel go, and hardened his heart again as soon as the plague was removed (Exodus 9:34, 35), Jehovah so hardened Pharaoh's heart that he not only did not let Israel go, but threatened Moses with death if he ever came into his presence again (Exodus 10:20, 27, 28). The hardening was now completed so that he necessarily fell a victim to judgment; though the very first stroke of judgment in the slaying of the first-born was an admonition to consider and return. And it was not till after he had rejected the mercy displayed in this judgment, and manifested a defiant spirit once more, in spite of the words with which he had given Moses and Aaron permission to depart, "Go, and bless me also" (Exodus 12:31, 32), that God completely hardened his heart, so that he pursued the

Israelites with an army, and was overtaken by the judgment of utter destruction.

Now, although the hardening of Pharaoh on the part of Jehovah was only the complement of Pharaoh's hardening of his own heart, in the verse before us the former aspect alone is presented, because the principal object was not only to prepare Moses for the opposition which he would meet with from Pharaoh, but also to strengthen his weak faith, and remove at the very outset every cause for questioning and omnipotence of Jehovah. If it was by Jehovah Himself that Pharaoh was hardened, this hardening, which He not only foresaw and predicted by virtue of His omniscience, but produced and inflicted through His omnipotence, could not possibly hinder the performance of His will concerning Israel, but must rather contribute to the realization of His purposes of salvation and the manifestation of His glory (cf. Exodus 9:16; 10:2; 14:4, 17, 18).

**Exodus 4:22, 23.** In order that Pharaoh might form a true estimate of the solemnity of the divine command, Moses was to make known to him not only the relation of Jehovah to Israel, but also the judgment to which he would be exposed if he refused to let Israel go. The relation in which Israel stood to Jehovah was expressed by God in the words, "Israel is My first-born son." Israel was Jehovah's son by virtue of his election to be the people of possession (Deut. 14:1, 2). This election began with the call of Abraham to be the father of the nation in which all the families of the earth were to be blessed. On the ground of this promise, which was now to be realized in the seed of Abraham by the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, the nation of Israel is already called Jehovah's "son," although it was through the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai that it was first exalted to be the people of Jehovah's possession out of all the nations (Exodus 19:5, 6). The divine sonship of Israel was therefore spiritual in its nature: it neither sprang from the fact that God, as the Creator of all nations, was also the Creator, or Begetter, and Father of Israel, nor was it founded, as *Baumgarten*

supposes, upon "the physical generation of Isaac, as having its origin, not in the power of nature, but in the power of grace." The relation of God, as Creator, to man His creature, is never referred to in the Old Testament as that of a father to a son; to say nothing of the fact that the Creator of man is *Elohim*, and not *Jehovah*. Wherever Jehovah is called the Father, Begetter, or Creator of Israel (even in Deut. 32:18; Jer. 2:27; Isa. 44:8; Mal. 1:6 and 2:10), the fatherhood of God relates to the election of Israel as Jehovah's people of possession. But the election upon which the *υιοθεσία* of Israel was founded, is not presented in the aspect of a "begetting through the Spirit;" it is spoken of rather as acquiring or buying (*קָנָה*), making

(*עָשָׂה*), founding or establishing (*בָּנָה*, Deut. 32:6). Even the expressions, "the Rock that begat thee," "God that bare thee" (Deut. 32:18), do not point to the idea of spiritual generation, but are to be understood as referring to the creation; just as in Ps. 90:2, where Moses speaks of the mountains as "brought forth" and the earth as "born." The choosing of Israel as the son of God was an adoption flowing from the free grace of God which involved the loving, fatherly treatment of the son, and demanded obedience, reverence, and confidence towards the Father (Mal. 1:6). It was this which constituted the very essence of the covenant made by Jehovah with Israel, that He treated it with mercy and love (Hos. 11:1; Jer. 31:9, 20), pitied it as a father pitieth his children (Ps. 103:13), chastened it on account of its sins, yet did not withdraw His mercy from it (2 Sam. 7:14, 15; Ps. 89:31-35), and trained His son to be a holy nation by the love and severity of paternal discipline.—Still Israel was not only a son, but the "first-born son" of Jehovah. In this title the calling of the heathen is implied. Israel was not to be Jehovah's only son, but simply the first-born, who was peculiarly dear to his Father, and had certain privileges above the rest. Jehovah was about to exalt Israel above all the nations of the earth (Deut. 28:1). Now, if Pharaoh would not let Jehovah's first-born son

depart, he would pay the penalty in the life of his own first-born (cf. 12:29). In this intense earnestness of the divine command, Moses had a strong support to his faith. If Israel was Jehovah's first-born son, Jehovah could not relinquish him, but must deliver His son from the bondage of Egypt.

**Exodus 4:24–26.** But if Moses was to carry out the divine commission with success, he must first of all prove himself to be a faithful servant of Jehovah in his own house. This he was to learn from the *occurrence at the inn*: an occurrence which has many obscurities on account of the brevity of the narrative, and has received many different interpretations. When Moses was on the way, Jehovah met him at the resting-place (מְלוֹן, see Gen. 42:27), and sought to kill him. In what manner, is not stated: whether by a sudden seizure with some fatal disease, or, what is more probable, by some act proceeding directly from Himself, which threatened Moses with death. This hostile attitude on the part of God was occasioned by his neglect to circumcise his son; for, as soon as Zipporah cut off (circumcised) the foreskin of her son with a stone, Jehovah let him go. צוֹר = צוּר, a rock, or stone, here a stone knife, with which, according to hereditary custom, the circumcision commanded by Joshua was also performed; not, however, because "stone knives were regarded as less dangerous than those of metal," nor because "for symbolical reasons preference was given to them, as a simple production of nature, over the metal knives that had been prepared by human hands and were applied to daily use." For if the Jews had detected any religious or symbolical meaning in stone, they would never have given it up for iron or steel, but would have retained it, like the Ethiopian tribe of the Alnaih, who used stone knives for that purpose as late as 150 years ago; whereas, in the Talmud, the use of iron or steel knives for the purpose of circumcision is spoken of, as though they were universally employed. Stone knives belong to a time anterior to the manufacture of iron or

steel; and wherever they were employed at a later period, this arose from a devoted adherence to the older and simpler custom (see my Commentary on Josh. 5:2). From the word "her son," it is evident that Zipporah only circumcised one of the two sons of Moses (v. 20); so that the other, not doubt the elder, had already been circumcised in accordance with the law. Circumcision had been enjoined upon Abraham by Jehovah as a covenant sign for all his descendants; and the sentence of death was pronounced upon any neglect of it, as being a breach of the covenant (Gen. 17:14). Although in this passage it is the uncircumcised themselves who are threatened with death, yet in the case of children the punishment fell upon the parents, and first of all upon the father, who had neglected to keep the commandment of God. Now, though Moses had probably omitted circumcision simply from regard to his Midianitish wife, who disliked this operation, he had been guilty of a capital crime, which God could not pass over in the case of one whom He had chosen to be His messenger, to establish His covenant with Israel. Hence He threatened him with death, to bring him to a consciousness of his sin, either by the voice of conscience or by some word which accompanied His attack upon Moses; and also to show him with what earnestness God demanded the keeping of His commandments. Still He did not kill him; for his sin had sprung from weakness of the flesh, from a sinful yielding to his wife, which could both be explained and excused on account of his position in the Midianite's house. That Zipporah's dislike to circumcision had been the cause of the omission, has been justly inferred by commentators from the fact, that on Jehovah's attack upon Moses, she proceeded at once to perform what had been neglected, and, as it seems, with inward repugnance. The expression, "She threw (the foreskin of her son) at his (Moses') feet," points to this (הִגִּיעַ לְ) as in Isa. 25:12). The suffix in רַגְלָיו (*his feet*) cannot refer to the son, not only because such an allusion would give no reasonable sense, but

also because the suffix refers to Moses in the immediate context, both before (in הַמִּיתוֹ, v. 24) and after (in מִמֶּנּוּ, v. 26); and therefore it is simpler to refer it to Moses here. From this it follows, then, that the words, “a blood-bridegroom art thou to me,” were addressed to Moses, and not to the boy. Zipporah calls Moses a blood-bridegroom, “because she had been compelled, as it were, to acquire and purchase him anew as a husband by shedding the blood of her son” (*Glass*). “Moses had been as good as taken from her by the deadly attack which had been made upon him. She purchased his life by the blood of her son; she received him back, as it were, from the dead, and married him anew; he was, in fact, a bridegroom of blood to her” (*Kurtz*). This she said, as the historian adds, after God had let Moses, go, לְמוֹלוֹת, “with reference to the circumcisions.” The plural is used quite generally and indefinitely, as Zipporah referred not merely to this one instance, but to circumcision generally. Moses was apparently induced by what had occurred to decide not to take his wife and children with him to Egypt, but to send them back to his father-in-law. We may infer this from the fact, that it was not till after Israel had arrived at Sinai that he brought them to him again (Exodus 18:2).

**Exodus 4:27–31.** After the removal of the sin, which had excited the threatening wrath of Jehovah, Moses once more received a token of the divine favour in the arrival of Aaron, under the direction of God, to meet him at the Mount of God (Exodus 3:1). To Aaron he related all the words of Jehovah, with which He had sent (commissioned) him (שָׁלַח with a double accusative, as in 2 Sam. 11:22; Jer. 42:5), and all the signs which He had commanded him (צִוָּה also with a double accusative, as in Gen. 6:22). Another proof of the favour of God consisted of the believing reception of his mission on the part of the elders and the people of Israel. “*The*

*people believed*” (וַיֵּאֱמָנוּ) when Aaron communicated to them the words of Jehovah to Moses, and did the signs in their presence. “*And when they heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and had looked upon their affliction, they bowed and worshipped.*” (*Knobel* is wrong in proposing to alter יִשְׁמְעוּ into

יִשְׁמְחוּ, according to the Sept. rendering, καὶ ἐχάρη). The faith of the people, and the worship by which their faith was expressed, proved that the promise of the fathers still lived in their hearts. And although this faith did not stand the subsequent test (Exodus 5), yet, as the first expression of their feelings, it bore witness to the fact that Israel was willing to follow the call of God.

## Exodus 5

### MOSES AND AARON SENT TO PHARAOH.—CH. 5–7:7

**Exodus 5:1–7:7.** The two events which form the contents of this section,—viz., (1) the visit of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh to make known the commands of their God, with the harsh refusal of their request on the part of Pharaoh, by an increase of the tributary labours of Israel (Exodus 5); and (2) the further revelations of Jehovah to Moses, with the insertion of the genealogies of Moses and Aaron,—not only hang closely together so far as the subject-matter is concerned, inasmuch as the fresh declarations of Jehovah to Moses were occasioned by the complaint of Moses that his first attempt had so signally failed, but both of them belong to the complete equipment of Moses for his divine mission. Their visit to Pharaoh was only preliminary in its character. Moses and Aaron simply made known to the king the will of their God, without accrediting themselves by miraculous signs as the messengers of Jehovah, or laying any particular emphasis upon His demand. For this first step was only intended to enlighten Moses as to the

attitude of Pharaoh and the people of Israel in relation to the work of God, which He was about to perform. Pharaoh answered the demand addressed to him, that he would let the people go for a few days to hold a sacrificial festival in the desert, by increasing their labours; and the Israelites complained in consequence that their good name had been made abhorrent to the king, and their situation made worse than it was. Moses might have despaired on this account; but he laid his trouble before the Lord, and the Lord filled his despondent heart with fresh courage through the renewed and strengthened promise that He would now for the first time display His name *Jehovah* perfectly—that He would redeem the children of Israel with outstretched arm and with great judgments—would harden Pharaoh’s heart, and do many signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, that the Egyptians might learn through the deliverance of Israel that He was *Jehovah*, i.e., the absolute God, who works with unlimited freedom (cf. p. 47). At the same time God removed the difficulty which once more arose in the mind of Moses, namely, that Pharaoh would not listen to him because of his want of oratorical power, by the assurance, “*I make thee a god for Pharaoh, and Aaron shall be thy prophet*” (Exodus 7:1), which could not fail to remove all doubt as to his own incompetency for so great and severe a task. With this promise Pharaoh was completely given up into Moses’ power, and Moses invested with all the plenipotentiary authority that was requisite for the performance of the work entrusted to him.

**Exodus 5.** Pharaoh’s Answer to the Request of Moses and Aaron.—Vv. 1–5. When the elders of Israel had listened with gladness and gratitude to the communications of Moses and Aaron respecting the revelation which Moses had received from *Jehovah*, that He was now about to deliver His people out of their bondage in Egypt; Moses and Aaron proceeded to Pharaoh, and requested in the name of the God of Israel, that he would let the people of Israel go and celebrate a festival in the wilderness in honour of their God. When we consider that every

nation presented sacrifices to its deities, and celebrated festivals in their honour, and that they had all their own modes of worship, which were supposed to be appointed by the gods themselves, so that a god could not be worshipped acceptably in every place; the demand presented to Pharaoh on the part of the God of the Israelites, that he would let His people go into the wilderness and sacrifice to Him, appears so natural and reasonable, that Pharaoh could not have refused their request, if there had been a single trace of the fear of God in his heart. But what was his answer? “*Who is Jehovah, that I should listen to His voice, to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah.*” There was a certain truth in these last words. The God of Israel had not yet made Himself known to him. But this was no justification. Although as a heathen he might naturally measure the power of the God by the existing condition of His people, and infer from the impotence of the Israelites that their God must be also weak, he would not have dared to refuse the petition of the Israelites, to be allowed to sacrifice to their God or celebrate a sacrificial festival, if he had had any faith in gods at all.

**Exodus 5:3.** The messengers founded their request upon the fact that the God of the

Hebrews had met them (**נִקְרָא**, vid., Exodus 3:18), and referred to the punishment which the neglect of the sacrificial festival demanded by God might bring upon the nation.

**פֶּן־יִפְגְּעוּנוּ**: “lest He strike us (attack us) with pestilence or sword.” **פָּגַע**: to strike, hit against any one, either by accident or with a hostile intent; ordinarily construed with **בְּ**, also with an accusative, 1 Sam. 10:5, and chosen here probably with reference to **נִקְרָה = נִקְרָא**.

“*Pestilence or sword:*” these are mentioned as expressive of a violent death, and as the means employed by the deities, according to the ordinary belief of the nations, to punish the neglect of their worship. The expression “God

of the Hebrews," for "God of Israel" (v. 1), is not chosen as being "more intelligible to the king, because the Israelites were called Hebrews by foreigners, more especially by the Egyptians (Exodus 1:16; 2:6)," as *Knobel* supposes, but to convince Pharaoh of the necessity for their going into the desert to keep the festival demanded by their God. In Egypt they might sacrifice to the gods of Egypt, but not to the God of the Hebrews.

**Exodus 5:4, 5.** But Pharaoh would hear nothing of any worship. He believed that the wish was simply an excuse for procuring holidays for the people, or days of rest from their labours, and ordered the messengers off to their slave duties: "Get you unto your burdens." For as the people were very numerous, he would necessarily lose by their keeping holiday. He called the Israelites "the people of the land," not "as being his own property, because he was the lord of the land" (*Baumgarten*), but as the working class, "land-people," equivalent to "common people," in distinction from the ruling castes of the Egyptians (vid., Jer. 52:25; Ezek. 7:27).

**Exodus 5:6–18.** As Pharaoh possessed neither fear of God (εὐσέβεια) nor fear of the gods, but, in the proud security of his might, determined to keep the Israelites as slaves, and to use them as tools for the glorifying of his kingdom by the erection of magnificent buildings, he suspected that their wish to go into the desert was nothing but an excuse invented by idlers, and prompted by a thirst for freedom, which might become dangerous to his kingdom, on account of the numerical strength of the people. He therefore thought that he could best extinguish such desires and attempts by increasing the oppression and adding to their labours. For this reason he instructed his bailiffs to abstain from delivering straw to the Israelites who were engaged in making bricks, and to let them gather it for themselves; but yet not to make the least abatement in the number (מִתְכַּנֶּתֶת)

to be delivered every day. הַנִּגְשִׁים בָּעַם, "those who urged the people on," were the

bailiffs selected from the Egyptians and placed over the Israelitish workmen, the general managers of the work. Under them there were the שֹׁטְרִים (lit., writers, γραμματεῖς LXX, from

שָׁטַר to write), who were chosen from the Israelites (vid., v. 14), and had to distribute the work among the people, and hand it over, when finished, to the royal officers. לִבְנֵי לֵבָנִים: to

make bricks, not to burn them; for the bricks in the ancient monuments of Egypt, and in many of the pyramids, are not burnt but dried in the sun (*Herod.* ii. 136; *Hengst.* Egypt and Books of Moses, pp. 2 and 79ff.). קָשַׁשׁ: a denom. verb

from קָשׂ, to gather stubble, then to stubble, to

gather (Num. 15:32, 33). תִּבְּוֹן, of uncertain etymology, is chopped straw; here, the stubble that was left standing when the corn was reaped, or the straw that lay upon the ground. This they chopped up and mixed with the clay, to give greater durability to the bricks, as may be seen in bricks found in the oldest monuments (cf. *Hgst.* p. 79).

**Exodus 5:9.** "Let the work be heavy (press heavily) upon the people, and they shall make with it (i.e., stick to their work), and not look at lying words." By "lying words" the king meant the words of Moses, that the God of Israel had appeared to him, and demanded a sacrificial festival from His people. In v. 11 special

emphasis is laid upon אַתֶּם "ye:" "Go, ye yourselves, fetch your straw," not others for you as heretofore; "for nothing is taken (diminished)

from your work." The word כִּי for has been correctly explained by *Kimchi* as supposing a parenthetical thought, *et quidem alacriter vobis eundum est.*

**Exodus 5:12.** "לְקַשֵּׁשׁ קָ" "to gather stubble for straw;" not "stubble for, in the sense of

instead of straw," for לֶחֶם is not equivalent to

תִּתְחַתּוּ but to gather the stubble left in the fields for the chopped straw required for the bricks.

**Exodus 5:13.** דִּבְרֵי יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ, the quantity fixed for every day, "just as when the straw was (there)," i.e., was given out for the work.

**Exodus 5:14ff.** As the Israelites could not do the work appointed them, their overlookers were beaten by the Egyptian bailiffs; and when they complained to the king of this treatment, they were repulsed with harshness, and told "Ye are idle, idle; therefore ye say, Let us go and

sacrifice to Jehovah." וְחַטָּאת עֲמַדָּה: "and thy people sin;" i.e., not "thy people (the Israelites) must be sinners," which might be the meaning

of חַטָּאת according to Gen. 43:9, but "thy (Egyptian) people sin." "Thy people" must be understood as applying to the Egyptians, on account of the antithesis to "thy servants," which not only refers to the Israelitish overlookers, but includes all the Israelites, especially in the first clause. חַטָּאת is an

unusual feminine form, for חַטָּאתָה (vid., Gen. 33:11); and עַם is construed as a feminine, as in Judg. 18:7 and Jer. 8:5.

**Exodus 5:19–23.** When the Israelitish overlookers saw that they were in evil (בְּרָעָה as in Ps. 10:6, i.e., in an evil condition), they came to meet Moses and Aaron, waiting for them as they came out from the king, and reproaching them with only making the circumstances of the people worse.

**Exodus 5:21.** "Jehovah look upon you and judge" (i.e., punish you, because) "ye have made the smell of us to stink in the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants," i.e., destroyed our good name with the king and his servants, and turned it into hatred and disgust. רִיחַ, a pleasant smell, is a

figure employed for a good name or repute, and the figurative use of the word explains the connection with the eyes instead of the nose.

"To give a sword into their hand to kill us."

Moses and Aaron, they imagined, through their appeal to Pharaoh had made the king and his counsellors suspect them of being restless people, and so had put a weapon into their hands for their oppression and destruction.

What perversity of the natural heart! They call upon God to judge, whilst by their very complaining they show that they have no confidence in God and His power to save. Moses

turned (וַיִּשָּׁב v. 22) to Jehovah with the

question, "Why hast Thou done evil to this people,"—increased their oppression by my mission to Pharaoh, and yet not delivered them? "These are not words of contumacy or indignation, but of inquiry and prayer" (*Aug. quaest.* 14). The question and complaint proceeded from faith, which flies to God when it cannot understand the dealings of God, to point out to Him how incomprehensible are His ways, to appeal to Him to help in the time of need, and to remove what seems opposed to His nature and His will.

## Exodus 6

**Exodus 6:1–7:7.** Equipment of Moses and Aaron as Messengers of Jehovah.—V. 1. In reply to the complaining inquiry of Moses, Jehovah promised him the deliverance of Israel by a strong hand (cf. 3:19), by which Pharaoh would be compelled to let Israel go, and even to drive them out of his land. Moses did not receive any direct answer to the question, "Why hast Thou so evil-entreated this people?" He was to gather this first of all from his own experience as the leader of Israel. For the words were strictly applicable here: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). If, even after the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and their glorious march through the desert, in which they had received so many proofs of the omnipotence and mercy of their God, they repeatedly rebelled against the guidance of God, and were

not content with the manna provided by the Lord, but lusted after the fishes, leeks, and onions of Egypt (Num. 11); it is certain that in such a state of mind as this, they would never have been willing to leave Egypt and enter into a covenant with Jehovah, without a very great increase in the oppression they endured in Egypt.—The brief but comprehensive promise was still further explained by the Lord (vv. 2–9), and Moses was instructed and authorized to carry out the divine purposes in concert with Aaron (vv. 10–13, 28–30, Exodus 7:1–6). The genealogy of the two messengers is then introduced into the midst of these instructions (Exodus 6:14–27); and the age of Moses is given at the close (Exodus 7:7). This section does not contain a different account of the calling of Moses, taken from some other source than the previous one; it rather presupposes Exodus 3–5, and completes the account commenced in Exodus 3 of the equipment of Moses and Aaron as the executors of the divine will with regard to Pharaoh and Israel. For the fact that the first visit paid by Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh was simply intended to bring out the attitude of Pharaoh towards the purposes of Jehovah, and to show the necessity for the great judgments of God, is distinctly expressed in the words, “Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh.” But before these judgments commenced, Jehovah announced to Moses (v. 2), and through him to the people, that henceforth He would manifest Himself to them in a much more glorious manner than to the patriarchs, namely, as Jehovah; whereas to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He had only appeared as El Shaddai. The words, “By My name Jehovah was I now known to them,” do not mean, however, that the patriarchs were altogether ignorant of the name Jehovah. This is obvious from the significant use of that name, which was not an unmeaning sound, but a real expression of the divine nature, and still more from the unmistakable connection between the explanation given by God here and Gen. 17:1. When the establishment of the covenant commenced, as described in Gen. 15, with the institution of the covenant sign of circumcision

and the promise of the birth of Isaac, Jehovah said to Abram, “I am El Shaddai, God Almighty,” and from that time forward manifested Himself to Abram and his wife as the Almighty, in the birth of Isaac, which took place apart altogether from the powers of nature, and also in the preservation, guidance, and multiplication of his seed. It was in His attribute as El Shaddai that God had revealed His nature to the patriarchs; but now He was about to reveal Himself to Israel as Jehovah, as the absolute Being working with unbounded freedom in the performance of His promises. For not only had He established His covenant with the fathers (v. 4), but He had also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, and remembered His

covenant (v. 5; **וָגַם—וָגַם**, not only—but also).

The divine promise not only commences in v. 2, but concludes at v. 8, with the emphatic expression, “I Jehovah,” to show that the work of Israel’s redemption resided in the power of the name Jehovah. In v. 4 the covenant promises of Gen. 17:7, 8; 26:3; 35:11, 12, are all brought together; and in v. 5 we have a repetition of Exodus 2:24, with the

emphatically repeated **אֲנִי** (*I*). On the ground of the erection of His covenant on the one hand, and, what was irreconcilable with that covenant, the bondage of Israel on the other, Jehovah was not about to redeem Israel from its sufferings and make it His own nation. This assurance, which God would carry out by the manifestation of His nature as expressed in the name *Jehovah*, contained three distinct elements: (*a*) the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, which, because so utterly different from all outward appearances, is described in three parallel clauses: bringing them out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; saving them from their bondage; and redeeming them with a stretched-out arm and with great judgments;—(*b*) the adoption of Israel as the nation of God;—(*c*) the guidance of Israel into the land promised to the fathers (vv.

6–8). **זְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה**, a stretched-out arm, is most

appropriately connected with שְׁפָטִים גְּדֹלִים, great judgments; for God raises, stretches out His arm, when He proceeds in judgment to smite the rebellious. These expressions repeat with greater emphasis the “strong hand” of v. 1, and are frequently connected with it in the rhetorical language of Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19). The “great judgments” were the plagues, the judgments of God, by which Pharaoh was to be compelled to let Israel go.

**Exodus 6:7.** The adoption of Israel as the nation of God took place at Sinai (Exodus 19:5).

אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂאתִי וּגְוֹ, “with regard to which I have lifted up My hand to give it” (v. 8). Lifting up the hand (sc., towards heaven) is the attitude of swearing (Deut. 32:40 cf. Gen. 14:22); and these words point back to Gen. 22:16ff. and 26:3 (cf. Exodus 24:7 and 50:24).

**Exodus 6:9–13.** When Moses communicated this solemn assurance of God to the people, they did not listen to him מִקְצֶר רוּחַ, lit., “for shortness of breath;” not “from impatience” (like קִצְרֵרוּחַ, Prov. 14:29, in contrast to אָרַךְ

אִפִּים), but from anguish, inward pressure, which prevents a man from breathing properly. Thus the early belief of the Israelites was changed into the despondency of unbelief through the increase of their oppression. This result also produced despondency in Moses’ mind, so that he once more declined the commission, which followed the promise, viz., to go to Pharaoh and demand that he would let Israel go out of his land (v. 11). If the children of Israel would not listen to him, how should Pharaoh hear him, especially as he was uncircumcised in the lips (v. 12)? עֵרַל

שְׁפָתָיו is one whose lips are, as it were, covered with a foreskin, so that he cannot easily bring out his words; in meaning the same as “heavy of mouth” in Exodus 4:10. The reply of God to this objection is given in Exodus 7:1–5.

For, before the historian gives the decisive answer of Jehovah which removed all further hesitation on the part of Moses, and completed his mission and that of Aaron to Pharaoh, he considers it advisable to introduce the genealogy of the two men of God, for the purpose of showing clearly their genealogical relation to the people of Israel.

**Exodus 6:13.** Verse 13 forms a concluding summary, and prepares the way for the genealogy that follows, the heading of which is given in v. 14.<sup>14</sup>

**Exodus 6:14–27.** The Genealogy of Moses and Aaron.—“These are their (Moses’ and Aaron’s)

father’s-houses.” בֵּית־אָבוֹת father’s-houses (not fathers’ house) is a composite noun, so formed that the two words not only denote one idea, but are treated grammatically as one word, like בֵּית־עֲצָבִים idol-houses (1 Sam.

31:9), and בֵּית־בָּמוֹת high-place-houses (cf. Ges. § 108, 3; Ewald, § 270c). *Father’s house* was a technical term applied to a collection of families, called by the name of a common ancestor. The father’s-houses were the larger divisions into which the families (*mishpachoth*), the largest subdivisions of the tribes of Israel, were grouped. To show clearly the genealogical position of Levi, the tribe-father of Moses and Aaron, among the sons of Jacob, the genealogy commences with Reuben, the first-born of Jacob, and gives the names of such of his sons and those of Simeon as were the founders of families (Gen. 46:9, 10). Then follows Levi; and not only are the names of his three sons given, but the length of his life is mentioned (v. 16), also that of his son Kohath and his descendant Amram, because they were the tribe-fathers of Moses and Aaron. But the Amram mentioned in v. 20 as the father of Moses, cannot be the same person as the Amram who was the son of Kohath (v. 18), but must be a later descendant. For, however the sameness of names may seem to favour the identity of the persons, if we simply look at the genealogy before us, a comparison of this passage with Num. 3:27, 28

will show the impossibility of such an assumption. "According to Num. 3:27, 28, the Kohathites were divided (in Moses' time) into the four branches, Amramites, Izharites, Hebronites, and Uzzielites, who consisted together of 8600 men and boys (women and girls not being included). Of these, about a fourth, or 2150 men, would belong to the Amramites. Now, according to Exodus 18:3, 4, Moses himself had only two sons. Consequently, if Amram the son of Kohath, and tribe-father of the Amramites, was the same person as Amram the father of Moses, Moses must have had 2147 brothers and brothers' sons (the brothers' daughters, the sisters, and their daughters, not being reckoned at all). But as this is absolutely impossible, it must be granted that Amram the son of Kohath was not the father of Moses, and that an indefinitely long list of generations has been omitted between the former and his descendant of the same name" (*Tiele, Chron. des A. T.* p. 36).<sup>15</sup> The enumeration of only four generations, viz., Levi, Iohath, Amram, Moses, is unmistakably related to Gen. 15:16, where it is stated that the fourth generation would return to Canaan. Amram's wife *Jochebed*, who is merely spoken of in general terms as a daughter of Levi (a Levitess) in Exodus 2:1 and Num. 26:59, is called here the דִּוּדָּה "aunt" (father's sister) of Amram, a marriage which was prohibited in the Mosaic law (Lev. 18:12), but was allowed before the giving of the law; so that there is no reason for following the LXX and *Vulgate*, and rendering the word, in direct opposition to the usage of the language, *patruelis*, the father's brother's daughter. Amram's sons are placed according to their age: Aaron, then Moses, as Aaron was three years older than his brother. Their sister Miriam was older still (*vid.*, 2:4). In the LXX, *Vulg.*, and one Hebrew MS, she is mentioned here; but this is a later interpolation. In vv. 21ff. not only are the sons of Aaron mentioned (v. 23), but those of two of Amram's brothers, Izhar and Uzziel (vv. 21, 22), and also Phinehas, the son of Aaron's son Eleazar (v. 25); as the genealogy was intended to trace the descent of

the principal priestly families, among which again special prominence is given to Aaron and Eleazar by the introduction of their wives. On the other hand, none of the sons of Moses are mentioned, because his dignity was limited to his own person, and his descendants fell behind those of Aaron, and were simply reckoned among the non-priestly families of Levi. The Korahites and Uzzielites are mentioned, but a superior rank was assigned to them in the subsequent history to that of other Levitical families (cf. Num. 16, 17, 26:11, and 3:30 with Lev. 10:4). Aaron's wife *Elisheba* was of the princely tribe of Judah, and her brother Naashon was a tribe-prince of Judah (cf. Num. 2:3). רָאִשֵׁי אֲבוֹת (v. 25), a frequent

abbreviation for רָאִשֵׁי בֵּית־אֲבוֹת, heads of the father's-houses of the Levites. In vv. 26 and 27, with which the genealogy closes, the object of introducing it is very clearly shown in the expression, "These are that Aaron and Moses," at the beginning of v. 26; and again, "These are that Moses and Aaron," at the close of v. 27. The reversal of the order of the names is also to be noticed. In the genealogy itself Aaron stands first, as the elder of the two; in the conclusion, which leads over to the historical narrative that follows, Moses takes precedence of his elder brother, as being the divinely appointed redeemer of Israel. On the expression, "according to their armies," see Exodus 7:4.

## Exodus 7

**Exodus 6:28-7:7.** In vv. 28-30 the thread of the history, which was broken off at v. 12, is again resumed. בְּיוֹם דְּבַר, on the day, i.e., at the time, when God spake. יוֹם is the construct state before an entire clause, which is governed by it without a relative particle, as in Lev. 7:35, 1 Sam. 25:15 (*vid.*, *Ewald*, § 286*i*). Moses' last difficulty (Exodus 6:12, repeated in v. 30) was removed by God with the words: "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Exodus 7:1).

According to Exodus 4:16, Moses was to be a god to Aaron; and in harmony with that, Aaron is here called the prophet of Moses, as being the person who would announce to Pharaoh the revelations of Moses. At the same time Moses was also made a god to Pharaoh; i.e., he was promised divine authority and power over Pharaoh, so that henceforth there was no more necessity for him to be afraid of the king of Egypt, but the latter, notwithstanding all resistance, would eventually bow before him. Moses was a god to Aaron as the revealer of the divine will, and to Pharaoh as the executor of that will.—In vv. 2–5 God repeats in a still more emphatic form His assurance, that notwithstanding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, He would bring His people Israel out of Egypt. וְשִׁלַּח (v. 2) does not mean *ut dimittat* or *mittat* (*Vulg. Ros.*; “that he send,” Eng. ver.); but וְ is *vav consec. perf.*, “and so he will send.” On v. 3 cf. Exodus 4:21.

**Exodus 7:4.** וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־יָדִי: “I will lay My hand on Egypt,” i.e., smite Egypt, “and bring out My armies, My people, the children of Israel.”

צְבָאוֹת (armies) is used of Israel, with reference to its leaving Egypt equipped (Exodus 13:18) and organized as an army according to the tribes (cf. 6:26 and 12:51 with Num. 1 and 2), to contend for the cause of the Lord, and fight the battles of Jehovah. In this respect the Israelites were called the hosts of Jehovah. The calling of Moses and Aaron was now concluded. Vv. 6 and 7 pave the way for the account of their performance of the duties consequent upon their call.

### MOSES' NEGOTIATIONS WITH PHARAOH.—CH. 7:8–11:10

**Exodus 7:8–11:10.** The negotiations of Moses and Aaron as messengers of Jehovah with the king of Egypt, concerning the departure of Israel from his land, commenced with a sign, by

which the messengers of God attested their divine mission in the presence of Pharaoh (Exodus 7:8–13), and concluded with the announcement of the last blow that God would inflict upon the hardened king (Exodus 11:1–10). The centre of these negotiations, or rather the main point of this lengthened section, which is closely connected throughout, and formally rounded off by Exodus 11:9, 10 into an inward unity, is found in the *nine* plagues which the messengers of Jehovah brought upon Pharaoh and his kingdom at the command of Jehovah, to bend the defiant spirit of the king, and induce him to let Israel go out of the land and serve their God. If we carefully examine the account of these nine penal miracles, we shall find that they are arranged in three groups of three plagues each. For the first and second, the fourth and fifth, and the seventh and eighth were announced beforehand by Moses to the king (Exodus 7:15; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:1), whilst the third, sixth, and ninth were sent without any such announcement (Exodus 8:16; 9:8; 10:21). Again, the first, fourth, and seventh were announced to Pharaoh in the morning, and the first and fourth by the side of the Nile (Exodus 7:15; 8:20), both of them being connected with the overflowing of the river; whilst the place of announcement is not mentioned in the case of the seventh (the hail, Exodus 9:13), because hail, as coming from heaven, was not connected with any particular locality. This grouping is not a merely external arrangement, adopted by the writer for the sake of greater distinctness, but is founded in the facts themselves, and the effect which God intended the plagues to produce, as we may gather from these circumstances—that the Egyptian magicians, who had imitated the first plagues, were put to shame with their arts by the third, and were compelled to see in it the finger of God (Exodus 8:19),—that they were smitten themselves by the sixth, and were unable to stand before Moses (Exodus 9:11),—and that after the ninth, Pharaoh broke off all further negotiation with Moses and Aaron (Exodus 10:28, 29). The last plague, commonly known as the tenth, which Moses also

announced to the king before his departure (Exodus 11:4ff.), differed from the nine former ones both in purpose and form. It was the first beginning of the judgment that was coming upon the hardened king, and was inflicted directly by God Himself, for Jehovah "went out through the midst of Egypt, and smote the first-born of the Egyptians both of man and beast" (Exodus 11:4; 12:29); whereas seven of the previous plagues were brought by Moses and Aaron, and of the two that are not expressly said to have been brought by them, one, that of the dog-flies, was simply sent by Jehovah (Exodus 8:21, 24), and the other, the murrain of beasts, simply came from His hand (Exodus 9:3,

6). The last blow (וַיִּבֶן 11:1), which brought about the release of Israel, was also distinguished from the nine plagues, as the direct judgment of God, by the fact that it was not effected through the medium of any natural occurrence, as was the case with all the others, which were based upon the natural phenomena of Egypt, and became signs and wonders through their vast excess above the natural measure of such natural occurrences and their supernatural accumulation, blow after blow following one another in less than a year, and also through the peculiar circumstances under which they were brought about. In this respect also the triple division is unmistakable. The first three plagues covered the whole land, and fell upon the Israelites as well as the Egyptians; with the fourth the separation commenced between Egyptians and Israelites, so that only the Egyptians suffered from the last six, the Israelites in Goshen being entirely exempted. The last three, again, were distinguished from the others by the fact, that they were far more dreadful than any of the previous ones, and bore visible marks of being the forerunners of the judgment which would inevitably fall upon Pharaoh, if he continued his opposition to the will of the Almighty God.

In this graduated series of plagues, the judgment of hardening was inflicted upon Pharaoh in the manner explained above. In the first three plagues God showed him, that He, the

God of Israel, was Jehovah (Exodus 7:17), i.e., that He ruled as Lord and King over the occurrences and powers of nature, which the Egyptians for the most part honoured as divine; and before His power the magicians of Egypt with their secret arts were put to shame. These three wonders made no impression upon the king. The plague of frogs, indeed, became so troublesome to him, that he begged Moses and Aaron to intercede with their God to deliver him from them, and promised to let the people go (Exodus 8:8). But as soon as they were taken away, he hardened his heart, and would not listen to the messengers of God. Of the three following plagues, the first (i.e., the fourth in the entire series), viz., the plague of swarming creatures or dog-flies, with which the distinction between the Egyptians and Israelites commenced, proving to Pharaoh that the God of Israel was Jehovah in the midst of the land (Exodus 8:22), made such an impression upon the hardened king, that he promised to allow the Israelites to sacrifice to their God, first of all in the land, and when Moses refused this condition, even outside the land, if they would not go far away, and Moses and Aaron would pray to God for him, that this plague might be taken away by God from him and from his people (Exodus 8:25ff.). But this concession was only forced out of him by suffering; so that as soon as the plague ceased he withdrew it again, and his hard heart was not changed by the two following plagues. Hence still heavier plagues were sent, and he had to learn from the last three that there was no god in the whole earth like Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews (Exodus 9:14). The terrible character of these last plagues so affected the proud heart of Pharaoh, that twice he acknowledged he had sinned (Exodus 9:27; 10:16), and gave a promise that he would let the Israelites go, restricting his promise first of all to the men, and then including their families also (Exodus 10:11, 24). But when this plague was withdrawn, he resumed his old sinful defiance once more (Exodus 9:34, 35; 10:20), and finally was altogether hardened, and so enraged at Moses persisting in his demand that

they should take their flocks as well, that he drove away the messengers of Jehovah and broke off all further negotiations, with the threat that he would kill them if ever they came into his presence again (Exodus 10:28, 29).

**Exodus 7:8–13.** Attestation of the Divine Mission of Moses and Aaron.—By Jehovah's directions Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh,

and proved by a miracle (מוֹפֶת Exodus 4:21)

that they were the messengers of the God of the Hebrews. Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh, and it became a serpent. Aaron's staff as no other than the wondrous staff of Moses (Exodus 4:2–4). This is perfectly obvious from a comparison of vv. 15 and 17 with vv. 19 and 20. If Moses was directed, according to vv. 15ff., to go before Pharaoh with his rod which had been turned into a serpent, and to announce to him that he would smite the water of the Nile with the staff in his hand and turn it into blood, and then, according to vv. 19ff., this miracle was carried out by Aaron taking his staff and stretching out his hand over the waters of Egypt, the staff which Aaron held over the water cannot have been any other than the staff of Moses which had been turned into a serpent. Consequently we must also understand by the staff of Aaron, which was thrown down before Pharaoh and became a serpent, the same wondrous staff of Moses, and attribute the expression "thy (i.e., Aaron's) staff" to the brevity of the account, i.e., to the fact that the writer restricted himself to the leading facts, and passed over such subordinate incidents as that Moses gave his staff to Aaron for him to work the miracle. For the same reason he has not even mentioned that Moses spoke to Pharaoh by Aaron, or what he said, although in v. 13 he states that Pharaoh did not hearken unto them, i.e., to their message or their words. The serpent, into which the staff was changed, is not called נָחָשׁ here, as in v. 15 and Exodus

4:3, but תַּנִּינִי (LXX δράκων, dragon), a general term for snake-like animals. This difference does not show that there were two distinct

records, but may be explained on the ground that the miracle performed before Pharaoh had a different signification from that which attested the divine mission of Moses in the presence of his people. The miraculous sign mentioned here is distinctly related to the art of snake-charming, which was carried to such an extent by the Psylli in ancient Egypt (cf. *Bochart*, and *Hengstenberg*, *Egypt and Moses*, pp. 98ff. transl.). It is probable that the

Israelites in Egypt gave the name תַּנִּינִי (Eng. ver. *dragon*), which occurs in Deut. 32:33 and

Ps. 91:13 as a parallel to פִּתְיוֹן (Eng. ver. *asp*), to the snake with which the Egyptian charmers generally performed their tricks, the *Hayeh* of the Arabs. What the magi and conjurers of Egypt boasted that they could perform by their secret or magical arts, Moses was to effect in reality in Pharaoh's presence, and thus manifest himself to the king as *Elohim* (v. 1), i.e., as endowed with divine authority and power. All that is related of the Psylli of modern times is, that they understand the art of turning snakes into sticks, or of compelling them to become rigid and apparently dead (for examples see *Hengstenberg*); but who can tell what the ancient Psylli may have been able to effect, or may have pretended to effect, at a time when the demoniacal power of heathenism existed in its unbroken force? The magicians summoned by Pharaoh also turned their sticks into snakes (v. 12); a fact which naturally excites the suspicion that the sticks themselves were only rigid snakes, though, with our very limited acquaintance with the dark domain of heathen conjuring, the possibility of their working "lying wonders after the working of Satan," i.e., supernatural things (2 Thess. 2:9), cannot be absolutely denied. The words, "They also, the *chartummim* of Egypt, did in like manner with their enchantments," are undoubtedly based upon the assumption, that the conjurers of Egypt not only pretended to possess the art of turning snakes into sticks, but of turning sticks into snakes as well, so that in the persons of the conjurers Pharaoh summoned the might of the

gods of Egypt to oppose the might of Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews. For these magicians, whom the Apostle Paul calls *Jannes* and *Jambres*, according to the Jewish tradition (2 Tim. 3:8), were not common jugglers, but חֲכָמִים “wise men,” men educated in human and divine wisdom, and חֲרָטְמִים, ἱερογραμματεῖς, belonging to the priestly caste (Gen. 41:8); so that the power of their gods was manifested in their secret arts (לְהַטְיִם) from לְהַטְיִם to conceal, to act secretly, like לְהַטְיִם in v. 22 from לוֹט), and in the defeat of their enchantments by Moses the gods of Egypt were overcome by Jehovah (Exodus 12:12). The supremacy of Jehovah over the demoniacal powers of Egypt manifested itself in the very first miraculous sign, in the fact that Aaron’s staff swallowed those of the magicians; though this miracle made no impression upon Pharaoh (v. 13).

### THE FIRST THREE PLAGUES.—CH. 7:14–8:15 (19)

**Exodus 7:14–8:15 (19).** When Pharaoh hardened his heart against the first sign, notwithstanding the fact that it displayed the supremacy of the messengers of Jehovah over the might of the Egyptian conjurers and their gods, and refused to let the people of Israel go; Moses and Aaron were empowered by God to force the release of Israel from the obdurate king by a series of penal miracles. These מִפְתִּים were not purely supernatural wonders, or altogether unknown to the Egyptians, but were land-plagues with which Egypt was occasionally visited, and were raised into miraculous deeds of the Almighty God, by the fact that they burst upon the land one after another at an unusual time of the year, in unwonted force, and in close succession. These plagues were selected by God as miraculous

signs, because He intended to prove thereby to the king and his servants, that He, Jehovah, was the Lord in the land, and ruled over the powers of nature with unrestricted freedom and omnipotence. For this reason God not only caused them to burst suddenly upon the land according to His word, and then as suddenly to disappear according to His omnipotent will, but caused them to be produced by Moses and Aaron and disappear again at their word and prayer, that Pharaoh might learn that these men were appointed by Him as His messengers, and were endowed by Him with divine power for the accomplishment of His will.

**Exodus 7:14–25.** The Water of the Nile Turned into Blood.—In the morning, when Pharaoh went to the Nile, Moses took his staff at the command of God; went up to him on the bank of the river, with the demand of Jehovah that he would let His people Israel go; and because hitherto (עַד־כֹּה) he had not obeyed, announced this *first* plague, which Aaron immediately brought to pass. Both time and place are of significance here. Pharaoh went out in the morning to the Nile (v. 15, Exodus 8:20), not merely to take a refreshing walk, or to bathe in the river, or to see how high the water had risen, but without doubt to present his daily worship to the Nile, which was honoured by the Egyptians as their supreme deity (vid., Exodus 2:5). At this very moment the will of God with regard to Israel was declared to him; and for his refusal to comply with the will of the Lord as thus revealed to him, the smiting of the Nile with the staff made known to him the fact, that the God of the Hebrews was the true God, and possessed the power to turn the fertilizing water of this object of their highest worship into blood. The changing of the water into blood is to be interpreted in the same sense as in Joel 3:4, where the moon is said to be turned into blood; that is to say, not as a chemical change into real blood, but as a change in the colour, which caused it to assume the appearance of blood (2 Kings 3:22). According to the statements of many travellers, the Nile water changes its colour when the water is

lowest, assumes first of all a greenish hue and is almost undrinkable, and then, while it is rising, becomes as red as ochre, when it is more wholesome again. The causes of this change have not been sufficiently investigated. The reddening of the water is attributed by many to the red earth, which the river brings down from Sennaar (cf. *Hengstenberg*, *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, pp. 104ff. transl.; *Laborde, comment.* p. 28); but *Ehrenberg* came to the conclusion, after microscopical examinations, that it was caused by cryptogamic plants and infusoria. This natural phenomenon was here intensified into a miracle, not only by the fact that the change took place immediately in all the branches of the river at Moses' word and through the smiting of the Nile, but even more by a chemical change in the water, which caused the fishes to die, the stream to stink, and, what seems to indicate putrefaction, the water to become undrinkable; whereas, according to the accounts of travellers, which certainly do not quite agree with one another, and are not entirely trustworthy, the Nile water becomes more drinkable as soon as the natural reddening beings. The change in the water extended to "the streams," or different arms of the Nile; "the rivers," or Nile canals; "the ponds," or large standing lakes formed by the Nile; and all "the pools of water," lit., every collection of their waters, i.e., all the other standing lakes and ponds, left by the overflowings of the Nile, with the water of which those who lived at a distance from the river had to content themselves. "So that there was blood in all the land of Egypt, both in the wood and in the stone;" i.e., in the vessels of wood and stone, in which the water taken from the Nile and its branches was kept for daily use. The reference is not merely to the earthen vessels used for filtering and cleansing the water, but to every vessel into which water had been put. The "stone" vessels were the stone reservoirs built up at the corners of the streets and in other places, where fresh water was kept for the poor (cf. *Oedmann's verm. Samml.* p. 133). The meaning of this supplementary clause is not that even the water which was in these vessels previous

to the smiting of the river was turned into blood, in which *Kurtz* perceives "the most miraculous part of the whole miracle;" for in that case the "wood and stone" would have been mentioned immediately after the "gatherings of the waters;" but simply that there was no more water to put into these vessels that was not changed into blood. The death of the fishes was a sign, that the smiting had taken away from the river its life-sustaining power, and that its red hue was intended to depict before the eyes of the Egyptians all the terrors of death; but we are not to suppose that there was any reference to the innocent blood which the Egyptians had poured into the river through the drowning of the Hebrew boys, or to their own guilty blood which was afterwards to be shed.

**Exodus 7:22.** This miracle was also imitated by the magicians. The question, where they got any water that was still unchanged, is not answered in the biblical text. *Kurtz* is of opinion that they took spring water for the purpose; but he has overlooked the fact, that if spring water was still to be had, there would be no necessity for the Egyptians to dig wells for the purpose of finding drinkable water. The supposition that the magicians did not try their arts till the miracle wrought by Aaron had passed away, is hardly reconcilable with the text, which places the return of Pharaoh to his house after the work of the magicians. For it can neither be assumed, that the miracle wrought by the messengers of Jehovah lasted only a few hours, so that Pharaoh was able to wait by the Nile till it was over, since in that case the Egyptians would not have thought it necessary to dig wells; nor can it be regarded as probable, that after the miracle was over, and the plague had ceased, the magicians began to imitate it for the purpose of showing the king that they could do the same, and that it was after this that the king went to his house without paying any need to the miracle. We must therefore follow the analogy of Exodus 9:25 as compared with Exodus 10:5, and not press the expression, "every collection of water" (v. 19), so as to infer that there was no Nile water at all, not even

what had been taken away before the smiting of the river, that was not changed, but rather conclude that the magicians tried their arts upon water that was already drawn, for the purpose of neutralizing the effect of the plague as soon as it had been produced. The fact that the clause, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened," is linked with the previous clause, "the magicians did so, etc.," by a *vav consecutive*, unquestionably implies that the imitation of the miracle by the magicians contributed to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. The expression, "to this also," in v. 23, points back to the first miraculous sign in vv. 10ff. This plague was keenly felt by the Egyptians; for the Nile contains the only good drinking water, and its excellence is unanimously attested by both ancient and modern writers (*Hengstenberg ut sup.* pp. 108, 109, transl.). As they could not drink of the water of the river from their loathing at its stench (v. 18), they were obliged to dig round about the river for water to drink (v. 24). From this it is evident that the plague lasted a considerable time; according to v. 25, apparently seven days. At least this is the most natural interpretation of the words, "and seven days were fulfilled after that Jehovah had smitten the river." It is true, there is still the possibility that this verse may be connected with the following one, "when seven days were fulfilled ... Jehovah said to Moses." But this is not probable; for the time which intervened between the plagues is not stated anywhere else, nor is the expression, "Jehovah said," with which the plagues are introduced, connected in any other instance with what precedes. The narrative leaves it quite undecided how rapidly the plagues succeeded one another. On the supposition that the changing of the Nile water took place at the time when the river began to rise, and when the reddening generally occurs, many expositors fix upon the month of June or July for the commencement of the plague; in which case all the plagues down to the death of the first-born, which occurred in the night of the 14th Abib, i.e., about the middle of April, would be confined to the space of about nine months. But this conjecture is a very uncertain

one, and all that is tolerably sure is, that the seventh plague (the hail) occurred in February (vid., Exodus 9:31, 32), and there were (not three weeks, but) eight weeks therefore, or about two months, between the seventh and tenth plagues; so that between each of the last three there would be an interval of fourteen or twenty days. And if we suppose that there was a similar interval in the case of all the others, the first plague would take place in September or October,—that is to say, after the yearly overflow of the Nile, which lasts from June to September.

### Exodus 8

**Exodus 8:1–15.** The plague of Frogs, or the *second* plague, also proceeded from the Nile, and had its natural origin in the putridity of the slimy Nile water, whereby the marsh waters especially became filled with thousands of

frogs. צְפַרְדֵּי is the small Nile frog, the *Dofda* of the Egyptians, called *rana Mosaica* or *Nilotica* by *Seetzen*, which appears in large numbers as soon as the waters recede. These frogs

(הַצְפַרְדֵּי) in Exodus 8:6, used collectively)

became a penal miracle from the fact that they came out of the water in unparalleled numbers, in consequence of the stretching out of Aaron's staff over the waters of the Nile, as had been foretold to the king, and that they not only penetrated into the houses and inner rooms ("bed-chamber"), and crept into the domestic utensils, the beds (מִטָּה), the ovens, and the kneading-troughs (not the "dough" as *Luther* renders it), but even got upon the men themselves.

**Exodus 8:7.** This miracle was also imitated by the Egyptian augurs with their secret arts, and frogs were brought upon the land by them. But if they were able to bring the plague, they could not take it away. The latter is not expressly stated, it is true; but it is evident from the fact that Pharaoh was obliged to send for Moses and Aaron to intercede with Jehovah to take them away. The king would never have applied to

Moses and Aaron for help if his charmers could have charmed the plague away. Moreover the fact that Pharaoh entreated them to intercede with Jehovah to take away the frogs, and promised to let the people go, that they might sacrifice to Jehovah (v. 8), was a sign that he regarded the God of Israel as the author of the plague. To strengthen the impression made upon the king by this plague with reference to the might of Jehovah, Moses said to him (v. 9), "Glorify thyself over me, when I shall entreat for thee," i.e., take the glory upon thyself of determining the time when I shall remove the plague through my intercession. The expression is elliptical, and לֵאמֹר (saying) is to be supplied, as in Judg. 7:2. To give Jehovah the glory, Moses placed himself below Pharaoh, and left him to fix the time for the frogs to be removed through his intercession.

**Exodus 8:10.** The king appointed the following day, probably because he hardly thought it possible for so great a work to be performed at once. Moses promised that it should be so: "According to thy word (sc., let it be), that thou mayest know that there is not (a God) like Jehovah our God." He then went out and cried, i.e., called aloud and earnestly, to Jehovah

concerning the matter (עַל דְּבַר) of the frogs, which he had set, i.e., prepared, for Pharaoh (שׁוּם as in Gen. 45:7). In consequence of his intercession God took the plague away. The frogs died off (מִן מוֹת, to die away out of, from), out of the houses, and palaces, and fields, and were gathered together by bushels

(חֲמֵרִים from חֶמֶר, the omer, the largest measure used by the Hebrews), so that the land stank with the odour of their putrefaction. Though Jehovah had thus manifested Himself as the Almighty God and Lord of the creation, Pharaoh did not keep his promise; but when he saw that there was breathing-time (רְוַחָה, ἀνάψυξις, relief from an overpowering

pressure), literally, as soon as he "got air," he hardened his heart, so that he did not hearken to Moses and Aaron (וְהִקְבֵּד inf. abs. as in Gen. 41:43).

**Exodus 8:16–19.** The Gnats, or the *third*

plague.—The כְּנָם, or כְּנִים (also כְּנָם, probably an old singular form, *Ewald*, § 163f), were not "lice," but σκνῖφες, *sciniphes*, a species of gnats, so small as to be hardly visible to the eye, but with a sting which, according to *Philo* and *Origen*, causes a most painful irritation of the skin. They even creep into the eyes and nose, and after the harvest they rise in great swarms from the inundated rice-fields. This plague was caused by the fact that Aaron smote the dust of the ground with his staff, and all the dust throughout the land of Egypt turned into gnats, which were upon man and beast (v. 17). "Just as the fertilizing water of Egypt had twice become a plague, so through the power of Jehovah the soil so richly blessed became a plague to the king and his people."

**Exodus 8:18.** "The magicians did so with their enchantments (i.e., smote the dust with rods), to bring forth gnats, but could not." The cause of this inability is hardly to be sought for, as *Knobel* supposes, in the fact that "the thing to be done in this instance, was to call creatures into existence, and not merely to call forth and change creatures and things in existence already, as in the case of the staff, the water, and the frogs." For after this, they could neither call out the dog-flies, nor protect their own bodies from the boils; to say nothing of the fact, that as gnats proceed from the eggs laid in the dust or earth by the previous generation, their production is not to be regarded as a direct act of creation any more than that of the frogs. The miracle in both plagues was just the same, and consisted not in a direct creation, but simply in a sudden creative generation and supernatural multiplication, not of the gnats only, but also of the frogs, in accordance with a previous prediction. The reason why the arts of the Egyptians magicians were put to shame in this case, we have to seek in the omnipotence of

God, restraining the demoniacal powers which the magicians had made subservient to their purposes before, in order that their inability to bring out these, the smallest of all creatures, which seemed to arise as it were from the dust itself, might display in the sight of every one the impotence of their secret arts by the side of the almighty creative power of the true God. This omnipotence the magicians were compelled to admit: they were compelled to acknowledge, "This is the finger of God." "But they did not make this acknowledgment for the purpose of giving glory to God Himself, but simply to protect their own honour, that Moses and Aaron might not be thought to be superior to them in virtue or knowledge. It was equivalent to saying, it is not by Moses and Aaron that we are restrained, but by a *divine power, which is greater than either*" (Bochart). The word *Elohim* is decisive in support of this view. If they had meant to refer to the God of Israel, they would have used the name *Jehovah*. The "finger of God" denotes creative omnipotence (Ps. 8:3; Luke 11:20, cf. Exodus 31:18). Consequently this miracle also made no impression upon Pharaoh.

### THE THREE FOLLOWING PLAGUES.—CH. 8:20–9:12

**Exodus 8:20–9:12.** As the Egyptian magicians saw nothing more than the finger of God in the miracle which they could not imitate, that is to say, the work of some deity, possibly one of the gods of the Egyptians, and not the hand of Jehovah the God of the Hebrews, who had demanded the release of Israel, a distinction was made in the plagues which followed between the Israelites and the Egyptians, and the former were exempted from the plagues: a fact which was sufficient to prove to any one that they came from the God of Israel. To make this the more obvious, the fourth and fifth plagues were merely announced by Moses to the king. They were not brought on through the mediation of either himself or Aaron, but were sent by Jehovah at the appointed time; no doubt

for the simple purpose of precluding the king and his wise men from the excuse which unbelief might still suggest, viz., that they were produced by the powerful incantations of Moses and Aaron.

**Exodus 8:20–32.** The *fourth* plague, the coming of which Moses foretold to Pharaoh, like the first, in the morning, and by the water (on the bank of the Nile), consisted in the sending of

"heavy vermin," probably Dog-Flies. עֲרָב,

literally a mixture, is rendered κυνόμυια (dog-fly) by the LXX, πάμμυια (all-fly), a mixture of all kinds of flies, by *Symmachus*. These insects are described by *Philo* and many travellers as a very severe scourge (vid., *Hengstenberg ut sup.* p. 113). They are much more numerous and annoying than the gnats; and when enraged, they fasten themselves upon the human body, especially upon the edges of the eyelids, and

become a dreadful plague. כִּבְדָּה: a heavy

multitude, as in Exodus 10:14, Gen. 50:9, etc. These swarms were to fill "the houses of the Egyptians, and even the land upon which they (the Egyptians) were," i.e., that part of the land which was not occupied by houses; whilst the land of Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt,

would be entirely spared. הִפְלִיחַ (to separate, to distinguish in a miraculous way) is conjugated with an accusative, as in Ps. 4:4. It is generally followed by בֵּין (Exodus 4:4; 11:7), to

distinguish between. עָמַד: to stand upon a land, i.e., to inhabit, possess it; not to exist, or live (Exodus 21:21).

**Exodus 8:23.** "And I will put a deliverance

between My people and thy people." פְּדוּתָהּ does not mean διαστολή, *divisio* (LXX, *Vulg.*), but redemption, deliverance. Exemption from this plague was essentially a deliverance for Israel, which manifested the distinction conferred upon Israel above the Egyptians. By this plague, in which a separation and deliverance was established between the people of God and the

Egyptians, Pharaoh was to be taught that the God who sent this plague was not some deity of Egypt, but “Jehovah in the midst of the land” (of Egypt); i.e., as *Knobel* correctly interprets it, (a) that Israel’s God was the author of the plague; (b) that He had also authority over Egypt; and (c) that He possessed supreme authority: or, to express it still more concisely, that Israel’s God was the Absolute God, who ruled both in and over Egypt with free and boundless omnipotence.

**Exodus 8:24ff.** This plague, by which the land was destroyed (תִּשְׁחֵת), or desolated, inasmuch as the flies not only tortured, “devoured” (Ps. 78:45) the men, and disfigured them by the swellings produced by their sting, but also killed the plants in which they deposited their eggs, so alarmed Pharaoh that he sent for Moses and Aaron, and gave them permission to sacrifice to their God “in the land.” But Moses could not consent to this restriction. “It is not appointed so to do” (נִכּוֹן does not mean *aptum, conveniens*, but *statutum, rectum*), for two reasons: (1) because sacrificing in the land would be an abomination to the Egyptians, and would provoke them most bitterly (v. 26); and (2) because they could only sacrifice to Jehovah their God as He had directed them (v. 27). The abomination referred to did not consist in their sacrificing animals which the Egyptians regarded as holy.

For the word תועבה (*abomination*) would not be applicable to the sacred animals. Moreover, the cow was the only animal offered in sacrifice by the Israelites, which the Egyptians regarded as sacred. The abomination would rather be this, that the Israelites would not carry out the rigid regulations observed by the Egyptians with regard to the cleanness of the sacrificial animals (vid., *Hengstenberg*, p. 114), and in fact would not observe the sacrificial rites of the Egyptians at all. The Egyptians would be very likely to look upon this as an insult to their religion and their gods; “the violation of the recognised mode of sacrificing would be

regarded as a manifestation of contempt for themselves and their gods” (*Calvin*), and this would so enrage them that they would stone

the Israelites. The הֵן before נִזְבַּח in v. 26 is the interjection *lo!* but it stands before a conditional clause, introduced without a conditional particle, in the sense of *if*, which it has retained in the Chaldee, and in which it is used here and there in the Hebrew (e.g., Lev. 25:20).

**Exodus 8:28–32.** These reasons commended themselves to the heathen king from his own religious standpoint. He promised, therefore, to let the people go into the wilderness and sacrifice, provided they did not go far away, if Moses and Aaron would release him and his people from this plague through their intercession. Moses promised that the swarms should be removed the following day, but told the king not to deceive them again as he had done before (v. 8). But Pharaoh hardened his heart as soon as the plague was taken away, just as he had done after the second plague (v. 15), to which the word “also” refers (v. 32).

## Exodus 9

**Exodus 9:1–7.** The *fifth* plague consisted of a severe Murrain, which carried off the cattle (מִקְנֵה, the living property) of the Egyptians, that were in the field. To show how Pharaoh was accumulating guilt by his obstinate resistance, in the announcement of this plague the expression, “If thou refuse to let them go” (cf. 8:2), is followed by the words, “and wilt hold them (the Israelites) still” (עוֹד still further, even after Jehovah has so emphatically declared His will).

**Exodus 9:3.** “The hand of Jehovah will be (הוֹיָה, which only occurs here, as the participle of הָיָה, generally takes its form from הוֹיָה, Neh. 6:6, Eccl. 2:22) against thy cattle ... as a very severe plague (דָּבַר that which sweeps away, a

plague), i.e., will smite them with a severe plague. A distinction was again made between the Israelites and the Egyptians. "Of all (the cattle) belonging to the children of Israel, not one (כָּבֵשׂ v. 4, = אֲחֹזֶד v. 6) shall die." A definite time was also fixed for the coming of the plague, as in the case of the previous one (Exodus 8:23), in order that, whereas murrains occasionally occur in Egypt, Pharaoh might discern in his one the judgment of Jehovah.

**Exodus 9:6.** In the words "all the cattle of the Egyptians died," all is not to be taken in an absolute sense, but according to popular usage, as denoting such a quantity, that what remained was nothing in comparison; and, according to v. 3, it must be entirely restricted to the cattle in the field. For, according to vv. 9 and 19, much of the cattle of the Egyptians still remained even after this murrain, though it extended to all kinds of cattle, horses, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep, and differed in this respect from natural murrains.

**Exodus 9:7.** But Pharaoh's heart still continued hardened, though he convinced himself by direct inquiry that the cattle of the Israelites had been spared.

**Exodus 9:8-12.** The sixth plague smote man and beast with Boils Breaking Forth in

Blisters.—שָׁחִין (a common disease in Egypt,

Deut. 28:27) from the unusual word שָׁחַן (*incaluit*) signifies inflammation, then an abscess or boil (Lev. 13:18ff.; 2 Kings 20:7).

אֲבַעְבֵּת, from בּוֹעַ, to spring up, swell up, signifies blisters, φλυκτίδες (LXX), *pustulae*. The natural substratum of this plague is discovered by most commentators in the so-called Nile-blisters, which come out in innumerable little pimples upon the scarlet-coloured skin, and change in a short space of time into small, round, and thickly-crowded blisters. This is called by the Egyptians *Hamm el Nil*, or the heat of the inundation. According to Dr. *Bilharz*, it is a rash, which occurs in summer, chiefly

towards the close at the time of the overflowing of the Nile, and produces a burning and pricking sensation upon the skin; or, in *Seetzen's* words, "it consists of small, red, and slightly rounded elevations in the skin, which give strong twitches and slight stinging sensations, resembling those of scarlet fever" (p. 209). The cause of this eruption, which occurs only in men and not in animals, has not been determined; some attributing it to the water, and others to the heat. *Leyrer*, in *Herzog's Cyclopaedia*, speaks of the "Anthrax which stood in a causal relation to the fifth plague; a black, burning abscess, which frequently occurs after a murrain, especially the cattle distemper, and which might be called to mind by the name ἄνθραξ, coal, and the symbolical sprinkling of the soot of the furnace." In any case, the manner in which this plague was produced was significant, though it cannot be explained with positive certainty, especially as we are unable to decide exactly what was the natural disease which lay at the foundation of the plague. At the command of God, Moses and Aaron took "handfuls of soot, and sprinkled it towards the heaven, so that it became dust over all the land of Egypt," i.e., flew like dust over the land, and became boils on

man and beast. פִּיחַ הַכִּבְשֵׁן: soot or ashes of

the smelting-furnace or lime-kiln. כִּבְשֵׁן is not an oven or cooking stove, but, as *Kimchi* supposes, a smelting-furnace or lime-kiln; not so called, however, a *metallis domandis*, but

from כָּבַשׁ in its primary signification to press together, hence (a) to soften, or melt, (b) to tread down. *Burder's* view seems inadmissible; namely, that this symbolical act of Moses had some relation to the expiatory rites of the ancient Egyptians, in which the ashes of sacrifices, particularly human sacrifices, were scattered about. For it rests upon the supposition that Moses took the ashes from a fire appropriated to the burning of sacrifices—a supposition to which neither כִּבְשֵׁן nor פִּיחַ is

appropriate. For the former does not signify a fire-place, still less one set apart for the burning of sacrifices, and the ashes taken from the sacrifices for purifying purposes were called **אֵפֶר**, and not **פִּיחַ** (Num. 19:10). Moreover, such an interpretation as this, namely, that the ashes set apart for purifying purposes produced impurity in the hands of Moses, as a symbolical representation of the thought, that “the religious purification promised in the sacrificial worship of Egypt was really a defilement,” does not answer at all to the effect produced. The ashes scattered in the air by Moses did not produce defilement, but boils or blisters; and we have no ground for supposing that they were regarded by the Egyptians as a religious defilement. And, lastly, there was not one of the plagues in which the object was to pronounce condemnation upon the Egyptian worship or sacrifices; since Pharaoh did not wish to force the Egyptian idolatry upon the Israelites, but simply to prevent them from leaving the country.

The ashes or soot of the smelting-furnace or lime-kiln bore, no doubt, the same relation to the plague arising therefrom, as the water of the Nile and the dust of the ground to the three plagues which proceeded from them. As Pharaoh and his people owed their prosperity, wealth, and abundance of earthly goods to the fertilizing waters of the Nile and the fruitful soil, so it was from the lime-kilns, so to speak, that those splendid cities and pyramids proceeded, by which the early Pharaohs endeavoured to immortalize the power and glory of their reigns. And whilst in the first three plagues the natural sources of the land were changed by Jehovah, through His servants Moses and Aaron, into sources of evil, the sixth plague proved to the proud king that Jehovah also possessed the power to bring ruin upon him from the workshops of those splendid edifices, for the erection of which he had made use of the strength of the Israelites, and oppressed them so grievously with burdensome toil as to cause Egypt to become like a furnace for smelting iron (Deut. 4:20),

and that He could make the soot or ashes of the lime-kiln, the residuum of that fiery heat and emblem of the furnace in which Israel groaned, into a seed which, when carried through the air at His command, would produce burning boils on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt. These boils were the first plague which attacked and endangered the lives of men; and in this respect it was the first foreboding of the death which Pharaoh would bring upon himself by his continued resistance. The priests were so far from being able to shelter the king from this plague by their secret arts, that they were attacked by them themselves, were unable to stand before Moses, and were obliged to give up all further resistance. But Pharaoh did not take this plague to heart, and was given up to the divine sentence of hardening.

### THE LAST THREE PLAGUES.—CH. 9:13–11:10

**Exodus 9:13–16.** As the plagues had thus far entirely failed to bend the unyielding heart of Pharaoh under the will of the Almighty God, the terrors of that judgment, which would infallibly come upon him, were set before him in three more plagues, which were far more terrible than any that had preceded them. That these were to be preparatory to the last decisive blow, is proved by the great solemnity with which they were announced to the hardened king (vv. 13–16). This time Jehovah was about to “*send all His strokes at the heart of Pharaoh, and against his servants and his people*” (v. 14).

**אֶל-לְבָבִי** does not signify “against thy person,”

for **לְבָבִי** is not used for **נַפְשִׁי**, and even the latter is not a periphrasis for “person;” but the strokes were to go to the king’s heart, “It announces that they will be plagues that will not only strike the head and arms, but penetrate the very heart, and inflict a mortal wound” (*Calvin*). From the plural “*strokes*,” it is evident that this threat referred not only to the seventh plague, viz., the hail, but to all the other

plagues, through which Jehovah was about to make known to the king that “there was none like Him in all the earth;” i.e., that not one of the gods whom the heathen worshipped was like Him, the only true God. For, in order to show this, Jehovah had not smitten Pharaoh and his people at once with pestilence and cut them off from the earth, but had set him up to make him see, i.e., discern or feel His power, and to glorify His name in all the earth (vv. 15, 16). In v. 15 שָׁלַחְתִּי וְגוֹ' (I have stretched out, etc.) is to be taken as the conditional clause: “If I had now stretched out My hand and smitten thee ... thou wouldst have been cut off.” הִנְעַמְדְתִּיךָ

forms the antithesis to תִּבְחָד, and means to cause to stand or continue, as in 1 Kings 15:4, 2 Chron. 9:8 (διετηρήθης LXX). Causing to stand presupposes setting up. In this first sense the Apostle Paul has rendered it ἐξήγειρα in Rom. 9:17, in accordance with the purport of his argument, because “God thereby appeared still more decidedly as absolutely determining all that was done by Pharaoh” (*Philippi* on Rom. 9:17). The reason why God had not destroyed Pharaoh at once was twofold: (1) that Pharaoh himself might experience (הִרְאֵת) to cause to see, i.e., to experience) the might of Jehovah, by which he was compelled more than once to give glory to Jehovah (v. 27, Exodus 10:16, 17; 12:31); and (2) that the name of Jehovah might be declared throughout all the earth. As both the rebellion of the natural man against the word and will of God, and the hostility of the world-power to the Lord and His people, were concentrated in Pharaoh, so there were manifested in the judgments suspended over him the patience and grace of the living God, quite as much as His holiness, justice, and omnipotence, as a warning to impenitent sinners, and a support to the faith of the godly, in a manner that should be typical for all times and circumstances of the kingdom of God in conflict with the ungodly world. The report of this glorious manifestation of Jehovah spread at

once among all the surrounding nations (cf. 15:14ff.), and travelled not only to the Arabians, but to the Greeks and Romans also, and eventually with the Gospel of Christ to all the nations of the earth (vid., *Tholuck* on Rom. 9:17).

**Exodus 9:17–35.** The *seventh plague*.—To break down Pharaoh’s opposition, Jehovah determined to send such a Hail as had not been heard of since the founding of Egypt, accompanied by thunder and masses of fire, and to destroy every man and beast that should be in the field. עוֹדָךְ מִסְתּוֹלֵל: “thou still dammest thyself up against My people.”

הִסְתּוֹלֵל: to set one’s self as a dam, i.e., to oppose; from סָלַל, to heap up earth as a dam or rampart. “*To-morrow about this time,*” to give Pharaoh time for reflection. Instead of “from the day that Egypt was founded until now,” we find in v. 24 “*since it became a nation,*” since its existence as a kingdom or nation.

**Exodus 9:19.** The good advice to be given by Moses to the king, to secure the men and cattle that were in the field, i.e., to put them under shelter, which was followed by the God-fearing Egyptians (v. 21), was a sign of divine mercy, which would still rescue the hardened man and save him from destruction. Even in Pharaoh’s case the possibility still existed of submission to the will of God; the hardening was not yet complete. But as he paid no heed to the word of the Lord, the predicted judgment was fulfilled (vv. 22–26). “*Jehovah gave voices*” (קִלְוֹת);

called “voices of God” in v. 28. This term is applied to the thunder (cf. 19:16; 20:18; Ps. 29:3–9), as being the mightiest manifestation of the omnipotence of God, which speaks therein to men (Rev. 10:3, 4), and warns them of the terrors of judgment. These terrors were heightened by masses of fire, which came down from the sky along with the hail that smote man and beast in the field, destroyed the vegetables, and shattered the trees. “*And fire ran along*

upon the ground;" תְּהִלָּה is a Kal, though it sounds like Hithpael, and signifies *grassari*, as in Ps. 73:9.

**Exodus 9:24.** "Fire mingled;" lit., collected together, i.e., formed into balls (cf. Ezek. 1:4). "The lightning took the form of balls of fire, which came down like burning torches."

**Exodus 9:25.** The expressions, "every herb," and "every tree," are not to be taken absolutely, just as in v. 6, as we may see from Exodus 10:5. Storms are not common in Lower or Middle Egypt, but they occur most frequently between the months of December and April; and hail sometimes accompanies them, though not with great severity. In themselves, therefore, thunder, lightning, and hail were not unheard of. They also came at the time of year when they usually occur, namely, when the cattle were in the field, i.e., between January and April, the only period in which cattle are turned out for pasture (for proofs, see *Hengstenberg*, Egypt and the Books of Moses). The supernatural character of this plague was manifested, not only in its being predicted by Moses, and in the exemption of the land of Goshen, but more especially in the terrible fury of the hail-storm, which made a stronger impression upon Pharaoh than all the previous plagues. For he sent for Moses and Aaron, and confessed to them, "I have sinned this time: Jehovah is righteous; I and my people are the sinners" (vv. 27ff.). But the very limitation "this time" showed that his repentance did not go very deep, and that his confession was far more the effect of terror caused by the majesty of God, which was manifested in the fearful thunder and lightning, than a genuine acknowledgment of his guilt. This is apparent also from the words which follow: "Pray to Jehovah for me, and let it be enough (רַב) *satis*, as in Gen. 45:28) of the being (מְהִיֵּת) of the voices of God and of the hail;" i.e., there has been enough thunder and hail, they may cease now.

**Exodus 9:29.** Moses promised that his request should be granted, that he might know "that the land belonged to Jehovah," i.e., that Jehovah ruled as Lord over Egypt (cf. 8:18); at the same time he told him that the fear manifested by himself and his servants was no true fear of

God. "יִרְאָה מִפְּנֵי י"י" denotes the true fear of

God, which includes a voluntary subjection to the divine will. Observe the expression, *Jehovah, Elohim*: Jehovah, who is Elohim, the Being to be honoured as supreme, the true God.

**Exodus 9:31-32.** The account of the loss caused by the hail is introduced very appropriately in vv. 31 and 32, to show how much had been lost, and how much there was still to lose through continued refusal. "The flax and the barley were smitten, for the barley was

ear, and the flax was גְּבֻעַל (*blossom*); i.e., they were neither of them quite ripe, but they were already in ear and blossom, so that they were broken and destroyed by the hail. "The wheat," on the other hand, "and the spelt were not broken down, because they were tender, or late"

(אֶפְיֹלוֹת); i.e., they had no ears as yet, and therefore could not be broken by the hail. These accounts are in harmony with the natural history of Egypt. According to *Pliny*, the barley is reaped in the sixth month after the sowing-time, the wheat in the seventh. The barley is ripe about the end of February or beginning of March; the wheat, at the end of March or beginning of April. The flax is in flower at the end of January. In the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and therefore quite in the north of Egypt, the spelt is ripe at the end of April, and farther south it is probably somewhat earlier; for, according to other accounts, the wheat and spelt ripen at the same time (vid., *Hengstenberg*, p. 119). Consequently the plague of hail occurred at the end of January, or at the latest in the first half of February; so that there were at least eight weeks between the seventh and tenth plagues. The hail must have smitten the half, therefore, of the most important field-produce, viz., the barley, which was a valuable

article of food both for men, especially the poorer classes, and for cattle, and the flax, which was also a very important part of the produce of Egypt; whereas the spelt, of which the Egyptians preferred to make their bread (*Herod.* 2, 36, 77), and the wheat were still spared.

**Exodus 9:33–35.** But even this plague did not lead Pharaoh to alter his mind. As soon as it had ceased on the intercession of Moses, he and his servants continued sinning and hardening their hearts.

### Exodus 10

**Exodus 10:1–20.** The eighth plague; the Locusts.—Vv. 1–6. As Pharaoh's pride still refused to bend to the will of God, Moses was directed to announce another, and in some respects a more fearful, plague. At the same time God strengthened Moses' faith, by telling him that the hardening of Pharaoh and his servants was decreed by Him, that these signs might be done among them, and that Israel might perceive by this to all generations that He was Jehovah (cf. 7:3–5). We may learn from Ps. 78 and 105 in what manner the Israelites narrated these signs to their children and children's children. **שֵׁית אֵתָהּ**, to set or

prepare signs (v. 1), is interchanged with **שׁוּם** (v. 2) in the same sense (vid., Exodus 8:12). The suffix in **בְּקִרְבּוֹ** (v. 1) refers to Egypt as a

country; and that in **בָּם** (v. 2) to the Egyptians. In the expression, "thou mayest tell," Moses is addressed as the representative of the nation.

**הִתְעַלְלָהּ**: to have to do with a person, generally in a bad sense, to do him harm (1 Sam. 31:4). "How I have put forth My might" (*De Wette*).

**Exodus 10:3.** As Pharaoh had acknowledged, when the previous plague was sent, that Jehovah was righteous (Exodus 9:27), his crime was placed still more strongly before him: "How

*long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me?"* (**לְעֵנַתְּ** for **לְהֵעֲנֹתְּ**, as in Exodus 34:24).

**Exodus 10:4ff.** To punish this obstinate refusal, Jehovah would bring locusts in such dreadful swarms as Egypt had never known before, which would eat up all the plants left by the hail, and even fill the houses. "They will cover the eye of the earth." This expression, which is peculiar to the Pentateuch, and only occurs again in v. 15 and Num. 22:5, 11, is based upon the ancient and truly poetic idea, that the earth, with its covering of plants, looks up to man. To substitute the rendering "surface" for the "eye," "face" is better. It was in the swarms that actually hid the ground that the fearful character of the plague consisted, as the swarms of locusts consume everything green. "The residue of the escape" is still further explained as "that which remaineth unto you from the hail," viz., the spelt and wheat, and all the vegetables that were left (vv. 12 and 15). For "all the trees that sprout" (v. 5), we find in v. 15, "all the tree-fruits and everything green upon the trees."

**Exodus 10:7–11.** The announcement of such a plague of locusts, as their forefathers had never seen before since their existence upon earth, i.e., since the creation of man (v. 6), put the servants of Pharaoh in such fear, that they tried to persuade the king to let the Israelites go. "How long shall this (Moses) be a snare to us? ... Seest thou not yet, that Egypt is destroyed?"

**מוֹקֵשׁ**, a snare or trap for catching animals, is a figurative expression for destruction. **הָאֲנָשִׁים** (v. 7) does not mean the men, but the people. The servants wished all the people to be allowed to go as Moses had desired; but Pharaoh would only consent to the departure of the men (**הַגְּבָרִים**, v. 11).

**Exodus 10:8.** As Moses had left Pharaoh after announcing the plague, he was fetched back again along with Aaron, in consequence of the

appeal made to the king by his servants, and asked by the king, how many wanted to go to the feast. **מִי וְמִי**, “*who and who still further are the going ones;*” i.e., those who wish to go? Moses required the whole nation to depart, without regard to age or sex, along with all their flocks and herds. He mentioned “*young and old, sons and daughters;*” the wives as belonging to the men being included in the “*we.*” Although he assigned a reason for this demand, viz., that they were to hold a feast to Jehovah, Pharaoh was so indignant, that he answered scornfully at first: “*Be it so; Jehovah be with you when I let you and your little ones go;*” i.e., may Jehovah help you in the same way in which I let you and your little ones go. This indicated contempt not only for Moses and Aaron, but also for Jehovah, who had nevertheless proved Himself, by His manifestations of mighty power, to be a God who would not suffer Himself to be trifled with. After this utterance of his ill-will, Pharaoh told the messengers of God that he could see through their intention. “*Evil is before your face;*” i.e., you have evil in view. He called their purpose an evil one, because they wanted to withdraw the people from his service. “*Not so,*” i.e., let it not be as you desire. “*Go then, you men, and serve Jehovah.*” But even this concession was not seriously meant. This is evident from the expression, “*Go then,*” in which the irony is unmistakable; and still more so from the fact, that with these words he broke off all negotiation with Moses and Aaron, and drove them from his presence. **וַיִּגְרֹשׁ**: “*one drove them forth;*” the subject is not expressed, because it is clear enough that the royal servants who were present were the persons who drove them away. “*For this are ye seeking:*” **אֲתֵה** relates simply to the words “*serve Jehovah,*” by which the king understood the sacrificial festival, for which in his opinion only the men could be wanted; not that “*he supposed the people for whom Moses had asked permission to go, to mean only the men*”

(*Knobel*). The restriction of the permission to depart to the men alone was pure caprice; for even the Egyptians, according to Herodotus (2, 60), held religious festivals at which the women were in the habit of accompanying the men.

**Exodus 10:12–15.** After His messengers had been thus scornfully treated, Jehovah directed Moses to bring the threatened plague upon the land. “*Stretch out thy hand over the land of Egypt with locusts;*” i.e., so that the locusts may

come. **עָלָה**, to go up: the word used for a hostile invasion. The locusts are represented as an army, as in Joel 1:6. Locusts were not an unknown scourge in Egypt; and in the case before us they were brought, as usual, by the wind. The marvellous character of the phenomenon was, that when Moses stretched out his hand over Egypt with the staff, Jehovah caused an east wind to blow over the land, which blew a day and a night, and the next morning brought the locusts (“*brought:*” inasmuch as the swarms of locusts are really brought by the wind).

**Exodus 10:13.** “*An east wind:* not νότοσ (LXX), the south wind, as *Bochart* supposed. Although the swarms of locusts are generally brought into Egypt from Libya or Ethiopia, and therefore by a south or south-west wind, they are sometimes brought by the east wind from Arabia, as *Denon* and others have observed (*Hgstb.* p. 120). The fact that the wind blew a day and a night before bringing the locusts, showed that they came from a great distance, and therefore proved to the Egyptians that the omnipotence of Jehovah reached far beyond the borders of Egypt, and ruled over every land. Another miraculous feature in this plague was its unparalleled extent, viz., over the whole of the land of Egypt, whereas ordinary swarms are confined to particular districts. In this respect the judgment had no equal either before or afterwards (v. 14). The words, “*Before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such,*” must not be diluted into “*a hyperbolic and proverbial saying, implying that there was no recollection of such noxious*”

locusts," as it is by *Rosenmüller*. This passage is not at variance with Joel 2:2, for the former relates to Egypt, the latter to the land of Israel; and Joel's description unquestionably refers to the account before us, the meaning being, that quite as terrible a judgment would fall upon Judah and Israel as had formerly been inflicted upon Egypt and the obdurate Pharaoh. In its dreadful character, this Egyptian plague is a type of the plagues which will precede the last judgment, and forms the groundwork for the description in Rev. 9:3–10; just as Joel discerned in the plagues which burst upon Judah in his own day a presage of the day of the Lord (Joel 1:15; 2:1), i.e., of the great day of judgment, which is advancing step by step in all the great judgments of history or rather of the conflict between the kingdom of God and the powers of this world, and will be finally accomplished in the last general judgment.

**Exodus 10:15.** The darkening of the land, and the eating up of all the green plants by swarms of locusts, have been described by many eye-witnesses of such plagues. "*Locustarum plerumque tanta conspicitur in Africa frequentia, ut volantes instar nebulae solis radios operiant*" (*Leo Afric*). "*Solemque obumbrant*" (*Pliny, h. n. ii. 29*).

**Exodus 10:16–20.** This plague, which even *Pliny* calls *Deorum irae pestis*, so terrified Pharaoh, that he sent for Moses and Aaron in haste, confessed his sin against Jehovah and them, and entreated them but this once more to procure, through their intercession with Jehovah their God, the forgiveness of his sin and the removal of "*this death*." He called the locusts *death*, as bringing death and destruction, and ruining the country. *Mors etiam agrorum est et herbarum atque arborum*, as *Bochart* observes with references to Gen. 47:19; Job 14:8; Ps. 48:47.

**Exodus 10:18, 19.** To show the hardened king the greatness of the divine long-suffering, Moses prayed to the Lord, and the Lord cast the locusts into the Red Sea by a strong west wind. The expression "*Jehovah turned a very strong west wind*" is a concise form, for "*Jehovah*

turned the wind into a very strong west wind." The fact that locusts do perish in the sea is attested by many authorities. *Gregatim sublatae vento in maria aut stagna decidunt* (*Pliny*); many others are given by *Bochart* and *Volney*.

וַיִּתְקַעְהוּ: He thrust them, i.e., drove them with irresistible force, into the Red Sea. The Red Sea is called יַם סוּף, according to the ordinary supposition, on account of the quantity of seaweed which floats upon the water and lies upon the shore; but *Knobel* traces the name to a town which formerly stood at the head of the gulf, and derived its name from the weed, and supports his opinion by the omission of the article before *Suph*, though without being able to prove that any such town really existed in the earlier times of the Pharaohs.

**Exodus 10:21–29.** Ninth plague: The Darkness.—As Pharaoh's defiant spirit was not broken yet, a continuous darkness came over all the land of Egypt, with the exception of Goshen, without any previous announcement, and came in such force that the darkness could be felt. וַיִּמַשׁ חֹשֶׁךְ: "*and one shall feel, grasp*

*darkness*." הַמַּשׁ: as in Ps. 115:7, Judg. 16:26, ψηλαφητὸν σκότος (LXX); not "*feel in the dark*," for מַשֵּׁ has this meaning only in the Piel with

בָּ (Deut. 28:29). חֹשֶׁךְ אַפְלָה: *darkness of obscurity*, i.e., the deepest darkness. The combination of two words or synonyms gives the greatest intensity to the thought. The darkness was so great that they could not see one another, and no one rose up from his place. The Israelites alone "*had light in their dwelling-places*." The reference here is not to the houses; so that we must not infer that the Egyptians were unable to kindle any lights even in their houses. The cause of this darkness is not given in the text; but the analogy of the other plagues, which had all of them a natural basis, warrants us in assuming, as most commentators have done, that there was the same here—that it was

in fact the *Chamsin*, to which the LXX evidently allude in their rendering: σκότος καὶ γνόφος καὶ θύελλα. This wind, which generally blows in Egypt before and after the vernal equinox and lasts two or three days, usually rises very suddenly, and fills the air with such a quantity of fine dust and coarse sand, that the sun loses its brightness, the sky is covered with a dense veil, and it becomes so dark that “the obscurity caused by the thickest fog in our autumn and winter days is nothing in comparison” (*Schubert*). Both men and animals hide themselves from this storm; and the inhabitants of the towns and villages shut themselves up in the innermost rooms and cellars of their houses till it is over, for the dust penetrates even through well-closed windows. For fuller accounts taken from travels, see *Hengstenberg* (pp. 120ff.) and *Robinson’s Palestine* i. pp. 287–289. *Seetzen* attributes the rising of the dust to a quantity of electrical fluid contained in the air.—The fact that in this case the darkness alone is mentioned, may have arisen from its symbolical importance. “The darkness which covered the Egyptians, and the light which shone upon the Israelites, were types of the wrath and grace of God” (*Hengstenberg*). This occurrence, in which, according to Arabian chroniclers of the middle ages, the nations discerned a foreboding of the day of judgment or of the resurrection, filled the king with such alarm that he sent for Moses, and told him he would let the people and their children go, but the cattle must be left behind.

יָצַף: *sistatur*, let it be placed, deposited in certain places under the guard of Egyptians, as a pledge of your return. *Maneat in pignus, quod reversuri sitis*, as *Chaskuni* correctly paraphrases it. But Moses insisted upon the cattle being taken for the sake of their sacrifices and burnt-offerings. “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” This was a proverbial expression for “not the smallest fraction.” *Bochart* gives instances of a similar introduction of the “hoof” into proverbial sayings by both Arabians and Romans (*Hieroz.* i. p. 490). This firmness on the part of Moses he defended by saying, “We know

not with what we shall serve the Lord, till we come thither;” i.e., we know not yet what kind of animals or how many we shall require for the sacrifices; our God will not make this known to

us till we arrive at the place of sacrifice. עָבַד with a double accusative as in Gen. 30:29; to serve any one with a thing.

**Exodus 10:27ff.** At this demand, Pharaoh, with the hardness suspended over him by God, fell into such wrath, that he sent Moses away, and threatened him with death, if he ever appeared in his presence again. “See my face,” as in Gen. 43:3. Moses answered, “Thou hast spoken rightly.” For as God had already told him that the last blow would be followed by the immediate release of the people, there was no further necessity for him to appear before Pharaoh.

## Exodus 11

**Exodus 11.** Ch. 11. Proclamation of the Tenth Plague; or the Decisive Blow.—Vv. 1–3. The announcement made by Jehovah to Moses, which is recorded here, occurred before the last interview between Moses and Pharaoh (Exodus 10:24–29); but it is introduced by the historian in this place, as serving to explain the confidence with which Moses answered Pharaoh (Exodus 10:29). This is evident from vv. 4–8, where Moses is said to have foretold to the king, before leaving his presence, the last

plague and all its consequences. וַיֹּאמֶר

therefore, in v. 1, is to be taken in a pluperfect sense: “had said;” and may be grammatically accounted for from the old Semitic style of historical writing referred to at p. 54, as vv. 1 and 2 contain the foundation for the announcement in vv. 4–8. So far as the facts are concerned, vv. 1–3 point back to Exodus 3:19–

22. One stroke more (וַיִּגַע) would Jehovah bring upon Pharaoh and Egypt, and then the king would let the Israelites go, or rather drive them out. בְּשִׁלְחוֹ בְלָה, “when he lets you go

altogether (בְּלֵילָה) adverbial as in Gen. 18:21), *he will even drive you away.*"

**Exodus 11:2, 3.** In this way Jehovah would overcome the resistance of Pharaoh; and even more than that, for Moses was to tell the people to ask the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold, for Jehovah would make them willing to give. The renown acquired by Moses through his miracles in Egypt would also contribute to this. (For the discussion of this subject, see Exodus 3:21, 22.) The communication of these instructions to the people is not expressly mentioned; but it is referred to in Exodus 12:35, 36, as having taken place.

**Exodus 11:4–8.** Moses' address to Pharaoh forms the continuation of his brief answer in Exodus 10:29. At midnight Jehovah would go out through the midst of Egypt. This midnight could not be "the one following the day on which Moses was summoned to Pharaoh after the darkness," as *Baumgarten* supposes; for it was not till after this conversation with the king that Moses received the divine directions as to the Passover, and they must have been communicated to the people at least four days before the feast of the Passover and their departure from Egypt (Exodus 12:3). What midnight is meant, cannot be determined. So much is certain, however, that the last decisive blow did not take place in the night following the cessation of the ninth plague; but the institution of the Passover, the directions of Moses to the people respecting the things which they were to ask for from the Egyptians, and the preparations for the feast of the Passover and the exodus, all came between. The "going out" of Jehovah from His heavenly seat denotes His direct interposition in, and judicial action upon, the world of men. The last blow upon Pharaoh was to be carried out by Jehovah Himself, whereas the other plagues had been

brought by Moses and Aaron. בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם

"in (through) the midst of Egypt:" the judgment of God would pass from the centre of the kingdom, the king's throne, over the whole land. "Every first-born shall die, from the first-

born of Pharaoh, that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid that is behind the mill," i.e., the meanest slave (cf. Exodus 12:29, where the captive in the dungeon is substituted for the maid, prisoners being often employed in this hard labour, Judg. 16:21; Isa. 47:2), "and all the first-born of cattle." This stroke was to fall upon both man and beast as a punishment for Pharaoh's conduct in detaining the Israelites and their cattle; but only upon the first-born, for God did not wish to destroy the Egyptians and their cattle altogether, but simply to show them that He had the power to do this. The first-born represented the whole race, of which it was the strength and bloom (Gen. 49:3). But against the whole of the people of Israel "not a dog shall point its tongue" (v. 7). The dog points its tongue to growl and bite. The thought expressed in this proverb, which occurs again in Josh. 10:21 and Judith 11:19, was that Israel would not suffer the slightest injury, either in the case of "man or beast." By this complete preservation, whilst Egypt was given up to death, Israel would discover that Jehovah had completed the separation between them and the Egyptians. The effect of this stroke upon the Egyptians would be "a great cry," having no parallel before or after (cf. 10:14); and the consequence of this cry would be, that the servants of Pharaoh would come to Moses and entreat them to go out with all the people. "At thy feet," i.e., in thy train (vid., Deut. 11:6; Judg. 8:5). With this announcement Moses departed from Pharaoh in great wrath. Moses' wrath was occasioned by the king's threat (Exodus 10:28), and pointed to the wrath of Jehovah, which Pharaoh would soon experience. As the more than human patience which Moses had displayed towards Pharaoh manifested to him the long-suffering and patience of his God, in whose name and by whose authority he acted, so the wrath of the departing servant of God was to show to the hardened king, that the time of grace was at an end, and the wrath of God was about to burst upon him.

**Exodus 11:9, 10.** In vv. 9 and 10 the account of Moses' negotiations with Pharaoh, which

commenced at Exodus 7:8, is brought to a close. What God predicted to His messengers immediately before sending them to Pharaoh (Exodus 7:3), and to Moses before his call (Exodus 4:21), had now come to pass. And this was the pledge that the still further announcement of Jehovah in Exodus 7:4 and 4:23, which had already been made known to the hardened king (vv. 4ff.), would be carried out. As these verses have a terminal character,

the *vav consecutive* in וַיִּאמֶר denotes the order of thought and not of time, and the two verses are to be rendered thus: "As Jehovah had said to Moses, Pharaoh will not hearken unto you, that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt, Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land."

## Exodus 12

### CONSECRATION OF ISRAEL AS THE COVENANT NATION. DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT.—CH. 12–13:16

**Exodus 12:1–28.** Institution of the Passover.—The deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt was at hand; also their adoption as the nation of Jehovah (Exodus 6:6, 7). But for this a divine consecration was necessary, that their outward severance from the land of Egypt might be accompanied by an inward severance from everything of an Egyptian or heathen nature. This consecration was to be imparted by the Passover—a festival which was to lay the foundation for Israel's birth (Hos. 2:5) into the new life of grace and fellowship with God, and to renew it perpetually in time to come. This festival was therefore instituted and commemorated before the exodus from Egypt. Vv. 1–28 contain the directions for the Passover: viz., vv. 1–14 for the keeping of the feast of the Passover before the departure from Egypt, and vv. 15–20 for the seven days' feast of unleavened bread. In vv. 21–27 Moses

communicates to the elders of the nation the leading instructions as to the former feast, and the carrying out of those instructions is mentioned in v. 28.

**Exodus 12:1, 2.** By the words, "*in the land of Egypt,*" the law of the Passover which follows is brought into connection with the giving of the law at Sinai and in the fields of Moab, and is distinguished in relation to the former as the first or foundation law for the congregation of Jehovah. The creation of Israel as the people of Jehovah (Isa. 43:15) commenced with the institution of the Passover. As a proof of this, it was preceded by the appointment of a new era, fixing the commencement of the congregation of Jehovah. "*This month*" (i.e., the present in which ye stand) "*be to you the head* (i.e., the beginning) *of the months, the first let it be to you for the months of the year;*" i.e., let the numbering of the months, and therefore the year also, begin with it. Consequently the Israelites had hitherto had a different beginning to their year, probably only a civil year, commencing with the sowing, and ending with the termination of the harvest (cf. 23:16); whereas the Egyptians most likely commenced their year with the overflowing of the Nile at the summer solstice (cf. *Lepsius, Chron.* 1, pp. 148ff.). The month which was henceforth to be the first of the year, and is frequently so designated (Exodus 40:2, 17; Lev. 23:5, etc.), is called *Abib* (the ear-month) in Exodus 13:4; 23:15; 34:18, Deut. 16:1, because the corn was then in ear; after the captivity it was called *Nisan* (Neh. 2:1; Esth. 3:7). It corresponds very nearly to our April.

**Exodus 12:3–14.** *Arrangements for the Passover.*—"All the congregation of Israel" was the nation represented by its elders (cf. v. 21, and my bibl. Arch. ii. p. 221). "*On the tenth of this* (i.e., the first) *month, let every one take to himself* אֶת־לֶמֶד (a lamb, lit., a young one, either sheep or goats; v. 5, and Deut. 14:4), *according to fathers' houses*" (vid., 6:14), i.e., according to the natural distribution of the people into families, so that only the members of one family

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or family circle should unite, and not an indiscriminate company. In v. 21 *mishpachoth* is used instead. "A lamb for the house," בַּיִת, i.e., the family forming a household.

**Exodus 12:4.** But if "the house be too small for a lamb" (lit., "small from the existence of a lamb,"

מִן comparative: הַיּוֹת מִשָּׂהּ is an existence which receives its purpose from the lamb, which answers to that purpose, viz., the consumption of the lamb, i.e., if a family is not numerous enough to consume a lamb), "let him (the house-father) and his nearest neighbour against his house take (sc., a lamb) according to the calculation of the persons." מִכְסָּה

computatio (Lev. 27:23), from כָּסַם *computare*;

and מְכֻסָּם, the calculated amount or number (Num. 31:28): it only occurs in the Pentateuch. "Every one according to the measure of his eating shall ye reckon for the lamb:" i.e., in deciding whether several families had to unite, in order to consume one lamb, they were to estimate how much each person would be likely to eat. Consequently more than two families might unite for this purpose, when they consisted simply of the father and mother and little children. A later custom fixed *ten* as the number of persons to each paschal lamb; and *Jonathan* has interpolated this number into the text of his Targum.

**Exodus 12:5.** The kind of lamb: תָּמִים *integer*, uninjured, without bodily fault, like all the sacrifices (Lev. 22:19, 20); a male like the burnt-offerings (Lev. 1:3, 11); בֶּן שָׁנָה one year old (ἐνιαύσιος, LXX). This does not mean "standing in the first year, viz., from the eighth day of its life to the termination of the first year" (*Rabb. Cler.*, etc.), a rule which applied to the other sacrifices only (Exodus 22:29; Lev. 22:27). The opinion expressed by *Ewald* and others, that oxen were also admitted at a later period, is quite erroneous, and cannot be

proved from Deut. 16:2, or 2 Chron 30:24 and 35:7ff. As the lamb was intended as a sacrifice (v. 27), the characteristics were significant. Freedom from blemish and injury not only befitted the sacredness of the purpose to which they were devoted, but was a symbol of the moral integrity of the person represented by the sacrifice. It was to be a male, as taking the place of the male first-born of Israel; and a year old, because it was not till then that it reached the full, fresh vigour of its life. "Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats:" i.e., as *Theodoret* explains it, "He who has a sheep, let him slay it; and he who has no sheep, let him take a goat." Later custom restricted the choice to the lamb alone; though even in the time of *Josiah* kids were still used as well (2 Chron. 25:7).

**Exodus 12:6.** "And it shall be to you for preservation (ye shall keep it) until the fourteenth day, and then ... slay it at sunset." Among the reasons commonly assigned for the instruction to choose the lamb on the 10th, and keep it till the 14th, which *Jonathan* and *Rashi* supposed to refer to the Passover in Egypt alone, there is an element of truth in the one given most fully by *Fagius*, "that the sight of the lamb might furnish an occasion for conversation respecting their deliverance from Egypt, ... and the mercy of God, who had so graciously looked upon them;" but this hardly serves to explain the interval of exactly four days. *Hofmann* supposes it to refer to the four *doroth* (Gen. 15:16), which had elapsed since Israel was brought to Egypt, to grow into a nation. The probability of such an allusion, however, depends upon just what *Hofmann* denies without sufficient reason, viz., upon the lamb being regarded as a sacrifice, in which Israel consecrated itself to its God. It was to be slain by "the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel:" not by the whole assembled people, as though they gathered together for this purpose, for the slaughtering took place in every house (v. 7); the meaning is simply, that the entire congregation, without any exception, was to slay it at the same time, viz., "between the two evenings" (Num. 9:3, 5, 11), or "in the

evening at sunset" (Deut. 16:6). Different opinions have prevailed among the Jews from a very early date as to the precise time intended. *Aben Ezra* agrees with the Caraites and Samaritans in taking the first evening to be the time when the sun sinks below the horizon, and the second the time of total darkness; in which case, "between the two evenings" would be from 6 o'clock to 7:20. *Kimchi* and *Rashi*, on the other hand, regard the moment of sunset as the boundary between the two evenings, and *Hitzig* has lately adopted their opinion. According to the rabbinical idea, the time when the sun began to descend, viz., from 3 to 5 o'clock, was the first evening, and sunset the second; so that "between the two evenings" was from 3 to 6 o'clock. Modern expositors have very properly decided in favour of the view held by *Aben Ezra* and the custom adopted by the Caraites and Samaritans, from which the explanation given by *Kimchi* and *Rashi* does not materially differ. It is true that this argument has been adduced in favour of the rabbinical practice, viz., that "only by supposing the afternoon to have been included, can we understand why the day of Passover is always called the 14th (Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3, etc.);" and also, that "if the slaughtering took place after sunset, it fell on the 15th Nisan, and not the 14th." But both arguments are based upon an untenable assumption. For it is obvious from Lev. 23:32, where the fast prescribed for the day of atonement, which fell upon the 10th of the 7th month, is ordered to commence on the evening of the 9th day, "from even to even," that although the Israelites reckoned the day of 24 hours from the evening sunset to sunset, in numbering the days they followed the natural day, and numbered each day according to the period between sunrise and sunset. Nevertheless there is no formal disagreement between the law and the rabbinical custom. The expression in Deut. 16:6, "at (towards) sunset," is sufficient to show that the boundary line between the two evenings is not to be fixed precisely at the moment of sunset, but only somewhere about that time. The daily evening sacrifice and the incense offering were also to

be presented "between the two evenings" (Exodus 29:39, 41; 30:8; Num. 28:4). Now as this was not to take place exactly at the same time, but to precede it, they could not both occur at the time of sunset, but the former must have been offered before that. Moreover, in later times, when the paschal lamb was slain and offered at the sanctuary, it must have been slain and offered before sunset, if only to give sufficient time to prepare the paschal meal, which was to be over before midnight. It was from these circumstances that the rabbinical custom grew up in the course of time, and the lax use of the word evening, in Hebrew as well as in every other language, left space enough for this. For just as we do not confine the term morning to the time before sunset, but apply it generally to the early hours of the day, so the term evening is not restricted to the period after sunset. If the sacrifice prescribed for the morning could be offered after sunrise, the one appointed for the evening might in the same manner be offered before sunset.

**Exodus 12:7.** Some of the blood was to be put (זָתַח as in Lev. 4:18, where זָתַח is distinguished

from זָתַח, to sprinkle, in v. 17) upon the two posts and the lintel of the door of the house in which the lamb was eaten. This blood was to be to them a sign (v. 13); for when Jehovah passed through Egypt to smite the first-born, He would see the blood, and would spare these houses, and not permit the destroyer to enter them (vv. 13, 23). The two posts with the lintel represented the door (v. 23), which they surrounded; and the doorway through which the house was entered stood for the house itself, as we may see from the frequent expression "in thy gates," for in thy towns (Exodus 20:10; Deut. 5:14; 12:17, etc.). The threshold, which belonged to the door quite as much as the lintel, was not to be smeared with blood, in order that the blood might not be trodden under foot. But the smearing of the door-posts and lintel with blood, the house was expiated and consecrated on an altar. That the smearing with blood was to be regarded as an

act of expiation, is evident from the simple fact, that a hyssop-bush was used for the purpose (v. 22); for sprinkling with hyssop is never prescribed in the law, except in connection with purification in the sense of expiation (Lev. 14:49ff.; Num. 19:18, 19). In Egypt the Israelites had no common altar; and for this reason, the houses in which they assembled for the Passover were consecrated as altars, and the persons found in them were thereby removed from the stroke of the destroyer. In this way the smearing of the door-posts and lintel became a sign to Israel of their deliverance from the destroyer. Jehovah made it so by His promise, that He would see the blood, and pass over the houses that were smeared with it. Through faith in this promise, Israel acquired in the sign a firm pledge of its deliverance. The smearing of the doorway was relinquished, after Moses (not Josiah, as *Vaihinger* supposes, cf. Deut. 16:5, 6) had transferred the slaying of the lambs to the court of the sanctuary, and the blood had been ordered to be sprinkled upon the altar there.

**Exodus 12:8, 9.** With regard to the preparation of the lamb for the meal, the following directions were given: *“They shall eat the lamb in that night”* (i.e., the night following the 14th), and none of it נא (“underdone” or raw), or בישל (“boiled,”—lit., done, viz., מבשל במים, done

in water, i.e., boiled, as בשל does not mean to be boiled, but to become ripe or done, Joel 3:13); *“but roasted with fire, even its head on (along with) its thighs and entrails;”* i.e., as *Rashi* correctly explains it, “undivided or whole, so that neither head nor thighs were cut off, and not a bone was broken (v. 46), and the viscera were roasted in the belly along with the entrails,” the latter, of course, being first of all cleansed. On כרעים and קרב see Lev. 1:9.

These regulations are all to be regarded from one point of view. The first two, neither underdone nor boiled, were connected with the roasting of the animal whole. As the roasting no doubt took place on a spit, since the Israelites

while in Egypt can hardly have possessed such ovens of their own, as are prescribed in the Talmud and are met with in Persia, the lamb would be very likely to be roasted imperfectly, or underdone, especially in the hurry that must have preceded the exodus (v. 11). By boiling, again, the integrity of the animal would have been destroyed, partly through the fact that it could never have been got into a pot whole, as the Israelites had no pots or kettles sufficiently large, and still more through the fact that, in boiling, the substance of the flesh is more or less dissolved. For it is very certain that the command to roast was not founded upon the hurry of the whole procedure, as a whole animal could be quite as quickly boiled as roasted, if not even more quickly, and the Israelites must have possessed the requisite cooking utensils. It was to be roasted, in order that it might be placed upon the table undivided and essentially unchanged. “Through the unity and integrity of the lamb given them to eat, the participants were to be joined into an undivided unity and fellowship with the Lord, who had provided them with the meal” (cf. 1

Cor. 10:17).<sup>16</sup> They were to eat it with מצות (ἄζυμα, *azymi panes*; LXX, *Vulg.*), i.e., (not sweet, or parched, but) *pure loaves*, nor fermented with leaven; for leaven, which sets the dough in fermentation, and so produces impurity, was a natural symbol of moral corruption, and was excluded from the sacrifices therefore as defiling (Lev. 2:11).

*“Over (upon) bitter herbs they shall eat it.”*

מררים, πικρίδες (LXX), *lactucæ agrestes* (*Vulg.*), probably refers to various kinds of bitter herbs. Πικρίς, according to *Aristot. Hist. an.* 9, 6, and *Plin. h. n.* 8, 41, is the same as *lactuca silvestris*, or wild lettuce; but in *Dioscor.* 2, 160, it is referred to as the wild σέρις or κυχώριον, i.e., wild endive, the *intubus* or *intubum* of the Romans. As lettuce and endive are indigenous in Egypt, and endive is also met with in Syria from the beginning of the winter months to the end of March, and lettuce in April and May, it is to these herbs of bitter flavor that

the term *merorim* chiefly applies; though others may also be included, as the Arabs apply the same term to *Scorzonera orient.*, *Picris scabra*, *Sonchus oler.*, *Hieracium uniflor.*, and others (*Forsk. flor.* cxviii. and 143); and in the *Mishnah*, Pes. 2, 6, five different varieties of bitter herbs are reckoned as *merorim*, though it is difficult to determine what they are (cf. *Bochart, Hieroz.* 1,

pp. 691ff., and *Cels. Hierobot.* ii. p. 727). By עַל (upon) the bitter herbs are represented, both here and in Num. 9:11, not as an accompaniment to the meat, but as the basis of the meal. עַל does not signify along with, or indicate accompaniment, not even in Exodus 35:22; but in this and other similar passages it still retains its primary signification, *upon* or *over*. It is only used to signify accompaniment in cases where the ideas of protection, meditation, or addition are prominent. If, then, the bitter herbs are represented in this passage as the basis of the meal, and the unleavened bread also in Num. 9:11, it is evident that the bitter herbs were not intended to be regarded as a savoury accompaniment, by which more flavour was imparted to the sweeter food, but had a more profound signification. The bitter herbs were to call to mind the bitterness of life experienced by Israel in Egypt (Exodus 1:14), and this bitterness was to be overpowered by the sweet flesh of the lamb. In the same way the unleavened loaves are regarded as forming part of the substance of the meal in Num. 9:11, in accordance with their significance in relation to it (vid., v. 15). There is no discrepancy between this and Deut. 16:3, where the *mazzoth* are spoken of as an accompaniment to the flesh of the sacrifice; for the allusion there is not to the eating of the paschal lamb, but to sacrificial meals held during the seven days' festival.

**Exodus 12:10.** The lamb was to be all eaten wherever this was possible; but if any was left, it was to be burned with fire the following day,—a rule afterwards laid down for all the sacrificial meals, with one solitary exception (vid., Lev. 7:15). They were to eat it בְּחֶפְזוֹן, "in

*anxious flight*" (from חָפַז *trepidare*, Ps. 31:23; to flee in terror, Deut. 20:3, 2 Kings 7:15); in travelling costume therefore,—with "the loins girded," that they might not be impeded in their walking by the long flowing dress (2 Kings 4:29),—with "shoes (Sandals) on their feet," that they might be ready to walk on hard, rough roads, instead of barefooted, as they generally went (cf. Josh. 9:5, 13; *Bynaeus de calceis* ii. 1, 7; and *Bochart, Hieroz.* i. pp. 686ff.), and "staff in hand" (Gen. 32:11). The directions in v. 11 had reference to the paschal meal in Egypt only, and had no other signification than to prepare the Israelites for their approaching departure. But though "this preparation was intended to give the paschal meal the appearance of a support for the journey, which the Israelites were about to take," this by no means exhausts its signification. The divine instructions close with the words, "it is חֶסֶד to Jehovah;" i.e., what is prescribed is a *pesach* appointed by Jehovah, and to be kept for Him (cf. Exodus 20:10, "Sabbath to Jehovah;" 32:5, "feast to Jehovah").

The word חֶסֶד, *Aram.* אַחְסָד, *Gr.* πάσχα, is derived from חָפַז, lit., to leap or hop, from which these two meanings arise: (1) to limp (1 Kings 18:21; 2 Sam. 4:4, etc.); and (2) to pass over, *transire* (hence *Tiphseh*, a passage over, 1 Kings 4:24). It is for the most part used figuratively for ὑπερβαίνειν, to pass by or spare; as in this case, where the destroying angel passed by the doors and houses of the Israelites that were smeared with blood. From this, *pesach* (ὑπερβασις, *Aquil.* in v. 11; ὑπερβασία, *Joseph. Ant.* ii. 14, 6) came afterwards to be used for the lamb, through which, according to divine appointment, the passing by or sparing had been effected (vv. 21, 27; 2 Chron. 35:1, 13, etc.); then for the preparation of the lamb for a meal, in accordance with the divine instructions, or for the celebration of this meal (thus here, v. 11; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:7, etc.); and then, lastly, it was transferred to the whole seven days' observance of the feast of

unleavened bread, which began with this meal (Deut. 16:1), and also to the sacrifices which were to be offered at that feast (Deut. 16:2; 2 Chron. 35:1, 7, etc.). The killing of the lamb appointed for the *pesach* was a **זָבַח**, i.e., a slain-offering, as Moses calls it when making known the command of God to the elders (v. 27); consequently the eating of it was a sacrificial feast ("the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover," Exodus 34:25). For **זָבַח** is never applied to slaying alone, as **שָׁחַט** is. Even in Prov. 17:1 and 1 Sam. 28:24, which *Hofmann* adduces in support of this meaning, it signifies "to sacrifice" only in a figurative or transferred sense. At the first Passover in Egypt, it is true, there was no presentation (**הִקְרִיב**), because Israel had not altar there. But the presentation took place at the very first repetition of the festival at Sinai (Num. 9:7). The omission of this in Egypt, on account of the circumstances in which they were placed, constituted no essential difference between the first "sacrifice of the Passover" and the repetitions of it; for the choice of the lamb four days before it was slain, was a substitute for the presentation, and the sprinkling of the blood, which was essential to every sacrifice, was effected in the smearing of the door-posts and lintel. The other difference upon which *Hofmann* lays stress, viz., that at all subsequent Passovers the fat of the animal was burned upon the altar, is very questionable. For this custom cannot be proved from the Old Testament, though it is prescribed in the *Mishnah*.<sup>17</sup> But even if the burning of the fat of the paschal lamb had taken place shortly after the giving of the law, on the ground of the general command in Lev. 3:17; 7:23ff. (for this is not taken for granted in Exodus 23:18, as we shall afterwards show), this difference could also be accounted for from the want of an altar in Egypt, and would not warrant us in refusing to admit the sacrificial character of the first Passover. For the appointment of the paschal meal by God does not preclude the idea that it

was a religious service, nor the want of an altar the idea of sacrifice, as *Hofmann* supposes. All the sacrifices of the Jewish nation were minutely prescribed by God, so that the presentation of them was the consequence of divine instructions. And even though the Israelites, when holding the first Passover according to the command of God, merely gave expression to their desire to participate in the deliverance from destruction and the redemption of Egypt, and also to their faith in the word and promise of God, we must neither measure the signification of this divine institution by that fact, nor restrict it to this alone, inasmuch as it is expressly described as a sacrificial meal.

**Exodus 12:12, 13.** In vv. 12 and 13 the name *pesach* is explained. In that night Jehovah would pass through Egypt, smite all the first-born of man and beast, execute judgment upon all the gods of Egypt, and *pass over* (**פָּסַח**) the Israelites. In what the judgment upon all the gods of Egypt consisted, it is hard to determine. The meaning of these words is not exhausted by Calvin's remark: "God declared that He would be a judge against the false gods, because it was most apparent then, now little help was to be found in them, and how vain and fallacious was their worship." The gods of Egypt were spiritual authorities and powers, *δαίμόνια*, which governed the life and spirit of the Egyptians. Hence the judgment upon them could not consist of the destruction of idols, as *Ps. Jonathan's* paraphrase supposes: *idola fusa colliquescent, lapidea concidentur, testacea confringentur, lignea in cinerem redigentur*. For there is nothing said about this; but in v. 29 the death of the first-born of men and cattle alone is mentioned as the execution of the divine threat; and in Num. 33:4 also the judgment upon the gods is connected with the burial of the first-born, without special reference to anything besides. From this it seems to follow pretty certainly, that the judgments upon the gods of Egypt consisted in the slaying of the first-born of man and beast. But the slaying of the first-born was a judgment upon the gods,

not only because the impotence and worthlessness of the fancied gods were displayed in the consternation produced by this stroke, but still more directly in the fact, that in the slaying of the king's son and many of the first-born animals, the gods of Egypt, which were worshipped both in their kings and also in certain sacred animals, such as the bull Apis and the goat Mendes, were actually smitten themselves.

**Exodus 12:13.** To the Israelites, on the other hand, the blood upon the houses in which they were assembled would be a sign and pledge that Jehovah would spare them, and no plague should fall upon them to destroy (cf. Ezek. 21:36; not "for the destroyer," for there is no article with לְמַשְׁחִית).

**Exodus 12:14.** That day (the evening of the 14th) Israel was to keep "for a commemoration as a feast to Jehovah," consecrated for all time, as an "eternal ordinance," לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם "in your generations," i.e., for all ages, דֹּרֹת denoting the succession of future generations (vid., v. 24). As the divine act of Israel's redemption was of eternal significance, so the commemoration of that act was to be an eternal ordinance, and to be upheld as long as Israel should exist as the redeemed people of the Lord, i.e., to all eternity, just as the new life of the redeemed was to endure for ever. For the Passover, the remembrance of which was to be revived by the constant repetition of the feast, was the celebration of their birth into the new life of fellowship with the Lord. The preservation from the stroke of the destroyer, from which the feast received its name, was the commencement of their redemption from the bondage of Egypt, and their elevation into the nation of Jehovah. The blood of the paschal lamb was atoning blood; for the Passover was a sacrifice, which combined in itself the signification of the future sin-offerings and peace-offerings; in other words, which shadowed forth both expiation and quickening fellowship with God. The smearing of the

houses of the Israelites with the atoning blood of the sacrifice set forth the reconciliation of Israel and its God, through the forgiveness and expiation of its sins; and in the sacrificial meal which followed, their communion with the Lord, i.e., their adoption as children of God, was typically completed. In the meal the *sacrificium* became a *sacramentum*, the flesh of the sacrifice a means of grace, by which the Lord adopted His spared and redeemed people into the fellowship of His house, and gave them food for the refreshing of their souls.

**Exodus 12:15–20.** Judging from the words "I brought out" in v. 17, Moses did not receive instructions respecting the *seven days' feast of Mazzoth* till after the exodus from Egypt; but on account of its internal and substantial connection with the Passover, it is placed here in immediate association with the institution of the paschal meal. "Seven days shall he eat

*unleavened bread, only (אֶזְרָא) on the first day* (i.e., not later than the first day) *he shall cause to cease* (i.e., put away) *leaven out of your houses.*" The first day was the 15th of the month (cf. Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17). On the other hand, when בְּרֵאשִׁית is thus defined in v. 18, "on the 14th day of the month at even," this may be accounted for from the close connection between the feast of Mazzoth and the feast of Passover, inasmuch as unleavened bread was to be eaten with the paschal lamb, so that the leaven had to be cleared away before this meal. The significance of this feast was in the eating of the *mazzoth*, i.e., of pure unleavened bread (see v. 8). As bread, which is the principal means of preserving life, might easily be regarded as the symbol of life itself, so far as the latter is set forth in the means employed for its own maintenance and invigoration, so the *mazzoth*, or unleavened loaves, were symbolical of the new life, as cleansed from the leaven of a sinful nature. But if the eating of mazzoth was to shadow forth the new life into which Israel was transferred, any one who ate leavened bread at the feast would renounce this new life, and was therefore to be cut off from

Israel, i.e., “from the congregation of Israel” (v. 19).

**Exodus 12:16.** On the first and seventh days, a holy meeting was to be held, and labour to be suspended. **מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ** is not *indictio sancti, proclamatio sanctitatis (Vitringa)*, but a *holy assembly*, i.e., a meeting of the people for the worship of Jehovah (Ezek. 46:3, 9). **מִקְרָא**,

from **קָרָא** to call, is that which is called, i.e., the assembly (Isa. 4:5; Neh. 8:8). No work was to be done upon these days, except what was necessary for the preparation of food; on the Sabbath, even this was prohibited (Exodus 35:2, 3). Hence in Lev. 23:7, the “work” is called “servile work,” ordinary handicraft.

**Exodus 12:17.** “Observe the Mazzoth” (i.e., the directions given in vv. 15 and 16 respecting the feast of Mazzoth), “for on this very day I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt.” This was effected in the night of the 14th-15th, or rather at midnight, and therefore in the early morning of the 15th Abib. Because Jehovah had brought Israel out of Egypt on the 15th Abib, therefore Israel was to keep Mazzoth for seven days. Of course it was not merely a commemoration of this event, but the exodus formed the groundwork of the seven days’ feast, because it was by this that Israel had been introduced into a new vital element. For this reason the Israelites were to put away all the leaven of their Egyptian nature, the leaven of malice and wickedness (1 Cor. 5:8), and by eating pure and holy bread, and meeting for the worship of God, to show that they were walking in newness of life. This aspect of the feast will serve to explain the repeated emphasis laid upon the instructions given concerning it, and the repeated threat of extermination against either native or foreigner, in case the law should be disobeyed (vv. 18–20). To eat leavened bread at this feast, would have been a denial of the divine act, by which Israel was introduced into the new life of fellowship with Jehovah. **גֵּר**, a stranger, was a non-Israelite who

lived for a time, or possibly for his whole life, in the midst of the Israelitish nation, but without being incorporated into it by circumcision.

**אֶזְרָח הָאֶרֶץ**, a tree that grows upon the soil in which it was planted; hence *indigena*, the native of a country. This term was applied to the Israelites, “because they had sprung from Isaac and Jacob, who were born in the land of Canaan, and had received it from God as a permanent settlement” (*Clericus*). The feast of *Mazzoth*, the commemoration of Israel’s creation as the people of Jehovah (Isa. 43:15–17), was fixed for seven days, to stamp upon it in the number seven the seal of the covenant relationship. This heptad of days was made holy through the sanctification of the first and last days by the holding of a holy assembly, and the entire suspension of work. The beginning and the end comprehended the whole. In the eating of unleavened bread Israel laboured for meat for the new life (John 6:27), whilst the seal of worship was impressed upon this new life in the holy convocation, and the suspension of labour was the symbol of rest in the Lord.

**Exodus 12:21–28.** Of the directions given by Moses to the elders of the nation, the leading points only are mentioned here, viz., the slaying of the lamb and the application of the blood (vv. 21, 22). The reason for this is then explained in v. 23, and the rule laid down in vv. 24–27 for its observance in the future.

**Exodus 12:21.** “Withdraw and take:” **מָשַׁךְ** is intransitive here, to draw away, withdraw, as in Judg. 4:6; 5:14; 20:37. **אֶזְרָח אֶזְרָח**: a bunch or bundle of hyssop: according to *Maimonides*, “*quantum quis comprehendit manu sua.*” **אֶזְרָח** (ὑσσώπος) was probably not the plant which we call hyssop, the *hyssopus officinalis*, for it is uncertain whether this is to be found in Syria and Arabia, but a species of *origanum* resembling hyssop, the Arabian *zâter*, either wild marjoram or a kind of thyme, *Thymus serpyllum*, mentioned in *Forsk. flora Aeg.* p. 107, which is very common in Syria and Arabia, and

is called *zâter*, or *zatureya*, the pepper or bean plant. "That is in the bason;" viz the bason in which the blood had been caught when the animal was killed. וְהִגַּעְתָּם, "and let it reach to, i.e., strike, the lintel:" in ordinary purifications the blood was sprinkled with the bunch of hyssop (Lev. 14:51; Num. 19:18). The reason for the command not to go out of the door of the house was, that in this night of judgment there would be no safety anywhere except behind the blood-stained door.

**Exodus 12:23** (cf. v. 13). "He will not suffer (יִיָּאֵר) the destroyer to come into your houses:" Jehovah effected the destruction of the first-born through הַמְשַׁחֵת, the destroyer, or destroying angel, ὁ ἄλοθρεύων (Heb. 11:28), i.e., not a fallen angel, but the angel of Jehovah, in whom Jehovah revealed Himself to the patriarchs and Moses. This is not at variance with Ps. 78:49; for the writer of this psalm regards not only the slaying of the first-born, but also the pestilence (Exodus 9:1-7), as effected through the medium of angels of evil: though, according to the analogy of 1 Sam.

13:17, הַמְשַׁחֵת might certainly be understood collectively as applying to a company of angels. V. 24. "This word," i.e., the instructions respecting the Passover, they were to regard as an institution for themselves and their children for ever (עַד-עוֹלָם) in the same sense as עוֹלָם, Gen. 17:7, 13); and when dwelling in the promised land, they were to explain the meaning of this service to their sons. The ceremony is called עֲבֹדָה, "service," inasmuch as it was the fulfilment of a divine command, a performance demanded by God, though it promoted the good of Israel.

**Exodus 12:27.** After hearing the divine instructions, the people, represented by their elders, bowed and worshipped; not only to show their faith, but also to manifest their

gratitude for the deliverance which they were to receive in the Passover.

**Exodus 12:28.** They then proceeded to execute the command, that through the obedience of faith they might appropriate the blessing of this "service."

**Exodus 12:29-36.** Death of the First-Born, and Release of Israel.—The last blow announced to Pharaoh took place in "the half of the night," i.e., at midnight, when all Egypt was lying in deep sleep (Matt. 25:5, 6), to startle the king and his people out of their sleep of sin. As all the previous plagues rested upon a natural basis, it might seem a probable supposition that this was also the case here, whilst the analogy of 2 Sam. 24:15, 16 might lead us to think of a pestilence as the means employed by the destroying angel. In that case we should find the heightening of the natural occurrence into a miracle in the fact, that the first-born both of man and beast, and they alone, were all suddenly slain, whilst the Israelites remained uninjured in their houses. This view would be favoured, too, by the circumstance, that not only are pestilences of frequent occurrence in Egypt, but they are most fatal in the spring months. On a closer examination, however, the circumstances mentioned tell against rather than in favour of such a supposition. In 2 Sam. 24:15, the pestilence is expressly alluded to; here it is not. The previous plagues were nearly all brought upon Egypt by Moses' staff, and with most of them the natural sources are distinctly mentioned; but the last plague came direct from Jehovah without the intervention of Moses, certainly for no other reason than to make it apparent that it was a purely supernatural punishment inflicted by His own omnipotence. The words, "There was not a house where there was not one dead," are to be taken literally, and not merely "as a general expression;" though, of course, they are to be limited, according to the context, to all the houses in which there were first-born of man or beast. The term "first-born" is not to be extended so far, however, as to include even heads of families who had children of their own,

in which case there might be houses, as *Lapide* and others suppose, where the grandfather, the father, the son, and the wives were all lying dead, provided all of them were first-born. The words, "From the son of Pharaoh, who will sit upon his throne, to the son of the prisoners in the prison" (v. 29 compared with Exodus 13:15), point unquestionably to those first-born sons alone who were not yet fathers themselves. But even with this limitation the blow was so terrible, that the effect produced upon Pharaoh and his people is perfectly intelligible.

**Exodus 12:30.** The very same night Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and gave them permission to depart with their people, their children, and their cattle. The statement that Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron is not at variance with Exodus 10:28, 29; and there is no necessity to resort to *Calvin's* explanation, "Pharaoh himself is said to have sent for those whom he urged to depart through the medium of messengers from the palace." The command never to appear in his sight again did not preclude his sending for them under totally different circumstances. The permission to depart was given unconditionally, i.e., without involving an obligation to return. This is evident from the words, "Get you forth from among my people," compared with Exodus 10:8, 24, "Go ye, serve Jehovah," and 8:25, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." If in addition to this we bear in mind, that although at first, and even after the fourth plague (Exodus 8:27), Moses only asked for a three days' journey to hold a festival, yet Pharaoh suspected that they would depart altogether, and even gave utterance to this suspicion, without being contradicted by Moses (Exodus 8:28, and 10:10); the words "Get you forth from among my people" cannot mean anything else than "depart altogether." Moreover, in Exodus 11:1 it was foretold to Moses that the result of the last blow would be, that Pharaoh would let them go, or rather drive them away; so that the effect of this blow, as here described, cannot be understood in any other way. And this is really implied in Pharaoh's last words, "Go, and bless me also;" whereas on former occasions he had

only asked them to intercede for the removal of the plagues (Exodus 8:8, 28; 9:28; 10:17). בִּרְךָ, to bless, indicates a final leave-taking, and was equivalent to a request that on their departure they would secure or leave behind the blessing of their God, in order that henceforth no such plague might ever befall him and his people. This view of the words of the king is not at variance either with the expression "as ye have said" in v. 31, which refers to the words "serve the Lord," or with the same words in v. 32, for there they refer to the flock and herds, or lastly, with the circumstance that Pharaoh pursued the Israelites after they had gone, with the evident intention of bringing them back by force (Exodus 14:5ff.), because this resolution is expressly described as a change of mind consequent upon renewed hardening (Exodus 14:4, 5).

**Exodus 12:33.** "And Egypt urged the people strongly" (עַל הַזֶּקֶץ to press hard, κατεβιάζοντο, LXX) to make haste, to send them out of the land; i.e., the Egyptians urged the Israelites to accelerate their departure, "for they said (sc., to themselves), "We are all dead," i.e., exposed to death. So great was their alarm at the death of the first-born.

**Exodus 12:34.** This urgency of the Egyptians compelled the Israelites to take the dough, which they were probably about to bake for their journey, before it was leavened, and also their kneading-troughs bound up in their clothes (cloths) upon their shoulders. שְׂמֹלָה, ἰμάτιον, was a large square piece of stuff or cloth, worn above the under-clothes, and could be easily used for tying up different things together. The Israelites had intended to leaven the dough, therefore, as the command to eat unleavened bread for seven days had not been given to them yet. But under the pressure of necessity they were obliged to content themselves with unleavened bread, or, as it is called in Deut. 16:3, "the bread of affliction," during the first days of their journey. But as the troubles connected with their departure from

Egypt were merely the introduction to the new life of liberty and grace, so according to the counsel of God the bread of affliction was to become a holy food to Israel; the days of their exodus being exalted by the Lord into a seven days' feast, in which the people of Jehovah were to commemorate to all ages their deliverance from the oppression of Egypt. The long-continued eating of unleavened bread, on account of the pressure of circumstances, formed the historical preparation for the seven days' feast of Mazzoth, which was instituted afterwards. Hence this circumstance is mentioned both here and in v. 39. On vv. 35 and 36, see Exodus 3:21, 22.

**Exodus 12:37–42.** *Departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt.*—The starting-point was *Raëmses*, from which they proceeded to *Succoth* (v. 37), thence to *Etham* at the end of the desert (Exodus 13:20), and from that by a curve to *Hachiroth*, opposite to the Red Sea, from which point they passed through the sea (Exodus 14:2, 21ff.). Now, if we take these words simply as they stand, Israel touched the border of the desert of Arabia by the second day, and on the third day reached the plain of Suez and the Red Sea. But they could not possibly have gone so far, if *Raëmses* stood upon the site of the modern *Belbeis*. For though the distance from *Belbeis* to Suez by the direct road past "*Rejûm el Khail*" is only a little more than 15 geographical miles, and a caravan with camels could make the journey in two days, this would be quite impossible for a whole nation travelling with wives, children, cattle, and baggage. Such a procession could never have reached *Etham*, on the border of the desert, on their second day's march, and then on the third day, by a circuitous course "of about a day's march in extent," have arrived at the plain of Suez between *Ajirûd* and the sea. This is admitted by *Kurtz*, who therefore follows *v. Raumer* in making a distinction between a stage and a day's journey, on the ground that עֲמָן signifies the station or place of encampment, and not a day's journey. But the word neither means station nor place of encampment. It is

derived from עָרַן to tear out (sc., the pegs of the tent), hence to take down the tent; and denotes removal from the place of encampment, and the subsequent march (cf. Num. 33:1). Such a march might indeed embrace more than a day's journey; but whenever the Israelites travelled more than a day before pitching their tents, it is expressly mentioned (cf. Num. 10:33, and 33:8, with Exodus 15:22). These passages show very clearly that the stages from *Raëmses* to *Succoth*, thence to *Etham*, and then again to *Hachiroth*, were a day's march each. The only question is, whether they only rested for one night at each of these places. The circumstances under which the Israelites took their departure favour the supposition, that they would get out of the Egyptian territory as quickly as possible, and rest no longer than was absolutely necessary; but the gathering of the whole nation, which was not collected together in one spot, as in a camp, at the time of their departure, and still more the confusion, and interruptions of various kinds, that would inevitably attend the migration of a whole nation, render it probable that they rested longer than one night at each of the places named. This would explain most simply, how Pharaoh was able to overtake them with his army at *Hachiroth*. But whatever our views on this point may be, so much is certain, that Israel could not have reached the plain of Suez in a three days' march from *Belbeis* with the circuitous route by *Etham*, and therefore that their starting-point cannot have been *Belbeis*, but must have been in the neighbourhood of *Heröopolis*; and there are other things that favour this conclusion. There is, first, the circumstance that Pharaoh sent for Moses the very same night after the slaying of the first-born, and told him to depart. Now the Pentateuch does not mention Pharaoh's place of abode, but according to Ps. 78:12 it was *Zoan*, i.e., *Tanis*, on the eastern bank of the Tanitic arm of the Nile. *Abu Keishib* (or *Heroopolis*) is only half as far from *Tanis* as *Belbeis*, and the possibility of Moses appearing before the king

and returning to his own people between midnight and the morning is perfectly conceivable, on the supposition that Moses was not in Heroopolis itself, but was staying in a more northerly place, with the expectation that Pharaoh would send a message to him, or send for him, after the final blow. Again, *Abu Keishib* was on the way to Gaza; so that the Israelites might take the road towards the country of the Philistines, and then, as this was not the road they were to take, *turn round* at God's command by the road to the desert (Exodus 13:17, 18). Lastly, Etham could be reached in two days from the starting-point named.<sup>18</sup> On the situation of *Succoth* and *Etham*, see Exodus 13:20.

The Israelites departed, "*about 600,000 on foot that were men.*" רגלי (as in Num. 11:21, the infantry of an army) is added, because they went out as an army (v. 41), and none are numbered but those who could bear arms, from 20 years old and upwards; and הגברים

because of לבד מטה, "*beside the little ones,*"

which follows. טף is used here in its broader sense, as in Gen. 47:12, Num. 32:16, 24, and applies to the entire family, including the wife and children, who did not travel on foot, but on beasts of burden and in carriages (Gen. 31:17). The number given is an approximative one. The numbering at Sinai gave 603,550 males of 20 years old and upwards (Num. 1:46), and 22,000 male Levites of a month old and upwards (Num. 3:39). Now if we add the wives and children, the total number of the people may have been about two million souls. The multiplication of the seventy souls, who went down with Jacob to Egypt, into this vast multitude, is not so disproportionate to the 430 years of their sojourn there, as to render it at all necessary to assume that the numbers given included not only the descendants of the seventy souls who went down with Jacob, but also those of "several thousand man-servants and maid-servants" who accompanied them. For, apart

from the fact, that we are not warranted in concluding, that because Abraham had 318 fighting servants, the twelve sons of Jacob had several thousand, and took them with them into Egypt; even if the servants had been received into the religious fellowship of Israel by circumcision, they cannot have reckoned among the 600,000 who went out, for the simple reason that they are not included in the seventy souls who went down to Egypt; and in Exodus 1:5 the number of those who came out is placed in unmistakable connection with the number of those who went in. If we deduct from the 70 souls the patriarch Jacob, his 12 sons, Dinah, Asher's daughter Zerah, the three sons of Levi, the four grandsons of Judah and Benjamin, and those grandsons of Jacob who probably died without leaving any male posterity, since their descendants are not mentioned among the families of Israel (cf. p. 239), there remain 41 grandsons of Jacob who founded families, in addition to the Levites. Now, if we follow 1 Chron. 7:20ff., where ten or eleven generations are mentioned between Ephraim and Joshua, and reckon 40 years as a generation, the tenth generation of the 41 grandsons of Jacob would be born about the year 400 of the sojourn in Egypt, and therefore be over 20 years of age at the time of the exodus. Let us assume, that on an average there were three sons and three daughters to every married couple in the first six of these generations, two sons and two daughters in the last four, and we shall find, that in the tenth generation there would be 478,224 sons about the 400th year of the sojourn in Egypt, who would therefore be above 20 years of age at the time of the exodus, whilst 125,326 men of the ninth generation would be still living, so that there would be 478,224 + 125,326, or 603,550 men coming out of Egypt, who were more than 20 years old. But though our calculation is based upon no more than the ordinary number of births, a special blessing from God is to be discerned not only in this fruitfulness, which we suppose to have been uninterrupted, but still more in the fact, that the presumed number of children continued alive, and begot the same

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number of children themselves; and the divine grace was peculiarly manifest in the fact, that neither pestilence nor other evils, nor even the measures adopted by the Pharaohs for the suppression of Israel, could diminish their numbers or restrain their increase. If the question be asked, how the land of Goshen could sustain so large a number, especially as the Israelites were not the only inhabitants, but lived along with Egyptians there, it is a sufficient reply, that according to both ancient and modern testimony (cf. *Robinson*, Pal. i. p. 78), this is the most fertile province in all Egypt, and that we are not so well acquainted with the extent of the territory inhabited by the Israelites, as to be able to estimate the amount of its produce.

**Exodus 12:38.** In typical fulfilment of the promise in Gen. 12:3, and no doubt induced by the signs and wonders of the Lord in Egypt to seek their good among the Israelites, a great crowd of mixed people (עַרְבֵי רַב) attached themselves to them, whom Israel could not shake off, although they afterwards became a snare to them (Num. 11:4). עַרְבֵי: lit., a mixture, ἐπίμικτος sc., λαός (LXX), a swarm of foreigners; called אֲסַפְסָפִים in Num. 11:4, a medley, or crowd of people of different nations. According to Deut. 29:10, they seem to have occupied a very low position among the Israelites, and to have furnished the nation of God with hewers of wood and drawers of water.—On v. 29, see v. 34.

**Exodus 12:40, 41.** The sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt had lasted 430 years. This number is not critically doubtful, nor are the 430 years to be reduced to 215 by an arbitrary interpolation, such as we find in the LXX, ἡ δὲ κατοίκησις τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἦν κατῶκησαν (*Cod. Alexodus* αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν) ἐν γῆ Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν γῆ Χαναάν κ.τ.λ. This chronological statement, the genuineness of which is placed beyond all doubt by *Onkelos*, the *Syriac*, *Vulgate*, and other versions, is not only in harmony with the

prediction in Gen. 15:13, where the round number 400 is employed in prophetic style, but may be reconciled with the different genealogical lists, if we only bear in mind that the genealogies do not always contain a complete enumeration of all the separate links, but very frequently intermediate links of little historical importance are omitted, as we have already seen in the genealogy of Moses and Aaron (Exodus 6:18–20). For example, the fact that there were more than the four generations mentioned in Exodus 6:16ff. between Levi and Moses, is placed beyond all doubt, not only by what has been adduced at Exodus 6:18–20, but by a comparison with other genealogies also. Thus, in Num. 26:29ff., 27:1, Josh. 17:3, we find six generations from Joseph to Zelophehad; in Ruth 4:18ff., 1 Chron 2:5, 6, there are also six from Judah to Nahshon, the tribe prince in the time of Moses; in 1 Chron. 2:18 there are seven from Judah to Bezaleel, the builder of the tabernacle; and in 1 Chron. 7:20ff., nine or ten are given from Joseph to Joshua. This last genealogy shows most clearly the impossibility of the view founded upon the Alexandrian version, that the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt lasted only 215 years; for ten generations, reckoned at 40 years each, harmonize very well with 430 years, but certainly not with 215.<sup>19</sup> The statement in v. 41, “the self-same day,” is not to be understood as relating to the first day after the lapse of the 430 years, as though the writer supposed that it was on the 14th Abib that Jacob entered Egypt 430 years before, but points back to the day of the exodus, mentioned in v. 14, as compared with vv. 11ff., i.e., the 15th Abib (cf. v. 51 and Exodus 13:4). On “the hosts of Jehovah,” see Exodus 7:4.

**Exodus 12:42.** This day therefore was לַיְלִיתָ

שְׁמֵרִים, “a preservation-night of the Lord, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.” The *apax legomenon* שְׁמֵרִים does not mean

“celebration, from שָׁמַר to observe, to honour”

(*Knobel*), but “preservation,” from שָׁמַר to keep, to preserve; and לִיהוָה is the same as in v. 27. “*This same night is (consecrated) to the Lord as a preservation for all children of Israel in their families.*” Because Jehovah had preserved the children of Israel that night from the destroyer, it was to be holy to them, i.e., to be kept by them in all future ages to the glory of the Lord, as a preservation.

**Exodus 12:43–50.** Regulations Concerning the Participants in the Passover.—These regulations, which were supplementary to the law of the Passover in vv. 3–11, were not communicated before the exodus; because it was only by the fact that a crowd of foreigners attached themselves to the Israelites, that Israel was brought into a connection with foreigners, which needed to be clearly defined, especially so far as the Passover was concerned, the festival of Israel’s birth as the people of God. If the Passover was still to retain this signification, of course no foreigner could participate in it. This is the first regulation. But as it was by virtue of a divine call, and not through natural descent, that Israel had become the people of Jehovah, and as it was destined in that capacity to be a blessing to all nations, the attitude assumed towards foreigners was not to be an altogether repelling one. Hence the further directions in v. 44: purchased servants, who had been politically incorporated as Israel’s property, were to be entirely incorporated by circumcision, so as even to take part in the Passover. But settlers, and servants working for wages, were not to eat of it, for they stood in a purely external relation, which might be any day dissolved. אָכַל בֵּי, lit., to eat *at* anything, to take part in the eating (Lev. 22:11). The deeper ground fore this was, that in this meal Israel was to preserve and celebrate its unity and fellowship with Jehovah. This was the meaning of the regulations, which were repeated in vv. 46 and 47 from vv. 4, 9, and 10, where they had been already explained. If, therefore, a foreigner living among the

Israelites wished to keep the Passover, he was first of all to be spiritually incorporated into the nation of Jehovah by circumcision (v. 48).

וַעֲשֵׂה פֶסַח: “*And he has made (i.e., made ready) a passover to Jehovah, let every male be circumcised to him (i.e., he himself, and the male members of his house), and then he may draw near (sc., to Jehovah) to keep it.*” The first עָשָׂה denotes the wish or intention to do it, the second, the actual execution of the wish. The words בְּזֵינֵכָר, גֵּר, תּוֹשֵׁב and שְׂכִיר, are all indicative of non-Israelites. בְּזֵינֵכָר was applied quite generally to any foreigner springing from another nation; גֵּר was a foreigner living for a shorter or longer time in the midst of the Israelites; תּוֹשֵׁב, lit., a dweller, settler, was one who settled permanently among the Israelites, without being received into their religious fellowship; שְׂכִיר was the non-Israelite, who worked for an Israelite for wages.

**Exodus 12:49.** There was one law with reference to the Passover which was applicable both to the native and the foreigner: no uncircumcised man was to be allowed to eat of it.

**Exodus 12:50.** Verse 50 closes the instructions concerning the Passover with the statement that the Israelites carried them out, viz., in after times (e.g., Num. 9:5); and in v. 51 the account of the exodus from Egypt is also brought to a close. All that Jehovah promised to Moses in Exodus 6:6 and 26 had now been fulfilled. But although v. 51 is a concluding formula, and so belongs to the account just closed, *Abenezra* was so far right in wishing to connect this verse with the commencement of the following chapter, that such concluding formulae generally serve to link together the different incidents, and therefore not only wind up what

goes before, but introduce what has yet to come.

### Exodus 13

**Exodus 13:1–16.** Sanctification of the First-Born, and Promulgation of the Law for the Feast of Mazzoth.—Vv. 1, 2. The sanctification of the first-born was closely connected with the Passover. By this the deliverance of the Israelitish first-born was effected, and the object of this deliverance was their sanctification. Because Jehovah had delivered the first-born of Israel, they were to be sanctified to Him. If the Israelites completed their communion with Jehovah in the Passover, and celebrated the commencement of their divine standing in the feast of unleavened bread, they gave uninterrupted effect to their divine sonship in the sanctification of the first-born. For this reason, probably, the sanctification of the first-born was commanded by Jehovah at Succoth, immediately after the exodus, and contemporaneously with the institution of the seven days' feast of Mazzoth (cf. Exodus 2:15), so that the place assigned it in the historical record is the correct one; whereas the divine appointment of the feast of Mazzoth had been mentioned before (Exodus 12:15ff.), and the communication of that appointment to the people was all that remained to be mentioned here.

**Exodus 13:2.** Every first-born of man and beast was to be sanctified to Jehovah, i.e., given up to Him for His service. As the expression, "all the first-born," applied to both man and beast, the explanation is added, "everything that opens the womb among the Israelites, of man and beast."

כָּל־פֶּטֶר כָּל־רֶחֶם for כָּל־פֶּטֶת רֶחֶם (v. 12): כָּל

is placed like an adjective after the noun, as in

Num. 8:16, כָּל־בְּכוֹר for בְּכוֹר כָּל, διανοῖγον πᾶσαν μήτραν for πᾶν διανοῖγον μήτραν (v. 12,

LXX). לִי הוּא: "it is Mine," it belongs to Me. This right to the first-born was not founded upon the fact, that "Jehovah was the Lord and Creator of all things, and as every created object owed

its life to Him, to Him should its life be entirely devoted," as Kurtz maintains, though without scriptural proof; but in Num. 3:13 and 8:17 the ground of the claim is expressly mentioned, viz., that on the day when Jehovah smote all the first-born of Egypt, He sanctified to Himself all the first-born of the Israelites, both of man and beast. Hence the sanctification of the first-born rested not upon the deliverance of the first-born sons from the stroke of the destroyer through the atoning blood of the paschal lamb, but upon the fact that God sanctified them for Himself at that time, and therefore delivered them. But Jehovah sanctified the first-born of Israel to Himself by adopting Israel as His first-born son (Exodus 4:22), or as His possession. Because Israel had been chosen as the nation of Jehovah, its first-born of man and beast were spared, and for that reason they were henceforth to be sanctified to Jehovah. In what way, is more clearly defined in vv. 12ff.

**Exodus 13:3–10.** The directions as to the seven days' feast of unleavened bread (Exodus 12:15–20) were made known by Moses to the people on the day of the exodus, at the first station, namely, Succoth; but in the account of this, only the most important points are repeated, and the yearly commemoration is enjoined. In v. 3, Egypt is called a "slave-house," inasmuch as Israel was employed in slave-labour there, and treated as a slave population (cf. Exodus 20:2;

Deut. 5:6; 6:12, etc.). חֲזֶק יָד "strength of hand," in vv. 3, 14, and 16, is more emphatic

than the more usual חֲזָקָה יָד (Exodus 3:19, etc.).—On v. 5, see Exodus 3:8, and 12:25. In v. 6, the term "feast to Jehovah" points to the keeping of the seventh day by a holy convocation and the suspension of work (Exodus 12:16). It is only of the seventh day that this is expressly stated, because it was understood as a matter of course, that the first was a feast of Jehovah.

**Exodus 13:8.** "because of that which Jehovah did to me" (הִזְקָה in a relative sense, *is qui*, for

אֶשֶׂר, see *Ewald*, § 331): sc., “I eat unleavened bread,” or, “I observe this service.” This completion of the imperfect sentence follows readily from the context, and the whole verse may be explained from Exodus 12:26, 27.

**Exodus 13:9.** The festival prescribed was to be to Israel “for a sign upon its hand, and for a memorial between the eyes.” These words presuppose the custom of wearing mnemonic signs upon the hand and forehead; but they are not to be traced to the heathen custom of branding soldiers and slaves with marks upon the hand and forehead. For the parallel passages in Deut. 6:8 and 11:18, “bind them for a sign upon your hand,” are proofs that the allusion is neither to branding nor writing on the hand. Hence the sign upon the hand probably consisted of a bracelet round the wrist, and the *ziccaron* between the eyes, of a band worn upon the forehead. The words are then used figuratively, as a proverbial expression employed to give emphasis to the injunction to bear this precept continually in mind, to be always mindful to observe it. This is still more apparent from the reason assigned, “that the law of Jehovah may be in thy mouth.” For it was not by mnemonic slips upon the hand and forehead that a law was so placed in the mouth as to be talked of continually (Deut. 6:7; 11:19), but by the reception of it into the heart and its continual fulfilment. (See also v. 16.) As the origin and meaning of the festival were to be talked of in connection with the eating of unleavened bread, so conversation about the law of Jehovah was introduced at the same time, and the obligation to keep it renewed and brought vividly to mind.

**Exodus 13:10.** This ordinance the Israelites were to keep לְמוֹעֲדָהּ, “at its appointed time” (i.e., from the 15th to the 21st Abib),—“from days to days,” i.e., as often as the days returned, therefore from year to year (cf. Judg. 11:40; 21:19; 1 Sam. 1:3; 2:19).

**Exodus 13:11–16.** In vv. 11–16, Moses communicated to the people the law briefly

noticed in v. 2, respecting the sanctification of the first-born. This law was to come into force when Israel had taken possession of the promised land. Then everything which opened the womb was to be given up to the Lord.

הָעֵבִיר לַיהוָה: to cause to pass over to

Jehovah, to consecrate or give up to Him as a sacrifice (cf. Lev. 18:21). In “all that openeth the womb” the first-born of both man and beast are included (v. 2). This general expression is then particularized in three clauses, commencing

with וְכֹל: (a) בְּהֵמָה *cattle*, i.e., oxen, sheep,

and goats, as clean domestic animals, but only the males; (b) *asses*, as the most common of the unclean domestic animals, instead of the whole of these animals, Num. 18:15; (c) the *first-born of the children of Israel*. The female first-born of man and beast were exempted from consecration. Of the clean animals the first-

born male (פֶּטֶר רְחֵם abbreviated from פֶּטֶר רָחֵם,

and שָׁגַר from the Chaldee שָׁגַר to throw, the dropped young one) was to belong to Jehovah, i.e., to be sacrificed to Him (v. 15, and Num. 18:17). This law is still further explained in Exodus 22:29, where it is stated that the sacrificing was not to take place till the eighth day after the birth; and in Deut. 15:21, 22, it is still further modified by the command, that an animal which had any fault, and was either blind or lame, was not to be sacrificed, but to be slain and eaten at home, like other edible animals. These two rules sprang out of the general instructions concerning the sacrificial animals. The first-born of the ass was to be

redeemed with a male lamb or kid (שֶׂה), as at Exodus 12:3); and if not redeemed, it was to be

killed. עֶרְף: from עָרַף the nape, to break the neck (Deut. 21:4, 6). The first-born sons of Israel were also to be consecrated to Jehovah as a sacrifice; not indeed in the manner of the heathen, by slaying and burning upon the altar, but by presenting them to the Lord as living

sacrifices, devoting all their powers of body and mind to His service. Inasmuch as the first birth represented all the births, the whole nation was to consecrate itself to Jehovah, and present itself as a priestly nation in the consecration of the first-born. But since this consecration had its foundation, not in nature, but in the grace of its call, the sanctification of the first birth cannot be deduced from the separation of the first-born to the priesthood. This view, which was very prevalent among early writers, has been thoroughly overthrown by *Outram* (*de Sacrif.* 1, c. 4) and *Vitringa* (*observ.* ii. c. 2, pp. 272ff.). As the priestly character of the nation did not give a title in itself to the administration of the priesthood within the theocracy, so the first-born were not *eo ipso* chosen as priests through their consecration to Jehovah. In what way they were to consecrate their life to the Lord, depended upon the appointment of the Lord, which was, that they were to perform the non-priestly work of the sanctuary, to be servants of the priests in their holy service. Even this work was afterwards transferred to the Levites (Num. 3). At the same time the obligation was imposed upon the people to redeem their first-born sons from the service which was binding upon them, but was now transferred to the Levites, who were substituted for them; in other words, to pay five shekels of silver *per* head to the priesthood (Num. 3:47; 18:16). In anticipation of this arrangement, which was to be introduced afterwards, the *redemption* (פְּדוּתָהּ) of the male first-born is already established here.—On v. 14, see Exodus 12:26. מָחָר: *to-morrow*, for the future generally, as in Gen. 30:33. מַה־זֹּאת: *what does this mean? quid sibi vult hoc praeceptum ac primogenitura* (Jonathan).

**Exodus 13:15.** הִקְשָׁה לְשִׁלְחָנוּ: “*he made hard*” (sc., his heart, cf. Exodus 7:3) “*to let us go.*” The sanctification of the first-born is enforced in v. 16 in the same terms as the keeping of the feast of Mazzoth in v. 9, with this

exception, that instead of לִזְכְּרוֹן we have

לְטוֹטְפֹת, as in Deut. 6:8, and 11:18. The word

טוֹטְפֹת signifies neither amulet nor στίγματα, but “binding” or headbands, as is evident from the Chaldee טוֹטְפָא armlet (2 Sam. 1:10),

טוֹטְפֹתָא tiara (Esth. 8:15; Ezek. 24:17, 23).

This command was interpreted literally by the Talmudists, and the use of *tephillim*, phylacteries (Matt. 23:5), founded upon it;<sup>20</sup> the Caraites, on the contrary, interpreted it figuratively, as a proverbial expression for constant reflection upon, and fulfilment of, the divine commands. The correctness of the latter is obvious from the words themselves, which do not say that the commands are to be written upon scrolls, but only that they are to be to the Israelites for signs upon the hand, and for bands between the eyes, i.e., they are to be kept in view like memorials upon the forehead and the hand. The expression in Deut. 6:8, “Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes,” does not point at all to the symbolizing of the divine commands by an outward sign to be worn upon the hand, or to bands with passages of the law inscribed upon them, to be worn on the forehead between the eyes; nor does the “advance in Deut. 6:8 from heart to word, and from word to hand or act,” necessarily lead to the peculiar notion of *Schultz*, that “the sleeve and turban were to be used as reminders of the divine commands, the former by being fastened to the hand in a peculiar way, the latter by an end being brought down upon the forehead.” The line of thought referred to merely expresses the idea, that the Israelites were not only to retain the commands of God in their hearts, and to confess them with the mouth, but to fulfil them with the hand, or in act and deed, and thus to show themselves in their whole bearing as the guardians and observers of the law. As the hand is the medium of action, and carrying in the hand represents handling, so the

space between the eyes, or the forehead, is that part of the body which is generally visible, and what is worn there is worn to be seen. This figurative interpretation is confirmed and placed beyond doubt by such parallel passages as Prov. 3:3, "Bind them (the commandments) about thy neck; write them upon the tables of thine heart" (cf. vv. 21, 22, 4:21; 6:21, 22; 7:3).

### JOURNEY FROM SUCCOTH, AND PASSAGE THROUGH THE RED SEA.— CH. 13:17–14:31

**Exodus 13:17–22.** Journey from Succoth to Etham.—Succoth, Israel's first place of encampment after their departure, was probably the rendezvous for the whole nation, so that it was from this point that they first proceeded in an orderly march. The shortest and most direct route from Egypt to Canaan would have been by the road to Gaza, in the land of the Philistines; but God did not lead them by this road, lest they should repent of their movement as soon as the Philistines opposed them, and so desire to return to Egypt,

פָּן: מִן, after אָמַר to say (to himself), i.e., to think, with the subordinate idea of anxiety. The Philistines were very warlike, and would hardly have failed to resist the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, of which they had taken possession of a very large portion. But the Israelites were not prepared for such a conflict, as is sufficiently evident from their despair, in Exodus 14:10ff. For this reason God made them

turn round (יָסַב for יָסַב, see *Ges.* § 67) by the way of the desert of the Red Sea. Previous to the account of their onward march, it is still further stated in vv. 18, 19, that they went out equipped, and took Joseph's bones with them, according to his last request. חֲמֻשִׁים, from

חֲמֵשׁ *lumbus*, lit., *lumbis accincti*, signifies equipped, as a comparison of this word as it is

used in Josh 1:14; 4:12, with חֲלוּצִים in Num. 32:30, 32, Deut. 3:18, places beyond all doubt; that is to say, not "armed," καθωπλισμένοι (*Sym.*), but prepared for the march, as contrasted with fleeing in disorder like fugitives. For this reason they were able to fulfil Joseph's request, from which fact *Calvin* draws the following conclusion: "In the midst of their adversity the people had never lost sight of the promised redemption. For unless the celebrated adjuration of Joseph had been a subject of common conversation among them all, Moses would never have thought of it."

**Exodus 13:20.** From Succoth they went to Etham. With regard to the situation of *Succoth*

(from סֹכֶת huts, probably a shepherd encampment), only so much can be determined, that this place was to the south-east of Raëmses, on the way to Etham. *Etham* was "at the end of the desert," which is called the desert of *Etham* in Num. 33:8, and the desert of *Shur* (*Jifar*, see Gen. 16:7) in Exodus 15:22; so that it was where Egypt ends and the desert of Arabia begins, in a line which curves from the northern extremity of the Gulf of Arabia up to the *Birket Temseh*, or Crocodile Lake, and then on to Lake *Menzalet*. According to the more precise statements of travellers, this line is formed from the point of the gulf northwards, by a broad sandy tract of land to the east of *Ajrud*, which never rises more than about three feet above the water-mark (*Robinson*, Pal. i. p. 80). It takes in the banks of the old canal, which commence about an hour and a half to the north of *Suez*, and run northwards for a distance which *Seetzen* accomplished in 4 hours upon camels (*Rob.* Pal. i. p. 548; *Seetzen*, R. iii. p. 151, 152). Then follow the so-called Bitter Lakes, a dry, sometimes swampy basin, or deep white salt plain, the surface of which, according to the measurements of French engineers, is 40 or 50 feet lower than the ordinary water-mark at *Suez*. On the north this basin is divided from the *Birket Temseh* by a still higher tract of land, the so-called Isthmus of *Arbek*. Hence "Etham at the end of the desert" is to be sought for either

on the Isthmus of Arbek, in the neighbourhood of the later Serapeum, or at the southern end of the Bitter Lakes. The distance is a conclusive argument against the former, and in favour of the latter; for although *Seetzen* travelled from Suez to Arbek in 8 hours, yet according to the accounts of the French *savan, de Bois Aymé*, who passed through this basin several times, from the northern extremity of the Bitter Lakes to Suez is 60,000 mètres (16 hours' journey),— a distance so great, that the children of Israel could not possibly have gone from *Etham* to *Hachiroth* in a day's march. Hence we must look for *Etham* at the southern extremity of the basin of the Bitter Lake,<sup>21</sup> which Israel might reach in two days from *Abu Keishib*, and then on the third day arrive at the plain of Suez, between *Ajrud* and the sea. *Succoth*, therefore, must be sought on the western border of the Bitter Lake.

**Exodus 13:21, 22.** From *Etham*, at the edge of the desert which separates Egypt from Asia, the Israelites were to enter the pathless desert, and leave the inhabited country. Jehovah then undertook to direct the march, and give them a safe-conduct, through a miraculous token of His presence. Whilst it is stated in vv. 17, 18, that *Elohim* led them and determined the direction of their road, to show that they did not take the course, which they pursued, upon their own judgment, but by the direction of God; in vv. 21, 22, it is said that "Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night," i.e., that they might march at all hours.<sup>22</sup> To this sign of the divine presence and guidance there was a natural analogon in the caravan fire, which consisted of small iron vessels or grates, with wood fires burning in them, fastened at the end of long poles, and carried as a guide in front of caravans, and, according to *Curtius (de gestis AlExodus M. V. 2, 7)*, in trackless countries in the front of armies also, and by which the direction of the road was indicated in the day-time by the smoke, and at night by the light of the fire. There was a still closer analogy in the custom of the ancient Persians, as described by *Curtius (iii. 3, 9)*, of

carrying fire, "which they called sacred and eternal," in silver altars, in front of the army. But the pillar of cloud and fire must not be confounded with any such caravan and army fire, or set down as nothing more than a mythical conception, or a dressing up of this natural custom. The cloud was not produced by an ordinary caravan fire, nor was it "a mere symbol of the presence of God, which derived all its majesty from the belief of the Israelites, that Jehovah was there in the midst of them," according to *Köster's* attempt to idealize the rationalistic explanation; but it had a miraculous origin and a supernatural character. We are not to regard the phenomenon as consisting of two different pillars, that appeared alternately, one of cloud, and the other of fire. There was but one pillar of both cloud and fire (Exodus 14:24); for even when shining in the dark, it is still called the pillar of cloud (Exodus 14:19), or the cloud (Num. 9:21); so that it was a cloud with a dark side and a bright one, causing darkness and also lighting the night (Exodus 14:20), or "a cloud, and fire in it by night" (Exodus 40:38). Consequently we have to imagine the cloud as the covering of the fire, so that by day it appeared as a dark cloud in contrast with the light of the sun, but by night as a fiery splendour, "a fire-look"

(כְּמַרְאֵה אֵשׁ, Num. 9:15, 16). When this cloud went before the army of Israel, it assumed the form of a column; so that by day it resembled a dark column of smoke rising up towards heaven, and by night a column of fire, to show the whole army what direction to take. But when it stood still above the tabernacle, or came down upon it, it most probably took the form of a round globe of cloud; and when it separated the Israelites from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, we have to imagine it spread out like a bank of cloud, forming, as it were, a dividing wall. In this cloud Jehovah, or the Angel of God, the visible representative of the invisible God under the Old Testament, was really present with the people of Israel, so that He spoke to Moses and gave him His commandments out of the cloud. In this, too,

appeared “the glory of the Lord” (Exodus 16:10; 40:34; Num. 17:7), the Shechinah of the later Jewish theology. The fire in the pillar of cloud was the same as that in which the Lord revealed Himself to Moses out of the bush, and afterwards descended upon Sinai amidst thunder and lightning in a thick cloud (Exodus 19:16, 18). It was a symbol of the “zeal of the Lord,” and therefore was enveloped in a cloud, which protected Israel by day from heat, sunstroke, and pestilence (Isa. 4:5, 6; 49:10; Ps. 91:5, 6; 121:6), and by night lighted up its path by its luminous splendour, and defended it from the terrors of the night and from all calamity (Ps. 27:1ff., 91:5, 6); but which also threatened sudden destruction to those who murmured against God (Num. 17:10), and sent out a devouring fire against the rebels and consumed them (Lev. 10:2; Num. 16:35). As *Sartorius* has aptly said, “We must by no means regard it as a mere appearance or a poetical figure, and just as little as a mere mechanical clothing of elementary forms, such, for example, as storm-clouds or natural fire. Just as little, too, must we suppose the visible and material part of it to have been an element of the divine nature, which is purely spiritual. We must rather regard it as a dynamic conformation, or a higher corporeal form, composed of the earthly sphere and atmosphere, through the determining influence of the personal and specific (specimen faciens) presence of God upon the earthly element, which corporeal form God assumed and pervaded, that He might manifest His own real presence therein.”<sup>23</sup>

**Exodus 13:22.** This sign of the presence of God did not depart from Israel so long as the people continued in the wilderness.

## Exodus 14

**Exodus 14.** Passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea; Destruction of Pharaoh and His Army.—Vv. 1, 2. At Etham God commanded the Israelites to turn (שוב) and encamp by the sea, before *Pihachiroth*, between *Migdol* and the sea, before *Baalzephon*, opposite to it. In Num. 33:7, the march is described thus: on leaving Etham

they turned up to (על) *Pihachiroth*, which is before (על-פני) in the front of) *Baalzephon*, and encamped before *Migdol*. The only one of these places that can be determined with any certainty is *Pihachiroth*, or *Hachiroth* (Num. 33:8, *pi* being simply the Egyptian article), which name has undoubtedly been preserved in the *Ajrud* mentioned by *Edrisi* in the middle of the twelfth century. At present this is simply a fort, which a well 250 feet deep, the water of which is so bitter, however, that camels can hardly drink it. It stands on the pilgrim road from Kahira to Mecca, four hours' journey to the north-west of Suez (vid., *Robinson*, Pal. i. p. 65). A plain, nearly ten miles long and about as many broad, stretches from *Ajrud* to the sea to the west of Suez, and from the foot of *Atâkah* to the arm of the sea on the north of Suez (*Robinson*, Pal. i. 65). This plain most probably served the Israelites as a place of encampment, so that they encamped before, i.e., to the east of, *Ajrud* towards the sea. The other places just also be sought in the neighbourhood of *Hachiroth* (*Ajrud*), though no traces of them have been discovered yet. *Migdol* cannot be the *Migdol* twelve Roman miles to the south of *Pelusium*, which formed the north-eastern boundary of Egypt (Ezek. 29:10), for according to Num. 33:7, Israel encamped before *Migdol*; nor is it to be sought for in the hill and mountain-pass called *Montala* by *Burckhardt*, *el Muntala* by *Robinson* (pp. 63, 64), two hours' journey to the northwest of *Ajrud*, as *Knobel* supposes, for this hill lies too far to the west, and when looked at from the sea is almost behind *Ajrud*; so that the expression “encamping before *Migdol*” does not suit this situation, not to mention the fact that a tower (מגדל) does not indicate a watch-tower (מצפה). *Migdol* was probably to the south of *Ajrud*, on one of the heights of the *Atâkah*, and near it, though more to the south-east, *Baalzephon* (*locus Typhonis*), which *Michaelis* and *Forster* suppose to be *Heroopolis*, whilst

*Knobel* places it on the eastern shore, and others to the south of Hachiroth. If Israel therefore did not go straight into the desert from Etham, on the border of the desert, but went southwards into the plain of Suez, to the west of the head of the Red Sea, they were obliged to bend round, i.e., "to turn" from the road they had taken first. The distance from Etham to the place of encampment at Hachiroth must be at least a six hours' journey (a tolerable day's journey, therefore, for a whole nation), as the road from Suez to Ajrud takes four hours (*Robinson*, i. p. 66).

**Exodus 14:3-9.** This turn in their route was not out of the way for the passage through the Red Sea; but apart from this, it was not only out of the way, but a very foolish way, according to human judgment. God commanded Moses to take this road, that He might be honoured upon Pharaoh, and show the Egyptians that He was Jehovah (cf. vv. 30, 31). Pharaoh would say of the Israelites, They have *lost their way*; they are wandering about in confusion; the desert has shut them in, as in a prison upon which the door is shut (סָגַר עַל as in Job 12:14); and in his obduracy he would resolve to go after them with his army, and bring them under his sway again.

**Exodus 14:4ff.** When it was announced that Israel had fled, "the heart of Pharaoh and his servants turned against the people," and they repented that they had let them go. When and whence the information came, we are not told. The common opinion, that it was brought after the Israelites changed their route, has no foundation in the text. For the change in Pharaoh's feelings towards the Israelites, and his regret that he had let them go, were caused not by their supposed mistake, but by their flight. Now the king and his servants regarded the exodus as a flight, as soon as they recovered from the panic caused by the death of the first-born, and began to consider the consequences of the permission given to the people to leave his service. This may have occurred as early as the second day after the exodus. In that case,

Pharaoh would have had time to collect chariots and horsemen, and overtake the Israelites at Hachiroth, as they could easily perform the same journey in two days, or one day and a half, to which the Israelites had taken more than three. "He yoked his chariot (had it yoked, cf. 1 Kings 6:14), and took his people (i.e., his warriors) with him," viz., "six hundred chosen war chariots (v. 7), and all the chariots of Egypt" (sc., that he could get together in the time), and

"royal guards upon them all." שְׁלֵשִׁים,

τριστατάι, *tristatae qui et terni statores vocantur, nomen est secundi gradus post regiam dignitatem* (Jerome on Ezek. 23:23), not charioteers (see my Com. on 1 Kings 9:22).

According to v. 9, the army raised by Pharaoh

consisted of chariot horses (סוּס רֶכֶב), riding

horses (פָּרָשִׁים, lit., runners, 1 Kings 5:6), and

חֵיל, the men belonging to them. War chariots and cavalry were always the leading force of the Egyptians (cf. Isa. 31:1; 36:9). Three times (vv. 4, 8, and 17) it is stated that Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he pursued the Israelites, to show that God had decreed this hardening, to glorify Himself in the judgment and death of the proud king, who would not honour God, the Holy One, in his life. "And the children of Israel were going out with a high hand:" v. 8. is a conditional clause in the sense of, "although they went out" (*Ewald*, §

341). יָד רָמָה, the high hand, is the high hand

of Jehovah with the might which it displayed (Isa. 26:11), not the armed hand of the Israelites. This is the meaning also in Num.

33:3; it is different in Num. 15:30. The very fact that Pharaoh did not discern the lifting up of Jehovah's hand in the exodus of Israel displayed the hardening of his heart. "Beside Pihachiroth:" see v. 2.

**Exodus 14:10-14.** When the Israelites saw the advancing army of the Egyptians, they were greatly alarmed; for their situation to human eyes was a very unfortunate one. Shut in on the

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east by the sea, on the south and west by high mountains, and with the army of the Egyptians behind them, destruction seemed inevitable, since they were neither outwardly armed nor inwardly prepared for a successful battle. Although they cried unto the Lord, they had no confidence in His help, notwithstanding all the previous manifestation so the fidelity of the true God; they therefore gave vent to the despair of their natural heart in complaints against Moses, who had brought them out of the servitude of Egypt to give them up to die in the desert. "Hast thou, because there were no graves at all (מִבְּלִי אֵין), a double negation to give emphasis) in Egypt, fetched us to die in the desert?" Their further words in v. 12 exaggerated the true state of the case from cowardly despair. For it was only when the oppression increased, after Moses' first interview with Pharaoh, that they complained of what Moses had done (Exodus 5:21), whereas at first they accepted his proposals most thankfully (Exodus 4:31), and even afterwards implicitly obeyed his directions.

**Exodus 14:13.** Moses met their unbelief and fear with the energy of strong faith, and promised them such help from the Lord, that they would never see again the Egyptians,

whom they had seen that day. אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתֶם does not mean ὃν τρόπον ἑώρακατε (LXX), *quemadmodum vidistis* (Ros., Kn.); but the sentence is inverted: "The Egyptians, whom ye have seen to-day, ye will never see again."

**Exodus 14:14.** "Jehovah will fight for you (לְכֶם, *dat comm.*), but you will be silent," i.e., keep quiet, and not complain any more (cf. Gen. 34:5).

**Exodus 14:15–29.** The words of Jehovah to Moses, "What criest thou to Me?" imply that Moses had appealed to God for help, or laid the complaints of the people before Him, and do not convey any reproof, but merely an admonition to resolute action. The people were to move forward, and Moses was to stretch out

his hand with his staff over the sea and divide it, so that the people might go through the midst on dry ground. Vv. 17 and 18 repeat the promise in vv. 3, 4. The command and promise were followed by immediate help (vv. 19–29). Whilst Moses divided the water with his staff, and thus prepared the way, the angel of God removed from before the Israelites, and placed himself behind them as a defence against the Egyptians, who were following them. "Upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen" (v. 17), is in apposition to "all his host;" as Pharaoh's army consisted entirely of chariots and horsemen (cf. v. 18).

**Exodus 14:20.** "And it was the cloud and the darkness (sc., to the Egyptians), and lighted up the night (sc., to the Israelites)." *Fuit nubes partim lucida et partim tenebricosa, ex una parte tenebricosa fuit Aegyptiis, ex altera lucida Israelitis* (Jonathan). Although the article is

striking in וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ, the difficulty is not to be removed, as *Ewald* proposes, by substituting וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ, "and as for the cloud, it caused darkness;" for in that case the grammar would require the imperfect with *consec.* This alteration of the text is also rendered suspicious from the fact that both *Onkelos* and the LXX read and render the word as a substantive.

**Exodus 14:21, 22.** When Moses stretched out his hand with the staff (v. 16) over the sea, "Jehovah made the water go (flow away) by a strong east wind the whole night, and made the sea into dry (ground), and the water split itself" (i.e., divided by flowing northward and southward); "and the Israelites went in the midst of the sea (where the water had been driven away by the wind) in the dry, and the water was a wall (i.e., a protection formed by the damming up of the water) on the right and on the left."

קִדְדִים, the east wind, which may apply either to the south-east or north-east, as the Hebrew has special terms for the four quarters only. Whether the wind blew directly from the east,

or somewhat from the south-east or north-east, cannot be determined, as we do not know the exact spot where the passage was made. in any case, the division of the water in both directions could only have been effected by an east wind; and although even now the ebb is strengthened by a north-east wind, as *Tischendorf* says, and the flood is driven so much to the south by a strong north-west wind that the gulf can be ridden through, and even forded on foot, to the north of Suez (v. *Schub.* Reise ii. p. 269), and “as a rule the rise and fall of the water in the Arabian Gulf is nowhere so dependent upon the wind as it is at Suez” (*Wellsted*, Arab. ii. 41, 42), the drying of the sea as here described cannot be accounted for by an ebb strengthened by the east wind, because the water is all driven southwards in the ebb, and not sent in two opposite directions. Such a division could only be produced by a wind sent by God, and working with omnipotent force, in connection with which the natural phenomenon of the ebb may no doubt have exerted a subordinate influence.<sup>24</sup> The passage was effected in the night, through the whole of which the wind was blowing, and in the morning watch (between three and six o’clock, v. 24) it was finished.

As to the possibility of a whole nation crossing with their flocks, *Robinson* concludes that this might have been accomplished within the period of an extraordinary ebb, which lasted three, or at the most four hours, and was strengthened by the influence of a miraculous wind. “As the Israelites,” he observes, “numbered more than two millions of persons, besides flocks and herds, they would of course be able to pass but slowly. If the part left dry were broad enough to enable them to cross in a body one thousand abreast, which would require a space of more than half a mile in breadth (and is perhaps the largest supposition admissible), still the column would be more than two thousand persons in depth, and in all probability could not have extended less than two miles. It would then have occupied at least an hour in passing over its own length, or in entering the sea; and deducting this from the largest time intervening, before the Egyptians

also have entered the sea, there will remain only time enough, under the circumstances, for the body of the Israelites to have passed, at the most, over a space of three or four miles.” (*Researches in Palestine*, vol. i. p. 84.)

But as the dividing of the water cannot be accounted for by an extraordinary ebb, even though miraculously strengthened, we have no occasion to limit the time allowed for the crossing to the ordinary period of an ebb. If God sent the wind, which divided the water and laid the bottom dry, as soon as night set in, the crossing might have begun at nine o’clock in the evening, if not before, and lasted till four or five o’clock in the morning (see v. 27). By this extension of the time we gain enough for the flocks, which *Robinson* has left out of his calculation. The Egyptians naturally followed close upon the Israelites, from whom they were only divided by the pillar of cloud and fire; and when the rear of the Israelites had reached the opposite shore, they were in the midst of the sea. And in the morning watch Jehovah cast a look upon them in the pillar of cloud and fire, and threw their army into confusion (v. 24). The breadth of the gulf at the point in question cannot be precisely determined. At the narrowest point above Suez, it is only two-thirds of a mile in breadth, or, according to *Niebuhr*, 3450 feet; but it was probably broader formerly, and even now is so farther up, opposite to *Tell Kolzum* (*Rob.* i. pp. 84 and 70). The place where the Israelites crossed must have been broader, otherwise the Egyptian army, with more than six hundred chariots and many horsemen, could not have been in the sea and perished there when the water returned.—“*And Jehovah looked at the army of the Egyptians in (with) the pillar of cloud and fire, and troubled it.*” This look of Jehovah is to be regarded as the appearance of fire suddenly bursting forth from the pillar of cloud that was turned towards the Egyptians, which threw the Egyptian army into alarm and confusion, and not as “a storm with thunder and lightning,” as *Josephus* and even *Rosenmüller* assume, on the ground of Ps. 78:18, 19, though without noticing the fact that the psalmist has merely

given a poetical version of the event, and intends to show "how all the powers of nature entered the service of the majestic revelation of Jehovah, when He judged Egypt and set Israel free" (*Delitzsch*). The fiery look of Jehovah was a much more stupendous phenomenon than a storm; hence its effect was incomparably grander, viz., a state of confusion in which the wheels of the chariots were broken off from the axles, and the Egyptians were therefore impeded in their efforts to escape.

**Exodus 14:25.** "And (Jehovah) made the wheels of his (the Egyptian's) chariots give way, and made, that he (the Egyptian) drove in difficulty."

גָּרַף to drive a chariot (2 Sam. 6:3, cf. 2 Kings 9:20).

**Exodus 14:26, 27.** Then God directed Moses to stretch out his staff again over the sea, and the sea came back with the turning of the morning (when the morning turned, or approached) to

its position (נִתְקַן *perennitas*, the lasting or permanent position), and the Egyptians were flying to meet it. "When the east wind which divided the sea ceased to blow, the sea from the north and south began to flow together on the western side;" whereupon, to judge from Exodus 15:10, the wind began immediately to blow from the west, and drove the waves in the face of the flying Egyptians. "And thus Jehovah shook the Egyptians (i.e., plunged them into the greatest confusion) in the midst of the sea," so that Pharaoh's chariots and horsemen, to the very last man, were buried in the waves.

**Exodus 14:30, 31.** This miraculous deliverance of Israel from the power of Egypt, through the mighty hand of their God, produced so wholesome a fear of the Lord, that they believed in Jehovah, and His servant Moses.

**Exodus 14:31.** "The great hand:" i.e., the might which Jehovah had displayed upon Egypt. In addition to the glory of God through the judgment upon Pharaoh (vv. 4, 17), the guidance of Israel through the sea was also designed to establish Israel still more firmly in the fear of the Lord and in faith. But faith in the

Lord was inseparably connected with faith in Moses as the servant of the Lord. Hence the miracle was wrought through the hand and staff of Moses. But this second design of the miraculous guidance of Israel did not exclude the first, viz., glory upon Pharaoh. From this manifestation of Jehovah's omnipotence, the Israelites were to discern not only the merciful Deliverer, but also the holy Judge of the ungodly, that they might grow in the fear of God, as well as in the faith which they had already shown, when, trusting in the omnipotence of Jehovah, they had gone, as though upon dry land (Heb. 11:29), between the watery walls which might at any moment have overwhelmed them.

## Exodus 15

### MOSES' SONG AT THE RED SEA.— CH. 15:1-21

**Exodus 15:1-21.** In the song of praise which Moses and the children of Israel sang at the Red Sea, in celebration of the wonderful works of Jehovah, the congregation of Israel commemorated the fact of its deliverance and its exaltation into the nation of God. By their glorious deliverance from the slave-house of Egypt, Jehovah had practically exalted the seed of Abraham into His own nation; and in the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, He had glorified Himself as God of the gods and King of the heathen, whom no power on earth could defy with impunity. As the fact of Israel's deliverance from the power of its oppressors is of everlasting importance to the Church of the Lord in its conflict with the ungodly powers of the world, in which the Lord continually overthrows the enemies of His kingdom, as He overthrew Pharaoh and his horsemen in the depths of the sea: so Moses' song at the Red Sea furnishes the Church of the Lord with the materials for its songs of praise in all the great conflicts which it has to sustain, during its onward course, with the powers of the world. Hence not only does the key-note of this song

resound through all Israel's songs, in praise of the glorious works of Jehovah for the good of His people (see especially Isa. 12), but the song of Moses the servant of God will also be sung, along with the song of the Lamb, by the conquerors who stand upon the "sea of glass," and have gained the victory over the beast and his image (Rev. 15:3).

The substance of this song, which is entirely devoted to the praise and adoration of Jehovah, is the judgment inflicted upon the heathen power of the world in the fall of Pharaoh, and the salvation which flowed from this judgment to Israel. Although Moses is not expressly mentioned as the author of the song, its authenticity, or Mosaic authorship, is placed beyond all doubt by both the contents and the form. The song is composed of three gradually increasing strophes, each of which commences with the praise of Jehovah, and ends with a description of the overthrow of the Egyptian host (vv. 2-5, 6-10, 11-18). The theme announced in the introduction in v. 1 is thus treated in three different ways; and whilst the omnipotence of God, displayed in the destruction of the enemy, is the prominent topic in the first two strophes, the third depicts with prophetic confidence the fruit of this glorious event in the establishment of Israel, as a kingdom of Jehovah, in the promised inheritance. Modern criticism, it is true, has taken offence at this prophetic insight into the future, and rejected the song of Moses, just because the wonders of God are carried forward in vv. 16, 17, beyond the Mosaic times. But it was so natural a thing that, after the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, they should turn their eyes to Canaan, and, looking forward with certainty to the possession of the promised land, should anticipate with believing confidence the foundation of a sanctuary there, in which their God would dwell with them, that none but those who altogether reject the divine mission of Moses, and set down the mighty works of God in Egypt as myths, could ever deny to Moses this anticipation and prospect. Even *Ewald* admits that this grand song of praise

"was probably the immediate effect of first enthusiasm in the Mosaic age," though he also ignores the prophetic character of the song, and denies the reality of any of the supernatural wonders of the Old Testament. There is nothing to prevent our understanding words, "then sang Moses," as meaning that Moses not only sang this song with the Israelites, but composed it for the congregation to the praise of Jehovah.

**Exodus 15:1-5.** *Introduction and first strophe.*—The introduction, which contains the theme of the song, "*Sing will I to the Lord, for highly exalted is He, horse and his rider He hath thrown into the sea,*" was repeated, when sung, as an anti-strophe by a chorus of women, with Miriam at their head (cf. vv. 20, 21); whether after every verse, or only at the close of the

longer strophes, cannot be determined. **גָּאָה** to

arise, to grow up, *trop.* to show oneself exalted; connected with an *inf. abs.* to give still further emphasis. Jehovah had displayed His superiority to all earthly power by casting horses and riders, the proud army of the haughty Pharaoh, into the sea. This had filled His people with rejoicing: (v. 2), "*My strength and song is Jah, He became my salvation; He is my God, whom I extol, my father's God, whom I extalt.*" **עֹז** strength, might, not praise or glory,

even in Ps. 8:2. **זְמִרָה**, an old poetic form for

**זְמִרָה**, from **זָמַר**, primarily to hum; thence

**זָמַר** ψάλλειν, to play music, or sing with a musical accompaniment. *Jah*, the concentration of *Jehovah*, the God of salvation ruling the course of history with absolute freedom (cf. p. 46), has passed from this song into the Psalms, but is restricted to the higher style of poetry. "*For He became salvation to me, granted me deliverance and salvation:*" on the use of *vav consec.* in explanatory clauses, see Gen. 26:12. This clause is taken from our song, and

introduced in Isa. 12:2, Ps. 118:14. **זֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ**: this

*Jah*, such an one is my God. אֱנֹוהוּ: Hiphil of

נָוה, related to נָוה, נָוה, to be lovely, delightful, *Hiph.* to extol, to praise, δοξάσω, *glorificabo* (LXX, *Vulg.*). “*The God of my father:*” i.e., of Abraham as the ancestor of Israel, or, as in Exodus 3:6, of the three patriarchs combined. What He promised them (Gen. 15:14; 46:3, 4) He had now fulfilled.

**Exodus 15:3.** “*Jehovah is a man of war:*” one who knows how to make war, and possesses the power to destroy His foes. “*Jehovah is His name:*” i.e., He has just proved Himself to be the God who rules with unlimited might. For (v. 4) “*Pharaoh’s chariots and his might* (his military force) *He cast into the sea, and the choice* (the chosen ones) *of his knights* (*shelishim*, see Exodus 14:7) *were drowned in the Red Sea.*”

**Exodus 15:5.** “*Floods cover them* (יִבְסִימוּ), defectively written for יִבְסִיו = יִבְסוּ, and the suffix מו for מו, only used here); *they go down into the deep like stone,*” which never appears again.

**Exodus 15:6–10.** Jehovah had not only proved Himself to be a true man of war in destroying the Egyptians, but also as the glorious and strong one, who overthrows His enemies at the very moment when they think they are able to destroy His people.

**Exodus 15:6.** “*Thy right hand, Jehovah, glorified in power* (gloriously equipped with power: on the Yod in נֶאֱדָרָי, see Gen. 31:39; the form is masc., and יָמִין, which is of common gender, is first of all construed as a masculine, as in Prov. 27:16, and then as a feminine), “*Thy right hand dashes in pieces the enemy.*” רָצַץ = רָעַץ: only used here, and in Judg. 10:8. The thought it quite a general one: the right hand of Jehovah smites every foe. This thought is deduced from the proof just seen of the power of God, and is

still further expanded in v. 7, “*In the fulness of Thy majesty Thou pullest down Thine*

*opponents.*” הִרַס generally applied to the pulling down of buildings; then used figuratively for the destruction of foes, who seek to destroy the building (the work) of God;

in this sense here and Ps. 28:5. קָמִים: those that rise up in hostility against a man (Deut. 33:11; Ps. 18:40, etc.). “*Thou lettest out Thy*

*burning heat, it devours them like stubble.*” חָרָה, the burning breath of the wrath of God, which Jehovah causes to stream out like fire (Ezek. 7:3), was probably a play upon the fiery look cast upon the Egyptians from the pillar of cloud (cf. Isa. 9:18; 10:17; and on the last words, Isa. 5:24, Nah. 1:10).

**Exodus 15:8–10.** Thus had Jehovah annihilated the Egyptians. “*And by the breath of Thy nostrils* (i.e., the strong east wind sent by God, which is described as the blast of the breath of His nostrils; cf. Ps. 18:16) *the waters heaped themselves up* (piled themselves up, so that it was possible to go between them like walls);

*the flowing ones stood like a heap*” (נָדָה *cumulus*); it occurs in Josh. 3:13, 16, and Ps. 33:7; 78:13, where it is borrowed from this passage. נִזְלִים:

the running, flowing ones; a poetic epithet applied to waves, rivers, or brooks, Ps. 78:16, 44; Isa. 44:3). “*The waves congealed in the heart of the sea:*” a poetical description of the piling up of the waves like solid masses.

**Exodus 15:9.** “*The enemy said: I pursue, overtake, divide spoil, my soul becomes full of them; I draw my sword, my hand will root them out.*” By these short clauses following one another without any copula, the confidence of the Egyptian as he pursued them breathing vengeance is very strikingly depicted. נַפְשׁ: the soul as the seat of desire, i.e., of fury, which sought to take vengeance on the enemy, “to cool

itself on them.” הוֹרִישׁ: to drive from their possession, to exterminate (cf. Num. 14:12).

**Exodus 15:10.** “*Thou didst blow with Thy breath: the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the mighty waters.*” One breath of God was sufficient to sink the proud foe in the waves of the sea. The waters are called אֲדִירִים, because of the mighty proof of the Creator’s glory which is furnished by the waves as they rush majestically along.

**Exodus 15:11–18.** *Third strophe.* On the ground of this glorious act of God, the song rises in the third strophe into firm assurance, that in His incomparable exaltation above all gods Jehovah will finish the word of salvation, already begun, fill all the enemies of Israel with terror at the greatness of His arm, bring His people to His holy dwelling-place, and plant them on the mountain of His inheritance. What the Lord had done thus far, the singer regarded as a pledge of the future.

**Exodus 15:11.** “*Who is like unto Thee among the gods, O Jehovah* (אֱלִים: not strong ones, but gods, *Elohim*, Ps. 86:8, because none of the many so-called gods could perform such deeds), *who is like unto Thee, glorified in holiness?*” God had glorified Himself in holiness through the redemption of His people and the destruction of His foes; so that Asaph could sing, “Thy way, O God, is in holiness” (Ps.

78:13). קִדְשׁ, holiness, is the sublime and incomparable majesty of God, exalted above all the imperfections and blemishes of the finite creature (vid., Exodus 19:6). “*Fearful for praises, doing wonders.*” The bold expression נוֹרָא

תְּהִלָּתֶךָ conveys more than *summe venerandus*, *s. colendus laudibus*, and signifies terrible to praise, *terribilis laudibus*. As His rule among men is fearful (Ps. 66:5), because He performs fearful miracles, so it is only with fear and trembling that man can sing songs of praise worthy of His wondrous works. *Omnium enim*

*laudantium vires, linguas et mentes superant ideoque magno cum timore et tremore eum laudant omnes angeli et sancti* (C. a Lap.). “*Thou stretchest out Thy hand, the earth swallows them.*” With these words the singer passes in survey all the mighty acts of the Lord, which were wrapt up in this miraculous overthrow of the Egyptians. The words no longer refer to the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. What Egypt had experienced would come upon all the enemies of the Lord and His people. Neither the idea of the earth swallowing them, nor the use of the imperfect, is applicable to the destruction of the Egyptians (see vv. 1, 4, 5, 10, 19, where the perfect is applied to it as already accomplished).

**Exodus 15:13.** “*Thou leadest through Thy mercy the people whom Thou redeemest; Thou guidest them through Thy might to Thy holy habitation.*” The deliverance from Egypt and guidance through the Red Sea were a pledge to the redeemed people of their entrance into the promised land. The holy habitation of God was Canaan (Ps. 78:54), which had been consecrated as a sacred abode for Jehovah in the midst of His people by the revelations made to the patriarchs there, and especially by the appearance of God at Bethel (Gen. 28:16ff., 31:13; 35:7).

**Exodus 15:14.** “*People hear, they are afraid; trembling seizes the inhabitants of Philistia.*”

**Exodus 15:15.** “*Then are the princes (alluphim, see Gen. 36:15) of Edom confounded; the mighty men of Moab, trembling seizes them; all the inhabitants of Canaan despair.*” אֵילִים, like

אֱוִלִים in 2 Kings 24:15, *scriptio plena* for

אֵלִים, strong, powerful ones. As soon as these nations should hear of the miraculous guidance of Israel through the Red Sea, and Pharaoh’s destruction, they would be thrown into despair from anxiety and alarm, and would not oppose the march of Israel through their land.

**Exodus 15:16.** “*Fear and dread fall upon them; for the greatness of Thine arm* (the adjective

לְדוֹל placed as a substantive before the noun)

*they are dumb* (לְדוֹל from דָּמָם) *as stones, till Thy people pass through, Jehovah, till the people which Thou hast purchased pass through.* Israel was still on its march to Canaan, an evident proof that vv. 13–15 do not describe what was past, but that future events were foreseen in spirit, and are represented by the use of perfects as being quite as certain as if they had already happened. The singer mentions not only Edom and Moab, but Philistia also, and the inhabitants of Canaan, as enemies who are so paralyzed with terror, as to offer no resistance to the passage of Israel through their territory; whereas the history shows that Edom did oppose their passing through its land, and they were obliged to go round in consequence (Num. 20:18ff.; Deut. 2:3, 8), whilst Moab attempted to destroy them through the power of Balaam's curse (Num. 22:2ff.); and what the inhabitants of Philistia and Canaan had to fear, was not their passing through, but their conquest of the land.<sup>25</sup> We learn, however, from Josh. 2:9, 10 and 9:9, that the report of Israel's miraculous passage through the Red Sea had reached to Canaan, and filled its inhabitants with terror.

**Exodus 15:17.** *"Thou wilt bring and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, the place which Thou hast made for Thy dwelling-place, Jehovah, for the sanctuary, Lord, which Thy hands prepared."* On the *dagesh dirim* in

מִקְדָּשׁ, see Exodus 2:3. The futures are not to be taken as expressive of wishes, but as simple predictions, and are not to be twisted into preterites, as they have been by *Knobel*. The *"mountain of Jehovah's inheritance"* was not the hill country of Canaan (Deut. 3:25), but the mountain which Jehovah had prepared for a sanctuary (Ps. 78:54), and chosen as a dwelling-place through the sacrifice of Isaac. The planting of Israel upon this mountain does not signify the introduction of the Israelites into the promised land, but the planting of the people of God in the house of the Lord (Ps. 92:14), in the future sanctuary, where Jehovah would perfect

His fellowship with His people, and where the people would show themselves by their sacrifices to be the "people of possession," and would serve Him for ever as their King. This was the goal, to which the redemption from Egypt pointed, and to which the prophetic foresight of Moses raised both himself and his people in this song, as he beholds in spirit and ardently desires the kingdom of Jehovah in its ultimate completion.<sup>26</sup> The song closes in v. 18 with an inspiring prospect of the time, when *"Jehovah will be King (of His people) for ever and ever;"* and in v. 19, it is dovetailed into the historical narrative by the repetition of the fact to which it owed its origin, and by the explanatory "for," which points back to the opening verse.

**Exodus 15:19–21.** In the words *"Pharaoh's horse, with his chariots and horsemen,"* Pharaoh, riding upon his horse as the leader of the army, is placed at the head of the enemies destroyed by Jehovah. In v. 20, *Miriam* is called *"the prophetess,"* not *ob poeticam et musicam facultatem* (Ros.), but because of her prophetic gift, which may serve to explain her subsequent opposition to Moses (Num. 11:1, 6); and *"the sister of Aaron,"* though she was Moses' sister as well, and had been his deliverer in his infancy, not "because Aaron had his own independent spiritual standing by the side of Moses" (*Baumg.*), but to point out the position which she was afterwards to occupy in the congregation of Israel, namely, as ranking, not with Moses, but with Aaron, and like him subordinate to Moses, who had been placed at the head of Israel as the mediator of the Old Covenant, and as such was Aaron's god (Exodus 4:16, *Kurtz*). As prophetess and sister of Aaron she led the chorus of women, who replied to the male chorus with timbrels and dancing, and by taking up the first strophe of the song, and in this way took part in the festival; a custom that was kept up in after times in the celebration of victories (Judg. 11:34; 1 Sam. 18:6, 7; 21:12; 29:5), possibly in imitation of an Egyptian model (see my *Archäologie*, § 137, note 8).

ISRAEL CONDUCTED FROM THE RED  
SEA TO THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD.—  
CH. 15:22–17:7

**Exodus 15:22–27.** March from the Red Sea to Marah and Elim.—Being thus delivered from Egypt and led safely through the Red Sea, Israel was led into the desert to the sanctuary of Sinai, to be adopted and consecrated by Jehovah as His possession.

**Exodus 15:22.** Leaving the Red Sea, they went into the desert of *Shur*. This name is given to the tract of desert which separates Egypt from Palestine, and also from the more elevated parts of the desert of Arabia, and stretches from the Mediterranean to the head of the Arabian Gulf or Red Sea, and thence along the eastern shore of the sea to the neighbourhood of the Wady Gharandel. In Num. 33:8 it is called the desert of *Etham*, from the town of Etham, which stood upon the border (see Exodus 13:20). The spot where the Israelites encamped after crossing the sea, and sang praises to the Lord for their gracious deliverance, is supposed to have been the present *Ayun Musa* (the springs of Moses), the only green spot in the northern part of this desolate tract of desert, where water could be obtained. At the present time there are several springs there, which yield a dark, brackish, though drinkable water, and a few stunted palms; and even till a very recent date country houses have been built and gardens laid out there by the richer inhabitants of Suez. From this point the Israelites went three days without finding water, till they came to *Marah*, where there was water, but so bitter that they could not drink it. The first spot on the road from *Ayun Musa* to Sinai where water can be found, is in the well of *Howâra*, 33 English miles from the former. It is now a basin of 6 or 8 feet in diameter, with two feet of water in it, but so disagreeably bitter and salt, that the Bedouins consider it the worst water in the whole neighbourhood (*Robinson*, i. 96). The distance from *Ayun Musa* and the quality of the water both favour the identity of *Howâra* and *Marah*. A whole people, travelling with children,

cattle, and baggage, could not accomplish the distance in less than three days, and there is no other water on the road from *Ayun Musa* to *Howâra*. Hence, from the time of Burckhardt, who was the first to rediscover the well, *Howâra* has been regarded as the *Marah* of the Israelites. In the Wady *Amara*, a barren valley two hours to the north of *Howâra*, where *Ewald* looked for it, there is not water to be found; and in the Wady *Gharandel*, two hours to the south, to which *Lepsius* assigned it, the quality of the water does not agree with our account.<sup>27</sup> It is true that no trace of the name has been preserved; but it seems to have been given to the place by the Israelites simply on account of the bitterness of the water. This furnished the people with an inducement to murmur against Moses (v. 24). They had probably taken a supply of water from *Ayun Musa* for the three days' march into the desert. But this store was now exhausted; and, as *Luther* says, "when the supply fails, our faith is soon gone." Thus even Israel forgot the many proofs of the grace of God, which it had received already.

**Exodus 15:25.** When Moses cried to the Lord in consequence, He showed him some wood which, when thrown into the water, took away its bitterness. The Bedouins, who know the neighbourhood, are not acquainted with such a tree, or with any other means of making bitter water sweet; and this power was hardly inherent in the tree itself, though it is ascribed to it in Ecclus. 38:5, but was imparted to it through the word and power of God. We cannot assign any reason for the choice of this particular earthly means, as the Scripture says nothing about any "evident and intentional contrast to the change in the Nile by which the sweet and pleasant water was rendered unfit for use" (*Kurtz*). The word פֶּי "wood" (see only Num. 19:6), alone, without anything in the context to explain it, does not point to a "living tree" in contrast to the "dead stick." And if any contrast had been intended to be shown between the punishment of the Egyptians and the training of the Israelites, this intention would certainly have been more visibly and

surely accomplished by using the staff with which Moses not only brought the plagues upon Egypt, but afterwards brought water out of the rock. If by עץ we understand a tree, with which

וַיִּשְׁלַח, however, hardly agrees, it would be much more natural to suppose that there was an allusion to the tree of life, especially if we compare Gen. 2:9 and 3:22 with Rev. 22:2, "the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations," though we cannot regard this reference as established. All that is clear and undoubted is, that by employing these means, Jehovah made Himself known to the people of Israel as their Physician, and for this purpose appointed the wood for the healing of the bitter water, which threatened Israel with disease and death (2 Kings 4:40).

By this event Jehovah accomplished two things: (a) "there He put (made) for it (the nation) an ordinance and a right," and (b) "there He proved it." The ordinance and right which Jehovah made for Israel did not consist in the words of God quoted in v. 26, for they merely give an explanation of the law and right, but in the divine act itself. The leading of Israel to bitter water, which their nature could not drink, and then the sweetening or curing of this water,

were to be a חֶקֶל for Israel, i.e., an institution or law by which God would always guide and

govern His people, and a מִשְׁפָּט or right, inasmuch as Israel could always reckon upon the help of God, and deliverance from every trouble. But as Israel had not yet true confidence in the Lord, this was also a trial, serving to manifest its natural heart, and, through the relief of its distress on the part of God, to refine and strengthen its faith. The practical proof which was given of Jehovah's presence was intended to impress this truth upon the Israelites, that Jehovah as their Physician would save them from all the diseases which He had sent upon Egypt, if they would hear His voice, do what was right in His eyes, and keep all His commandments.

**Exodus 15:27.** *Elim*, the next place of encampment, has been sought from olden time in the Wady *Gharandel*, about six miles south of *Howâra*; inasmuch as this spot, with its plentiful supply of comparatively good water, and its luxuriance of palms, tamarisks, acacias, and tall grass, which cause it to be selected even now as one of the principal halting-places between Suez and Sinai, quite answers to *Elim*, with its twelve wells of water and seventy palm-trees (cf. *Rob.* i. pp. 100, 101, 105). It is true the distance from *Howâra* is short, but the encampments of such a procession as that of the Israelites are always regulated by the supply of water. Both *Baumgarten* and *Kurtz* have found in *Elim* a place expressly prepared for Israel, from its bearing the stamp of the nation in the number of its wells and palms: a well for every tribe, and the shade of a palm-tree for the tent of each of the elders. But although the number of the wells corresponded to the twelve tribes of Israel, the number of the elders was much larger than that of the palms (*Exodus* 29:9). One fact alone is beyond all doubt, namely, that at *Elim*, this lovely oasis in the barren desert, Israel was to learn how the Lord could make His people lie down in the green pastures, and lead them beside still waters, even in the barren desert of this life (*Ps.* 23:2).

## Exodus 16

**Exodus 16.** Quails and Manna in the Desert of Sin.—V. 1. From *Elim* the congregation of Israel proceeded into the desert of *Sin*. According to *Num.* 33:10, they encamped at the Red Sea between *Elim* and the desert of *Sin*; but this is passed over here, as nothing of importance happened there. Judging from the nature of the ground, the place of encampment *at the Red Sea* is to be found at the mouth of the Wady *Taiyibeh*. For the direct road from the W. *Gharandel* to *Sinai*, and the only practicable one for caravans, goes over the tableland between this wady and the Wady *Useit* to the upper end of the W. *Taiyibeh*, a beautiful valley, covered with tamarisks and shrubs, where good water may be found by digging, and which winds

about between steep rocks, and opens to the sea at *Ras Zelimeh*. To the north of this the hills and rocks come close to the sea, but to the south they recede, and leave a sandy plain with numerous shrubs, which is bounded on the east by wild and rugged rocky formations, and stretches for three miles along the shore, furnishing quite space enough therefore for the Israelitish camp. It is about eight hours' journey from Wady Gharandel, so that by a forced march the Israelites might have accomplished it in one day. From this point they went "to the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai." The place of encampment here is doubtful. There are two roads that lead from W. Taiyibeh to Sinai: the *lower*, which enters the desert plain by the sea at the *Murkha* or *Morcha* well, not far from the mouth of the Wady *eth Thafary*, and from which you can either go as far as *Tûr* by the sea-coast, and then proceed in a north-easterly direction to Sinai, or take a more direct road through Wady *Shellâl* and *Badireh* into Wady *Mukattek* and *Feirân*, and so on to the mountains of Horeb; and the *upper road*, first pointed out by *Burckhardt* and *Robinson*, which lies in a S.E. direction from W. Taiyibeh through W. *Shubeikeh*, across an elevated plain, then through Wady *Humr* to the broad sandy plain of *el Debbe* or *Debbet en Nasb*, thence through Wady *Nasb* to the plain of *Debbet er Ramleh*, which stretches far away to the east, and so on across the Wadys *Chamile* and *Seich* in almost a straight line to Horeb. One of these two roads the Israelites must have taken. The majority of modern writers have decided in favour of the lower road, and place the desert of *Sin* in the broad desert plain, which commences at the foot of the mountain that bounds the Wady Taiyibeh towards the south, and stretches along the sea-coast to *Ras Muhammed*, the southernmost point of the peninsula, the southern part of which is now called *el Kâa*. The encampment of the Israelites in the desert of *Sin* is then supposed to have been in the northern part of this desert plain, where the well *Murkha* still furnishes a resting-place plentifully supplied with drinkable water. *Ewald* has thus represented the Israelites as

following the desert of *el Kâa* to the neighbourhood of *Tûr*, and then going in a north-easterly direction to Sinai. But apart from the fact that the distance is too great for the three places of encampment mentioned in Num. 33:12–14, and a whole nation could not possibly reach Rephidim in three stages by this route, it does not tally with the statement in Num. 33:12, that the Israelites left the desert of Sin and went to *Dofkah*; so that *Dofkah* and the places that follow were not in the desert of Sin at all.

For these and other reasons, *De Laborde*, *v. Raumer*, and others suppose the Israelites to have gone from the fountain of *Murkha* to Sinai by the road which enters the mountains not far from this fountain through Wady *Shellâl*, and so continues through Wady *Mukattek* to Wady *Ferân* (*Robinson*, i. p. 105). But this view is hardly reconcilable with the encampment of the Israelites "in the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai." For instance, the direct road from W. Gharandel (Elim) to Sinai does not touch the desert plain of *el Kâa* at all, but turns away from it towards the north-east, so that it is difficult to understand how this desert could be said to lie between Elim and Sinai. For this reason, even *Kurtz* does not regard the clause "which is between Elim and Sinai" as pointing out the situation of the desert itself, but (contrary to the natural sense of the words) as a more exact definition of that part or point of the desert of Sin at which the road from Elim to Sinai crosses it. But nothing is gained by this explanation. There is no road from the place of encampment by the Red Sea in the Wady Taiyibeh by which a whole nation could pass along the coast to the upper end of this desert, so as to allow the Israelites to cross the desert on the way from Taiyibeh to the W. *Shellâl*. As the mountains to the south of the W. Taiyibeh come so close to the sea again, that it is only at low water that a narrow passage is left (*Burckhardt*, p. 985), the Israelites would have been obliged to turn eastwards from the encampment by the Red Sea, to which they had no doubt gone for the sake of the water, and to go all round the mountain to get to the *Murkha*

spring. This spring (according to *Burckhardt*, p. 983), “a small lake in the sandstone rock, close at the foot of the mountain”) is “the principal station on this road,” next to Ayun Musa and Gharandel; but the water is “of the worst description, partly from the moss, the bog, and the dirt with which the well is filled, but chiefly no doubt from the salt of the soil by which it is surrounded,” and men can hardly drink it; whereas in the Wady *Thafary*, a mile (? five English miles) to the north-east of Murkha, there is a spring that “yields the only sweet water between Tor and Suez” (p. 982). Now, even if we were to assume that the Israelites pitched their camp, not by this, the only sweet water in the neighbourhood, but by the bad water of Murkha, the Murkah spring is not situated in the desert of *el Kâa*, but only on the eastern border of it; so that if they proceeded thence into the Wady *Shellâl*, and so on to the Wady *Feirân*, they would not have crossed the desert at all. In addition to this, although the lower road through the valley of Mukatteb is described by *Burckhardt* as “much easier and more frequented,” and by *Robinson* as “easier” than the upper road across Nasseb (Nasb), there are two places in which it runs through very narrow defiles, by which a large body of people like the Israelites could not possibly have forced their way through to Sinai. From the Murkha spring, the way into the valley of Mukatteb is through “a wild mountain road,” which is shut out from the eyes of the wanderer by precipitous rocks. “We got off our dromedaries,” says *Dieterici*, ii. p. 27, “and left them to their own instinct and sure tread to climb the dangerous pass. We looked back once more at the desolate road which we had threaded between the rocks, and saw our dromedaries, the only signs of life, following a serpentine path, and so climbing the pass in this rocky theatre Nakb el Butera.” *Strauss* speaks of this road in the following terms: “We went eastwards through a large plain, overgrown with shrubs of all kinds, and reached a narrow pass, only broad enough for one camel to go through, so that our caravan emerged in a very pictorial serpentine fashion.

The wild rocks frowned terribly on every side.” Moreover, it is only through a “terribly wild pass” that you can descend from the valley Mukatteb into the glorious valley of Feiran (*Strauss*, p. 128).<sup>28</sup>

For these reasons we must adopt *Knobel's* conclusions, and seek the desert of Sin in the upper road which leads from Gharandel to Sinai, viz., in the broad sandy table-land *el Debbe* or *Debbet er Ramle*, which stretches from the Tih mountains over almost the whole of the peninsula from N.W. to S.E. (vid., *Robinson*, i. 112), and in its south-eastern part touches the northern walls of the Horeb or Sinai range, which helps to explain the connection between the names *Sin* and *Sinai*, though the meaning “thorn-covered” is not established, but is

merely founded upon the idea that סִין has the

same meaning as סִינָה. This desert table-land, which is essentially distinguished from the limestone formations of the Tih mountains, and the granite mass of Horeb, by its soil of sand and sandstone, stretches as far as *Jebel Humr* to the north-west, and the Wady *Khamile* and *Barak* to the south-west (vid., *Robinson*, i. p. 101, 102). Now, if this sandy table-land is to be regarded as the desert of *Sin*, we must look for the place of Israel's encampment somewhere in this desert, most probably in the north-western portion, in a straight line between Elim (Gharandel) and Sinai, possibly in Wady *Nasb*, where there is a well surrounded by palm-trees about six miles to the north-west of *Sarbut el Khadim*, with a plentiful supply of excellent water, which *Robinson* says was better than he had found anywhere since leaving the Nile (i. 110). The distance from W. Taiyibeh to this spot is not greater than that from Gharandel to Taiyibeh, and might therefore be accomplished in a hard day's march.

**Exodus 16:2-12.** Here, in this arid sandy waste, the whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron on account of the want of food. What they brought with them from Egypt had been consumed in the 30 days that had elapsed since they came out (v. 1). In

their vexation the people expressed the wish that they had died in Egypt by the flesh-pot, in the midst of plenty, *“by the hand of Jehovah,”* i.e., by the last plague which Jehovah sent upon Egypt, rather than here in the desert of slow starvation. The form **וַיִּלִּינוּ** is a *Hiphil* according

to the consonants, and should be pointed **וַיִּלִּינוּ**,

from **הִלִּין** for **הִלִּין** (see *Ges.* § 72, Anm. 9, and *Ewald*, § 114c.). As the want really existed, Jehovah promised them help (v. 4). He would rain bread from heaven, which the Israelites should gather every day for their daily need, to try the people, whether they would walk in His law or not. In what the trial was to consist, is briefly indicated in v. 5: *“And it will come to pass on the sixth day (of the week), that they will prepare what they have brought, and it will be double what they gather daily.”* The meaning is, that what they gathered and brought into their tents on the sixth day of the week, and made ready for eating, would be twice as much as what they gathered on every other day; not that Jehovah would miraculously double what was brought home on the sixth day, as *Knobel* interprets the words in order to make out a

discrepancy between v. 5 and v. 22. **הִכִּין**, *to prepare*, is to be understood as applying partly to the measuring of what had been gathered (v. 18), and partly to the pounding and grinding of the grains of manna into meal (Num. 11:8). In what respect this was a test for the people, is pointed out in vv. 16ff. Here, in vv. 4 and 5, the promise of God is only briefly noticed, and its leading points referred to; it is described in detail afterwards, in the communications which Moses and Aaron make to the people. In vv. 6, 7, they first tell the people, *“At even, then shall ye know that Jehovah hath brought you out of Egypt; and in the morning, then shall ye see the glory of the Lord.”* Bearing in mind the parallelism of the clauses, we obtain this meaning, that in the evening and in the morning the Israelites would perceive the glory of the Lord, who had brought them out of Egypt.

“Seeing” is synonymous with “knowing.” Seeing the glory of Jehovah did not consist in the sight of the glory of the Lord which appeared in the cloud, as mentioned in v. 10, but in their perception or experience of that glory in the miraculous gift of flesh and bread (v. 8, cf. Num.

14:22). *“By His hearing”* (**בְּשָׁמְעוֹ**), i.e., because He has heard, *“your murmuring against Jehovah”* (“Against Him” in v. 8, as in Gen. 19:24); *for what are we, that ye murmur against us?”* The murmuring of the people against Moses and Aaron as their leaders really affected Jehovah as the actual guide, and not Moses and Aaron, who had only executed His will. Jehovah would therefore manifest His glory to the people, to prove to them that He had heard their murmuring. The announcement of this manifestation of God is more fully explained to the people by Moses in v. 8, and the explanation is linked on to the leading clause in v. 7 by the words, “when He giveth,” etc. Ye shall see the glory of Jehovah, when Jehovah shall give you, etc.

**Exodus 16:9, 10.** But before Jehovah manifested Himself to the people in His glory, by relieving their distress, He gave them to behold His glory in the cloud, and by speaking out of the cloud, confirmed both the reproaches and promises of His servants. In the murmuring of the people, their unbelief in the actual presence of God had been clearly manifested. *“It was a deep unbelief,”* says *Luther*, *“that they had thus fallen back, letting go the word and promise of God, and forgetting His former miracles and aid.”* Even the pillar of cloud, this constant sign of the gracious guidance of God, had lost its meaning in the eyes of the people; so that it was needful to inspire the murmuring multitude with a salutary fear of the majesty of Jehovah, not only that their rebellion against the God who had watched them with a father’s care might be brought to mind, but also that the fact might be deeply impressed upon their hearts, that the food about to be sent was a gift of His grace. *“Coming near before Jehovah”* (v. 9), was coming out of the tents to the place where the cloud was standing. On thus coming

out, "they turned towards the desert" (v. 10), i.e., their faces were directed towards the desert of Sin; "and, behold, the glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud," i.e., in a flash of light bursting forth from the cloud, and revealing the majesty of God. This extraordinary sign of the glory of God appeared in the desert, partly to show the estrangement of the murmuring nation from its God, but still more to show to the people, that God could glorify Himself by bestowing gifts upon His people even in the barren wilderness. For Jehovah spoke to Moses out of this sign, and confirmed to the people what Moses had promised them (vv. 11, 12).

**Exodus 16:13–15.** The same evening (according to v. 12, "between the two evenings," vid., Exodus 12:6) quails came up and covered the camp. **עָלָה**: to advance,

applied to great armies. **הַשָּׁלוּ**, with the article indicating the generic word, and used in a collective sense, are quails, ὀρτυγομήτρα (LXX); i.e., the quail-king, according to *Hesychius* ὀρτυξ ὑπερμεγέθης, and *Phot.* ὀρτυξ μέγας, hence a large species of quails, ὀρτυγες (*Josephus*), *coturnices* (*Vulg.*). Some suppose it to be the *Katà* or the Arabs, a kind of partridge which is found in great abundance in Arabia, Palestine, and Syria. These fly in such dense masses that the Arab boys often kill two or three at a time, by merely striking at them with a stick as they fly (*Burckhardt*, *Syr.* p. 681). But in spring the quails also come northwards in immense masses from the interior of Africa, and return in autumn, when they sometimes arrive so exhausted, that they can be caught with the hand (cf. *Diod. Sic.* i. 60; v. *Schubert*, *Reise* ii. p. 361). Such a flight of quails was now brought by God, who caused them to fall in the camp of the Israelites, so that it was completely covered by them. Then in the morning there came an "effusion of dew round about the camp; and when the effusion of dew ascended (i.e., when the mist that produced the dew had cleared away), behold there (it lay) upon the surface of the desert, fine, congealed, fine as the hoar-frost upon the ground." The meaning of the ἀπ. λεγ.

**מְחֻסָּפִים** is uncertain. The meaning, scaled off, scaly, *decorticated*, which is founded upon the Chaldee rendering **מְקֻלָּף**, is neither suitable to the word nor to the thing. The rendering *volutatum, rotundum*, is better; and better still perhaps that of *Meier*, "run together, curdled." When the Israelites noticed this, which they had never seen before, they said to one another, **מָן**

**הוּא**, τί ἐστὶ τοῦτο (LXX), "what is this?" for they

knew not what it was. **מָן** for **מָה** belongs to the popular phraseology, and has been retained in the Chaldee and Ethiopic, so that it is undoubtedly to be regarded as early Semitic. From the question, *man hu*, the divine bread received the name of *man* (v. 31), or *manna*. *Kimchi*, however, explains it as meaning *donum et portio*. *Luther* follows him, and says, "Mann in Hebrew means ready money, a present or a gift;" whilst *Gesenius* and others trace the word to **מָנָה**, to divide, to apportion, and render **מָן**

**הוּא** "what is apportioned, a gift or present."

But the Arabic word to which appeal is made, is not early Arabic; and this explanation does not suit the connection. How could the people say "it is apportioned," when they did not know what it was, and Moses had to tell them, it is the bread which Jehovah has given you for food? If they had seen at once that it was food sent them by God, there would have been no necessity for Moses to tell them so.

**Exodus 16:16–21.** After explaining the object of the manna, Moses made known to them at once the directions of God about gathering it. *In the first place*, every one was to gather according to the necessities of his family, a bowl a head, which held, according to v. 36, the tenth part of an ephah. Accordingly they gathered, "he that made much, and he that made little," i.e., he that gathered much, and he that gathered little, and measured it with the omer; and he who gathered much had no surplus, and he who

gathered little had no lack: “every one according to the measure of his eating had they gathered.” These words are generally understood by the Rabbins as meaning, that whether they had gathered much or little, when they measured it in their tents, they had collected just as many omers as they needed for the number in their families, and therefore that no one had either superfluity or deficiency. *Calvin*, on the other hand, and other Christian commentators, suppose the meaning to be, that all that was gathered was placed in a heap, and then measured out in the quantity that each required. In the former case, the miraculous superintendence of God was manifested in this, that no one was able to gather either more or less than what he needed for the number in his family; in the second case, in the fact that the entire quantity gathered, amounted exactly to what the whole nation required. In both cases, the superintending care of God would be equally wonderful, but the words of the text decidedly favour the old Jewish view.

**Exodus 16:19ff.** *In the second place*, Moses commanded them, that no one was to leave any of what had been gathered till the next morning. Some of them disobeyed, but what

was left went into worms (יֵרֵם תּוֹלְעִים) literally rose into worms) and stank. Israel was to take no care for the morrow (Matt. 6:34), but to enjoy the daily bread received from God in obedience to the giver. The gathering was to take place in the morning (v. 21); for when the sun shone brightly, it melted away.

**Exodus 16:22-31.** Moreover, God bestowed His gift in such a manner, that the Sabbath was sanctified by it, and the way was thereby opened for its sanctification by the law. On the sixth day of the week the quantity yielded was twice as much, viz., two omers for one (one person). When the princes of the congregation informed Moses of this, he said to them, “*Let tomorrow be rest (שַׁבָּתוֹן), a holy Sabbath to the Lord.*” They were to bake and boil as much as was needed for the day, and keep what was over for the morrow, for on the Sabbath they

would find none in the field. They did this, and what was kept for the Sabbath neither stank nor bred worms. It is perfectly clear from this event, that the Israelites were not acquainted with any sabbatical observance at that time, but that, whilst the way was practically opened, it was through the decalogue that it was raised into a legal institution (see Exodus 10:8ff.).

שַׁבָּתוֹן is an abstract noun denoting “rest,” and

שַׁבָּת a concrete, literally the observer, from which it came to be used as a technical term for the seventh day of the week, which was to be observed as a day of rest to the Lord.

**Exodus 16:27ff.** On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather manna, notwithstanding Moses’ command, but they found nothing. Whereupon God reproved their resistance to His commands, and ordered them to remain quietly at home on the seventh day. Through the commandments which the Israelites were to keep in relation to the manna, this gift assumed the character of a temptation, or test of their obedience and faith (cf. v. 4).

**Exodus 16:31.** The manna was “like coriander-seed, white; and the taste of it like cake with

honey.” גִּידָא: Chald. גִּידָא; LXX κόριον; *Vulg.*

coriandrum; according to Dioscorid. 3, 64, it

was called γοῖδ by the Carthaginians. צִפְיָחַת is

rendered ἔγκρις by the LXX; according to *Athenaeus* and the Greek Scholiasts, a sweet kind of confectionary made with oil. In Num. 11:7, 8, the manna is said to have had the appearance of *bdellium*, a fragrant and transparent resin, resembling wax (Gen. 2:12). It was ground in handmills or pounded in mortars, and either boiled in pots or baked on

the ashes, and tasted like לֶשֶׁד הַשֶּׁמֶן, “dainty of oil,” i.e., sweet cakes boiled with oil.

This “bread of heaven” (Ps. 78:24; 105:40) Jehovah gave to His people for the first time at a season of the year and also in a place in which natural manna is still found. It is ordinarily met

with in the peninsula of Sinai in the months of June and July, and sometimes even in May. It is most abundant in the neighbourhood of Sinai, in Wady *Feirân* and es Sheikh, also in Wady Gharandel and Taiyibeh, and some of the valleys to the south-east of Sinai (*Ritter*, 14, p. 676; *Seetzen's Reise* iii. pp. 76, 129). In warm nights it exudes from the branches of the tarfah-tree, a kind of tamarisk, and falls down in the form of small globules upon the withered leaves and branches that lie under the trees; it is then gathered before sunrise, but melts in the heat of the sun. In very rainy seasons it continues in great abundance for six weeks long; but in many seasons it entirely fails. It has the appearance of gum, and has a sweet, honey-like taste; and when taken in large quantities, it is said to act as a mild aperient (*Burckhardt*, *Syr.* p. 954; *Wellsted* in *Ritter*, p. 674). There are striking points of resemblance, therefore, between the manna of the Bible and the tamarisk manna. Not only was the locality in which the Israelites first received the manna the same as that in which it is obtained now; but the time was also the same, inasmuch as the 15th day of the second month (v. 1) falls in the middle of our May, if not somewhat later. The resemblance in colour, form, and appearance is also unmistakeable; for, though the tamarisk manna is described as a dirty yellow, it is also said to be white when it falls upon stones. Moreover, it falls upon the earth in grains, is gathered in the morning, melts in the heat of the sun, and has the flavour of honey. But if these points of agreement suggest a connection between the natural manna and that of the Scriptures, the differences, which are universally admitted, point with no less distinctness of the miraculous character of the bread of heaven. This is seen at once in the fact that the Israelites received the manna for 40 years, in all parts of the desert, at every season of the year, and in sufficient quantity to satisfy the wants of so numerous a people. According to v. 35, they ate manna "until they came to a land inhabited, unto the borders of the land of Canaan;" and according to Josh. 5:11, 12, the manna ceased, when they kept the Passover

after crossing the Jordan, and ate of the produce of the land of Canaan on the day after the Passover. Neither of these statements is to be so strained as to be made to signify that the Israelites ate no other bread than manna for the whole 40 years, even after crossing the Jordan: they merely affirm that the Israelites received no more manna after they had once entered the inhabited land of Canaan; that the period of manna or desert food entirely ceased, and that of bread baked from corn, or the ordinary food of the inhabited country, commenced when they kept the Passover in the steppes of Jericho, and ate unleavened bread and parched cakes of the produce of the land as soon as the new harvest had been consecrated by the presentation of the sheaf of first-fruits to God. But even in the desert the Israelites had other provisions at command. In the first place, they had brought large flocks and herds with them out of Egypt (Exodus 12:38; 17:3); and these they continued in possession of, not only at Sinai (Exodus 34:3), but also on the border of Edom and the country to the east of the Jordan (Num. 20:19; 32:1). Now, if the maintenance of these flocks necessitated, on the one hand, their seeking for grassy spots in the desert; on the other hand, the possession of cattle secured them by no means an insignificant supply of milk and flesh for food, and also of wool, hair, and skins for clothing. Moreover, there were different tribes in the desert at that very time, such as the Ishmaelites and Amalekites, who obtained a living for themselves from the very same sources which must necessarily have been within reach of the Israelites. Even now there are spots in the desert of Arabia where the Bedouins sow and reap; and no doubt there was formerly a much larger number of such spots than there are now, since the charcoal trade carried on by the Arabs has interfered with the growth of trees, and considerably diminished both the fertility of the valleys and the number and extent of the green oases (cf. *Rüppell, Nubien*, pp. 190, 201, 256). For the Israelites were not always wandering about; but after the sentence was pronounced, that they were to remain for 40 years in the desert,

they may have remained not only for months, but in some cases even for years, in certain places of encampment, where, if the soil allowed, they could sow, plant, and reap. There were many of their wants, too, that they could supply by means of purchases made either from the trading caravans that travelled through the desert, or from tribes that were settled there; and we find in one place an allusion made to their buying food and water from the Edomites (Deut. 2:6, 7). It is also very obvious from Lev. 8:2; 26:31, 32; 9:4; 10:12; 24:5ff., and Num. 7:13ff., that they were provided with wheaten meal during their stay at Sinai.<sup>29</sup> But notwithstanding all these resources, the desert was "great and terrible" (Deut. 9:19; 8:15); so that, even though it is no doubt the fact that the want of food is very trifling in that region (cf. *Burckhardt*, Syria, p. 901), there must often have been districts to traverse, and seasons to endure, in which the natural resources were either insufficient for so numerous a people, or failed altogether. It was necessary, therefore, that God should interpose miraculously, and give His people bread and water and flesh by supernatural means. So that it still remains true, that God fed Israel with manna for 40 years, until their entrance into an inhabited country rendered it possible to dispense with these miraculous supplies. We must by no means suppose that the supply of manna was restricted to the neighbourhood of Sinai; for it is expressly mentioned after the Israelites had left Sinai (Num. 11:7ff.), and even when they had gone round the land of Edom (Num. 21:5). But whether it continued outside the true desert,—whether, that is to say, the Israelites were still fed with manna after they had reached the inhabited country, viz., in Gilead and Bashan, the Amoritish kingdoms of Sihon and Og, which extended to Edrei in the neighbourhood of Damascus, and where there was no lack of fields, and vineyards, and wells of water (Num. 21:22), that came into the possession of the Israelites on their conquest of the land,—or during their encampment in the fields of Moab opposite to Jericho, where they were invited by the Moabites and Edomites to

join in their sacrificial meals (Num. 25:2), and where they took possession, after the defeat of the Midianites, of their cattle and all that they had, including 675,000 sheep and 72,000 beeves (Num. 31:31ff.),—cannot be decided in the negative, as *Hengstenberg* supposes; still less can it be answered with confidence in the affirmative, as it has been by *C. v. Raumer* and *Kurtz*. For if, as even *Kurtz* admits, the manna was intended either to supply the want of bread altogether, or where there was bread to be obtained, though not in sufficient quantities, to make up the deficiency, it might be supposed that no such deficiency would occur in these inhabited and fertile districts, where, according to Josh. 1:11, there were sufficient supplies, at hand to furnish ample provision for the passage across the Jordan. It is possible too, that as there were more trees in the desert at that time than there are now, and, in fact, more vegetation generally, there may have been supplies of natural manna in different localities, in which it is not met with at present, and that this manna harvest, instead of yielding only 5 or 7 cwt., as is the case now, produced considerably more.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the quantity which the Israelites gathered every day,—viz. an omer a head, or at least 2 lbs.,—still remains a divine miracle; though this statement in vv. 16ff. is not to be understood as affirming, that for 40 years they collected that quantity every day, but only, that whenever and wherever other supplies failed, that quantity could be and was collected day by day.

Moreover, the divine manna differed both in origin and composition from the natural produce of the tamarisk. Though the tamarisk manna resembles the former in appearance, colour, and taste, yet according to the chemical analysis to which it has been submitted by *Mitscherlich*, it contains no farina, but simply saccharine matter, so that the grains have only the consistency of wax; whereas those of the manna supplied to the Israelites were so hard that they could be ground in mills and pounded in mortars, and contained so much meal that it was made into cakes and baked, when it tasted like honey-cake, or sweet confectionary

prepared with oil, and formed a good substitute for ordinary bread. There is no less difference in the origin of the two. The manna of the Israelites fell upon the camp with the morning dew (vv. 13, 14; Num. 11:9), therefore evidently out of the air, so that Jehovah might be said to have rained it from heaven (v. 4); whereas the tamarisk manna drops upon the ground from the fine thin twigs of this shrub, and, in *Ehrenberg's* opinion, in consequence of the puncture of a small, yellow insect, called *coccus maniparus*. But it may possibly be produced apart from this insect, as *Lepsius* and *Tischendorf* found branches with a considerable quantity of manna upon them, and saw it drop from trees in thick adhesive lumps, without being able to discover any *coccus* near (see *Ritter*, 14, pp. 675–6). Now, even though the manna of the Bible may be connected with the produce of the tamarisk, the supply was not so inseparably connected with these shrubs, as that it could only fall to the earth with the dew, as it was exuded from their branches. After all, therefore, we can neither deny that there was some connection between the two, nor explain the gift of the heavenly manna, as arising from an unrestricted multiplication and increase of this gift of nature. We rather regard the bread of heaven as the production and gift of the grace of God, which fills all nature with its powers and productions, and so applies them to its purposes of salvation, as to create out of that which is natural something altogether new, which surpasses the ordinary productions of nature, both in quality and quantity, as far as the kingdom of nature is surpassed by the kingdom of grace and glory.

**Exodus 16:32–36.** As a constant memorial of this bread of God for succeeding generations, Jehovah commanded Moses to keep a bowl full (מִלֵּא הַעֲמָר, the filling of a bowl) of the manna. Accordingly Aaron placed a jar of manna (as it is stated in vv. 34, 35, by way of anticipation, for the purpose of summing up everything of importance relating to the manna) “before Jehovah,” or speaking still more exactly, “before the testimony,” i.e., the tables of

the law (see Exodus 25:16), or according to Jewish tradition, in the ark of the covenant

(Heb. 9:4). צִנְצֹנִת, from צָנַן to guard round, to preserve, signifies a jar or bottle, not a basket. According to the Jerusalem Targum, it was an earthenware jar; in the LXX it is called σάμνος χρυσοῦς, a golden jar, but there is nothing of this kind in the original text.

**Exodus 16:36.** In conclusion, the quantity of the manna collected for the daily supply of each individual, which was preserved in the sanctuary, is given according to the ordinary measurement, viz., the ephah. The common

opinion, that עֹמֶר was the name for a measure of capacity, which was evidently shared by the Seventy, who have rendered the word γομόρ, has no foundation so far as the Scriptures are concerned. Not only is it a fact, that the word *omer* is never used as a measure except in this chapter, but the tenth of an ephah is constantly indicated, even in the Pentateuch, by “the tenth part of an ephah” (Lev. 5:11; 6:13; Num. 5:15; 28:5), or “a tenth deal” (Exodus 29:40; Lev. 14:10, etc.; in all 30 times). The *omer* was a small vessel, cup, or bowl, which formed part of the furniture of every house, and being always of the same size, could be used as a measure in case of need.<sup>31</sup> The ephah is given by *Bertheau* as consisting of 1985·77 Parisian cubic inches, and holding 739,800 Parisian grains of water; *Thenius*, however, gives only 1014·39 Parisian, or 1124·67 Rhenish inches. (See my *Archäologie*, ii. 141–2.)

## Exodus 17

**Exodus 17:1–7.** Want of Water at Rephidim.—V. 1. On leaving the desert of Sin, the Israelites came לְמִסְעֵיהֶם, “according to their journeys,” i.e., in several marches performed with encampings and departures, to *Rephidim*, at Horeb, where they found no water. According to Num. 33:12–14, they encamped twice between the desert of Sin and Rephidim, viz., at *Dofkah* and *Alush*. The situation of *Rephidim* may be determined with tolerable certainty,

partly from v. 6 as compared with Exodus 18:5, which shows that it is to be sought for at Horeb, and partly from the fact, that the Israelites reached the desert of Sinai, after leaving Rephidim, in a single day's march (Exodus 19:2). As the only way from *Debbet er Ramleh* to Horeb or Sinai, through which a whole nation could pass, lies through the large valley of *es-Sheikh*, Rephidim must be sought for at the point where this valley opens into the broad plain of *er Rahah*; and not in the defile with Moses' seat (*Jokad Seidna Musa*) in it, which is a day's journey from the foot of Sinai, or five hours from the point at which the Sheikh valley opens into the plain or *er Rahah*, or the plain of *Szueir* or *Suweiri*,<sup>32</sup> because this plain is so far from Sinai, that the Israelites could not possibly have travelled thence to the desert of Sinai in a single day; nor yet at the fountain of *Abu Suweirah*, which is three hours to the north of Sinai (*Strauss*, p. 131), for the Sheikh valley, which is only a quarter of a mile broad at this spot, and enclosed on both sides by tall cliffs (*Robinson*, i. 215), would not afford the requisite space for a whole nation; and the well found here, which though small is never dry (*Robinson*, i. 216), neither tallies with the want of water at Rephidim, nor stands "upon the rock at (in) Horeb," so that it could be taken to be the spring opened by Moses. The distance from Wady *Nasb* (in the desert of Sin) to the point at which the upper Sinai road reaches the Wady *es Sheikh* is about 15 hours (*Robinson*, vol. iii. app.), and the distance thence to the plain of *er Rahah* through the Sheikh valley, which runs in a large semicircle to Horeb, 10 hours more (*Burckhardt*, pp. 797ff.), whereas the straight road across *el Oerf*, Wady *Solaf*, and *Nukb Hawy* to the convent of Sinai is only seven hours and a half (*Robinson*, vol. iii. appendix). The whole distance from Wady *Nasb* to the opening of the Sheikh valley into the plain of *er Rahah*, viz., 25 hours in all, the Israelites might have accomplished in three days, answering to the three stations, *Dofkah*, *Alush*, and *Rephidim*. A trace of *Dofkah* seems to have been retained in *el Tabbacha*, which *Seetzen* found in the narrow rocky valley of Wady *Gné*, i.e., *Kineh*, after his

visit to Wady *Mukatkeb*, on proceeding an hour and a half farther in a north-westerly (?) direction, and where he saw some Egyptian antiquities. *Knobel* supposes the station *Alush* to have been in the Wady *Oesch* or *Osh* (*Robinson*, i. 125; *Burckhardt*, p. 792), where sweet water may be met with at a little distance off. But apart from the improbability of *Alush* being identical with *Osh*, even if *al* were the Arabic article, the distance is against it, as it is at least twelve camel-hours from Horeb through the Sheikh valley. *Alush* is rather to be sought for at the entrance to the Sheikh valley; for in no other case could the Israelites have reached Rephidim in one day.

**Exodus 17:2-7.** As there was no water to drink in Rephidim, the people murmured against Moses, for having brought them out of Egypt to perish with thirst in the wilderness. This murmuring Moses called "tempting God," i.e., unbelieving doubt in the gracious presence of the Lord to help them (v. 7). In this the people manifested not only their ingratitude to Jehovah, who had hitherto interposed so gloriously and miraculously in every time of distress or need, but their distrust in the guidance of Jehovah and the divine mission of Moses, and such impatience of unbelief as threatened to break out into open rebellion against Moses. "Yet a little," he said to God (i.e., a very little more), "and they stone me;" and the divine long-suffering and grace interposed in this case also, and provided for the want without punishing their murmuring. Moses was to pass on before the people, and, taking some of the elders with him, and his staff with which he smote the Nile, to go to the rock at Horeb, and smite upon the rock with the staff, at the place where God should stand before him, and water would come out of the rock. The elders were to be eye-witnesses of the miracle, that they might bear their testimony to it before the unbelieving people, "*ne dicere possint, jam ab antiquis temporibus fontes ibi fuisse*" (*Rashi*). Jehovah's standing before Moses upon the rock, signified the gracious assistance of God. עֲמַד

לְפָנַי frequently denotes the attitude of a servant when standing before his master, to receive and execute his commands. Thus Jehovah condescended to come to the help of Moses, and assist His people with His almighty power. His gracious presence caused water to flow out of the hard dry rock, though not till Moses struck it with his staff, that the people might acknowledge him afresh as the possessor of supernatural and miraculous powers. The precise spot at which the water was smitten out of the rock cannot be determined; for there is no reason whatever for fixing upon the summit of the present Horeb, *Ras el Sufsafeh*, from which you can take in the whole of the plain of er Rahah (*Robinson*, i. p. 154).

**Exodus 17:7.** From this behaviour of the unbelieving nation the place received the names *Massah* and *Meribah*, "temptation and murmuring," that this sin of the people might never be forgotten (cf. Deut. 6:16; Ps. 78:20; 95:8; 105:41).

### CONFLICT WITH AMALEK.—CH. 17:8–16

**Exodus 17:8–13.** The want of water had only just been provided for, when Israel had to engage in a conflict with the Amalekites, who had fallen upon their rear and smitten it (Deut. 25:18). The expansion of this tribe, that was descended from a grandson of Esau (see Gen. 36:12), into so great a power even in the Mosaic times, is perfectly conceivable, if we imagine the process to have been analogous to that which we have already described in the case of the leading branches of the Edomites, who had grown into a powerful nation through the subjugation and incorporation of the earlier population of Mount Seir. The Amalekites had no doubt come to the neighbourhood of Sinai for the same reason for which, even in the present day, the Bedouin Arabs leave the lower districts at the beginning of summer, and congregate in the mountain regions of the Arabian peninsula, viz., because the grass is

dried up in the former, whereas in the latter the pasturage remains green much longer, on account of the climate being comparatively cooler (*Burckhardt*, Syr. p. 789). There they fell upon the Israelites, probably in the Sheikh valley, where the rear had remained behind the main body, not merely for the purpose of plundering or of disputing the possession of this district and its pasture ground with the Israelites, but to assail Israel as the nation of God, and if possible to destroy it. The divine command to exterminate Amalek (v. 14) points to this; and still more the description given of the Amalekites in Balaam's utterances, as

רֵאשִׁית גּוֹיִם, "the beginning," i.e., the first and foremost of the heathen nations (Num. 24:20). In Amalek the heathen world commenced that conflict with the people of God, which, while it aims at their destruction, can only be terminated by the complete annihilation of the ungodly powers of the world. Earlier theologians pointed out quite correctly the deepest ground for the hostility of the Amalekites, when they traced the *causa belli* to this fact, "*quod timebat Amalec, qui erat de semine Esau, jam implendam benedictionem, quam Jacob obtinuit et praeripuit ipsi Esau, praesertim cum in magna potentia venirent Israelitae, ut promissam occuparent terram*" *Münster*, *C. a Lapide*, etc.). This peculiar significance in the conflict is apparent, not only from the divine command to exterminate the Amalekites, and to carry on the war of Jehovah with Amalek from generation to generation (vv. 14 and 16), but also from the manner in which Moses led the Israelites to battle and to victory. Whereas he had performed all the miracles in Egypt and on the journey by stretching out his staff, on this occasion he directed his servant Joshua to choose men for the war, and to fight the battle with the sword. He himself went with Aaron and Hur to the summit of a hill to hold up the staff of God in his hands, that he might procure success to the warriors through the spiritual weapons of prayer.

The proper name of *Joshua*, who appears here for the first time in the service of Moses, as

Hosea (הוֹשֵׁעַ); he was a prince of the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8, 16; Deut. 32:44). The name יהוֹשֵׁעַ, "Jehovah is help" (or, God-help), he probably received at the time when he entered Moses' service, either before or after the battle with the Amalekites (see Num. 13:16, and *Hengstenberg*, *Dissertations*, vol. ii.). Hur, who also held a prominent position in the nation, according to Exodus 24:14, in connection with Aaron, was the son of Caleb, the son of Hezron, the grandson of Judah (1 Chron. 2:18–20), and the grandfather of Bezaleel, the architect of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:2; 35:30; 38:22, cf. 1 Chron. 2:19, 20). According to Jewish tradition, he was the husband of Miriam.

The battle was fought on the day after the first attack (v. 9). The hill (גִּבְעָה, not Mount Horeb), upon the summit of which Moses took up his position during the battle, along with Aaron and Hur, cannot be fixed upon with exact precision, but it was probably situated in the table-land of *Fureia*, to the north of er Rahah and the Sheikh valley, which is a fertile piece of pasture ground (*Burckhardt*, p. 801; *Robinson*, i. pp. 139, 215), or else in the plateau which runs to the north-east of the Horeb mountains and to the east of the Sheikh valley, with the two peaks Umlanz and Um Alawy; supposing, that is, that the Amalekites attacked the Israelites from Wady Mukliffeh or es Suweiriyeh. Moses went to the top of the hill that he might see the battle from thence. He took Aaron and Hur with him, not as adjutants to convey his orders to Joshua and the army engaged, but to support him in his own part in connection with the conflict. This was to hold up his hand with the staff of God in it. To understand the meaning of this sign, it must be borne in mind that, although v. 11 merely speaks of the raising and dropping of the hand (in the singular), yet, according to v. 12, both hands were supported by Aaron and Hur, who stood one on either side, so that Moses did not hold up his hands alternately, but grasped the staff with both his hands, and held

it up with the two. The lifting up of the hands has been regarded almost with unvarying unanimity by Targumists, Rabbins, Fathers, Reformers, and nearly all the more modern commentators, as the sign or attitude of prayer. *Kurtz*, on the contrary, maintains, in direct opposition to the custom observed throughout the whole of the Old Testament by all pious and earnest worshipers, of lifting up their hands to God in heaven, that this view attributes an importance to the outward form of prayer which has no analogy even in the Old Testament; he therefore agrees with *Lakemacher*, in *Rosenmüller's Scholien*, in regarding the attitude of Moses with his hand lifted up as "the attitude of a commander superintending and directing the battle," and the elevation of the hand as only the means adopted for raising the staff, which was elevated in the sight of the warriors of Israel as the banner of victory. But this meaning cannot be established from vv. 15 and 16. For the altar with the name "*Jehovah my banner*," and the watchword "*the hand on the banner of Jehovah, war of the Lord against Amalek*," can neither be proved to be connected with the staff which Moses held in his hand, nor be adduced as a proof that Moses held the staff in front of the Israelites as the banner of victory. The lifting up of the staff of God was, no doubt, a banner to the Israelites of victory over their foes, but not in this sense, that Moses directed the battle as commander-in-chief, for he had transferred the command to Joshua; nor yet in this sense, that he imparted divine powers to the warriors by means of the staff, and so secured the victory. To effect this, he would not have lifted it up, but have stretched it out, either over the combatants, or at all events towards them, as in the case of all the other miracles that were performed with the staff. The lifting up of the staff secured to the warriors the strength needed to obtain the victory, from the fact that by means of the staff Moses brought down this strength from above, i.e., from the Almighty God in heaven; not indeed by a merely spiritless and unthinking elevation of the staff, but by the power of his prayer, which was embodied in

the lifting up of his hands with the staff, and was so far strengthened thereby, that God had chosen and already employed this staff as a medium of the saving manifestation of His almighty power. There is no other way in which we can explain the effect produced upon the battle by the raising and dropping (הִנִּיחַ) of the staff in his hands. As long as Moses held up the staff, he drew down from God victorious powers for the Israelites by means of his prayer; but when he let it fall through the exhaustion of the strength of his hands, he ceased to draw down the power of God, and Amalek gained the upper hand. The staff, therefore, as it was stretched out on high, was not a sign to the Israelites that were fighting, for it is by no means certain that they could see it in the heat of the battle; but it was a sign to Jehovah, carrying up, as it were, to God the wishes and prayers of Moses, and bringing down from God victorious powers for Israel. If the intention had been the hold it up before the Israelites as a banner of victory. Moses would not have withdrawn to a hill apart from the field of battle, but would either have carried it himself in front of the army, or have given it to Joshua as commander, to be borne by him in front of the combatants, or else have entrusted it to Aaron, who had performed the miracles in Egypt, that he might carry it at their head. The pure reason why Moses did not do this, but withdrew from the field of battle to lift up the staff of God upon the summit of a hill, and to secure the victory by so doing, is to be found in the important character of the battle itself. As the heathen world was now commencing its conflict with the people of God in the persons of the Amalekites, and the prototype of the heathen world, with its hostility to God, was opposing the nation of the Lord, that had been redeemed from the bondage of Egypt and was on its way to Canaan, to contest its entrance into the promised inheritance; so the battle which Israel fought with this foe possessed a typical significance in relation to all the future history of Israel. It could not conquer by the sword alone, but could only gain the victory by

the power of God, coming down from on high, and obtained through prayer and those means of grace with which it had been entrusted. The means now possessed by Moses were the staff, which was, as it were, a channel through which the powers of omnipotence were conducted to him. In most cases he used it under the direction of God; but God had not promised him miraculous help for the conflict with the Amalekites, and for this reason he lifted up his hands with the staff in prayer to God, that he might thereby secure the assistance of Jehovah for His struggling people. At length he became exhausted, and with the falling of his hands and the staff he held, the flow of divine power ceased, so that it was necessary to support his arms, that they might be kept firmly directed

upwards (אֶמְוֶנָה, lit., firmness) until the enemy was entirely subdued. And from this Israel was to learn the lesson, that in all its conflicts with the ungodly powers of the world, strength for victory could only be procured through the incessant lifting up of its hands in prayer. *“And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people (the Amalekites and their people) with the edge of the sword”* (i.e., without quarter. See Gen. 34:26).

**Exodus 17:14–16.** As this battle and victory were of such significance, Moses was to write it for a memorial בִּסְפָר, in *“the book”* appointed for a record of the wonderful works of God, and *“to put it into the ears of Joshua,”* i.e., to make known to him, and impress upon him, that Jehovah would utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; not “in order that he might carry out this decree of God on the conquest of Canaan, as *Knobel* supposes, but to strengthen his confidence in the help of the Lord against all the enemies of Israel. In Deut. 25:19 the Israelites are commanded to exterminate Amalek, when God should have given them rest in the land of Canaan from all their enemies round about.

**Exodus 17:15, 16.** To praise God for His help, Moses built an altar, which he called *“Jehovah my banner,”* and said, when he did so, *“The hand*

on the throne (or banner) of Jah! War to the Lord from generation to generation!" There is nothing said about sacrifices being offered upon this altar. It has been conjectured, therefore, that as a place of worship and thank-offering, the altar with its expressive name was merely to serve as a memorial to posterity of the gracious help of the Lord, and that the words which were spoken by Moses were to serve as a watchword for Israel, keeping this act of God in lively remembrance among the people in all succeeding generations. כִּי (v. 16) merely introduces the words as in Gen. 4:23, etc. The expression יָד עַל-בֵּס יְהוָה is obscure, chiefly on account of the ἀπ. λεγ. בֵּס. In the ancient versions (with the exception of the Septuagint, in which כֵּס יְהוָה is treated as one word, and rendered κρυφαία) בֵּס is taken to be equivalent to כִּסֵּה (1 Kings 10:19; Job 26:9) for אֶבֶן, and the clause is rendered "the hand upon the throne of the Lord." But whilst some understand the laying of the hand (sc., of God) upon the throne to be expressive of the attitude of swearing, others regard the hand as symbolical of power. There are others again, like *Clericus*, who suppose the hand to denote the hand laid by the Amalekites upon the throne of the Lord, i.e., on Israel. But if בֵּס signifies throning or *adytum arcanum*, the words can hardly be understood in any other sense than "the hand lifted up to the throne of Jehovah in heaven, war to the Lord," etc.; and thus understood, they can only contain an admonition to Israel to follow the example of Moses, and wage war against Amalek with the hands lifted up to the throne of Jehovah. Modern expositors, however, for the most part regard בֵּס as a corruption of נִס, "the hand on the banner of the Lord." But even admitting

this, though many objections may be offered to its correctness, we must not understand by "the banner of Jehovah" the staff of Moses, but only the altar with the name Jehovah-nissi, as the symbol or memorial of the victorious help afforded by God in the battle with the Amalekites.

## Exodus 18

### JETHRO THE MIDIANITE IN THE CAMP OF ISRAEL.—CH. 18

**Exodus 18:1-12.** The Amalekites had met Israel with hostility, as the prototype of the heathen who would strive against the people and kingdom of God. But Jethro, the Midianitish priest, appeared immediately after in the camp of Israel, not only as Moses' father-in-law, to bring back his wife and children, but also with a joyful acknowledgement of all that Jehovah had done to the Israelites in delivering them from Egypt, to offer burnt-offerings to the God of Israel, and to celebrate a sacrificial meal with Moses, Aaron, and all the elders of Israel; so that in the person of Jethro the first-fruits of the heathen, who would hereafter seek the living God, entered into religious fellowship with the people of God. As both the Amalekites and Midianites were descended from Abraham, and stood in blood-relationship to Israel, the different attitudes which they assumed towards the Israelites foreshadowed and typified the twofold attitude which the heathen world would assume towards the kingdom of God. (On *Jethro*, see Exodus 2:18; on Moses' wife and sons, see Exodus 2:21, 22; and on the expression in v. 2, "after he had sent her back," Exodus 4:26.)—Jethro came to Moses "into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God." The mount of God is Horeb (Exodus 3:1); and the place of encampment is Rephidim, at Horeb, i.e., at the spot where the Sheikh valley opens into the plain of er Rahah (Exodus 17:1). This part is designated as a wilderness; and according to *Robinson* (1, pp. 130, 131) the district round this valley and plain is "naked

desert," and "wild and desolate." The occasion for Jethro the priest to bring back to his son-in-law his wife and children was furnished by the intelligence which had reached him, that Jehovah had brought Israel out of Egypt (v. 1), and, as we may obviously supply, had led them to Horeb. When Moses sent his wife and sons back to Jethro, he probably stipulated that they were to return to him on the arrival of the Israelites at Horeb. For when God first called Moses at Horeb, He foretold to him that Israel would be brought to this mountain on its deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 3:12).<sup>33</sup>

**Exodus 18:6–12.** When Jethro announced his arrival to Moses ("he said," sc., through a messenger), he received his father-in-law with the honour due to his rank; and when he had conducted him to his tent, he related to him all the leading events connected with the departure from Egypt, and all the troubles they had met with on the way, and how Jehovah had delivered them out of them all. Jethro rejoiced at this, and broke out in praise to Jehovah, declaring that Jehovah was greater than all gods, i.e., that He had shown Himself to be exalted above all gods, for God is great in the eyes of men only when He makes known His greatness through the display of His omnipotence. He then gave a practical expression to his praise by a burnt-offering and slain-offering, which he presented to God. The second כִּי in v. 11 is only an emphatic

repetition of the first, and בַּדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר is not dependent upon יַדְעֹתִי, but upon גְּדוֹל, or upon הַגְּדִיל understood, which is to be

supplied in thought after the second כִּי: "That He has proved Himself great by the affair in which they (the Egyptians) dealt proudly against them (the Israelites)." Compare Neh. 9:10, from which it is evident, that to refer these words to the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea as a punishment for their attempt to destroy the Israelites in the water (Exodus

1:22) is too contracted an interpretation; and that they rather relate to all the measures adopted by the Egyptians for the oppression and detention of the Israelites, and signify that Jehovah had shown Himself great above all gods by all the plagues inflicted upon Egypt down to the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea.

**Exodus 18:12.** The sacrifices, which Jethro offered to God, were applied to a sacrificial meal, in which Moses joined, as well as Aaron and all the elders. Eating bread before God signified the holding of a sacrificial meal, which was eating before God, because it was celebrated in a holy place of sacrifice, where God was supposed to be present.

**Exodus 18:13–24.** The next day Jethro saw how Moses was occupied from morning till evening in judging the people, who brought all their disputes to him, that he might settle them

according to the statutes of God. עָמַד עַל: as in Gen. 18:8. The people came to Moses "to seek or inquire of God" (v. 15), i.e., to ask for a decision from God: in most cases, this means to inquire through an oracle; here it signifies to desire a divine decision as to questions in dispute. By judging or deciding the cases brought before him, Moses made known to the people the ordinances and laws of God. For every decision was based upon some law, which, like all true justice here on earth, emanated first of all from God. This is the meaning of v. 16, and not, as *Knobel* supposes, that Moses made use of the questions in dispute, at the time they were decided, as good opportunities for giving laws to the people. Jethro condemned this plan (vv.

18ff.) as exhausting, wearing out (נָבַל lit., to fade away, Ps. 37:2), both for Moses and the people: for the latter, inasmuch as they not only got wearied out through long waiting, but, judging from v. 23, very often began to take the law into their own hands on account of the delay in the judicial decision, and so undermined the well-being of the community at large; and for Moses, inasmuch as the work was necessarily too great for him, and he could not

continue for any length of time to sustain such a burden alone (v. 18). The obsolete form of the

*inf. const.* עֲשֵׂהוּ for עֲשֵׂתוֹ is only used here, but is not without analogies in the Pentateuch. Jethro advised him (vv. 19ff.) to appoint judges from the people for all the smaller matters in dispute, so that in future only the more difficult cases, which really needed a superior or divine decision, would be brought to him that he might lay them before God. "I will give thee counsel, and God be with thee (i.e., help thee to carry out this advice): *Be thou to the people* מוֹלֵךְ

הָאֱלֹהִים, *towards God*," i.e., lay their affairs before God, take the place of God in matters of judgment, or, as *Luther* expresses it, "take charge of the people before God." To this end, in the *first* place, he was to instruct the people in the commandments of God, and their own walk and conduct (הִזְהִיר with a double accusative, to enlighten, instruct; דִּרְךְ the walk, the whole behaviour; מַעֲשֵׂה particular actions);

*secondly*, he was to select able men (אֲנָשֵׁי חַיִל men of moral strength, 1 Kings 1:52) as judges, men who were God-fearing, sincere, and unselfish (gain-hating), and appoint them to administer justice to the people, by deciding the simpler matters themselves, and only referring the more difficult questions to him, and so to lighten his own duties by sharing the burden with these judges. הִקְלֵ מֵעָלֶיךָ (v. 22) "*make light of* (that which lies) *upon thee*." If he would do this, and God would command him, he would be able to stand, and the people would come to their place, i.e., to Canaan, in good condition (בְּשָׁלוֹם). The *apodosis* cannot begin with וְצִוְּךָ, "then God will *establish* thee," for צִוְּךָ never has this meaning; but the idea is

this, "if God should preside over the execution of the plan proposed."

**Exodus 18:24.** Moses followed this sage advice, and, as he himself explains in Deut. 1:12–18, directed the people to nominate wise, intelligent, and well-known men from the heads of the tribes, whom he appointed as judges, instructing them to administer justice with impartiality and without respect of persons.

**Exodus 18:25–27.** The judges chosen were arranged as chiefs (שָׂרִים) over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, after the analogy of the military organization of the people on their march (Num. 31:14), in such a manner, however, that this arrangement was linked on to the natural division of the people into tribes, families, etc. (see my *Archäologie*, § 140). For it is evident that the decimal division was not made in an arbitrary manner according to the number of heads, from the fact that, on the one hand, the judges were chosen from the heads of their tribes and according to their tribes (Deut. 1:13); and on the other hand, the larger divisions of the tribes, viz., the families (*mishpachoth*), were also called thousands (Num. 1:15; 10:4; Josh. 22:14, etc.), just because the number of their heads of families would generally average about a thousand; so that in all probability the hundreds, fifties, and tens denote smaller divisions of the nation, in which there were about this number of fathers. Thus in Arabic, for example, "*the ten*" is a term used to signify a family (cf. *Hengstenberg*, *Dissertations* v. ii. 343, and my *Arch.* § 149). The difference between the harder or greater matters and the smaller matters consisted in this: questions which there was not definite law to decide were great or hard; whereas, on the other hand, those which could easily be decided from existing laws or general principles of equity were simple or small. (*Vide Joh. Selden de Synedriis* i. c. 16, in my *Arch.* § 149, Not. 3, where the different views are discussed respecting the relative positions and competency of the various judges, about which there is no precise information given in the

law.) So far as the total number of judges is concerned, all that can be affirmed with certainty is, that the estimated number of 600 judges over thousands, 6000 over hundreds, 12,000 over fifties, and 60,000 over tens, in all 78,600 judges, which is given by *Grotius* and in the Talmud, and according to which there must have been a judge for every seven adults, is altogether erroneous (cf. *J. Selden l.c.* pp. 339ff.). For if the thousands answered to the families (*Mishpachoth*), there cannot have been a thousand males in every one; and in the same way the hundreds, etc., are not to be understood as consisting of precisely that number of persons, but as larger or smaller family groups, the numerical strength of which we do not know. And even if we did know it, or were able to estimate it, this would furnish no criterion by which to calculate the number of the judges, for the text does not affirm that every one of these larger or smaller family groups had a judge of its own; in fact, the contrary may rather be inferred, from the fact that, according to Deut. 1:15, the judges were chosen out of the heads of the tribes, so that the number of judges must have been smaller than that of the heads, and can hardly therefore have amounted to many hundreds, to say nothing of many thousands.

### Exodus 19

#### ARRIVAL AT SINAI, AND PREPARATION FOR THE COVENANT.—CH. 19

**Exodus 19:1, 2.** In the third month after their departure from Egypt, the Israelites arrived at Sinai, proceeding from Rephidim into the desert of Sinai, and encamping there before the mountain. On what day of the month, the received text does not state. The striking expression **בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה** ("the same day"), without any previous notice of the day, cannot signify the first day of the month; nor can

**הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי** signify the third new moon in the year, and be understood as referring to the first day of the third month. For although, according to the etymology of **חֹדֶשׁ** (from **חָדַשׁ** to be new), it might denote the new moon, yet in chronological data it is never used in this sense; but the day of the month is invariably appended after the month itself has been given (e.g., **אָחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ** Exodus 40:2, 17; Gen. 8:5, 13; Num. 1:1; 29:1; 33:38, etc.).

Moreover, in the Pentateuch the word **חֹדֶשׁ** never signifies new moon; but the new moons are called **רֵאשִׁי חֹדָשִׁים** (Num. 10:10; 28:11, cf. *Hengstenberg*, Dissertations, vol. ii. 297). And even in such passages as 1 Sam. 20:5; 18:24, 2 Kings 4:23, Amos 8:5, Isa. 1:13, etc., where

**חֹדֶשׁ** is mentioned as a feast along with the Sabbaths and other feasts, the meaning new moon appears neither demonstrable nor necessary, as **חֹדֶשׁ** in this case denotes the feast of the month, the celebration of the beginning of the month. If, therefore, the text is genuine, and the date of the month has not dropt out (and the agreement of the ancient versions with the Masoretic text favours this conclusion), there is no other course open, than to understand **יוֹם**, as in Gen. 2:4 and Num. 3:1, and probably also in the unusual expression

**יוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ**, Exodus 40:2, in the general sense of time; so that here, and also in Num. 9:1; 20:1, the month only is given, and not the day of the month, and it is altogether uncertain whether the arrival in the desert of Sinai took place on one of the first, one of the middle, or one of the last days of the month. The Jewish tradition, which assigns the giving of the law to the fiftieth day after the Passover, is of far too recent a date to pass for historical (see my *Archäologie*, § 83, 6).

The *desert of Sinai* is not the plain of er Rahah to the north of Horeb, but the desert in front (סיני) of the mountain, upon the summit of which Jehovah came down, whilst Moses ascended it to receive the law (v. 20 and 34:2). This mountain is constantly called Sinai so long as Israel stayed there (vv. 18, 20, 23, 24:16; 34:2, 4, 29, 32; Lev. 7:38; 25:1; 26:46; 27:34; Num. 3:1; see also Num. 28:6 and Deut. 33:2); and the place of their encampment by the mountain is also called the “*desert of Sinai*,” never the desert of Horeb (Lev. 7:38; Num. 1:1, 19; 3:14; 9:1; 10:12; 26:64; 33:15). But in Exodus 33:6 this spot is designated as “Mount Horeb,” and in Deuteronomy, as a rule, it is spoken of briefly as “Horeb” (Deut. 1:2, 6, 19; 4:10, 15; 5:2; 9:8; 18:16; 28:69). And whilst the general identity of Sinai and Horeb may be inferred from this; the fact, that wherever the intention of the writer is to give a precise and geographical description of the place where the law was given, the name Sinai is employed, leads to the conclusion that the term Horeb was more general and comprehensive than that of Sinai; in other words, that Horeb was the range of which Sinai was one particular mountain, which only came prominently out to view when Israel had arrived at the mount of legislation. This distinction between the two names, which *Hengstenberg* was the first to point out and establish (in his *Dissertations*, vol. ii. p. 325), is now generally admitted; so that the only room that is left for any difference of opinion is with reference to the extent of the Horeb range. There is no ground for supposing that the name *Horeb* includes the whole of the mountains in the Arabian peninsula. Sufficient justice is done to all the statements in the Bible, if we restrict this name to the southern and highest range of the central mountains,—to the exclusion, therefore, of the Serbal group.<sup>34</sup> This southern range, which Arabian geographers and the Bedouins call *Jebel Tur* or *Jebel Tur Sina*, consists of three summits: (1) a central one, called by the Arabs *Jebel Musa* (Moses’ Mountain), and by Christians either *Horeb* or else *Horeb-Sinai*, in which case the northern

and lower peak, or *Ras es Sufsafeh*, is called Horeb, and the southern and loftier one Sinai; (2) a western one, called *Jebel Humr*, with *Mount Catherine* on the south, the loftiest point in the whole range; and (3) an eastern one, called *Jebel el Deir* (Convent Mountain) or *Episteme* (*vide Ritter*, 14, pp. 527ff.).—Near this range there are two plains, which furnish space enough for a large encampment. One of these is the plain of *er Rahah*, on the north and north-west of Horeb-Sinai, with a level space of an English square mile, which is considerably enlarged by the Sheikh valley that opens into it from the east. At its southern extremity Horeb, with its granite rocks, runs almost precipitously to the height of 1200 or 1500 feet; and towards the west it is also shut in as with a wall by the equally precipitous spurs of *Jebel Humr*. The other plain, which is called *Sebayeh*, lies to the south-east of Sinai, or *Jebel Musa* in the more restricted sense; it is from 1400 to 1800 feet broad, 12,000 feet long, and is shut in towards the south and east by mountains, which rise very gently, and do not reach any considerable height. There are three wadys leading to this plain from er Rahah and the Sheikh valley. The most westerly of these, which separates Horeb-Sinai from *Jebel Humr* with *Mount Catherine* on the south, is called *el Leja*, and is a narrow defile full of great blocks of stone, and shut in towards the south like a *cul de sac* by *Mount Catherine*. The central one, which separates Horeb from *Jebel Deir*, is *Wady Shoeib* (Jethro valley), with the convent of Sinai in it, which is also called the *Convent Valley* in consequence. This is less confined, and not so much strewn with stones; towards the south it is not quite shut in, and yet not quite open, but bounded by a steep pass and a grassy mountain-saddle, viz., the easily accessible *Jebel Sebayeh*. The third and most easterly is the *Wady es Sebayeh*, which is from 400 to 600 feet broad, and leads form the Sheikh valley, in a southern and south-westerly direction, to the plain of the same name, which stretches like an amphitheatre to the southern slope of Sinai, or *Jebel Musa*, in the more restricted sense. When seen from this plain, “*Jebel Musa* has the appearance of a lofty

and splendid mountain cone, towering far above the lower gravelly hills by which it is surrounded" (*Ritter*, pp. 540, 541).

Since *Robinson*, who was the first to describe the plain of *er Rahah*, and its fitness for the encampment of Israel, visited Sinai, this plain has generally been regarded as the site where Israel encamped in the "desert of Sinai." *Robinson* supposed that he had discovered the Sinai of the Bible in the northern peak of Mount Horeb, viz., *Ras es Sufsafeh*. But *Ritter*, *Kurtz*, and others have followed *Laborde* and *Fa. A. Strauss*, who were the first to point out the suitability of the plain of *Sebayeh* to receive a great number of people, in fixing upon *Jebel Musa* in the stricter sense, the southern peak of the central group, which tradition had already indicated as the scene of the giving of the law, as the true Mount Sinai, where Moses received the laws from God, and the plain of *Sebayeh* as the spot to which Moses led the people (i.e., the men) on the third day, out of the camp of God and through the *Sebayeh* valley (v. 16). For this plain is far better adapted to be the scene of such a display of the nation, than the plain of *er Rahah*: first, because the hills in the background slope gradually upwards in the form of an amphitheatre, and could therefore hold a larger number of people;<sup>35</sup> whereas the mountains which surround the plain of *er Rahah* are so steep and rugged, that they could not be made use of in arranging the people:—and secondly, because the gradual sloping of the plain upwards, both on the east and south, would enable even the furthest rows to see Mount Sinai in all its majestic grandeur; whereas the plain of *er Rahah* slopes downwards towards the north, so that persons standing in the background would be completely prevented by those in front from seeing *Ras es Sufsafeh*.—If, however, the plain of *es Sebayeh* so entirely answers to all the topographical data of the Bible, that we must undoubtedly regard it as the spot where the people of God were led up to the foot of the mountain, we cannot possibly fix upon the plain of *er Rahah* as the place of encampment in the desert of Sinai. The very expression "desert of Sinai," which is applied to

the place of encampment, is hardly reconcilable with this opinion. For example, if the Sinai of the Old Testament is identical with the present *Jebel Musa*, and the whole group of mountains bore the name of Horeb, the plain of *er Rahah* could not with propriety be called the desert of Sinai, for Sinai cannot even be seen from it, but is completely hidden by the *Ras es Sufsafeh* of Horeb. Moreover, the road from the plain of *er Rahah* into the plain of *es Sebayeh* through the *Sebayeh* valley is so long and so narrow, that the people of Israel, who numbered more than 600,000 men, could not possibly have been conducted from the camp in *er Rahah* into the *Sebayeh* plain, and so up to Mount Sinai, and then, after being placed in order there, and listening to the promulgation of the law, have returned to the camp again, all in a single day. The *Sebayeh* valley, or the road from the *Sheikh* valley to the commencement of the plain of *Sebayeh*, is, it is true, only an hour long. But we have to add to this the distance from the point at which the *Sebayeh* valley opens into the *Sheikh* valley to the western end of the plain of *er Rahah*, viz., two hours' journey, and the length of the plain of *Sebayeh* itself, which is more than five miles long; so that the Israelites, at least those who were encamped in the western part of the plain of *er Rahah*, would have to travel four or five hours before they could be posted at the foot of Sinai.<sup>36</sup> *Tischendorf* calls this a narrow, bad road, which the Israelites were obliged to pass through to Sinai, when they came out of the *Sheikh* valley. At any rate, this is true of the southern end of the valley of *Sebayeh*, from the point at which it enters the plain of *Sebayeh*, where we can hardly picture it to ourselves as broad enough for two hundred men to walk abreast in an orderly procession through the valley;<sup>37</sup> consequently, 600,000 men would have required two hours' time simply to pass through the narrow southern end of the valley of *Sebayeh*. Now, it is clear enough from the narrative itself that Moses did not take merely the elders, as the representatives of the nation, from the camp to the mountain to meet with God (v. 17), but took the whole nation, that is to

say, all the adult males of 20 years old and upwards; and this is especially evident from the command so emphatically and repeatedly given, that no one was to break through the hedge placed round the mountain. It may also be inferred from the design of the revelation itself, which was intended to make the deepest impression upon the whole nation of that majesty of Jehovah and the holiness of His law.

Under these circumstances, if the people had been encamped in the plain of er Rahah and the Sheikh valley, they could not have been conducted to the foot of Sinai and stationed in the plain of Sebayeh in the course of six hours, and then, after hearing the revelation of the law, have returned to their tents on the same day; even assuming, as *Kurtz* does (iii. p. 117), that "the people were overpowered by the majesty of the promulgation of the law, and fled away in panic;" for flight through so narrow a valley would have caused inevitable confusion, and therefore would have prevented rather than facilitated rapidity of movement. There is not a word, however, in the original text about a panic, or about the people flying (see Exodus 20:18): it is merely stated, that as soon as the people witnessed the alarming phenomena connected with the descent of God upon the mountain, they trembled in the camp (Exodus 19:16), and that when they were conducted to the foot of the mountain, and "saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking," and heard the solemn promulgation of the

decatalogue, they trembled (וַיִּרְאוּ, Exodus 19:16), and said to Moses, through their elders and the heads of tribes, that they did not wish God to speak directly to them any more, but wished Moses to speak to God and listen to His words; whereupon, after God had expressed His approval of these words of the people, Moses directed the people to return to their tents (Exodus 20:18ff.; Deut. 5:23–30). If, again, we take into consideration, that after Moses had stationed the people at the foot of the mountain, he went up to God to the summit of Sinai, and came down again at the command of

God to repeat the charge to the people, not to break through the hedge round the mountain (vv. 20–25), and it was not till after this, that God proclaimed the decatalogue, and that this going up and down must also have taken up time, it cannot have been for so very short a time that the people continued standing round the bottom of the mountain. But if all these difficulties be regarded as trivial, and we include the evening and part of the night in order to afford time for the people to return to their tents; not only is there nothing in the biblical text to require the hypothesis which assigns the encampment to the plain of er Rahah, and the posting of the people at Sinai to the plain of Sebayeh, but there are various allusions which seem rather to show that such a hypothesis is inadmissible. It is very obvious from Exodus 24:17, that the glory of the Lord upon the top of the mountain could be seen from the camp; and from Exodus 34:1–3, that the camp, with both the people and their cattle in it, was so immediately in the neighbourhood of Sinai, that the people could easily have ascended the mountain, and the cattle could have grazed upon it. Now this does not apply in the least to the plain of er Rahah, from which not even the top of Jebel Musa can be seen, and where the cattle could not possibly have grazed upon it, but only to the plain of Sebayeh; and therefore proves that the camp in "the desert of Sinai" is not to be sought for in the plain of er Rahah, but in the plain of Sebayeh, which reaches to the foot of Sinai. If it should be objected, on the other hand, that there is not room in this plain for the camp of the whole nation, this objection is quite as applicable to the plain of er Rahah, which is not large enough in itself to take in the entire camp, without including a large portion of the Sheikh valley; and it loses all its force from the fact, that the mountains by which the plain of Sebayeh is bounded, both on the south and east, rise so gently and gradually, that they could be made use of for the camp, and on these sides therefore the space is altogether unlimited, and would allow of the widest dispersion of the people and their flocks.

**Exodus 19:3–6.** Moses had known from the time of his call that Israel would serve God on this mountain (Exodus 3:12); and as soon as the people were encamped opposite to it, he went up to God, i.e., up the mountain, to the top of which the cloud had probably withdrawn. There God gave him the necessary instructions for preparing for the covenant: first of all assuring him, that He had brought the Israelites to Himself to make them His own nation, and that He would speak to them from the mountain (vv. 4–9); and then ordering him to sanctify the people for this revelation of the Lord (vv. 10–15). The promise precedes the demand; for the grace of God always anticipates the wants of man, and does not demand before it has given. Jehovah spoke to Moses “from Mount Horeb.” Moses had probably ascended one of the lower heights, whilst Jehovah is to be regarded as on the summit of the mountain. The words of God (vv. 4ff.) refer first of all to what He had done for the Egyptians, and how He had borne the Israelites on eagles’ wings; manifesting in this way not only the separation between Israel and the Egyptians, but the adoption of Israel as the nation of His especial grace and favour. The “eagles’ wings” are figurative, and denote the strong and loving care of God. The eagle watches over its young in the most careful manner, flying under them when it leads them from the nest, lest they should fall upon the rocks, and be injured or destroyed (cf. Deut. 32:11, and for proofs from profane literature, *Bochart*, *Hieroz*, ii. pp. 762, 765ff.). “*And brought you unto Myself:*” i.e., not “led you to the dwelling-place of God on Sinai,” as *Knobel* supposes; but took you into My protection and My especial care.

**Exodus 19:5.** This manifestation of the love of God to Israel formed only the prelude, however, to that gracious union which Jehovah was now about to establish between the Israelites and Himself. If they would hear His voice, and keep the covenant which as about to be established with them, they should be a costly possession to Him out of all nations (cf. Deut. 7:6; 14:2;

26:18). סִגְלָה does not signify property in

general, but valuable property, that which is laid by, or put aside (סִגְלָה), hence a treasure of silver and gold (1 Chron. 29:3; Eccl. 2:8). In the *Sept.* the expression is rendered λαὸς περιούσιος, which the Scholiast in *Octat.* interprets ἐξάίρετος, and in Mal. 3:17 εἰς περιποίησιν: hence the two phrases in the New Testament, λαὸς περιούσιος in Tit. 2:14, and λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν in 1 Pet. 2:9. Jehovah had chosen Israel as His costly possession out of all the nations of the earth, because the whole earth was His possession, and all nations belonged to Him as Creator and Preserver. The reason thus assigned for the selection of Israel precludes at the very outset the exclusiveness which would regard Jehovah as merely a national deity. The idea of the *segullah* is explained in v. 6: “*Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests.*” מַמְלָכָה signifies both *kingship*, as the embodiment of royal supremacy, exaltation, and dignity, and the *kingdom*, or the union of both king and subjects, i.e., the land and nation, together with its king. In the passage before us, the word has been understood by most of the early commentators, both Jewish and Christian, and also in the ancient versions,<sup>38</sup> in the first or active sense, so that the expression contains the idea, “*Ye shall be all priests and kings*” (*Luther*); *praeditos fore tam sacerdotali quam regio honore* (*Calvin*); *quod reges et sacerdotes sunt in republica, id vos eritis mihi* (*Drusius*). This explanation is required by both the passage itself and the context. For apart from the fact that kingship is the primary and most general meaning of the word מַמְלָכָה (cf. מַמְלֶכֶת

יְהוָה, the kingship, or government of David), the other (passive) meaning would not be at all suitable here; for a kingdom of priests could never denote the fellowship existing in a kingdom between the king and the priests, but only a kingdom or commonwealth consisting of priests, i.e., a kingdom the members and citizens of which were priests, and as priests

constituted the **מְמַלְכָה**, in other words, were possessed of royal dignity and power; for **מְמַלְכָה**, βασιλεία, always includes the idea of **מֶלֶךְ** or ruling (βασιλεύειν). The LXX have quite hit the meaning in their rendering: βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα. Israel was to be a regal body of priests to Jehovah, and not merely a nation of priests governed by Jehovah. The idea of the theocracy, or government of God, as founded by the establishment of the Sinaitic covenant institution in Israel, is not at all involved in the term “kingdom of priests.” The theocracy established by the conclusion of the covenant (Exodus 24) was only the means adopted by Jehovah for making His chosen people a royal body of priests; and the maintenance of this covenant was the indispensable subjective condition, upon which their attainment of this divinely appointed destiny and glory depended. This promise of Jehovah expressed the design of the call of Israel, to which it was to be fully conducted by the covenant institution of the theocracy, if it maintained the covenant with Jehovah. The object of Israel’s kingship and priesthood was to be found in the nations of the earth, out of which Jehovah had chosen Israel as a costly possession. This great and glorious promise, the fulfilment of which could not be attained till the completion of the kingdom of God, when the Israel of God, the Church of the Lord, which Jesus Christ, the first-begotten from the dead, and prince (ἄρχων, ruler) of the kings of the earth, has made a “kingdom,” “priests unto God and His Father” (Rev. 1:6 and 5:10, where the reading should be βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς), is exalted to glory with Christ as the first-born among many brethren, and sits upon His throne and reigns, has not been introduced abruptly here. On the contrary, the way was already prepared by the promises made to the patriarchs, of the blessing which Abraham would become to all the nations of the earth, and of the kings who were to spring from him and come out of the loins of Israel (Gen. 12:3; 17:6; 35:11), and still more distinctly by Jacob’s

prophecy of the sceptre of Judah, to whom, through *Shiloh*, the willing submission of the nations should be made (Gen. 49:10). But these promises and prophecies are outshone by the clearness, with which kingship and priesthood over and for the nations are foretold of Israel here.

This kingship, however, is not merely of a spiritual kind, consisting, as *Luther* supposes, in the fact, that believers “are lords over death, the devil, hell, and all evil,” but culminates in the universal sway foretold by Balaam in Num. 24:8 and 17ff., by Moses in his last words (Deut. 33:29), and still more distinctly in Dan. 7:27, to the people of the saints of the Most High, as the ultimate end of their calling from God. The spiritual attitude of Israel towards the nations was the result of its priestly character. As the priest is a mediator between God and man, so Israel was called to be the vehicle of the knowledge and salvation of God to the nations of the earth. By this it unquestionably acquired an intellectual and spiritual character; but this includes, rather than excludes, the government of the world. For spiritual and intellectual supremacy and rule must eventually ensure the government of the world, as certainly as spirit is the power that overcomes the world. And if the priesthood of Israel was the power which laid the foundation for its kingship,—in other

words, if Israel obtained the **מְמַלְכָה** or government over the nations solely as a priestly nation,—the Apostle Peter, when taking up this promise (1 Pet. 2:9), might without hesitation follow the Septuagint rendering (βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα), and substitute in the place of the “priestly kingdom,” a “royal priesthood;” for there is no essential difference between the two, the kingship being founded upon the priesthood, and the priesthood completed by the kingship.

As a kingdom of priests, it was also necessary that Israel should be a “holy nation.” *Gens sancta hic dicitur non respectu pietatis vel sanctimoniae, sed quam Deus singulari privilegio ab aliis separavit. Verum ab hac sanctificatione*

*pendet altera, nempe ut sanctitatem colant, qui Dei gratia eximii sunt, atque ita vicissim Deum sanctificent (Calvin).* This explanation is in general a correct one; for these words indicate the dignity to which Israel was to be elevated by Jehovah, the Holy One, through its separation from the nations of the earth. But it cannot be shown that **שִׁדְדָה** ever means “separated.” Whether we suppose it to be related to **שִׁדְדָה**, and **שִׁדְדָה** the newly shining moonlight, or compare it with the Sanskrit *dhûsch*, to be splendid, or beautiful, in either case the primary meaning of the word is, “to be splendid, pure, untarnished.” *Diestel* has correctly observed, that the holiness of God and Israel is most closely connected with the covenant relationship; but he is wrong in the conclusion which he draws from this, namely, that “holy” was originally only a “relative term,” and that a thing was holy “so far as it was the property of God.” For the whole earth is Jehovah’s property (v. 5), but it is not holy on that account. Jehovah is not holy only “so far as within the covenant He is both possession and possessor, absolute life and the source of life, and above all, both the chief good and the chief model for His people” (*Diestel*), or “as the truly separate One, enclosed within Himself, who is self-existent, in contrast with the world to which He does not belong” (*Hofmann*); but holiness pertains to God alone, and to those who participate in the divine holiness,—not, however, to God as the Creator and Preserver of the world, but to God as the Redeemer of man. Light is the earthly reflection of His holy nature: the Holy One of Israel is the light of Israel (Isa. 10:17, cf. 1 Tim 6:16). The light, with its purity and splendour, is the most suitable earthly element to represent the brilliant and spotless purity of the Holy One, in whom there is no interchange of light and darkness (Jas. 1:17). God is called the Holy One, because He is altogether pure, the clear and spotless light; so that in the idea of the holiness of God there are embodied the absolute moral purity and perfection of the divine nature, and His

unclouded glory. Holiness and glory are inseparable attributes in God; but in His relation to the world they are so far distinguished, that the whole earth is full of His glory, whilst it is to and in Israel that His holiness is displayed (Isa. 6:3); in other words, the glory of God is manifested in the creation and preservation of the world, and His holy name in the election and guidance of Israel (compare Ps. 104 with Ps. 103). God has displayed the glory of His name in the creation of the heavens and the earth (Ps. 8); but His way in Israel (Ps. 77:14), i.e., the work of God in His kingdom of grace, is holy; so that it might be said, that the glory of God which streams forth in the material creation is manifested as holiness in His saving work for a sinful world, to rescue it from the  $\phi\theta\omicron\rho\acute{\alpha}$  of sin and death and restore it to the glory of eternal life, and that it was manifested here in the fact, that by the counsels of His own spontaneous love (Deut. 4:37) He chose Israel as His possession, to make of it a holy nation, if it hearkened to His voice and kept His covenant. It was not made this, however, by being separated from the other nations, for that was merely the means of attaining the divine end, but by the fact, that God placed the chosen people in the relation of covenant fellowship with Himself, founded His kingdom in Israel, established in the covenant relationship an institution of salvation, which furnished the covenant people with the means of obtaining the expiation of their sins, and securing righteousness before God and holiness of life with God, in order that by the discipline of His holy commandments, under the guidance of His holy arm, He might train and guide them to the holiness and glory of the divine life. But as sin opposes holiness, and the sinner resists sanctification, the work of the holiness of God reveals itself in His kingdom of grace, not only positively in the sanctification of those who suffer themselves to be sanctified and raised to newness of life, but negatively also, in the destruction of all those who obstinately refuse the guidance of His grace; so that the glory of the thrice Holy One (Isa. 6:3) will be fully manifested both in the glorification of His

chosen people and the deliverance of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:21), and also in the destruction of hardened sinners, the annihilation of everything that is ungodly in this world, the final overthrow of Satan and his kingdom, and the founding of the new heaven and new earth. Hence not only is every person, whom God receives into the

sphere of His sin-destroying grace, קָדוֹשׁ, or holy; but everything which is applied to the realization of the divine work of salvation, or consecrated by God to this object. The opposite

of קָדוֹשׁ, holy, is חָל, κοινός, *profanus* (from

חָלַל, to be loose, lit., the unbound), not

devoted to holy purposes and uses (cf. Lev. 10:10); and this term was applied, not only to

what was sinful and unclean (טָמֵא), but to

everything earthly in its natural condition, because the whole earth, with all that is upon it, has been involved in the consequences of sin.

**Exodus 19:7–15.** When Moses communicated to the people through their elders this incomparable promise of the Lord, they

promised unanimously (יְחָדוּ) to do all that

Jehovah said; and when Moses reported to the Lord what the people had answered, He said to Moses, *“I will come to thee in the darkness of the cloud, that the people may listen to My speaking*

*to thee* (שָׁמַע בְּךָ, as in Gen. 27:5, etc.), and also

*believe thee for ever.”* As God knew the weakness of the sinful nation, and could not, as the Holy One, come into direct intercourse with it on account of its unholiness, but was about to conclude the covenant with it through the mediation of Moses, it was necessary, in order to accomplish the design of God, that the chosen mediator should receive special credentials; and these were to consist in the fact that Jehovah spoke to Moses in the sight and hearing of the people, that is to say, that He solemnly proclaimed the fundamental law of

the covenant in the presence of the whole nation (Exodus 19:16–20:18), and showed by this fact that Moses was the recipient and mediator of the revelation of God, in order that the people might believe him *“for ever,”* as the law was to possess everlasting validity (Matt. 5:18).

**Exodus 19:10–16.** God then commanded Moses to prepare the people for His appearing or speaking to them: (1) by their sanctification, through the washing of the body and clothes (see Gen. 35:2), and abstinence from conjugal intercourse (v. 15) on account of the defilement connected therewith (Lev. 15:18); and (2) by setting bounds round the people, that they might not ascend or touch the mountain. The

hedging or bounding (הַגְבִּיל) of the people is spoken of in v. 23 as setting bounds about the mountain, and consisted therefore in the erection of a barrier round the mountain, which was to prevent the people from ascending or

touching it. Any one who touched it (קָצְהוּ), *“its end,”* i.e., the outermost or lowest part of the mountain) was to be put to death, whether man or beast. *“No hand shall touch him”* (the individual who passed the barrier and touched the mountain), i.e., no one was to follow him within the appointed boundaries, but he was to be killed from a distance either by stones or

darts. (יִרְהַ for יִנְרַה, see Gesenius, § 69.) Not till *“the drawing out of the trumpet blast,”* or, as Luther renders it, *“only when it sounded long,”*

could they ascend the mountain (v. 13). הַיָּבֵל,

from יָבַל to stream violently with noise, is

synonymous with קָרַן הַיָּבֵל (Josh. 6:5), and

was really the same thing as the שׁוֹפָר, i.e., a

long wind instrument shaped like a horn. מְשַׁךְ

הַיָּבֵל is to draw the horn, i.e., to blow the horn

with tones long drawn out. This was done

either to give a signal to summon the people to war (Judg. 3:27; 6:34), or to call them to battle (Judg. 7:18; Job 39:24, 25, etc.), or for other public proclamations. No one (this is the idea) was to ascend the mountain on pain of death, or even to touch its outermost edge; but when the horn was blown with a long blast, and the signal to approach was given thereby, then they might ascend it (see v. 21),—of course not 600,000 men, which would have been physically impossible, but the people in the persons of their representatives the elders.

**עָלוֹת בְּהָרָה** signifies to go up the mountain in v. 13 as well as in v. 12, and not merely to come to the foot of the mountain (see Deut. 5:5).

**Exodus 19:16–25.** After these preparations, on the morning of the third day (from the issuing of this divine command), Jehovah came down upon the top of Mount Sinai (v. 20), manifesting His glory in fire as the mighty, jealous God, in the midst of thunders (**קִלְתָּ**) and lightnings, so that the mountain burned with fire (Deut. 4:11; 5:20), and the smoke of the burning mountain ascended as the smoke (**עָשָׁן** for **עֲשָׂן**), and the whole mountain trembled (v. 18), at the same time veiling in a thick cloud the fire of His wrath and jealousy, by which the unholy are consumed. Thunder and lightning bursting forth from the thick cloud, and fire with smoke, were the elementary substrata, which rendered the glory of the divine nature visible to men, though in such a way that the eye of mortals beheld no form of the spiritual and invisible Deity. These natural phenomena were accompanied by a loud trumpet blast, which “blew long and waxed louder and louder” (vv. 16 and 19; see Gen. 8:3), and was, as it were, the herald’s call, announcing to the people the appearance of the Lord, and summoning them to assemble before Him and listen to His words, as they sounded forth from the fire and cloudy darkness. The blast (**קוֹל**) of the *shophar* (v. 19), i.e., the *σάλπιγξ Θεοῦ*, the trump of God, such a trumpet as is used in the service of God

(in heaven, 1 Thess. 4:16; see *Winer’s Grammar*), is not “the voice of Jehovah,” but a sound resembling a trumpet blast. Whether this sound was produced by natural means, or, as some of the earlier commentators supposed, by angels, of whom myriads surrounded Jehovah when He came down upon Sinai (Deut. 33:2), it is impossible to decide. At this alarming phenomenon, “*all the people that was in the camp trembled*” (v. 16). For according to Exodus 20:20 (17), it was intended to inspire them with a salutary fear of the majesty of God. Then Moses conducted the people (i.e., the men) out of the camp of God, and stationed them at the foot of the mountain outside the barrier (v. 17); and “*Moses spake*” (v. 19), i.e., asked the Lord for His commands, “*and God answered loud*”

(**בְּקוֹל**), and told him to come up to the top of the mountain. He then commanded him to go down again, and impress upon the people that no one was to break through to Jehovah to see, i.e., to break down the barriers that were erected around the mountain as the sacred place of God, and attempt to penetrate into the presence of Jehovah. Even the priests, who were allowed to approach God by virtue of their office, were to sanctify themselves, that Jehovah might not break forth upon them (**יִפְרֹץ**), i.e.,

dash them to pieces. (On the form **הַעֲדָתָהּ** for

**הַעֲדָתָהּ**, see *Ewald*, § 199 a). The *priests* were neither “the sons of Aaron,” i.e., Levitical priest, nor the first-born or *principes populi*, but “those who had hitherto discharged the duties of the priestly office according to natural right and custom” (*Baumgarten*). Even these priests were too unholy to be able to come into the presence of the holy God. This repeated enforcement of the command not to touch the mountain, and the special extension of it even to the priests, were intended to awaken in the people a consciousness of their own unholiness quite as much as of the unapproachable holiness of Jehovah. But this separation from God, which arose from the unholiness of the nation, did not

extend to Moses and Aaron, who were to act as mediators, and were permitted to ascend the mountain. Moreover, the prospect of ascending the holy mountain “at the drawing of the blast” was still before the people (v. 13). And the strict prohibition against breaking through the barrier, to come of their own accord into the presence of Jehovah, is by no means at variance with this. When God gave the sign to ascend the mountain, the people might and were to draw near to Him. This sign, viz., the long-drawn trumpet blast, was not to be given in any case till after the promulgation of the ten words of the fundamental law. But it was not given even after this promulgation; not, however, because “the development was altogether an abnormal one, and not in accordance with the divine appointment in v. 13, inasmuch as at the thunder, the lightning, and the sound of the trumpet, with which the giving of the law was concluded, they lost all courage, and instead of waiting for the promised signal, were overcome with fear, and ran from the spot,” for there is not a word in the text about running away; but because the people were so terrified by the alarming phenomena which accompanied the coming down of Jehovah upon the mountain, that they gave up the right of speaking with God, and from a fear of death entreated Moses to undertake the intercourse with God in their behalf (Exodus 20:18–21). Moreover, we cannot speak of an “abnormal development” of the drama, for the simple reason, that God not only foresaw the course and issue of the affair, but at the very outset only promised that He would come to Moses in a thick cloud (v. 9), and merely announced and carried out His own descent upon Mount Sinai before the eyes of the people in the terrible glory of His sacred majesty (v. 11), for the purpose of proving the people, that His fear might be before their eyes (Exodus 20:20; cf. Deut. 5:28, 29). Consequently, apart from the physical impossibility of 600,000 ascending the mountain, it never was intended that all the people should do so.<sup>39</sup> What God really intended, came to pass. After the people had been received into fellowship with Jehovah

through the atoning blood of the sacrifice, they were permitted to ascend the mountain in the persons of their representatives, and there to see God (Exodus 24:9–11).

## Exodus 20

### THE TEN WORDS OF JEHOVAH.—CH. 20:1–21.

**Exodus 20:1.** The promulgation of the ten words of God, containing the fundamental law of the covenant, took place before Moses ascended the mountain again with Aaron (Exodus 19:24). “All these words” are the words of God contained in vv. 2–17, which are repeated again in Deut. 5:6–18, with slight variations that do not materially affect the sense,<sup>40</sup> and are called the “words of the covenant, the ten words,” in Exodus 34:28, and Deut. 4:13; 10:4. God spake these words directly to the people, and not “through the medium of His finite spirits,” as v. Hofmann, Kurtz, and others suppose. There is not a word in the Old Testament about any such mediation. Not only was it *Elohim*, according to the chapter before us, who spake these words to the people, and called Himself Jehovah, who had brought Israel out of Egypt (v. 2), but according to Deut. 5:4, Jehovah spake these words to Israel “face to face, in the mount, out of the midst of the fire.”

Hence, according to Buxtorf (*Dissert. de Decalogo in genere*, 1642), the Jewish commentators almost unanimously affirm that God Himself spake the words of the decalogue, and that words were formed in the air by the power of God, and not by the intervention and ministry of angels.<sup>41</sup> And even from the New Testament this cannot be proved to be a doctrine of the Scriptures. For when Stephen says to the Jews, in Acts 7:53, “Ye have received the law” εἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων (Eng. Ver. “by the disposition of angels”), and Paul speaks of the law in Gal. 3:19 as διαταγεῖς δι’ ἀγγέλων (“ordained by angels”), these expressions leave it quite uncertain in what the διατάσσειν of the

angels consisted, or what part they took in connection with the giving of the law.<sup>42</sup> So again, in Heb. 2:2, where the law, “the word spoken by angels” (δι’ ἀγγέλων), is placed in contrast with the “salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord” (διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου), the antithesis is of so indefinite a nature that it is impossible to draw the conclusion with any certainty, that the writer of this epistle supposed the speaking of God at the promulgation of the decalogue to have been effected through the medium of a number of finite spirits, especially when we consider that in the Epistle to the Hebrews speaking is the term applied to the divine revelation generally (see Heb. 1:1). As his object was not to describe with precision the manner in which God spake to the Israelites from Sinai, but only to show the superiority of the Gospel, as the revelation of salvation, to the revelation of the law; he was at liberty to select the indefinite expression δι’ ἀγγέλων, and leaven it to the readers of his epistle to interpret it more fully for themselves from the Old Testament. According to the Old Testament, however, the law was given through the medium of angels, only so far as God appeared to Moses, as He had done to the patriarchs, in the form of the “Angel of the Lord,” and Jehovah came down upon Sinai, according to Deut. 33:2, surrounded by myriads of holy angels as His escort.<sup>43</sup> The notion that God spake through the medium of “His finite spirits” can only be sustained in one of two ways: either by reducing the angels to personifications of natural phenomena, such as thunder, lightning, and the sound of a trumpet, a process against which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews enters his protest in Heb. 12:19, where he expressly distinguishes the “voice of words” from these phenomena of nature; or else by affirming, with *v. Hofmann*, that God, the supernatural, cannot be conceived of without a plurality of spirits collected under Him, or apart from His active operation in the world of bodies, in distinction from which these spirits are comprehended with Him and under Him, so that even the ordinary and regular phenomena of nature would have to be regarded as the

workings of angels; in which case the existence of angels as created spirits would be called in question, and they would be reduced to mere personifications of divine powers.

The words of the covenant, or ten words, were written by God upon two tables of stone (Exodus 31:18), and are called the law and the commandment (הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה) in Exodus 24:12, as being the kernel and essence of the law. But the Bible contains neither distinct statements, nor definite hints, with reference to the numbering and division of the commandments upon the two tables,—a clear proof that these points do not possess the importance which has frequently been attributed to them. The different views have arisen in the course of time. Some divide the ten commandments into two pentads, one upon each table. Upon the first they place the commandments concerning (1) other gods, (2) images, (3) the name of God, (4) the Sabbath, and (5) parents; on the second, those concerning (1) murder, (2) adultery, (3) stealing, (4) false witness, and (5) coveting. Others, again, reckon only three to the first table, and seven to the second. In the first they include the commandments respecting (1) other gods, (2) the name of God, (3) the Sabbath, or those which concern the duties towards God; and in the second, those respecting (1) parents, (2) murder, (3) adultery, (4) stealing, (5) false witness, (6) coveting a neighbour’s house, (7) coveting a neighbour’s wife, servants, cattle, and other possession, or those which concern the duties towards one’s neighbour. The *first* view, with the division into two fives, we find in *Josephus* (Ant. iii. 5, 5) and *Philo* (*quis rer. divin. haer.* § 35, *de Decal.* § 12, etc.); it is unanimously supported by the fathers of the first four centuries,<sup>44</sup> and has been retained to the present day by the Eastern and Reformed Churches. The later Jews agree so far with this view, that they only adopt *one* commandment against coveting; but they differ from it in combining the commandment against images with that against false gods, and taking the

introductory words "I am the Lord thy God" to be the first commandment. This mode of numbering, of which we find the first traces in *Julian Apostata* (in *Cyrrilli AlExodus c. Julian l. V. init.*), and in an allusion made by *Jerome* (on Hos. 10:10), is at any rate of more recent origin, and probably arose simply from opposition to the Christians. It still prevails, however, among the modern Jews.<sup>45</sup>

The *second* view was brought forward by *Augustine*, and no one is known to have supported it previous to him. In his *Quaest. 71* on Ex., when treating of the question how the commandments are to be divided ("*utrum quatuor sint usque ad praeceptum de Sabbatho, quae ad ipsum Deum pertinent, sex autem reliqua, quorum primum: Honora patrem et matrem, quae ad hominem pertinent: an potius illa tria sint et ipsa septem*"), he explains the two different views, and adds, "Mihi tamen videntur congruentius accipi illa tria et ista septem, quoniam Trinitatem videntur illa, quae ad Deum pertinent, insinuare diligentius intuentibus." He then proceeds still further to show that the commandment against images is only a fuller explanation of that against other gods, but that the commandment not to covet is divided into two commandments by the repetition of the words, "*Thou shalt not covet,*" although "*concupiscentia uxoris alienae et concupiscentia domus alienae tantum in peccando differant.*" In this division *Augustine* generally reckons the commandment against coveting the neighbour's wife as the *ninth*, according to the text of Deuteronomy; although in several instances he places it after the coveting of the house, according to the text of *Exodus*. Through the great respect that was felt for *Augustine*, this division became the usual one in the Western Church; and it was adopted even by *Luther* and the Lutheran Church, with this difference, however, that both the Catholic and Lutheran Churches regard the commandment not to covet a neighbour's house as the *ninth*, whilst only a few here and there give the preference, as *Augustine* does, to the order adopted in Deuteronomy.

Now if we inquire, which of these divisions of the ten commandments is the correct one, there is nothing to warrant either the assumption of the Talmud and the Rabbins, that the words, "I am Jehovah thy God," etc., form the first commandment, or the preference given by *Augustine* to the text of Deuteronomy. The words, "I am the Lord," etc., contain no independent member of the decalogue, but are merely the preface to the commandments which follow. "*Hic sermo nondum sermo mandati est, sed quis sit, qui mandat, ostendit*" (*Origen, homil. 8 in Ex.*). But, as we have already shown, the text of Deuteronomy, in all its deviations from the text of Exodus, can lay no claim to originality. As to the other two views which have obtained a footing in the Church, the historical credentials of priority and majority are not sufficient of themselves to settle the question in favour of the first, which is generally called the Philonian view, from its earliest supporter. It must be decided from the text of the Bible alone. Now in both substance and form this speaks against the Augustinian, Catholic, and Lutheran view, and in favour of the Philonian, or Oriental and Reformed. In *substance*; for whereas no essential difference can be pointed out in the two clauses which prohibit coveting, so that even *Luther* has made but one commandment of them in his smaller catechism, there was a very essential difference between the commandment against other gods and that against making an image of God, so far as the Israelites were concerned, as we may see not only from the account of the golden calf at Sinai, but also from the image worship of Gideon (Judg. 8:27), Micah (Judg. 17), and Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:28ff.). In *form*; for the last five commandments differ from the first five, not only in the fact that no reasons are assigned for the former, whereas all the latter are enforced by reasons, in which the expression "Jehovah thy God" occurs every time; but still more in the fact, that in the text of Deuteronomy all the commandments after "Thou shalt do no murder" are connected together by the copula **et**, which is repeated

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before every sentence, and from which we may see that Moses connected the commandments which treat of duties to one's neighbour more closely together, and by thus linking them together showed that they formed the second half of the decalogue.

The weight of this testimony is not counterbalanced by the division into *parashoth* and the double accentuation of the Masoretic text, viz., by accents both above and below, even if we assume that this was intended in any way to indicate a logical division of the commandments. In the Hebrew MSS and editions of the Bible, the decalogue is divided into ten *parashoth*, with spaces between them marked either by ׀ (*Setuma*) or ׃ (*Phetucha*); and whilst the commandments against other gods and images, together with the threat and promise appended to them (vv. 3–6), form one *parashah*, the commandment against coveting (v. 14) is divided by a *setuma* into two. But according to *Kennicott* (ad Exodus 10:17, Deut. 5:18, and *diss. gener.* p. 59) this *setuma* was wanting in 234 of the 694 MSS consulted by him, and in many exact editions of the Bible as well; so that the testimony is not unanimous here. It is no argument against this division into *parashoth*, that it does not agree either with the Philonian or the rabbinical division of the ten commandments, or with the Masoretic arrangement of the verses and the lower accents which correspond to this. For there can be no doubt that it is older than the Masoretic treatment of the text, though it is by no means original on that account. Even when the Targum on the Song of Sol. (Exodus 5:13) says that the tables of stone were written in ten

שִׁטִּים or שִׁטִּים, i.e., rows or strophes, like the rows of a garden full of sweet odours, this Targum is much too recent to furnish any valid testimony to the original writing and plan of the decalogue. And the upper accentuation of the decalogue, which corresponds to the division into *parashoth*, has must as little claim to be received as a testimony in favour of "a division of the verses which was once evidently

regarded as very significant" (*Ewald*); on the contrary, it was evidently added to the lower accentuation simply in order that the decalogue might be read in the synagogues on particular days after the *parashoth*.<sup>46</sup> Hence the double accentuation was only so far of importance, as showing that the Masorites regarded the *parashoth* as sufficiently important, to be retained for reading in the synagogue by a system of accentuation which corresponded to them. But if this division into *parashoth* had been regarded by the Jews from time immemorial as original, or Mosaic, in its origin; it would be impossible to understand either the rise of other divisions of the decalogue, or the difference between this division and the Masoretic accentuation and arrangement of the verses. From all this so much at any rate is clear, that from a very early period there was a disposition to unite together the two commandments against other gods and images; but assuredly on no other ground than because of the threat and promise with which they are followed, and which must refer, as was correctly assumed, to both commandments. But if these two commandments were classified as one, there was no other way of bringing out the number ten, than to divide the commandment against coveting into two. But as the transposition of the wife and the house in the two texts could not well be reconciled with this, the *setuma* which separated them in v. 14 did not meet with universal reception.

Lastly, on the division of the ten covenant words upon the two tables of stone, the text of the Bible contains no other information, than that "the tables were written on both their sides" (Exodus 32:15), from which we may infer with tolerable certainty, what would otherwise have the greatest probability as being the most natural supposition, viz., that the entire contents of the "ten words" were engraved upon the tables, and not merely the ten commandments in the stricter sense, without the accompanying reasons.<sup>47</sup> But if neither the numbering of the ten commandments nor their arrangement on the two tables was indicated in the law as drawn up

for the guidance of the people of Israel, so that it was possible for even the Israelites to come to different conclusions on the subject; the Christian Church has all the more a perfect right to handle these matters with Christian liberty and prudence for the instruction of congregations in the law, from the fact that it is no longer bound to the ten commandments, as a part of the law of Moses, which has been abolished for them through the fulfilment of Christ, but has to receive them for the regulation of its own doctrine and life, simply as being the unchangeable norm of the holy will of God which was fulfilled through Christ.

**Exodus 20:2.** The Ten Words commenced with a declaration of Jehovah concerning Himself, which served as a practical basis for the obligation on the part of the people to keep the commandments: “*I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee,*” etc. By bringing them out of Egypt, the house of bondage, Jehovah had proved to the Israelites that He was their God. This glorious act, to which Israel owed its existence as an independent nation, was peculiarly fitted, as a distinct and practical manifestation of unmerited divine love, to kindle in the hearts of the people the warmest love in return, and to incite them to keep the commandments. These words are not to be regarded, as *Knobel* supposes, as either a confession, or the foundation of the whole of the theocratical law, just as *Saleucus*, *Plato*, and other lawgivers placed a belief in the existence of the gods at the head of their laws. They were rather the preamble, as *Calvin* says, by which God prepared the minds of the people for obeying them, and in this sense they were frequently repeated to give emphasis to other laws, sometimes in full, as in Exodus 29:46, Lev. 19:36; 23:43; 25:38, 55; 26:13, etc., sometimes in the abridged form, “*I am Jehovah your God,*” as in Lev. 11:44; 18:2, 4, 30; 19:4, 10, 25, 31, 34; 20:7, etc., for which the simple expression, “*I am Jehovah,*” is now and then substituted, as in Lev. 19:12, 13, 16, 18, etc.

**Exodus 20:3.** The First Word.—“*Let there not be to thee (thou shalt have no) other gods* על

פְּנֵי,” lit., *beyond Me* (עַל as in Gen. 48:22; Ps.

16:2), or in addition to Me (עַל as in Gen. 31:50; Deut. 19:9), equivalent to πλὴν ἐμοῦ (LXX), “by the side of Me” (*Luther*). “Before Me,” *coram me* (*Vulg.*, etc.), is incorrect; also against Me, in opposition to Me. (On פְּנֵי see Exodus 33:14.)

The singular יְהוָה does not require that we should regard *Elohim* as an abstract noun in the sense of Deity; and the plural אֱלֹהִים would not suit this rendering (see Gen. 1:14). The sentence is quite a general one, and not only prohibits polytheism and idolatry, the worship of idols in thought, word, and deed (cf. Deut. 8:11, 17, 19), but also commands the fear, love, and worship of God the Lord (cf. Deut. 6:5, 13, 17; 10:12, 20). Nearly all the commandments are couched in the negative form of prohibition, because they presuppose the existence of sin and evil desires in the human heart.

**Exodus 20:4–6.** The Second Word.—To the prohibition of idolatrous worship there is linked on, as a second word, the prohibition of the worship of images. “After declaring in the first commandment who was the true God, He commanded that He alone should be worshipped; and now He defines what is His lawful worship” (*Calvin*). “*Thou shalt not make to thyself a likeness and any form of that which is*

*in heaven above,*” etc. עֲשֶׂה is construed with a double accusative, so that the literal rendering would be “make, as a likeness and any form,

that which is in heaven,” etc. פָּסֶל, from פָּסַל

to carve wood or stone, is a figure made of wood or stone, and is used in Judg. 17:3ff. for a figure representing Jehovah, and in other places for figures of heathen deities—of Asherah, for

example, in 2 Kings 21:7. תְּמוּנָה does not

signify an image made by man, but a form which is seen by him (Num. 12:8; Deut. 4:12, 15ff.; Job 4:16; Ps. 17:15). In Deut. 5:8 (cf. 4:16) we find **פֶּסֶל כָּל־תְּמוּנָה** “likeness of any form:” so that in this passage also **וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה** is to be taken as in apposition to **פֶּסֶל**, and the **וְ** as *vav explic.*: “and indeed any form,” viz., of Jehovah, not of heathen gods. That the words should be so understood, is demanded by Deut. 4:15ff., where Moses lays stress upon the command, not to make to themselves an image (**פֶּסֶל**) in the form of any sculpture (**סֹמֶל**), and gives this as the reason: “For ye saw no form in the day when Jehovah spake to you at Horeb.” This authoritative exposition of the divine prohibition on the part of Moses himself proves undeniably, that **פֶּסֶל** and **תְּמוּנָה** are to be understood as referring to symbolical representations of Jehovah. And the words which follow also receive their authoritative exposition from Deut. 4:17 and 18. By “*that which is in heaven*” we are to understand the birds, not the angels, or at the most, according to Deut. 4:19, the stars as well; by “*that which is in earth*,” the cattle, reptiles, and the larger or smaller animals; and by “*that which is in the water*,” fishes and water animals. “*Under the earth*” is appended to the “*water*,” to express in a pictorial manner the idea of its being lower than the solid ground (cf. Deut. 4:18). It is not only evident from the context that the allusion is not to the making of images generally, but to the construction of figures of God as objects of religious reverence or worship, but this is expressly stated in v. 5; so that even *Calvin* observes, that “there is no necessity to refute what some have foolishly imagined, that sculpture and painting of every kind are condemned here.” With the same aptness he has just before observed, that “although Moses only speaks of idols, there is no doubt that by implication he condemns all the forms of false

worship, which men have invented for themselves.”

**Exodus 20:5.** “*Thou shalt not pray to them and serve them.*” (On the form **תַּעֲבֹדֵם** with the *o*-sound under the guttural, see *Ewald*, § 251d.).

**הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה** signifies bending before God in

prayer, and invoking His name; **עָבַד**, worship by means of sacrifice and religious ceremonies.

The suffixes **לָהֶם** and **לָהֶם** (*to them*, and *them*) refer to the things in heaven, etc., which are made into *pesel*, symbols of Jehovah, as being the principal object of the previous clause, and

not to **פֶּסֶל וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה**, although **עָבַד פֶּסֶל**

is applied in Ps. 97:7 and 2 Kings 17:41 to a rude idolatrous worship, which identifies the image as the symbol of deity with the deity

itself, Still less do they refer to **אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים** in v. 3.

The threat and promise, which follow in vv. 5b and 6, relate to the first two commandments, and not to the second alone; because both of them, although forbidding two forms of idolatry, viz., idolo-latry and ikono-latry, are combined in a higher unity, by the fact, that whenever Jehovah, the God who cannot be copied because He reveals His spiritual nature in no visible form, is worshipped under some visible image, the glory of the invisible God is changed, or Jehovah changed into a different God from what He really is. Through either form of idolatry, therefore, Israel would break its covenant with Jehovah. For this reason God enforces the two commandments with the

solemn declaration: “I, Jehovah thy God, am **אֱלֹהִים**

**קַנָּא** a jealous God;” i.e., not only *ζηλωτής*, a jealous avenger of sinners, but *ζηλωτόπος*, a jealous God, who will not transfer to another the honour that is due to Himself (Isa. 42:8; 48:11), nor tolerate the worship of any other god (Exodus 34:14), but who directs the

warmth of His anger against those who hate Him (Deut. 6:15), with the same energy with which the warmth of His love (Song of Sol. 8:6) embraces those who love Him, except that love in the form of grace reaches much further than wrath. The sin of the fathers He visits (punishes) on the children to the third and fourth generation. **שְׁלִשִׁים** third (sc., children) are not grandchildren, but great-grandchildren, and **רְבַעִים** the fourth generation. On the other hand He shows mercy to the thousandths, i.e., to the thousandth generation (cf. Deut. 7:9, where **לְאַלְפִים דָּוָר** stands for **לְאַלְפִים**). The cardinal number is used here for the ordinal, for which there was no special form in the case of **אֶלֶף**. The words **לְשָׁנָי** and **לְאֵהָבֵי**, in which the punishment and grace are traced to their ultimate foundation, are of great importance to a correct understanding of this utterance of God. The **לְ** before **שָׁנָי** does not take up the genitive with **עוֹן** again, as *Knobel* supposes, for no such use of **לְ** can be established from Gen. 7:11; 16:3; 14:18; 41:12, or in fact in any way whatever. In this instance **לְ** signifies “at” or “in relation to;” and **לְשָׁנָי**, from its very position, cannot refer to the fathers alone, but to the fathers and children to the third and fourth generation. If it referred to the fathers alone, it would necessarily stand after **לְאֵהָבֵי וְגו’**. **אֵבֶת** is to be taken in the same way. God punishes the sin of the fathers in the children to the third and fourth generation in relation to those who hate Him, and shows mercy to the thousandth generation in relation to those who love Him. The human race is a living organism, in which not only sin and wickedness are transmitted, but evil as the curse of the sin and the punishment of the wickedness. As children receive their nature

from their parents, or those who beget them, so they have also to bear and atone for their fathers’ guilt. This truth forced itself upon the minds even of thoughtful heathen from their own varied experience (cf. *Aeschyl. Sept. 744; Eurip.* according to *Plutarch de sera num. vind. 12, 21; Cicero de nat. deorum 3, 38; and Baumgarten-Crusius, bibl. Theol. p. 208*). Yet there is no *fate* in the divine government of the world, no irresistible necessity in the continuous results of good and evil; but there reigns in the world a righteous and gracious God, who not only restrains the course of His penal judgments, as soon as the sinner is brought to reflection by the punishment and hearkens to the voice of God, but who also forgives the sin and iniquity of those who love Him, keeping mercy to the thousandth generation (Exodus 34:7). The words neither affirm that sinning fathers remain unpunished, nor that the sins of fathers are punished in the children and grandchildren without any fault of their own: they simply say nothing about whether and how the fathers themselves are punished; and, in order to show the dreadful severity of the penal righteousness of God, give prominence to the fact, that punishment is not omitted,—that even when, in the long-suffering of God, it is deferred, it is not therefore neglected, but that the children have to bear the sins of their fathers, whenever, for example (as naturally follows from the connection of children with their fathers, and, as *Onkelos* has added in his paraphrase of the words), “the children fill up the sins of their fathers,” so that the descendants suffer punishment for both their own and their forefathers’ misdeeds (Lev. 26:39; Isa. 65:7; Amos 7:17; Jer. 16:11ff.; Dan. 9:16). But when, on the other hand, the hating ceases, when the children forsake their fathers’ evil ways, the warmth of the divine wrath is turned into the warmth of love, and God becomes **עֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד** (“showing mercy”) to them; and this mercy endures not only to the third and fourth generation, but to the thousandth generation, though only in relation to those who love God, and manifest this love

by keeping His commandments. "If God continues for a long time His visitation of sin, He continues to all eternity His manifestation of mercy, and we cannot have a better proof of this than in the history of Israel itself" (*Schultz*).<sup>48</sup>

**Exodus 20:7.** The Third Word, "*Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain,*" is closely connected with the former two.

Although there is no God beside Jehovah, the absolute One, and His divine essence cannot be seen or conceived of under any form, He had made known the glory of His nature in His name (Exodus 3:14ff., 6:2), and this was not to

be abused by His people. **שָׁמַע** does not

mean to utter the name (**שָׁמַע** never has this meaning), but in all the passages in which it has been so rendered it retains its proper meaning, "to take up, life up, raise;" e.g., to take up or raise (begin) a proverb (Num. 23:7; Job 27:1), to lift up a song (Ps. 81:3), or a prayer (Isa. 37:4). And it is evident from the parallel in Ps. 24:4, "to lift up his soul to vanity," that it does not mean "to utter" here. **שָׁמַע** does not signify

*a lie* (**שָׁקַר**), but according to its etymon **שָׂאָה**, to be waste, it denotes that which is waste and disorder, hence that which is empty, vain, and nugatory, for which there is no occasion. The word prohibits all employment of the name of God for vain and unworthy objects, and includes not only false swearing, which is condemned in Lev. 19:12 as a profanation of the name of Jehovah, but trivial swearing in the ordinary intercourse of life, and every use of the name of God in the service of untruth and lying, for imprecation, witchcraft, or conjuring; whereas the true employment of the name of God is confined to "invocation, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving," which proceeds from a pure, believing heart. The natural heart is very liable to transgress this command, and therefore it is solemnly enforced by the threat, "for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless" (leave him unpunished), etc.

**Exodus 20:8-11.** The Fourth Word, "*Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy,*" presupposes an acquaintance with the Sabbath, as the expression "remember" is sufficient to show, but not that the Sabbath had been *kept* before this. From the history of the creation that had been handed down, Israel must have known, that after God had created the world in six days He rested the seventh day, and by His resting sanctified the day (Gen. 2:3). But hitherto there had been no commandment given to man to sanctify the day. This was given for the first time to Israel at Sinai, after preparation had been made for it by the fact that the manna did not fall on the seventh day of the week (Exodus 16:22). Here therefore the mode of sanctifying it was established for the first time. The seventh

day was to be **שִׁבְתָּ** (a festival-keeper, see

Exodus 16:23), i.e., a day of rest belonging to the Lord, and to be consecrated to Him by the fact that no work was performed upon it. The

command not to do any (**כָּל**) work applied to both man and beast without exception. Those who were to rest are divided into two classes

by the omission of the cop. **ו** before **עֲבַדְדֶּךָ** (v.

10): viz., *first*, free Israelites ("*thou*") and their children ("*thy son and thy daughter*"); and *secondly*, their slaves (*man-servant and maid-servant*), and cattle (beasts of draught and burden), and their strangers, i.e., foreign labourers who had settled among the Israelites. "*Within thy gates*" is equivalent to in the cities, towns, and villages of thy land, not in thy

houses (cf. Deut. 5:14; 14:21, etc.). **שַׁעַר** (a gate) is only applied to the entrances to towns, or large enclosed courts and palaces, never to the entrances into ordinary houses, huts, and

tents. **מְלָאכָה** work (cf. Gen. 2:2), as

distinguished from **עֲבָדָה** labour, is not so much a term denoting a lighter kind of labour, as a general and comprehensive term applied to the performance of any task, whether easy or

severe. עֲבָדָה is the execution of a definite task, whether in field labour (Ps. 104:23) and mechanical employment (Exodus 39:32) on the one hand, or priestly service and the duties connected with worship on the other (Exodus 12:25, 26; Num. 4:47). On the Sabbath (and also on the day of atonement, Lev. 23:28, 31) every occupation was to rest; on the other feast-days only laborious occupations (מְלֵאכֶת עֲבָדָה, Lev. 23:7ff.), i.e., such occupations as came under the denomination of labour, business, or industrial employment. Consequently, not only were ploughing and reaping (Exodus 34:21), pressing wine and carrying goods (Neh. 13:15), bearing burdens (Jer. 17:21), carrying on trade (Amos 8:5), and holding markets (Neh. 13:15ff.) prohibited, but collecting manna (Exodus 16:26ff.), gathering wood (Num. 15:32ff.), and kindling fire for the purpose of boiling or baking (Exodus 35:3). The intention of this resting from every occupation on the Sabbath is evident from the foundation upon which the commandment is based in v. 11, viz., that at the creation of the heaven and the earth Jehovah rested on the seventh day, and therefore blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it. This does not imply, however, that "Israel was to follow the Lord by keeping the Sabbath, and, in imitation of His example, to be active where the Lord was active, and rest where the Lord rested; to copy the Lord in accordance with the lofty aim of man, who was created in His likeness, and make the pulsation of the divine life in a certain sense his own" (Schultz). For although a parallel is drawn, between the creation of the world by God in six days and His resting upon the seventh day on the one hand, and the labour of man for six days and his resting upon the seventh on the other; the reason for the keeping of the Sabbath is not to be found in this parallel, but in the fact that God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because He rested upon it. The significance of the Sabbath, therefore, is to be found in God's blessing and sanctifying the seventh day of the week at the creation, i.e., in the fact, that after

the work of creation was finished on the seventh day, God blessed and hallowed the created world, filling it with the powers of peace and good belonging to His own blessed rest, and raising it to a participation in the pure light of His holy nature (see Gen. 2:3). For this reason His people Israel were to keep the Sabbath now, not for the purpose of imitating what God had done, and enjoying the blessing of God by thus following God Himself, but that on this day they also might rest from their work; and that all the more, because their work was no longer the work appointed to man at the first, when he was created in the likeness of God, work which did not interrupt his blessedness in God (Gen. 2:15), but that hard labour in the sweat of his brow to which he had been condemned in consequence of the fall. In order therefore that His people might rest from toil so oppressive to both body and soul, and be refreshed, God prescribed the keeping of the Sabbath, that they might thus possess a day for the repose and elevation of their spirits, and a foretaste of the blessedness into which the people of God are at last to enter, the blessedness of the eternal κατάπαυσις ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ (Heb. 4:10), the ἀνάπαυσις ἐκ τῶν κόπων (Rev. 14:13). See my *Archaeologie*, § 77). But instead of this objective ground for the sabbatical festival, which furnished the true idea of the Sabbath, when Moses recapitulated the decalogue, he adduced only the subjective aspect of rest or refreshing (Deut. 5:14, 15), reminding the people, just as in Exodus 23:12, of their bondage in Egypt and their deliverance from it by the strong arm of Jehovah, and then adding, "therefore (that thou mightest remember this deliverance from bondage) Jehovah commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day." This is not at variance with the reason given in the present verse, but simply gives prominence to a subjective aspect, which was peculiarly adapted to warm the hearts of the people towards the observance of the Sabbath, and to render the Sabbath rest dear to the people, since it served to keep the Israelites constantly in mind of the rest which Jehovah had procured for them from the slave labour of

Egypt. For resting from every work is the basis of the observance of the Sabbath; but this observance is an institution peculiar to the Old Testament, and not to be met with in any other nation, though there are many among whom the division of weeks occurs. The observance of the Sabbath, by being adopted into the decalogue, was made the foundation of all the festal times and observances of the Israelites, as they all culminated in the Sabbath rest. At the same time, as an ἐντολή τοῦ νόμου, an ingredient in the Sinaitic law, it belonged to the "shadow of (good) things to come" (Col. 2:17, cf. Heb. 10:1), which was to be done away when the "body" in Christ had come. Christ is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8), and after the completion of His work, He also rested on the Sabbath. But He rose again on the Sunday; and through His resurrection, which is the pledge to the world of the fruits of His redeeming work, He has made this day the κυριακή ἡμέρα (Lord's day) for His Church, to be observed by it till the Captain of its salvation shall return, and having finished the judgment upon all His foes to the very last shall lead it to the rest of that eternal Sabbath, which God prepared for the whole creation through His own resting after the completion of the heaven and the earth.

**Exodus 20:12.** The Fifth Word, "*Honour thy father and thy mother,*" does not refer to fellow-men, but to "those who are the representatives (*vicarii*) of God. Therefore, as God is to be served with honour and fear, His representatives are to be so too" (*Luther decem. praec.*). This is placed beyond all doubt by Lev. 19:3, where reverence towards parents is placed on an equality with the observance of the Sabbath, and אִירָא (*fear*) is substituted for

כָּבֵד (*honour*). It also follows from כָּבֵד, which, as *Calvin* correctly observes, nihil aliud est quam Deo et hominibus, qui dignitate pollent, justum honorem deferre. Fellow-men or neighbours (רֵעִי) are to be loved (Lev. 19:18): parents, on the other hand, are to be honoured and feared; reverence is to be shown to them

with heart, mouth, and hand—in thought, word, and deed. But by father and mother we are not to understand merely the authors and preservers of our bodily life, but also the founders, protectors, and promoters of our spiritual life, such as prophets and teachers, to whom sometimes the name of father is given (2 Kings 2:12; 13:14), whilst at other times paternity is ascribed to them by their scholars being called sons and daughters (Ps. 34:12; 45:11; Prov. 1:8, 10, 15, etc.); also the guardians of our bodily and spiritual life, the powers ordained of God, to whom the names of father and mother (Gen. 45:8; Judg. 5:7) may justly be applied, since all government has grown out of the relation of father and child, and draws its moral weight and stability, upon which the prosperity and well-being of a nation depends, from the reverence of children towards their parents.<sup>49</sup> And the promise, "*that thy days may be long (thou mayest live long) in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee,*" also points to this. There is a double promise here. So long as the nation rejoiced in the possession of obedient children, it was assured of a long life or existence in the land of Canaan; but there is also included the promise of a long life, i.e., a great age, to individuals (cf. Deut. 6:2; 22:7), just as we find in 1 Kings 3:14 a good old age referred to as a special blessing from God. In Deut. 5:16, the promise of long life is followed by the words, "and that it may be well with thee," which do not later the sense, but merely explain it more fully.

As the majesty of God was thus to be honoured and feared in parents, so the image of God was to be kept sacred in all men. This thought forms the transition to the rest of the commandments.

**Exodus 20:13–17.** The other Five Words or commandments, which determine the duties to one's neighbour, are summed up in Lev. 19:18 in the one word, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." The order in which they follow one another is the following: they first of all secure life, marriage, and property against active invasion or attack, and then, proceeding from deed to word and thought, they forbid false

witness and coveting.<sup>50</sup> If, therefore, the first three commandments in this table refer primarily to deeds; the subsequent advance to the prohibition of desire is a proof that the deed is not to be separated from the disposition, and that “the fulfilment of the law is only complete when the heart itself is sanctified” (*Oehler*). Accordingly, in the command, “Thou shalt not kill,” not only is the accomplished fact of murder condemned, whether it proceed from open violence or stratagem (Exodus 21:12, 14, 18), but every act that endangers human life, whether it arise from carelessness (Deut. 22:8) or wantonness (Lev. 19:14), or from hatred, anger, and revenge (Lev. 19:17, 18). Life is placed at the head of these commandments, not as being the highest earthly possession, but because it is the basis of human existence, and in the life the personality is attacked, and in that the image of God (Gen. 9:6). The omission of the object still remains to be noticed, as showing that the prohibition includes not only the killing of a fellow-man, but the destruction of one’s own life, or suicide.—The two following commandments are couched in equally general terms. *Adultery*, נִאֲרָה, which is used in Lev. 20:10 of both man and woman, signifies (as distinguished from זְנִיָּה to commit fornication) the sexual intercourse of a husband with the wife of another, or of a wife with the husband of another. This prohibition is not only directed against any assault upon the husband’s dearest possession, for the tenth commandment guards against that, but upholds the sacredness of marriage as the divine appointment for the propagation and multiplication of the human race; and although addressed primarily to the man, like all the commandments that were given to the whole nation, applies quite as much to the woman as to the man, just as we find in Lev. 20:10 that adultery was to be punished with death in the case of both the man *and* the woman.—Property was to be equally inviolable. The command, “Thou shalt not steal,” prohibited not only the secret or open removal of another

person’s property, but injury done to it, or fraudulent retention of it, through carelessness or indifference (Exodus 21:33; 22:13; 23:4, 5; Deut. 22:1–4).—But lest these commandments should be understood as relating merely to the outward act as such, as they were by the Pharisees, in opposition to whom Christ set forth their true fulfilment (Matt. 5:21ff.), God added the further prohibition, “Thou shalt not answer as a false witness against thy neighbour,” i.e., give false testimony against him. עֲנֶה and אָמַר: to answer or give evidence against a person (Gen. 30:33). עֵד is not evidence, but a witness. Instead of עֵד שֶׁקֶר, a witness of a lie, who consciously gives utterance to falsehood, we find עֵד שׁוֹא in Deuteronomy, one who says what is vain, worthless, unfounded (שִׁמֵּעַ שׁוֹא, Exodus 23:1; on שׁוֹא see v. 7). From this it is evident, that not only is lying prohibited, but false and unfounded evidence in general; and not only evidence before a judge, but false evidence of every kind, by which (according to the context) the life, married relation, or property of a neighbour might be endangered (cf. Exodus 23:1; Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; 22:13ff.).—The last or tenth commandment is directed against desiring (coveting), as the root from which every sin against a neighbour springs, whether it be in word or deed. The חָמַד, ἐπιθυμεῖν (LXX), coveting, proceeds from the heart (Prov. 6:25), and brings forth sin, which “is finished” in the act (Jas. 1:14, 15). The repetition of the words, “Thou shalt not covet,” does not prove that there are two different commandments, any more than the substitution of תַּתְּאוּנָה in Deut. 5:18 for the second תַּחְמֹד. חָמַד and תַּתְּאוּנָה are synonyms,—the only difference between them being, that “the former denotes the desire as

founded upon the perception of beauty, and therefore excited from without, the latter, desire originating at the very outset in the person himself, and arising from his own want or inclination" (*Schultz*). The repetition merely serves to strengthen and give the great emphasis to that which constitutes the very kernel of the command, and is just as much in harmony with the simple and appropriate language of the law, as the employment of a synonym in the place of the repetition of the same word is with the rhetorical character of Deuteronomy. Moreover, the objects of desire do not point to two different commandments. This is evident at once from the transposition of

the house and wife in Deuteronomy. **בֵּית** (the house) is not merely the dwelling, but the entire household (as in Gen. 15:2, Job 8:15), either including the wife, or exclusive of her. In the text before us she is included; in Deuteronomy she is not, but is placed first as the crown of the man, and a possession more costly than pearls (Prov. 12:4; 31:10). In this case, the idea of the "house" is restricted to the other property belonging to the domestic economy, which is classified in Deuteronomy as fields, servants, cattle, and whatever else a man may have; whereas in Exodus the "house" is divided into wife, servants, cattle, and the rest of the possessions.

**Exodus 20:18–21** (cf. Deut. 5:19–33). The terrible phenomena, amidst which the Lord displayed His majesty, made the intended impression upon the people who were stationed by the mountain below, so that they desired that God would not speak to them any more, and entreated Moses through their elders to act as mediator between them, promising at the same time that they would hear him (cf.

Exodus 19:9, 16–19). **רָאִים**, perceiving: **רָאָה** to see being frequently used for perceiving, as being the principle sense by which most of the impressions of the outer world are received (e.g., Gen. 42:1; Isa. 44:16; Jer. 33:24). **לְפִידִם**, fire-torches, are the vivid flashes of lightning

(Exodus 19:16). "*They trembled and stood afar off:*" not daring to come nearer to the mountain, or to ascend it. "*And they said,*" viz., the heads of the tribes and elders: cf. Deut. 5:20, where the words of the people are more fully given. "*Lest we die:*" cf. Deut. 5:21–23. Though they had discovered that God speaks with man, and yet man lives; they felt so much that they were

**בְּשָׂר**, *flesh*, i.e., powerless, frail, and alienated by sin from the holy God, that they were afraid lest they should be consumed by this great fire, if they listened any longer to the voice of God.

**Exodus 20:20.** To direct the sinner's holy awe in the presence of the holy God, which was expressed in these words of the people, into the proper course of healthy and enduring penitence, Moses first of all took away the false fear of death by the encouraging answer, "Fear not," and then immediately added, "for God is

come to prove you." **נִסּוּת** referred to the testing of the state of the heart in relation to God, as it is explained in the exegetical clause which follows: "*that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.*" By this terrible display of His glory, God desired to inspire them with the true fear of Himself, that they might not sin through distrust, disobedience, or resistance to His guidance and commands.

**Exodus 20:21.** "*So the people stood afar off*" (as in v. 18), not "went far away," although, according to Deut. 5:30, Moses was directed by God to tell the people to return to their tents. This is passed over here, and it is merely observed, for the purpose of closing the first act in the giving the law, and preparing the way for the second, that the people remained afar off, whereas Moses (and Aaron, cf. 19:24) drew near to the darkness where God was, to receive the further commands of the Lord.

THE LEADING FEATURES IN THE  
COVENANT CONSTITUTION.—CH.  
20:22–24:2.

These refer, *first* of all, to the general form of divine worship in Israel (Exodus 20:22–26); *secondly*, to the rights of the Israelites, (*a*) in a civil or social point of view, i.e., so far as their relation to one another was concerned (Exodus 21:1–23:13), and (*b*) in their religious and theocratical relation to Jehovah (Exodus 23:14–19); and *thirdly*, to the attitude which Jehovah would maintain towards Israel (Exodus 23:20–33).

**Exodus 20:22–26.** The General Form of Divine Worship in Israel.—As Jehovah had spoken to the Israelites from heaven, they were not to make gods of earthly materials, such as silver and gold, by the side of Him, but simply to construct an altar of earth or unhewn stones without steps, for the offering up of His sacrifices at the place where He would reveal Himself. “*From heaven*” Jehovah came down upon Sinai enveloped in the darkness of a cloud; and thereby He made known to the people that His nature was heavenly, and could not be imitated in any earthly material. “*Ye shall not make with Me,*” place by the side of, or on a par with Me,” “*gods of silver and gold,*” —that is to say, idols primarily intended to represent the nature of God, and therefore meant as symbols of Jehovah, but which became false gods from the very fact that they were intended as representations of the purely spiritual God.

**Exodus 20:24.** For the worship of Jehovah, the God of heaven, Israel needed only an altar, on which to cause its sacrifices to ascend to God. The altar, as an elevation built up of earth or rough stones, was a symbol of the elevation of man to God, who is enthroned on high in the heaven; and because man was to raise himself to God in his sacrifices, Israel also was to make an altar, though only of earth, or if of stones, not of hewn stones. “*For if thou swingest thy tool*

(**הַרְבַּ** lit., sharpness, then any edge tool) *over it* (over the stone), *thou defilest it*” (v. 25). “*Of earth:*” i.e., not “of comparatively simple materials, such as befitted a representation of the creature” (*Schultz* on Deut. 12); for the altar was not to represent the creature, but to be the

place to which God came to receive man into His fellowship there. For this reason the altar was to be made of the same material, which formed the earthly soil for the kingdom of God, either of earth or else of stones, just as they existed in their natural state; not, however, “because unpolished stones, which retain their true and native condition, appear to be endowed with a certain native purity, and therefore to be most in harmony with the sanctity of an altar” (*Spencer de legg. Hebr. rit. lib. ii. c. 6*), for the “native purity” of the earth does not agree with Gen. 3:17; but because the altar was to set forth the nature of the simple earthly soil, unaltered by the hand of man. The earth, which has been involved in the curse of sin, is to be renewed and glorified into the kingdom of God, not by sinful men, but by the gracious hand of God alone. Moreover, Israel was not to erect the altar for its sacrifices in any place that it might choose, but only in every place in which Jehovah should bring His name

to remembrance. **הַזְכִּיר שֵׁם וְגו'** does not mean “to make the name of the Lord remembered,” i.e., to cause men to remember it; but to establish a memorial of His name, i.e., to make a glorious revelation of His divine nature, and thereby to consecrate the place into a holy soil (cf. 3:5), upon which Jehovah would come to Israel and bless it. Lastly, the command not to go up to the altar by steps (v. 26) is followed by the words, “that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.” It was in the feeling of shame that the consciousness of sin first manifested itself, and it was in the shame that the sin was chiefly apparent (Gen. 3:7); hence the nakedness was a disclosure of sin, through which the altar of God would be desecrated, and for this reason it was forbidden to ascend to the altar by steps. These directions with reference to the altar to be built do not refer merely to the altar, which was built for the conclusion of the covenant, nor are they at variance with the later instructions respecting the one altar at the tabernacle, upon which all the sacrifices were to be presented (Lev. 17:8, 9; Deut. 12:5ff.), nor are they merely

“provisional” but they lay the foundation for the future laws with reference to the places of worship, though without restricting them to one particular locality on the one hand, or allowing an unlimited number of altars on the other. Hence “several places and altars are referred to here, because, whilst the people were wandering in the desert, there could be no fixed place for the tabernacle” (*Riehm*). But the erection of the altar is unquestionably limited to every place which Jehovah appointed for the purpose by a revelation. We are not to understand the words, however, as referring merely to those places in which the tabernacle and its altar were erected, and to the site of the future temple (Sinai, Shiloh, and Jerusalem), but to all those places also where altars were built and sacrifices offered on extraordinary occasions, on account of God,—appearing there such, for example, as Ebal (Josh. 8:30 compared with Deut. 27:5), the rock in Ophrah (Judg. 6:25, 26), and many other places besides.

## Exodus 21

**Exodus 21:1–23:13.** Fundamental Rights of the Israelites in their Civil or Social Relations.—Ch. 21:1–11. The *mishpatim* (v. 1) are not the “laws, which were to be in force and serve as rules of action,” as *Knobel* affirms, but the *rights*, by which the national life was formed into a civil commonwealth and the political order secured. These rights had reference first of all to the relation in which the individuals stood one towards another. The *personal rights* of dependants are placed at the head (vv. 2–11); and first those of *slaves* (vv. 2–6), which are still more minutely explained in Deut. 15:12–18, where the observance of them is urged upon the hearts of the people on subjective grounds.

**Exodus 21:2.** The Hebrew servant was to obtain his freedom without paying compensation, after six years of service. According to Deut. 15:12, this rule applied to the Hebrew maid-servant as well. The predicate עֶבְרִי limits the rule to Israelitish servants, in distinction from slaves of foreign extraction, to

whom this law did not apply (cf. Deut. 15:12, “thy brother”).<sup>51</sup> An Israelite might buy his own countryman, either when he was sold by a court of justice on account of theft (Exodus 22:1), or when he was poor and sold himself (Lev. 25:39). The emancipation in the seventh year of service was intimately connected with the sabbatical year, though we are not to understand it as taking place in that particular year. “He shall go out free,” sc., from his

master’s house, i.e., be set at liberty. הָנִים:

without compensation. In Deuteronomy the master is also commanded not to let him go out empty, but to load him (הֵעֲנִיק) to put upon his neck) from his flock, his threshing-floor, and his wine-press (i.e., with corn and wine); that is to say, to give him as much as he could carry away with him. The motive for this command is drawn from their recollection of their own deliverance by Jehovah from the bondage of Egypt. And in v. 18 an additional reason is supplied, to incline the heart of the master to this emancipation, viz., that “he has served thee for six years the double of a labourer’s wages,”—that is to say, “he has served and worked so much, that it would have cost twice as much, if it had been necessary to hire a labourer in his place” (*Schultz*),—and “Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee in all that thou doest,” sc., through his service.

**Exodus 21:3, 4.** There were three different circumstances possible, under which emancipation might take place. The servant might have been unmarried and continued so

(בְּגִפּוֹ: with his body, i.e., alone, single): in that case, of course, there was no one else to set at liberty. Or he might have brought a wife with him; and in that case his wife was to be set at liberty as well. Or his master might have given him a wife in his bondage, and she might have borne him children: in that case the wife and children were to continue the property of the master. This may appear oppressive, but it was an equitable consequence of the possession of property in slaves at all. At the same time, in

order to modify the harshness of such a separation of husband and wife, the option was given to the servant to remain in his master's service, provided he was willing to renounce his liberty for ever (vv. 5, 6). This would very likely be the case as a general rule; for there were various legal arrangements, which are mentioned in other places, by which the lot of Hebrew slaves was greatly softened and placed almost on an equality with that of hired labourers (cf. Exodus 23:12; Lev. 25:6, 39, 43, 53; Deut. 12:18; 16:11). In this case the master was to take his servant אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים, lit., *to God*, i.e., according to the correct rendering of the LXX, πρὸς τὸ κριτήριον, to the place where judgment was given in the name of God (Deut. 1:17; cf. Exodus 22:7, 8, and Deut. 19:17), in order that he might make a declaration there that he gave up his liberty. His ear was then to be bored with an awl against the door or lintel of the house, and by this sign, which was customary in many of the nations of antiquity, to be fastened as it were to the house for ever. That this was the meaning of the piercing of the ear against the door of the house, is evident from the unusual expression in Deut. 15:17, "and put (the awl) into his ear and into the door, that he may be thy servant for ever," where the ear and the door are co-ordinates. "For ever," i.e., as long as he lives. *Josephus* and the Rabbins would restrict the service to the time ending with the year of jubilee, but without sufficient reason, and contrary to the usage of the language, as לְעֹלָם is used in Lev. 25:46 to denote service which did not terminate with the year of jubilee. (See the remarks on Lev. 25:10; also my *Archäologie*.)

**Exodus 21:7–11.** The *daughter* of an Israelite, who had been sold by her father as a maid-servant (לְאִמָּה), i.e., as the sequel shows, as a housekeeper and concubine, stood in a different relation to her master's house. She was not to go out like the men-servants, i.e., not to be sent away as free at the end of six years of service; but the three following regulations,

which are introduced by אִם (v. 8), וְאִם (v. 9), and וְאִם (v. 11), were to be observed with regard to her. In the *first* place (v. 8), "if she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed." The אִם before יַעֲדָהּ is one of the fifteen cases in which אִם has been marked in the Masoretic text as standing for לוֹ; and it cannot possibly signify *not* in the passage before us. For if it were to be taken as a negative, "that he do not appoint her," sc., as a concubine for himself, the pronoun לוֹ would certainly not be omitted.

הַפְּדָהּ (for הַפְּדָהּ, see Ges. § 53, Note 6), to let her be redeemed, i.e., to allow another Israelite to buy her as a concubine; for there can hardly have been any thought of redemption on the part of the father, as it would no doubt be poverty alone that caused him to sell his daughter (Lev. 35:39). But "to sell her unto a strange nation (i.e., to any one but a Hebrew), he shall have no power, if he acts unfaithfully towards her," i.e., if he do not grant her the promised marriage. In the *second* place (vv. 9, 10), "if he appoint her as his son's wife, he shall act towards her according to the rights of daughters," i.e., treat her as a daughter; "and if he take him (the son) another (wife),—whether because the son was no longer satisfied, or because the father gave the son another wife in addition to her,—"her food (שֵׂאֵר) flesh as the chief article of food, instead of לֶחֶם, bread, because the lawgiver had persons of property in his mind, who were in a position to keep concubines), her raiment, and her duty of marriage he shall not diminish," i.e., the claims which she had as a daughter for support, and as his son's wife for conjugal rights, were not to be neglected; he was not to allow his son, therefore, to put her away or treat her badly.

With this explanation the difficulties connected with every other are avoided. For instance, if we refer the words of v. 9 to the son, and understand them as meaning, "if the son should take another wife," we introduce a change of subject without anything to indicate it. If, on the other hand, we regard them as meaning, "if the father (the purchaser) should take to himself another wife," this ought to have come before v. 9. In the *third* place (v. 11), "if he do not (do not grant) these three unto her, she shall go out for nothing, without money." "These three" are food, clothing, and conjugal rights, which are mentioned just before; not "*si eam non desponderit sibi nec filio, nec redimi sit passus*" (Rabbins and others), nor "if he did not give her to his son as a concubine, but diminished her," as Knobel explains it.

**Exodus 21:12-17.** Still higher than personal liberty, however, is life itself, the right of existence and personality; and the infliction of injury upon this was not only prohibited, but to be followed by punishment corresponding to the crime. The principle of retribution, *jus talionis*, which is the only one that embodies the idea of justice, lies at the foundation of these threats.

**Exodus 21:12-14.** A *death-blow* was to be punished with death (cf. Gen. 9:6; Lev. 24:17). "*He that smiteth a man and (so that) he die (whether on the spot or directly afterwards did not matter), he shall be put to death.*" This general rule is still further defined by a distinction being drawn between accidental and intentional killing. "*But whoever has not lain in wait (for another's life), and God has caused it to come to his hand*" (to kill the other); i.e., not only if he did not intend to kill him, but did not even cherish the intention of smiting him, or of doing him harm from hatred and enmity (Num. 35:16-23; Deut. 19:4, 5), and therefore did so quite unawares, according to a dispensation of God, which is generally called an accident because it is above our comprehension. For such a man God would appoint places of refuge, where he should be

protected against the avenger of blood. (On this point, see Num. 35:9ff.)

**Exodus 21:14.** "*But he who acts presumptuously against his neighbour, to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from Mine altar that he may die.*" These words are not to be understood as meaning, that only intentional and treacherous killing was to be punished with death; but, without restricting the general rule in v. 12, they are to be interpreted from their antithesis to v. 13, as signifying that even the altar of Jehovah was not to protect a man who had committed intentional murder, and carried out his purpose with treachery. (More on this point at Num. 35:16ff.) By this regulation, the idea, which was common to the Hebrews and many other nations, that the altar as God's abode afforded protection to any life that was in danger from men, was brought back to the true measure of its validity, and the place of expiation for sins of weakness (cf. Lev. 4:2; 5:15, 18; Num. 15:27-31) was prevented from being abused by being made a place of refuge for criminals who were deserving of death. Maltreatment of a father and mother through striking (v. 15), man-stealing (v. 16), and cursing parents (v. 17, cf. Lev. 20:9), were all to be placed on a par with murder, and punished in the same way. By the "*smiting*" (הִכָּה) of parents we are not to understand smiting to death, for in that case נָמַת would be added as in v. 12, but any kind of maltreatment. The murder of parents is not mentioned at all, as not likely to occur and hardly conceivable. The cursing (קָלַל) as in Gen. 12:3) of parents is placed on a par with smiting, because it proceeds from the same disposition; and both were to be punished with death, because the majesty of God was violated in the persons of the parents (cf. Exodus 20:12). *Man-stealing* was also no less a crime, being a sin against the *dignity* of man, and a violation of the image of God. For אִישׁ "a man," we find in Deut. 24:7,

נַפְשׁוֹ “a soul,” by which both man and woman are intended, and the still more definite limitation, “of his brethren of the children of Israel.” The crime remained the same whether he had sold him (the stolen man), or whether he was still found in his hand. (For ׀—׀ as a sign of an alternative in the linking together of short sentences, see Prov. 29:9, and Ewald, § 361.) This is the rendering adopted by most of the earlier translators, and we get no intelligent sense if we divide the clauses thus: “and sell him so that he is found in his hand.”

**Exodus 21:18–32.** Fatal blows and the crimes placed on a par with them are now followed in simple order by the laws relating to *bodily injuries*.

**Exodus 21:18, 19.** If in the course of a quarrel one man should hit another with a stone or with his fist, so that, although he did not die, he “lay upon his bed,” i.e., became bedridden; if the person struck should get up again and walk out with his staff, the other would be innocent, he should “only give him his sitting and have him cured,” i.e., compensate him for his loss of time and the cost of recovery. This certainly implies, on the one hand, that if the man died upon his bed, the injury was to be punished with death, according to v. 12; and on the other hand, that if he died after getting up and going out, no further punishment was to be inflicted for the injury done.

**Exodus 21:20, 21.** The case was different with regard to a slave. The master had always the right to punish or “chasten” him with a stick (Prov. 10:13; 13:24); this right was involved in the paternal authority of the master over the servants in his possession. The law was therefore confined to the abuse of this authority in outbursts of passion, in which case, “if the servant or the maid should die under his hand (i.e., under his blows), he was to be punished”

(נָקָם יִנְקָם: “vengeance shall surely be taken”). But in what the נָקָם was to consist is

not explained; certainly not in slaying by the sword, as the Jewish commentators maintain. The lawgiver would have expressed this by

מוֹת יָמָת. No doubt it was left to the

authorities to determine this according to the circumstances. The law in v. 12 could hardly be applied to a case of this description, although it was afterwards extended to foreigners as well as natives (Lev. 24:21, 22), for the simple reason, that it is hardly conceivable that a master would intentionally kill his slave, who was his possession and money. How far the lawgiver was from presupposing any such intention here, is evident from the law which follows in v. 21, “Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two (i.e., remain alive), it shall not be avenged, for he is his money.” By the continuance of his life, if only for a day or two, it would become perfectly evident that the master did not wish to kill his servant; and if nevertheless he died after this, the loss of the slave was punishment enough for the master. There is no ground whatever for restricting this regulation, as the Rabbins do, to slaves who were not of Hebrew extraction.

**Exodus 21:22–25.** If men strove and thrust against a woman with child, who had come near or between them for the purpose of making peace, so that her children come out (come into the world), and no injury was done either to the woman or the child that was born,<sup>52</sup> a pecuniary compensation was to be paid, such as the husband of the woman laid upon him, and

he was to give it בַּפְּלָלִים by (by an appeal to) arbitrators. A fine is imposed, because even if no injury had been done to the woman and the fruit of her womb, such a blow might have endangered life. (For יֵצֵא to go out of the

womb, see Gen. 25:25, 26.) The plural יְלָדֶיהָ is employed for the purpose of speaking indefinitely, because there might possibly be more than one child in the womb. “But if injury occur (to the mother or the child), thou shalt give soul for soul, eye for eye, ... wound for

wound:" thus perfect retribution was to be made.

**Exodus 21:26, 27.** But the *lex talionis* applied to the free Israelite only, not to slaves. In the case of the latter, if the master struck out an eye and destroyed it, i.e., blinded him with the blow, or struck out a tooth, he was to let him go free, as a compensation for the loss of the member. Eye and tooth are individual examples selected to denote all the members, from the most important and indispensable down to the very least.

**Exodus 21:28-32.** The life of man is also protected against injury from cattle (cf. Gen. 9:5). "If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten;" because, as the stoning already shows, it was laden with the guilt of murder, and therefore had become unclean (cf. Num. 35:33). The master or owner of the ox was innocent, sc., if his ox had not been known to do so before. But if this were the case, "if his master

have been warned (הוּעַד בְּבַעְלָיו, lit., testimony laid against its master), and notwithstanding this he have not kept it in," then the master was to be put to death, because through his carelessness in keeping the ox he had caused the death, and therefore shared the guilt. As this guilt, however, had not been incurred through an intentional crime, but had arisen simply from carelessness, he was allowed to redeem his forfeited life by the payment of expiation money (כִּפָּר, lit., covering, expiation, cf. Exodus 30:12), "according to all that was laid upon him," sc., by the judge.

**Exodus 21:31, 32.** The death of a son or a daughter through the goring of an ox was also to be treated in the same way; but that of a slave (man-servant or maid-servant) was to be compensated by the payment of thirty shekels of silver (i.e., probably the ordinary price for the redemption of a slave, as the redemption price of a free Israelite was fifty shekels, Lev. 27:3) on the part of the owner of the ox; but the

ox was to be killed in this case also. There are other ancient nations in whose law books we find laws relating to the punishment of animals for killing or wounding a man, but not one of them had a law which made the owner of the animal responsible as well, for they none of them looked upon human life in its likeness of God.

**Exodus 21:33-36.** Passing from life to *property*, in connection with the foregoing, the life of the animal, the most important possession of the Israelites, is first of all secured against destruction through carelessness. If any one opened or dug a pit or cistern, and did not close it up again, and another man's ox or ass (mentioned, for the sake of example, as the most important animals among the live stock of the Israelites) fell in and was killed, the owner of the pit was to pay its full value, and the dead animal to belong to him. If an ox that was not known to be vicious gored another man's ox to death, the vicious animal was to be sold, and its money (what it fetched) to be divided; the dead animal was also to be divided, so that both parties bore an equal amount of damage. If, on the other hand, the ox had been known to be vicious before, and had not been kept in, carefully secured, by its possessor, he was to compensate the owner of the one that had been killed with the full value of an ox, but to receive the dead one instead.

## Exodus 22

**Exodus 22:1-4** (or v. 37-Exodus 22:3). With regard to *cattle-stealing*, the law makes a distinction between what had been killed or sold, and what was still alive and in the thief's hand (or possession). In the latter case, the thief was to restore piece for piece twofold (v. 4); in the former, he was to restore an ox fivefold and a small animal (a sheep or a goat) fourfold (v. 1). The difference between the compensation for an ox and a small animal is to be accounted for from the comparative worth of the cattle to the possessor, which determined the magnitude of the theft and the amount of the compensation. But the other distinctions of twofold, fourfold, and fivefold restitution

cannot be accounted for, either by supposing “that the animal slain or sold was lost to its master, and might have been of peculiar value to him” (*Knobel*), for such a consideration of personal feelings would have been quite foreign to the law,—not to mention the fact that an animal that had been sold might be recovered by purchase; or from the fact that “the thief in this case had carried his crime still further” (*Baumgarten*), for the main thing was still the theft, not the consumption or sale of the animal stolen. The reason can only have lain in the educational purpose of the law: viz., in the intention to lead the thief to repent of his crime, to acknowledge his guilt, and to restore what he had stolen. Now, as long as he still retained the stolen animal in his own possession, having neither consumed nor parted with it, this was always in his power; but the possibility was gone as soon as it had either been consumed or sold (see by *Archäologie*, § 154, Note 3).<sup>53</sup>

**Exodus 22:2, 3.** Into the midst of the laws relating to theft, we have one introduced here, prescribing what was to be done with the thief. “If the thief be found breaking in (i.e., by night according to v. 3), and be smitten so that he die, there shall be no blood to him (the person smiting him); if the sun has risen upon him (the thief breaking in), there is blood to him:” i.e., in the latter case the person killing him drew upon himself blood-guiltiness (דָּמִים lit., drops of blood, blood shed), in the former case he did not. “The reason for this disparity between a thief by night and one in the day is, that the power and intention of a nightly thief are uncertain, and whether he may not have come for the purpose of committing murder; and that by night, if thieves are resisted, they often proceed to murder in their rage; and also that they can neither be recognised, nor resisted and apprehended with safety” (*Calovius*). In the latter case the slayer contracted blood-guiltiness, because even the life of a thief was to be spared, as he could be punished for his crime, and what was stolen be restored according to the regulations laid down in vv. 1 and 4. But if he had not sufficient to make

retribution, he was to be sold “for his stolen,” i.e., for the value of what he had stolen, that he might earn by his labour the compensation to be paid.

**Exodus 22:5, 6.** Injury done to another man’s field or corn was also to be made good by compensation for the injury done. If any one should consume a field or a vineyard, and let loose his beast, so that it fed in another man’s field, he was to give the best of his field and vineyard as restitution. These words do not

refer to wilful injury, for שָׁלַח does not mean to drive in, but simply to let loose, set at liberty; they refer to injury done from carelessness, when any one neglected to take proper care of a beast that was feeding in his field, and it strayed in consequence, and began grazing in another man’s. Hence simple compensation was all that was demanded; though this was to be made “from the best of his field,” i.e., *quicquid optimum habebit in agro vel vinea* (*Jerome*).<sup>54</sup>

**Exodus 22:6.** Verse 6 also relates to unintentional injury, arising from want of proper care: “If fire break out and catch thorns (thorn-hedges surrounding a corn-field, Isa. 5:5; Sir. 28:24), and sheaves, or the standing

seed (הַקֶּמֶה) the corn standing in the straw), or the field be consumed, he that kindleth the fire shall make compensation (for the damage done).”

**Exodus 22:7–15.** In cases of dishonesty, or the loss of property entrusted, the following was to be the recognised right: If money or articles

(בָּלִים, not merely tools and furniture, but clothes and ornaments, cf. Deut. 22:5; Isa. 61:10) given to a neighbour to keep should be stolen out of his house, the thief was to restore double if he could be found; but if he could not be discovered, the master of the house was to go before the judicial court (אֵל הָאֱלֹהִים, see

Exodus 21:6; אֵל נִקְרָב to draw near to), to see “whether he has not stretched out his hand to his

neighbour's goods." מְלֵאכָה: lit., employment, then something earned by employment, a possession. Before the judicial court he was to cleanse himself of the suspicion of having fraudulently appropriated what had been entrusted to him; and in most cases this could probably be only done by an oath of purification. The Sept. and Vulg. both point to this by interpolating καὶ ὀμείται, *et jurabit* ("and he shall swear"), though we are not warranted in supplying וַיִּשָּׁבַע in consequence. For, apart from the fact that אִם-לֹא is not to be regarded as a particle of adjuration here, as *Rosenmüller* supposes, since this particle signifies "truly" when employed in an oath, and therefore would make the declaration affirmative, whereas the oath was unquestionably to be taken as a release from the suspicion of fraudulent appropriation, and in case of confession an oath was not requisite at all;—apart from all this, if the lawgiver had intended to prescribe an oath for such a case, he would have introduced it here, just as he has done in v. 11. If the man could free himself before the court from the suspicion of unfaithfulness, he would of course not have to make compensation for what was lost, but the owner would have to bear the damage. This legal process is still further extended in v. 9: עַל-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי-פֶשַׁע, "upon every matter of trespass" (by which we are to understand, according to the context, unfaithfulness with regard to, or unjust appropriation of, the property of another man, not only when it had been entrusted, but also if it had been found), "for ox, for ass, etc., or for any manner of lost thing, of which one says that it is this ("this," viz., the matter of trespass), the cause of both (the parties contending about the right of possession) shall come to the judicial court; and he whom the court (Elohim) shall pronounce guilty (of unjust appropriation) shall give double compensation to his neighbour: only double as in vv. 4 and 7, not four or fivefold as

in v. 1, because the object in dispute had not been consumed.

**Exodus 22:10ff.** If an animal entrusted to a neighbour to take care of had either died or hurt itself (נִשְׁבַּר, broken a limb), or been driven away by robbers when out at grass (1 Chron. 5:21; 2 Chron. 14:14, cf. Job 1:15, 17), without any one (else) seeing it, an oath was to be taken before Jehovah between both (the owner and the keeper of it), "whether he had not stretched out his hand to his neighbour's property," i.e., either killed, or mutilated, or disposed of the animal. This case differs from the previous one, not only in the fact that the animal had either become useless to the owner or was altogether lost, but also in the fact that the keeper, if his statement were true, had not been at all to blame in the matter. The only way in which this could be decided, if there was אֵין

רֵאָה, i.e., no other eye-witness present than the keeper himself at the time when the fact occurred, was by the keeper taking an oath before Jehovah, that is to say, before the judicial court. And if he took the oath, the master (owner) of it (the animal that had perished, or been lost or injured) was to accept (sc., the oath), and he (the accused) was not to make reparation. "But if it had been stolen מֵעִמּוֹ from with him (i.e., from his house or stable), he was to make it good," because he might have prevented this with proper care (cf. Gen. 31:39). On the other hand, if it had been torn in pieces (viz., by a beast of prey, while it was out at grass), he was not to make any compensation, but only to furnish a proof that he had not been wanting in proper care. יִבְאֶהוּ

עֵד "let him bring it as a witness," viz., the animal that had been torn in pieces, or a portion of it, from which it might be seen that he had chased the wild beast to recover its prey (cf. 1 Sam. 17:34, 35; Amos 3:12).

**Exodus 22:14, 15.** If any one borrowed an animal of his neighbour (to use it for some kind of work), and it got injured and died, he was to make compensation to the owner, unless the latter were present at the time; but not if he were. "For either he would see that it could not have been averted by any human care; or if it could, seeing that he, the owner himself, was present, and did not avert it, it would only be right that he should suffer the consequence of his own neglect to afford assistance" (*Calovius*).

The words which follow, 'אִם שָׂכִיר וְגוֹ', cannot have any other meaning than this, "if it was hired, it has come upon his hire," i.e., he has to bear the injury or loss for the money which he got for letting out the animal. The suggestion which *Knobel* makes with a "perhaps," that

שָׂכִיר refers to a hired labourer, to whom the word is applied in other places, and that the meaning is this, "if it is a labourer for hire, he goes into his hire,—i.e., if the hirer is a daily labourer who has nothing with which to make compensation, he is to enter into the service of the person who let him the animal, for a sufficiently long time to make up for the loss,"—is not only opposed to the grammar (the perfect בָּא for which יָבֵא should be used), but is also at variance with the context, "not make it good."

**Exodus 22:16, 17.** The seduction of a girl, who belonged to her father as long as she was not betrothed (cf. Exodus 21:7), was also to be regarded as an attack upon the family possession. Whoever persuaded a girl to let him lie with her, was to obtain her for a wife by the payment of a dowry (מְהָר see Gen. 34:12); and if her father refused to give her to him, he was to weigh (pay) money equivalent to the dowry of maidens, i.e., to pay the father just as much for the disgrace brought upon him by the seduction of his daughter, as maidens would receive for a dowry upon their marriage. The seduction of a girl who was betrothed, was

punished much more severely (see Deut. 22:23, 24).

**Exodus 22:18–31.** The laws which follow, from v. 18 onwards, differ both in form and subject-matter from the determinations of right which we have been studying hitherto: in form,

through the omission of the כִּי with which the others were almost invariably introduced; in subject-matter, inasmuch as they make demands upon Israel on the ground of its election to be the holy nation of Jehovah, which go beyond the sphere of natural right, not only prohibiting every inversion of the natural order of things, but requiring the manifestation of love to the infirm and needy out of regard to Jehovah. The transition from the former series to the present one is made by the command in v. 18, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;" witchcraft being, on the one hand, "the vilest way of injuring a neighbour in his property, or even in his body and life" (*Ranke*), whilst, on the other hand, employment of powers of darkness for the purpose of injuring a neighbour was a practical denial of the divine vocation of Israel, as well as of Jehovah the Holy One of Israel. The witch is mentioned instead of the wizard, "not because witchcraft was not to be punished in the case of men, but because the female sex was more addicted to this crime"

(*Calovius*). לֹא תַחֲיֶיהָ (shalt not suffer to live)

is chosen instead of the ordinary מוֹת יוֹמָת (shall surely die), which is used in Lev. 20:27 of wizards also, not "because the lawgiver intended that the Hebrew witch should be put to death in any case, and the foreigner only if she would not go when she was banished" (*Knobel*), but because every Hebrew witch was not to be put to death, but regard was to be had to the fact that witchcraft is often nothing but jugglery, and only those witches were to be put to death who would not give up their witchcraft when it was forbidden. Witchcraft is followed in v. 19 by the unnatural crime of lying with a beast; and this is also threatened with the

punishment of death (see Lev. 18:23, and 20:15, 16).

**Exodus 22:20.** Whoever offered sacrifice to strange gods instead of to Jehovah alone, was liable to death. **יִחְרַם** he shall be banned, put under the ban (*cherem*), i.e., put to death, and by death devoted to the Lord, to whom he would not devote himself in life (cf. Lev. 27:29, and my *Archäologie*, § 70).

**Exodus 22:21.** The Israelites were not to offer sacrifice to foreign deities; but a foreigner himself they were not only to tolerate, but were not to vex or oppress him, bearing in mind that they also had been foreigners in Egypt (cf. Exodus 23:9, and Lev. 19:33, 34).—Whilst the foreigner, as having no rights, is thus commended to the kindness of the people through their remembrance of what they themselves had experienced in Egypt, those members of the nation itself who were most in need of protection (viz., widows and orphans) are secured from humiliation by an assurance of the special care and watchfulness of Jehovah, under which such forsaken ones stand, inasmuch as Jehovah Himself would take their troubles upon Himself, and punish their

oppressors with just retribution. **עָנָה** to humiliate, includes not only unjust oppression, but every kind of cold and contemptuous treatment. The suffix in **אָתוֹ** (v. 23) refers to

both **אֱלֹהֵימָנָה** and **יְתוֹם**, according to the rule that when there are two or more subjects of different genders, the masculine is employed (Ges. § 148, 2). The **כִּי** before **אֶם** expresses a strong assurance: “yea, if he cries to Me, I will hearken to him” (see *Ewald*, § 330*b*). “Killing with the sword” points to wars, in which men and fathers of families perish, and their wives and children are made widows and orphans.

**Exodus 22:25–27.** If a man should lend to one of the poor of his own people, he was not to oppress him by demanding interest; and if he gave his upper garment as a pledge, he was to

give it him back towards sunset, because it was his only covering; as the poorer classes in the East use the upper garment, consisting of a large square piece of cloth, to sleep in. “*It is his clothing for his skin:*” i.e., it serves for a covering to his body. “*Wherein shall he lie?*” i.e., in what shall he wrap himself to sleep? (cf. Deut. 24:6, 10–13).—With vv. 28ff. God directs Himself at once to the hearts of the Israelites, and attacks the sins of selfishness and covetousness, against which the precepts in vv. 21–27 were directed in their deepest root, for the purpose of opposing all inward resistance to the promotion of His commands.

**Exodus 22:28.** “*Thou shalt not despise God, and the prince among thy people thou shalt not curse.*” *Elohim* does not mean either the gods of other nations, as *Josephus*, *Philo*, and others, in their dead and work-holy monotheism, have rendered the word; or the rulers, as *Onkelos* and others suppose; but simply God, deity in general, whose majesty was despised in every break of the commandments of Jehovah, and who was to be honoured in the persons of the rulers (cf. Prov. 24:21; 1 Pet. 2:17). Contempt of God consists not only in blasphemies of Jehovah openly expressed, which were to be punished with death (Lev. 24:11ff.), but in disregard of His threats with reference to the oppression of the poorer members of His people (vv. 22–27), and in withholding from them what they ought to receive (vv. 29–31). Understood in this way, the command is closely connected not only with what precedes, but also with what follows. The

prince (**נְשִׂיא**, lit., the elevated one) is

mentioned by the side of God, because in his exalted position he has to administer the law of God among His people, and to put a stop to what is wrong.

**Exodus 22:29, 30.** “*Thy fulness and thy flowing thou shalt not delay (to Me).*” **מְלֵאָה** fulness, signifies the produce of corn (Deut. 22:9); and

**דָּמָעָה** (lit., tear, flowing, *liquor stillans*), which only occurs here, is a poetical epithet for the produce of the press, both wine and oil (cf.

δάκρυον τῶν δένδρων, LXX; *arborum lacrimae*, Plin. 11:6). The meaning is correctly given by the LXX: ἀπαρχὰς ἄλωνος καὶ ληνοῦ σοῦ. That the command not to delay and not to withhold the fulness, etc., relates to the offering of the first-fruits of the field and vineyard, as is more fully defined in Exodus 23:19 and Deut. 26:2–11, is evident from what follows, in which the law given at the exodus from Egypt, with reference to the sanctification of the first-born of man and beast (Exodus 13:2, 12), is repeated and incorporated in the *rights* of Israel, inasmuch as the adoption of the first-born on the part of Jehovah was a perpetual guarantee to the whole nation of the right of covenant fellowship. (On the rule laid down in v. 30, see Lev. 22:27.)

**Exodus 22:31.** As the whole nation sanctified itself to the Lord in the sanctification of the first-born, the Israelites were to show themselves to be holy men unto the Lord by not eating “flesh torn to pieces in the field,” i.e., the flesh of an animal that had been torn to pieces by a wild beast in the field. Such flesh they were to throw to the dogs, because eating it would defile (cf. Lev. 17:15).

### Exodus 23

**Exodus 23:1–13.**—Vv. 1–9. Lastly, no one was to violate another’s rights.—V. 1. “*Thou shalt not raise (bring out) an empty report.*” שִׁמְעַ

אֵשׁ, a report that has no foundation, and, as the context shows, does injury to another, charges him with wrongdoing, and involves him in legal proceedings. “*Put not thine hand with a wicked man (do not offer him thy hand, or render him assistance), to be a witness of violence.*” This clause is unquestionably connected with the preceding one, and implies that raising a false report furnishes the wicked man with a pretext for bringing the man, who is suspected of crime on account of this false report, before a court of law; in consequence of which the originator or propagator of the empty report becomes a witness of injustice and violence.

**Exodus 23:2.** Just as little should a man follow a multitude to pervert justice. “*Thou shalt not be behind many (follow the multitude) to evil things, nor answer concerning a dispute to incline thyself after many* (i.e., thou shalt not give such testimony in connection with any dispute, in which thou takest part with the

great majority), *so as to pervert*” (לְהִטּוֹת), sc.,

justice. But, on the other hand, “*neither shalt thou adorn the poor man in his dispute*” (v. 3), i.e., show partiality to the poor or weak man in an unjust cause, out of weak compassion for him. (Compare Lev. 19:15, a passage which,

notwithstanding the fact that הִדָּר is applied to favour shown to the great or mighty,

overthrows *Knobel’s* conjecture, that גָּדַל

should be read for וְגָדַל, inasmuch as it prohibits the showing of favour to the one as much as to the other.)

**Exodus 23:4, 5.** Not only was their conduct not to be determined by public opinion, the direction taken by the multitude, or by weak compassion for a poor man; but personal antipathy, enmity, and hatred were not to lead them to injustice or churlish behaviour. On the contrary, if the Israelite saw his enemy’s beast straying, he was to bring it back again; and if he saw it lying down under the weight of its burden, he was to help it up again (cf. Deut.

22:1–4). The words וְחִדַּלְתָּ מֵעֹזב וְגו’, “*cease (desist) to leave it to him (thine enemy); thou shalt loosen it (let it loose) with him,*” which have been so variously explained, cannot have any other signification than this: “beware of leaving an ass which has sunk down beneath its burden in a helpless condition, even to thine enemy, to try whether he can help it up alone; rather help him to set it loose from its burden, that it may get up again.” This is evident from

Deut. 22:4, where לֹא תִתְעַלְמָתָּ, “withdraw

not thyself,” is substituted for וְחִדַּלְתָּ מֵעֹזב,

and **הָקַם תְּקִים עִמּוֹ**, “set up with him,” for **עָזַב תִּעְזֹב עִמּוֹ**. From this it is obvious that **עָזַב** is used in the first instance in the sense of leaving it alone, leaving it in a helpless condition, and immediately afterwards in the sense of undoing or letting loose. The peculiar turn given to the expression, “thou shalt cease from leaving,” is chosen because the ordinary course, which the natural man adopts, is to leave an enemy to take care of his own affairs, without troubling about either him or his difficulties. Such conduct as this the Israelite was to give up, if he ever found his enemy in need of help.

**Exodus 23:6ff.** The warning against unkindness towards an enemy is followed by still further prohibitions of injustice in questions of right: viz., in v. 6, a warning against perverting the right of the poor in his cause; in v. 7, a general command to keep far away from a false matter, and not to slay the innocent and righteous, i.e., not to be guilty of judicial murder, together with the threat that God would not justify the sinner; and in v. 8, the command not to accept presents, i.e., to be bribed by gifts, because “*the gift makes seeing men (פְּקֻחִים) open eyes) blind, and perverts the causes of the just.*” The rendering “words of the righteous” is not correct; for even if we are to understand the expression “seeing men” as referring to judges, the “righteous” can only refer to those who stand at the bar, and have right on their side, which judges who accept of bribes may turn into wrong.

**Exodus 23:9.** The warning against oppressing the foreigner, which is repeated from Exodus 22:20, is not tautological, as Bertheau affirms for the purpose of throwing suspicion upon this verse, but refers to the oppression of a stranger in judicial matters by the refusal of justice, or by harsh and unjust treatment in court (Deut. 24:17; 27:19). “*For ye know the soul (animus, the soul as the seat of feeling) of the stranger,*”

i.e., ye know from your own experience in Egypt how a foreigner feels.

**Exodus 23:10–12.** Here follow directions respecting the year of rest and day of rest, the first of which lays the foundation for the keeping of the sabbatical and jubilee years, which are afterwards instituted in Lev. 25, whilst the latter gives prominence to the element of rest and refreshment involved in the Sabbath, which had been already instituted (Exodus 20:9–11), and presses it in favour of beasts of burden, slaves, and foreigners. Neither of these instructions is to be regarded as laying down laws for the feasts; so that they are not to be included among the rights of Israel, which commence at v. 14. On the contrary, as they are separated from these by v. 13, they are to be reckoned as forming part of the laws relating to their mutual obligations one towards another. This is evident from the fact, that in both of them the care of the poor stands in the foreground. From this characteristic and design, which are common to both, we may explain the fact, that there is no allusion to the keeping of a Sabbath unto the Lord, as in Exodus 20:10 and Lev. 25:2, in connection with either the seventh year or seventh day: all that is mentioned being their sowing and reaping for six years, and working for six days, and then letting the land lie fallow in the seventh year, and their ceasing or resting from labour on the seventh day. “*The seventh year thou shalt let (thy land) loose (שָׁמַט) to leave unemployed), and let it lie; and the poor of thy people shall eat (the produce which grows of itself), and their remainder (what they leave) shall the beast of the field eat.*” **הִנְפִישׁ**: lit., to breathe one’s self, to draw breath, i.e., to refresh one’s self (cf. Exodus 31:17; 2 Sam. 16:14).—With v. 13a the laws relating to the rights of the people, in their relations to one another, are concluded with the formula enforcing their observance, “*And in all that I say to you, take heed,*” viz., that ye carefully maintain all the rights which I have given you. There is then attached to this, in v. 14b, a warning, which forms the transition to

the relation of Israel to Jehovah: "Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." This forms a very fitting boundary line between the two series of *mishpatim*, inasmuch as the observance and maintenance of both of them depended upon the attitude in which Israel stood towards Jehovah.

**Exodus 23:14–19.** The Fundamental Rights of Israel in its Religious and Theocratical Relation to Jehovah.—As the observance of the Sabbath and sabbatical year is not instituted in vv. 10–12, so vv. 14–19 do not contain either the original or earliest appointment of the feasts, or a complete law concerning the yearly feasts. They simply command the observance of three feasts during the year, and the appearance of the people three times in the year before the Lord; that is to say, the holding of three national assemblies to keep a feast before the Lord, or three annual pilgrimages to the sanctuary of Jehovah. The leading points are clearly set forth in vv. 14 and 17, to which the other verses are subordinate. These leading points are

**מִשְׁפָּטִים** or *rights*, conferred upon the people of Israel in their relation to Jehovah; for keeping a feast to the Lord, and appearing before Him, were both of them privileges bestowed by Jehovah upon His covenant people. Even in itself the festal rejoicing was a blessing in the midst of this life of labour, toil, and trouble; but when accompanied with the right of appearing before the Lord their God and Redeemer, to whom they were indebted for everything they had and were, it was one that no other nation enjoyed. For though they had their joyous festivals, these festivals bore the same relation to those of Israel, as the dead and worthless gods of the heathen to the living and almighty God of Israel.

Of the three feasts at which Israel was to appear before Jehovah, the feast of *Mazzoth*, or unleavened bread, is referred to as already instituted, by the words "as I have commanded thee," and "at the appointed time of the earing month," which point back to chs. 12 and 13; and

all that is added here is, "ye shall not appear before My face empty." "Not empty:" i.e., not with empty hands, but with sacrificial gifts, answering to the blessing given by the Lord (Deut. 16:16, 17). These gifts were devoted partly to the general sacrifices of the feast, and partly to the burnt and peace-offerings which were brought by different individuals to the feasts, and applied to the sacrificial meals (Num. 28 and 29). This command, which related to all the feasts, and therefore is mentioned at the very outset in connection with the feast of unleavened bread, did indeed impose a duty upon Israel, but such a duty as became a source of blessing to all who performed it. The gifts demanded by God were the tribute, it is true, which the Israelites paid to their God-King, just as all Eastern nations are required to bring presents when appearing in the presence of their kings; but they were only gifts from God's own blessing, a portion of that which He had bestowed in rich abundance, and they were offered to God in such a way that the offerer was thereby more and more confirmed in the rights of covenant fellowship. The other two festivals are mentioned here for the first time, and the details are more particularly determined afterwards in Lev. 23:15ff., and Num. 28:26ff. One was called the *feast of Harvest*, "of the first-fruits of thy labours which thou hast sown in the field," i.e., of thy field-labour. According to the subsequent arrangements, the first of the field-produce was to be offered to God, not the first grains of the ripe corn, but the first loaves of bread of white or wheaten flour made from the new corn (Lev. 23:17ff.). In Exodus 24:22 it is called the "feast of Weeks," because, according to Lev. 23:15, 16, Deut. 16:9, it was to be kept seven weeks after the feast of *Mazzoth*; and the "feast of the first-fruits of wheat harvest," because the loaves of first-fruits to be offered were to be made of wheaten flour. The other of these feasts, i.e., the third in the year, is called "*the feast of Ingathering*, at the end of the year, in the gathering in of thy labours out of the field." This general and indefinite allusion to time was quite sufficient for the preliminary institution

of the feast. In the more minute directions respecting the feasts given in Lev. 23:34, Num. 29:12, it is fixed for the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and placed on an equality with the feast of Mazzoth as a seven days' festival.

בְּצֵאת הַשָּׁנָה does not mean after the close of the year, *finito anno*, any more than the corresponding expression in Exodus 34:22,

תְּקִיפַת הַשָּׁנָה, signifies at the turning of the year. The year referred to here was the so-called civil year, which began with the preparation of the ground for the harvest-sowing, and ended when all the fruits of the field and garden had been gathered in. No particular day was fixed for its commencement, nor was there any new year's festival; and even after the beginning of the earing month had been fixed upon for the commencement of the year (Exodus 12:2), this still remained in force, so far as all civil matters connected with the sowing and harvest were concerned; though there is no evidence that a double reckoning was carried on at the same time, or that a civil reckoning existed side by side with the

religious. בְּאַסְפְּדָךְ does not mean, "when thou hast gathered," *postquam collegisti*; for אָסַף does

not stand for אָסַף, nor has the infinitive the force of the preterite. On the contrary, the expression "at thy gathering in," i.e., when thou gatherest in, is kept indefinite both here and in Lev. 23:39, where the month and days in which this feast was to be kept are distinctly pointed out; and also in Deut. 16:13, in order that the time for the feast might not be made absolutely dependent upon the complete termination of the gathering in, although as a rule it would be almost over. The gathering in of "thy labours out of the field" is not to be restricted to the vintage and gathering of fruits: this is evident not only from the expression "out of the field," which points to field-produce, but also from the clause in Deut. 16:13, "gathering of the floor and wine-press," which shows clearly that the words

refer to the gathering in of the whole of the year's produce of corn, fruit, oil, and wine.

**Exodus 23:17.** "Three times in the year" (i.e., according to v. 14 and Deut. 16:16, at the three feasts just mentioned) "all thy males shall appear before the face of the Lord Jehovah." The command to appear, i.e., to make a pilgrimage to the sanctuary, was restricted to the male members of the nation, probably to those above 20 years of age, who had been included in the census (Num. 1:3). But this did not prohibit the inclusion of women and boys (cf. 1 Sam. 1:3ff., and Luke 2:31ff.).

**Exodus 23:18, 19.** The blessing attending their appearing before the Lord was dependent upon the feasts being kept in the proper way, by the observance of the three rules laid down in vv. 18 and 19. "Thou shalt not offer the blood of My

sacrifice upon leavened bread." עַל upon, as in Exodus 12:8, denoting the basis upon which the sacrifice was offered. The meaning has been correctly given by the early commentators, viz., "as long as there is any leavened bread in your houses," or "until the leaven has been entirely removed from your houses." The reference made here to the removal of leaven, and the expression "blood of My sacrifice," both point to the paschal lamb, which was regarded as the sacrifice of Jehovah κατ' ἕξοχήν, on account of its great importance. *Onkelos* gives this explanation: "My Passover" for "My sacrifice."—

"Neither shall the fat of My feast remain (יִלֵּיץ to pass the night) until the morning." "The fat of My feast" does not mean the fat of My festal

sacrifice, for אֵילָן, a feast, is not used for the sacrifice offered at the feast; it signifies rather the best of My feast, i.e., the paschal sacrifice, as we may see from Exodus 34:25, where "the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover" is given as the explanation of "the fat of My feast." As the paschal sacrifice was the sacrifice of Jehovah *par excellence*, so the feast of the Passover was the feast of Jehovah *par excellence*. The expression "fat of My feast" is not to be understood as referring at all to the fat of the

lamb, which was burned upon the altar in the case of the expiatory and whole offerings; for there could have been no necessity for the injunction not to keep this till the morning, inasmuch as those parts of every sacrifice which were set apart for the altar were burned immediately after the sprinkling of the blood. The allusion is to the flesh of the paschal lamb, which was eaten in the night before daybreak, after which anything that remained was to be burned. עֲדֵבֶקֶר (without the article) *till*

*morning*, has the same meaning as לְבֶקֶר “for the (following) morning” in Exodus 34:25.

**Exodus 23:19.** The next command in v. 19a has reference to the feast of Harvest, or feast of Weeks. In “*the first-fruits of thy land*” there is an unmistakable allusion to “the first-fruits of thy labours” in v. 16. It is true the words, “the first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God,” are so general in their character, that we can hardly restrict them to the wave-loaves to be offered as first-fruits at the feast of Weeks, but must interpret them as referring to all the first-fruits, which they had already been commanded not to delay to offer (Exodus 22:29), and the presentation of which is minutely prescribed in Num. 18:12, 13, and Deut. 26:2–11, —including therefore the sheaf of barley to be offered in the second day of the feast of unleavened bread (Lev. 23:9ff.). At the same time the reference to the feast of Weeks is certainly to be retained, inasmuch as this feast was an express admonition to Israel, to offer the first of the fruits of the Lord. In the expression רֵאשִׁית

בְּכוֹרֵי, the latter might be understood as explanatory of the former and in apposition to it, since they are both of them applied to the first-fruits of the soil (vid., Deut. 26:2, 10, and Num. 18:13). But as רֵאשִׁית could hardly need any explanation in this connection, the partitive sense is to be preferred; though it is difficult to decide whether “the first of the first-fruits”

signifies the first selection from the fruits that had grown, ripened, and been gathered first,—that is to say, not merely of the entire harvest, but of every separate production of the field and soil, according to the rendering of the LXX ἀπαρχὰς τῶν πρωτογεννημάτων τῆς γῆς,—or

whether the word רֵאשִׁית is used figuratively, and signifies the best of the first-fruits. There is no force in the objection offered to the former view, that “in no other case in which the offering of first-fruits generally is spoken of, is one particular portion represented as holy to Jehovah, but the first-fruits themselves are that portion of the entire harvest which was holy to Jehovah.” For, apart from Num. 18:12, where a different rendering is sometimes given to

רֵאשִׁית, the expression מֵרֵאשִׁית in Deut.

26:2 shows unmistakably that only a portion of the first of all the fruit of the ground had to be offered to the Lord. On the other hand, this view is considerably strengthened by the fact, that whilst בְּכוֹרֵי, בְּכוֹרִים signify those fruits

which ripened first, i.e., earliest, רֵאשִׁית is used to denote the ἀπαρχή, the first portion or first selection from the whole, not only in Deut. 26:2, 10, but also in Lev. 23:10, and most probably in Num. 18:12 as well.—Now if these directions do not refer either exclusively or specially to the loaves of first-fruits of the feast of Weeks, the opinion which has prevailed from the time of *Abarbanel* to that of *Knobel*, that the following command, “Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk,” refers to the feast of Ingathering, is deprived of its principal support. And any such allusion is rendered very questionable by the fact, that in Deut. 14:21, where this command is repeated, it is appended to the prohibition against eating the flesh of an animal that had been torn to pieces. Very different explanations have been given to the command. In the *Targum, Mishnah*, etc., it is regarded as a general prohibition against eating flesh prepared with milk. *Luther* and others suppose it to refer to the cooking of the kid,

before it has been weaned from its mother's milk. But the actual reference is to the cooking of a kid in the milk of its own mother, as indicating a contempt of the relation which God has established and sanctified between parent and young, and thus subverting the divine ordinances. As kids were a very favourite food (Gen. 27:9, 14; Judg. 6:19; 13:15; 1 Sam. 16:20), it is very likely that by way of improving the flavour they were sometimes cooked in milk. According to *Aben Ezra* and *Abarbanel*, this was a custom adopted by the *Ishmaelites*; and at the present day the Arabs are in the habit of cooking lamb in sour milk. A restriction is placed upon this custom in the prohibition before us, but there is no intention to prevent the introduction of a superstitious usage customary at the sacrificial meals of other nations, which *Spencer* and *Knobel* have sought to establish as at all events probable, though without any definite historical proofs, and for the most part on the strength of far-fetched analogies.

**Exodus 23:20–33.** Relation of Jehovah to Israel.—The declaration of the rights conferred by Jehovah upon His people is closed by promises, through which, on the one hand, God insured to the nation the gifts and benefits involved in their rights, and, on the other hand, sought to promote that willingness and love which were indispensable to the fulfilment of the duties incumbent upon every individual in consequence of the rights conferred upon them. These promises secured to the people not only the protection and help of God during their journey through the desert, and in the conquest of Canaan, but also preservation and prosperity when they had taken possession of the land.

**Exodus 23:20.** Jehovah would send an angel before them, who should guard them on the way from injury and destruction, and bring them to the place prepared for them, i.e., to Canaan. The name of Jehovah was in this angel (v. 21), that is to say, Jehovah revealed Himself in him; and hence he is called in Exodus 33:15, 16, the face of Jehovah, because the essential nature of Jehovah was manifested in him. This

angel was not a created spirit, therefore, but the manifestation of Jehovah Himself, who went before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, to guide and to defend them (Exodus 13:21). But because it was Jehovah who was guiding His people in the person of the angel, He demanded unconditional obedience (v. 21), and if they

provoked Him (תָּמַר for תָּמַר, see Exodus 13:18) by disobedience, He would not pardon their transgression; but if they followed Him and hearkened to His voice, He would be an enemy to their enemies, and an adversary to their adversaries (v. 22). And when the angel of the Lord had brought them to the Canaanites and exterminated the latter, Israel was still to yield the same obedience, by not serving the gods of the Canaanites, or doing after their works, i.e., by not making any idolatrous images, but destroying them (these works), and smiting to pieces the pillars of their idolatrous

worship (מַצֵּבֹת does not mean statues erected as idols, but memorial stones or columns dedicated to idols: see my Comm. on 1 Kings 14:23), and serving Jehovah alone. Then would He bless them in the land with bountiful provision, health, fruitfulness, and length of life (vv. 23–26). "Bread and water" are named, as being the provisions which are indispensable to the maintenance of life, as in Isa. 3:1; 30:20; 33:16. The taking away of "sickness" (cf. 15:26) implied the removal of everything that could endanger life. The absence of anything that miscarried, or was barren, insured the continuance and increase of the nation; and the promise that their days should be fulfilled, i.e., that they should not be liable to a premature death (cf. Isa. 55:20), was a pledge of their well-being.

**Exodus 23:27ff.** But the most important thing of all for Israel was the previous conquest of the promised land. And in this God gave it a special promise of His almighty aid. "I will send My fear before thee." This fear was to be the result of the terrible acts of God performed on behalf of Israel, the rumour of which would spread before them and fill their enemies with fear and

trembling (cf. Exodus 15:14ff.; Deut. 2:26; and Josh. 2:11, where the beginning of the fulfilment is described), throwing into confusion and putting to flight every people against whom

נָתַן אֶת־אֵיבֹ (אֲשֶׁר—בָּהֶם) Israel came.

עָרַךְ to give the enemy to the neck, i.e., to cause him to turn his back, or flee (cf. Ps. 18:41; 21:13; Josh. 7:8, 12). אֶל־יָךְ: in the direction towards thee.

**Exodus 23:28.** In addition to the fear of God, hornets (הַצְּרָעָה) construed as a generic word with the collective article), a very large species of wasp, that was greatly dreaded both by man and beast on account of the acuteness of its sting, should come and drive out the Canaanites, of whom three tribes are mentioned *instar omnium*, from before the Israelites. Although it is true that *Aelian* (*hist. anim.* 11, 28) relates that the Phaselians, who dwelt near the Solymites, and therefore probably belonged to the Canaanites, were driven out of their country by wasps, and *Bochart* (*Hieroz.* iii. pp. 409ff.) has collected together accounts of different tribes that have been frightened away from their possessions by frogs, mice, and other vermin, “the sending of hornets before the Israelites” is hardly to be taken literally, not only because there is not a word in the book of Joshua about the Canaanites being overcome and exterminated in any such way, but chiefly on account of Josh. 24:12, where Joshua says that God sent the hornet before them, and drove out the two kings of the Amorites, referring thereby to their defeat and destruction by the Israelites through the miraculous interposition of God, and thus placing the figurative use of the term hornet beyond the possibility of doubt. These hornets, however, which are very aptly described in Wisdom 12:8, on the basis of this passage, as προδρόμους, the pioneers of the army of Jehovah, do not denote merely *varii generis mala*, as *Rosenmüller* supposes, but *acerrimos timoris aculeos, quibus quodammodo volantibus*

*rumoribus pungebantur, ut fugerent* (*Augustine, quaest. 27 in Jos.*). If the fear of God which fell upon the Canaanites threw them into such confusion and helpless despair, that they could not stand before Israel, but turned their backs towards them, the stings of alarm which followed this fear would completely drive them away. Nevertheless God would not drive them away at once, “in one year,” lest the land should become a desert for want of men to cultivate it, and the wild beasts should multiply against Israel; in other words, lest the beasts of prey should gain the upper hand and endanger the lives of man and beast (Lev. 26:22; Ezek. 14:15, 21), which actually was the case after the carrying away of the ten tribes (2 Kings 17:25, 26). He would drive them out by degrees ( מַעַט

מַעַט, only used here and in Deut. 7:22), until Israel was sufficiently increased to take possession of the land, i.e., to occupy the whole of the country. This promise was so far fulfilled, according to the books of Joshua and Judges, that after the subjugation of the Canaanites in the south and north of the land, when all the kings who fought against Israel had been smitten and slain and their cities captured, the entire land was divided among the tribes of Israel, in order that they might exterminate the remaining Canaanites, and take possession of those portions of the land that had not yet been conquered (Josh. 13:1–7). But the different tribes soon became weary of the task of exterminating the Canaanites, and began to enter into alliance with them, and were led astray by them to the worship of idols; whereupon God punished them by withdrawing His assistance, and they were oppressed and humiliated by the Canaanites because of their apostasy from the Lord (Judg. 1 and 2).

**Exodus 23:31ff.** The divine promise closes with a general indication of the boundaries of the land, whose inhabitants Jehovah would give up to the Israelites to drive them out, and with a warning against forming alliances with them and their gods, lest they should lead Israel astray to sin, and thus become a snare to it. On

the basis of the promise in Gen. 15:18, certain grand and prominent points are mentioned, as constituting the boundaries towards both the east and west. On the west the boundary extended from the Red Sea (see Exodus 13:18) to the sea of the Philistines, or Mediterranean Sea, the south-eastern shore of which was inhabited by the Philistines; and on the east from the desert, i.e., according to Deut. 11:24, the desert of Arabia, to the river (Euphrates).

The poetic suffix **מו** affixed to **גִּרְשָׁתָּהּ** answers to the elevated oratorical style. Making a covenant with them and their gods would imply the recognition and toleration of them, and, with the sinful tendencies of Israel, would be inevitably followed by the worship of idols. The first **כִּי** in v. 33 signifies *if*; the second, *imo*, verily, and serves as an energetic introduction to the apodosis. **מוֹקֵשׁ**, a snare (vid., Exodus 10:7); here a clause of destruction, inasmuch as apostasy from God is invariably followed by punishment (Judg. 2:3).

## Exodus 24

**Exodus 24:1, 2.** These two verses form part of the address of God in Exodus 20:22–23:33; for

**וַאֲלֵ מֹשֶׁה אָמַר** (“*but to Moses He said*”)

cannot be the commencement of a fresh address, which would necessarily require

**וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵם** (cf. v. 12, Exodus 19:21; 20:22).

The turn given to the expression **וַאֲלֵם** presupposes that God had already spoken to others, or that what had been said before related not to Moses himself, but to other persons. But this cannot be affirmed of the decalogue, which applied to Moses quite as much as to the entire nation (a sufficient refutation of *Knobel's* assertion, that these verses are a continuation of Exodus 19:20–25, and are linked on to the decalogue), but only of the address concerning the *mishpatim*, or “rights,” which commences with Exodus 20:22,

and, according to Exodus 20:22 and 21:1, was intended for the nation, and addressed to it, even though it was through the medium of Moses. What God said to the people as establishing its rights, is here followed by what He said to Moses himself, namely, that he was to go up to Jehovah, along with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders. At the same time, it is of course implied that Moses, who had ascended the mountain with Aaron alone (Exodus 20:21), was first of all to go down again and repeat to the people the “rights” which God had communicated to him, and only when this had been done, to ascend again with the persons named. According to vv. 3 and 12 (? 9), this is what Moses really did. But Moses alone was to go near to Jehovah: the others were to worship afar off, and the people were not to come up at all.

## CONCLUSION OF THE COVENANT.— CH. 24:3–18.

**Exodus 24:3–18.** The ceremony described in vv. 3–11 is called “the covenant which Jehovah made with Israel” (v. 8). It was opened by Moses, who recited to the people “*all the words of Jehovah*” (i.e., not the decalogue, for the people had heard this directly from the mouth of God Himself, but the words in Exodus 20:22–26), and “*all the rights*” (Exodus 21–23); whereupon the people answered unanimously (**קוֹל אֶחָד**), “*All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do.*” This constituted the preparation for the conclusion of the covenant. It was necessary that the people should not only know what the Lord imposed upon them in the covenant about to be made with them, and what He promised them, but that they should also declare their willingness to perform what was imposed upon them. The covenant itself was commenced by Moses writing all the words of Jehovah in “*the book of the covenant*” (vv. 4 and 7), for the purpose of preserving them in an official record. The next day, early in the morning, he built an altar at the foot of the

mountain, and erected twelve boundary-stones or pillars for the twelve tribes, most likely round about the altar and at some distance from it, so as to prepare the soil upon which Jehovah was about to enter into union with the twelve tribes. As the altar indicated the presence of Jehovah, being the place where the Lord would come to His people to bless them (Exodus 20:24), so the twelve pillars, or boundary-stones, did not serve as mere memorials of the conclusion of the covenant, but were to indicate the place of the twelve tribes, and represent their presence also.

**Exodus 24:5.** After the foundation and soil had been thus prepared in the place of sacrifice, for the fellowship which Jehovah was about to establish with His people; Moses sent young men of the children of Israel to prepare the sacrifices, and directed them to offer burnt-offering and sacrifice slain-offerings, viz.,

שְׁלָמִים, “*peace-offerings* (see at Lev. 3:1) for

*Jehovah*,” for which purpose פָּרִים, bullocks, or young oxen, were used. The young men were not first-born sons, who had officiated as priests previous to the institution of the Levitical priesthood, according to the natural right of primogeniture, as *Onkelos* supposes; nor were they the sons of Aaron, as *Augustine* maintains: they simply acted as servants of Moses; and the priestly duty of sprinkling the blood was performed by him as the mediator of the covenant. It is merely as *young men*, therefore, i.e., as strong and active, that they are introduced in this place, and not as representatives of the nation, “by whom the sacrifice was presented, and whose attitude resembled that of a youth just ready to enter upon his course” (*Kurtz*, O. C. iii. 143). For, as *Oehler* says, “this was not a sacrifice presented by the nation on its own account. The primary object was to establish that fellowship, by virtue of which it could draw near to Jehovah in sacrifice. Moreover, according to vv. 1 and 9, the nation possessed its proper representatives in the seventy elders” (*Herzog’s Cyclopaedia*). But even though these sacrifices were not

offered by the representatives of the nation, and for this very reason Moses selected young men from among the people to act as servants at this ceremony, they had so far a substitutionary position, that in their persons the nation was received into fellowship with God by means of the sprinkling of the blood, which was performed in a peculiar manner, to suit the unique design of this sacrificial ceremony.

**Exodus 24:6-8.** The blood was divided into two parts. One half was swung by Moses upon the altar (קָרַק to swing, shake, or pour out of

the vessel, in distinction from הִזָּה to sprinkle)

the other half he put into basins, and after he had read the book of the covenant to the people, and they had promised to do and follow all the words of Jehovah, he sprinkled it upon the people with these words: “*Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah has made with you over all these words.*” As several animals were slaughtered, and all of them young oxen, there must have been a considerable quantity of blood obtained, so that the one half would fill several basins, and many persons might be sprinkled with it as it was being swung about. The division of the blood had reference to the two parties to the covenant, who were to be brought by the covenant into a living unity; but it had no connection whatever with the heathen customs adduced by *Bähr* and *Knobel*, in which the parties to a treaty mixed their own blood together. For this was not a mixture of different kinds of blood, but it was a division of one blood, and that *sacrificial* blood, in which animal life was offered instead of human life, making expiation as a pure life for sinful man, and by virtue of this expiation restoring the fellowship between God and man which had been destroyed by sin. But the sacrificial blood itself only acquired this signification through the sprinkling or swinging upon the altar, by virtue of which the human soul was received, in the soul of the animal sacrificed for man, into the fellowship of the divine grace manifested upon the altar, in order that, through the power

of this sin-forgiving and sin-destroying grace, it might be sanctified to a new and holy life. In this way the sacrificial blood acquired the signification of a vital principle endued with the power of divine grace; and this was communicated to the people by means of the sprinkling of the blood. As the only reason for dividing the sacrificial blood into two parts was, that the blood sprinkled upon the altar could not be taken off again and sprinkled upon the people; the two halves of the blood are to be regarded as one blood, which was first of all sprinkled upon the altar, and then upon the people. In the blood sprinkled upon the altar, the natural life of the people was given up to God, as a life that had passed through death, to be pervaded by His grace; and then through the sprinkling upon the people it was restored to them again, as a life renewed by the grace of God. In this way the blood not only became a bond of union between Jehovah and His people, but as the blood of the covenant, it became a vital power, holy and divine, uniting Israel and its God; and the sprinkling of the people with this blood was an actual renewal of life, a transposition of Israel into the kingdom of God, in which it was filled with the powers of God's spirit of grace, and sanctified into a kingdom of priests, a holy nation of Jehovah (Exodus 19:6). And this covenant was made "upon all the words" which Jehovah had spoken, and the people had promised to observe. Consequently it had for its foundation the divine law and right, as the rule of life for Israel.

**Exodus 24:9–11.** Through their consecration with the blood of the covenant, the Israelites were qualified to ascend the mountain, and there behold the God of Israel and celebrate the covenant meal; of course, not the whole of the people, for that would have been impracticable on physical grounds, but the nation in the persons of its representatives, viz., the seventy elders, with Aaron and his two eldest sons. The fact that the latter were summoned along with the elders had reference to their future election to the priesthood, the bearers of which were to occupy the position of mediators between Jehovah and the nation, an office for which this

was a preparation. The reason for choosing *seventy* out of the whole body of elders (v. 3) is to be found in the historical and symbolical significance of this number (see p. 240). "*They saw the God of Israel.*" This title is very appropriately given to Jehovah here, because He, the God of the fathers, had become in truth the God of Israel through the covenant just made. We must not go beyond the limits drawn in Exodus 33:20–23 in our conceptions of what

constituted the sight (הִזָּק v. 11) of God; at the same time we must regard it as a vision of God in some form of manifestation which rendered the divine nature discernible to the human eye. Nothing is said as to the form in which God manifested Himself. This silence, however, is not intended "to indicate the imperfection of their sight of God," as *Baumgarten* affirms, nor is it to be explained, as *Hofmann* supposes, on the ground that "what they saw differed from what the people had constantly before their eyes simply in this respect, that after they had entered the darkness, which enveloped the mountain that burned as it were with fire at its summit, the fiery sign separated from the cloud, and assumed a shape, beneath which it was bright and clear, as an image of untroubled bliss." The words are evidently intended to affirm something more than, that they saw the fiery form in which God manifested Himself to the people, and that whilst the fire was ordinarily enveloped in a cloud, they saw it upon the mountain without the cloud. For, since

Moses saw the form (הַמְּוֹנֶה) of Jehovah (Num. 12:8), we may fairly conclude, notwithstanding the fact that, according to v. 2, the representatives of the nation were not to draw near to Jehovah, and without any danger of contradicting Deut. 4:12 and 15, that they also saw a form of God. Only this form is not described, in order that no encouragement might be given to the inclination of the people to make likenesses of Jehovah. Thus we find that Isaiah gives no description of the form in which he saw the Lord sitting upon a high and lofty throne (Isa. 6:1). Ezekiel is the first to

describe the form of Jehovah which he saw in the vision, "as the appearance of a man" (Ezek. 1:26; compare Dan. 7:9 and 13). "And there was under His feet as it were work of clear sapphire

(לְבַנֵּת, from לְבָנָה whiteness, clearness, not

from לְבָנָה a brick<sup>55</sup>), and as the material

(עֲצָם body, substance) of heaven in

brilliancy,"—to indicate that the God of Israel was enthroned above the heaven in super-terrestrial glory and undisturbed blessedness. And God was willing that His people should share in this blessedness, for "He laid not His hand upon the nobles of Israel," i.e., did not attack them. "They saw God, and did eat and drink," i.e., they celebrated thus near to Him the sacrificial meal of the peace-offerings, which had been sacrificed at the conclusion of the covenant, and received in this covenant meal a foretaste of the precious and glorious gifts with which God would endow and refresh His redeemed people in His kingdom. As the promise in Exodus 19:5, 6, with which God opened the way for the covenant at Sinai, set clearly before the nation that had been rescued from Egypt the ultimate goal of its divine calling; so this termination of the ceremony was intended to give to the nation, in the persons of its representatives, a tangible pledge of the glory of the goal that was set before it. The sight of the God of Israel was a foretaste of the blessedness of the sight of God in eternity, and the covenant meal upon the mountain before the face of God was a type of the marriage supper of the Lamb, to which the Lord will call, and at which He will present His perfected Church in the day of the full revelation of His glory (Rev. 19:7–9).

**Exodus 24:12–18.** Verses 12–18 prepare the way for the subsequent revelation recorded in Exodus 25–31, which Moses received concerning the erection of the sanctuary. At the conclusion of the covenant meal, the representatives of the nation left the mountain along with Moses. This is not expressly stated, indeed; since it followed as a matter of course

that they returned to the camp, when the festival for which God had called them up was concluded. A command was then issued again to Moses to ascend the mountain, and remain

there (וְהָיָה־שָׁם), for He was about to give

him the tables of stone, with (אֶל as in Gen. 3:24)

the law and commandments, which He had written for their instruction (cf. 31:18).

**Exodus 24:13, 14.** When Moses was preparing to ascend the mountain with his servant Joshua (vid., 17:9), he ordered the elders to remain in

the camp (בְּזֹה i.e., where they were) till their return, and appointed Aaron and Hur (vid., 17:10) as administrators of justice in case of any disputes occurring among the people.

מִי־בַעַל דְּבָרִים: whoever has matters,

matters of dispute (on this meaning of בַּעַל see Gen. 37:19).

**Exodus 24:15–17.** When he ascended the mountain, upon which the glory of Jehovah dwelt, it was covered for six days with the cloud, and the glory itself appeared to the Israelites in the camp below like devouring fire (cf. 19:16); and on the seventh day He called Moses into the cloud. Whether Joshua followed him we are not told; but it is evident from Exodus 32:17 that he was with him on the mountain, though, judging from v. 2 and Exodus 33:11, he would not go into the immediate presence of God.

**Exodus 24:18.** "And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights," including the six days of waiting,—the whole time without eating and drinking (Deut. 9:9). The number forty was certainly significant, since it was not only repeated on the occasion of his second protracted stay upon Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28; Deut. 9:18), but occurred again in the forty days of Elijah's journey to Horeb the mount of God in the strength of the food received from the angel (1 Kings 19:8), and in the fasting of Jesus at the time of His temptation (Matt. 4:2; Luke 4:2), and even appears to have

been significant in the forty years of Israel's wandering in the desert (Deut. 8:2). In all these cases the number refers to a period of temptation, of the trial of faith, as well as to a period of the strengthening of faith through the miraculous support bestowed by God.

### DIRECTIONS CONCERNING THE SANCTUARY AND PRIESTHOOD.— CH. 25–31.

**Exodus 25–31.** To give a definite external form to the covenant concluded with His people, and construct a visible bond of fellowship in which He might manifest Himself to the people and they might draw near to Him as their God, Jehovah told Moses that the Israelites were to erect Him a sanctuary, that He might dwell in the midst of them (Exodus 25:8). The construction and arrangement of this sanctuary were determined in all respects by God Himself, who showed to Moses, when upon the mountain, a pattern of the dwelling and its furniture, and prescribed with great minuteness both the form and materials of all the different parts of the sanctuary and all the things required for the sacred service. If the sanctuary was to answer its purpose, the erection of it could not be left to the inventive faculty of any man whatever, but must proceed from Him, who was there to manifest Himself to the nation, as the Holy One, in righteousness and grace. The people could only carry out what God appointed, and could only fulfil their covenant duty, by the readiness with which they supplied the materials required for the erection of the sanctuary and completed the work with their own hands. The divine directions extended to all the details, because they were all of importance in relation to the design of God. The account therefore is so elaborate, that it contains a description not only of the directions of God with reference to the whole and every separate part (Exodus 25–31), but also of the execution of the work in all its details (Exodus 35–40).

The following is the plan upon which this section is arranged. After the command of God to the people to offer gifts for the sanctuary about to be erected, which forms the introduction to the whole (Exodus 25:1–9), the further directions commence with a description of the ark of the covenant, which Jehovah had appointed as His throne in the sanctuary, that is to say, as it were, with the sanctuary in the sanctuary (Exodus 25:10–22). Then follow— (1) the table of shew-bread and the golden candlestick (vv. 23–40), as the two things by means of which the continual communion of Israel with Jehovah was to be maintained; (2) the construction of the dwelling, with an account of the position to be occupied by the three things already named (Exodus 26); (3) the altar of burnt-offering, together with the court which was to surround the holy dwelling (Exodus 27:1–19). This is immediately followed by the command respecting the management of the candlestick (vv. 20, 21), which prepares the way for an account of the institution of the priesthood, and the investiture and consecration of the priests (Exodus 28 and 29), and by the directions as to the altar of incense, and the service to be performed at it (Exodus 30:1–10); after which, there only remain a few subordinate instructions to complete the whole (Exodus 30:11–31:17). "The description of the entire sanctuary commences, therefore," as *Ranke* has aptly observed, "with the ark of the law, the place of the manifestation of Jehovah, and terminates with the altar of incense, which stood immediately in front of it." The dwelling was erected round Jehovah's seat, and round this the court. The priests first of all presented the sacrifices upon the altar of burnt-offering, and then proceeded into the holy place and drew near to Jehovah. The highest act in the daily service of the priests was evidently this standing before Jehovah at the altar of incense, which was only separated by the curtain from the most holy place.

#### **Exodus 25**

**Exodus 25:1–9** (cf. Exodus 35:1–9). The Israelites were to bring to the Lord a heave-

offering (תְּרוּמָה from רֹם, a gift lifted, or heaved by a man from his own property to present to the Lord; see at Lev. 2:9), “on the part of every one whom his heart drove,” i.e., whose heart was willing (cf. נָדִיב לְבוֹ Exodus 35:5, 22): viz., gold, silver, brass, etc.

**Exodus 25:4.** תְּכֵלֶת, ὑάκινθος, purple of a dark blue shade, approaching black rather than bright blue. אַרְגָּמָן, πορφύρα (Chald. אַרְגָּוֹן, 2 Chron. 2:6; Dan. 5:7, 16; — Sanskrit, *râgaman* or *râgavan*, *colore rubro praeditus*), true purple of a dark red colour. תּוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי, literally the crimson prepared from the dead bodies and nests of the glow-worm,<sup>56</sup> then the scarlet-red purple, or crimson. שֵׁשׁ, βύσσος, from שׁוּשׁ to be white, a fine white cotton fabric, not linen, muslin, or net. עֲזִים goats, here goats’ hair (τρίχες αἰγείαι, LXX).

**Exodus 25:5.** עֹרֹת אֵילִים מְאֻדָּמִים rams’ skins reddened, i.e., dyed red. תַּחֲשׁ is either the seal, *phoca*, or else, as this is not known to exist in the Arabian Gulf, the φῶκος= φώκαινα of the ancients, as *Knobel* supposes, or κήτος θαλάσσιον ὄμοιον δελφίνι, the sea-cow (*Manati*, *Halicora*), which is found in the Red Sea, and has a skin that is admirably adapted for sandals. *Hesychius* supposes it to have been the latter, which is probably the same as the large fish *Tûn* or *Atûm*, that is caught in the Red Sea, and belongs to the same species as the *Halicora* (*Robinson*, Pal. i. p. 170); as its skin is also used by the Bedouin Arabs for making sandals (*Burckhardt*, Syr. p. 861). In the *Manati* the upper skin differs from the under; the former being larger, thicker, and coarser than the latter, which is only two lines in thickness and very tough, so that the skin would be well adapted either for the thick covering of tents or for the finer kinds of ornamental sandals (*Ezek.*

16:10). עֵצֵי שֵׁטִים acacia-wood. שֵׁטָה for

שֵׁטָה, the true acacia (*acacia vera*), which grows in Egypt and on the Arabian peninsula into a tree of the size of a nut-tree, or even larger;<sup>57</sup> the only tree in *Arabia deserta* from which planks could be cut, and the wood of which is very light and yet very durable.

**Exodus 25:6.** Oil for the candlestick (see at Exodus 27:20). בְּשָׂמִים perfumes, spices for the anointing oil (see at Exodus 30:22ff.), and for the incense (הַסַּמִּים, lit., the scents, because the materials of which it was composed were not all of them fragrant; see at Exodus 30:34ff.).

**Exodus 25:7.** Lastly, precious stones, אֲבִנֵי שֹהַם probably beryls (see at Gen. 2:12), for the ephod (Exodus 28:9), and אֲבִנֵי מְלֵאִים, lit., stones of filling, i.e., jewels that are set (see Exodus 28:16ff.). On *ephod* (אֶפֶד), see at

Exodus 28:6; and on חֹשֶׁן, at Exodus 28:15. The precious stones were presented by the princes of the congregation (Exodus 35:27).

**Exodus 25:8, 9.** With these freewill-offerings they were to make the Lord a sanctuary, that He might dwell in the midst of them (see at v. 22). “According to all that I let thee see (show thee), the pattern of the dwelling and the pattern of all its furniture, so shall ye make it.” The participle מְרֹאָה does not refer to the past; and there is nothing to indicate that it does, either in v. 40, where “in the mount” occurs, or in the use of the preterite in Exodus 26:30; 27:8. It does not follow from the expression, “which is showed thee in the mount,” that Moses had already left the mountain and returned to the camp; and the use of the preterite in the passages last named may be simply explained, either on the supposition that the sight of the pattern or

model of the whole building and its component parts preceded the description of the different things required for the completion of the building, or that the instructions to make the different parts in such and such a way, pointed to a time when the sight of the model really belonged to the past. On the other hand, the model for the building could not well be shown to Moses, before he had been told that the gifts to be made by the people were to be devoted to

the building of a sanctuary. **תְּבִנִּית**, from **בָּנָה** to build, lit., a building, then a figure of anything, a copy of representation of different things, Deut. 4:17ff.; a drawing or sketch, 2 Kings 16:10: it never means the original, not even in Ps. 144:12, as *Delitzsch* supposes (see his Com. on Heb. 8:5). In such passages as 1 Chron. 28:11, 12, 19, where it may be rendered plan, it does not signify an original, but simply means a model or drawing, founded upon an idea, or taken from some existing object, according to which a building was to be constructed. Still less can the object connected with **תְּבִנִּית** in the genitive be understood as

referring to the original, from which the **תְּבִנִּית** was taken; so that we cannot follow the Rabbins in their interpretation of this passage, as affirming that the heavenly originals of the tabernacle and its furniture had been shown to Moses in a vision upon the mountain. What was shown to him was simply a picture or model of the earthly tabernacle and its furniture, which were to be made by him. Both Acts 7:44 and Heb. 8:5 are perfectly reconcilable with this interpretation of our verse, which is the only one that can be grammatically sustained. The words of Stephen, that Moses was to make the tabernacle *κατὰ τὸν τύπον ὃν ἑώρακει*, “according to the fashion that he had seen,” are so indefinite, that the text of Exodus must be adduced to explain them. And when the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews cites the words, “See that thou make all things *κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δειχθέντα σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει*” (according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount), from v.

40 of this chapter, as a proof the Levitical priests only served the type and shadow of heavenly things (*τῶν ἐπουρανίων*); it is true, his words may be understood as showing that he regarded the earthly tabernacle with all its arrangements as only the counterpart and copy of a heavenly original. But this interpretation is neither necessary nor well founded. For although the author, by following the Sept., in

which **בְּתִבְנִיתָם** is rendered *κατὰ τὸν τύπον*, the suffix being dropped, leaves it just a possible thing to understand the *τύπος* shown to Moses as denoting a heavenly tabernacle (or temple); yet he has shown very clearly that this was not his own view, when he explains the “patterns of things in the heavens” (*ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς*) and “the true” things (*τὰ ἀληθινά*) of both the tabernacle and its furniture as denoting the “heaven” (*οὐρανός*) into which Christ had entered, and not any temple in heaven. If the *ἐπουράνια* are heaven itself, the *τύπος* showed to Moses cannot have been a temple in heaven, but either heaven itself, or, more probably still, as there could be no necessity for this to be shown to Moses in a pictorial representation, a picture of heavenly things or divine realities, which was shown to Moses that he might copy and embody it in the earthly tabernacle.<sup>58</sup> If we understand the verse before us in this sense, it merely expresses what is already implied in the fact itself. If God showed Moses a picture or model of the tabernacle, and instructed him to make everything exactly according to this pattern, we must assume that in the tabernacle and its furniture heavenly realities were to be expressed in earthly forms; or, to put it more clearly, that the thoughts of God concerning salvation and His kingdom, which the earthly building was to embody and display, were visibly set forth in the pattern shown. The symbolical and typical significance of the whole building necessarily follows from this, though without our being obliged to imitate the Rabbins, and seek in the tabernacle the counterpart or copy of a heavenly temple. What these divine thoughts were that were embodied

in the tabernacle, can only be gathered from the arrangement and purpose of the whole building and its separate parts; and upon this point the description furnishes so much information, that when read in the light of the whole of the covenant revelation, it gives to all the leading points precisely the clearness that we require.

**Exodus 25:10–22.** The Ark of the Covenant (cf. Exodus 37:1–9).—They were to make an ark

(אָרוֹן) of acacia-wood, two cubits and a half long, one and a half broad, and one and a half high, and to plate it with pure gold both within and without. Round about it they were to

construct a golden זָר, i.e., probably a golden rim, encircling it like an ornamental wreath. They were also to cast four golden rings and

fasten them to the four feet (פְּעֻמֹת walking feet, feet bent as if for walking) of the ark, two on either side; and to cut four poles of acacia-wood and plate them with gold, and put them through the rings for carrying the ark. The poles were to remain in the rings, without moving from them, i.e., without being drawn out, that the bearers might not touch the ark itself (Num. 4:15).

**Exodus 25:16.** Into this ark Moses was to put “the testimony” (הַעֲדוּת; cf. Exodus 40:20).

This is the name given to the two tables of stone, upon which the ten words spoken by God to the whole nation were written, and which Moses was to receive from God (Exodus 24:12). Because these ten words were the declaration of God upon the basis of which the covenant was concluded (Exodus 34:27, 28; Deut. 4:13; 10:1, 2), these tables were called the tables of testimony (Exodus 31:18; 34:29), or tables of the covenant (Deut. 9:9; 11:15).

**Exodus 25:17ff.** In addition to this, Moses was to make a *capporeth* (ἱλαστήριον ἐπίθεμα, LXX; *propitiatorium*, *Vulg.*), an atoning covering. The meaning *operculum*, lid (*Ges.*), cannot be sustained, notwithstanding the fact that the *capporeth* was placed upon the ark (v. 21) and

covered the tables laid within it; for the verb

כָּפַר has not the literal signification of covering or covering up either in *Kal* or *Piel*. In *Kal* it only occurs in Gen. 6:14, where it means to pitch or tar; in *Piel* it is only used in the figurative sense of covering up sin or guilt, i.e., of making atonement. 1 Chron. 28:11 is decisive on this point, where the holy of holies, in which the

*capporeth* was, is called בֵּית הַכִּפֹּרֶת, which cannot possibly mean the covering-house, but must signify the house of atonement. The force of this passage is not weakened by the remark made by *Delitzsch* and others, to the effect that it was only in the later usage of the language that the idea of covering gave place to that of the covering up or expiation of sin; for neither in the earlier nor earliest usage of the language can the supposed primary meaning of the word be anywhere discovered. *Knobel's* remark has still less force, viz., that the ark must have had a lid, and it must have been called a lid. For if from the very commencement this lid had a more important purpose than that of a simple covering, it might also have received its name from this special purpose, even though this was not fully explained to the Israelites till a later period in the giving of the law (Lev. 16:15, 16). It must, however, have been obvious to every one, that it was to be something more than the mere lid of the ark, from the simple fact that it was not to be made, like the ark, of wood plated with gold, but to be made of pure gold, and to have two golden cherubs upon the top. The *cherubim* (see p. 67) were to be made of gold

מִקְשָׁה (from קָשָׁה to turn), i.e., literally, turned work (cf. Isa. 3:24), here, according to

*Onkelos*, נְגִיד *opus ductile*, work beaten with the hammer and rounded, so that the figures were not solid but hollow (see *Bähr*, i. p. 380).

**Exodus 25:19.** “Out of the *capporeth* shall ye make the cherubs at its two ends,” i.e., so as to form one whole with the *capporeth* itself, and be inseparable from it.

**Exodus 25:20.** “And let the cherubs be stretching out wings on high, screening (סִכְכִּים, συσκιάζοντες) with their wings above the capporeth, and their faces (turned) one to the other; towards the capporeth let the faces of the cherubs be.” That is to say, the cherubs were to spread out their wings in such a manner as to form a screen over the capporeth, with their faces turned towards one another, but inclining or stooping towards the capporeth. The reason for this is given in v. 22. There—viz., above the capporeth that was placed upon the ark containing the testimony—Jehovah would present Himself to Moses (נוֹעַד, from יָעַד to appoint, to present one’s self to a person at an appointed place, to meet with him), and talk with him “from above the capporeth, out from between the two cherubs upon the ark of testimony, all that I shall command thee for the sons of Israel” (cf. Exodus 29:42). Through this divine promise and the fulfilment of it (Exodus 40:35; Lev. 1:1; Num. 1:1; 17:19), the ark of the covenant together with the capporeth became the throne of Jehovah in the midst of His chosen people, the footstool of the God of Israel (1 Chron. 28:2, cf. Ps. 132:7; 99:5; Lam. 2:1). The ark, with the tables of the covenant as the self-attestation of God, formed the foundation of this throne, to show that the kingdom of grace which was established in Israel through the medium of the covenant, was founded in justice and righteousness (Ps. 89:15; 97:2). The gold plate upon the ark formed the footstool of the throne for Him, who caused His name, i.e., the real presence of His being, to dwell in a cloud between the two cherubim above their outspread wings; and there He not only made known His will to His people in laws and commandments, but revealed Himself as the jealous God who visited sin and showed mercy (Exodus 20:5, 6; 34:6, 7),—the latter more especially on the great day of atonement, when, through the medium of the blood of the sin-offering sprinkled upon and in front of the capporeth, He granted reconciliation to His people for all their transgressions in all their

sin (Lev. 16:14ff.). Thus the footstool of God became a throne of grace (Heb. 4:16, cf. 9:5), which received its name capporeth or ἱλαστήριον from the fact that the highest and most perfect act of atonement under the Old Testament was performed upon it. Jehovah, who betrothed His people to Himself in grace and mercy for an everlasting covenant (Hos. 2:2), was enthroned upon it, above the wings of the two cherubim, which stood on either side of His throne; and hence He is represented as

“dwelling (between) the cherubim” יָשַׁב

הַכְּרֻבִים (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; Ps. 80:2, etc.).

The cherubs were not combinations of animal forms, taken from man, the lion, the ox, and the eagle, as many have inferred from Ezek. 1 and 10, for even the composite beings which Ezekiel saw with four faces had a human figure (Ezek. 1:5); but they are to be regarded as figures made in a human form, and not in a kneeling posture, but, according to the analogy of 2 Chron. 3:13, standing upright. Consequently, as the union of four faces in one cherub is peculiar to Ezekiel, and the cherubs of the ark of the covenant, like those of Solomon’s temple, had but one face each, not only did the human type form the general basis of these figures, but in every respect, with the exception of the wings, they were made in the likeness of men. And this is the only form which would answer the purpose for which they were intended, viz., to represent the cherubim, or heavenly spirits, who were stationed to prevent the return of the first man to the garden of Eden after his expulsion thence, and keep the way to the tree of life (see p. 67). Standing upon the capporeth of the ark of the covenant, the typical foundation of the throne of Jehovah, which

Ezekiel saw in the vision as דְּמוֹת רְקִיעַ “the likeness of a firmament” (Ezek. 1:22, 25), with their wings outspread and faces lowered, they represented the spirits of heaven, who surround Jehovah, the heavenly King, when seated upon His throne, as His most exalted servants and the witnesses of His sovereign and

saving glory; so that Jehovah enthroned above the wings of the cherubim was set forth as the God of Hosts who is exalted above all the angels, surrounded by the assembly or council of the holy ones (Ps. 89:6–9), who bow their faces towards the capporeth, studying the secrets of the divine counsels of love (1 Pet. 1:12), and worshipping Him that liveth for ever and ever (Rev. 4:10).

**Exodus 25:23–30.** The Table of Shew-Bread (cf. Exodus 37:10–16).—The table for the shew-bread (v. 30) was to be made of acacia-wood, two cubits long, one broad, and one and a half high, and to be plated with pure gold, having a golden wreath round, and a “*finish (מִסְגֵּרֶת) of a hand-breadth round about,*” i.e., a border of a hand-breadth in depth surrounding and enclosing the four sides, upon which the top of the table was laid, and into the four corners of which the feet of the table were inserted. A golden wreath was to be placed round this rim.

As there is no article attached to זֶרֶזְהָב in v.

25 (cf. 37:12), so as to connect it with the זֶר in v. 24, we must conclude that there were two such ornamental wreaths, one round the slab of the table, the other round the rim which was under the slab. At the four corners of the four feet, near the point at which they joined the rim, four rings were to be fastened for בְּתִיִּם, i.e., to hold the poles with which the table was carried, as in the case of the ark.

**Exodus 25:29.** Vessels of pure gold were also to be made, to stand upon the table (cf. 37:16).

קַעֲרֹת, τὰ τευβλία (LXX), large deep plates, in which the shew-bread was not only brought to the table, but placed upon it. These plates cannot have been small, for the silver קַעֲרָה, presented by Nahshon the tribe prince, weighed 130 shekels (Num. 7:13). כַּפֹּת, from כַּף a hollow hand, small scoops, according to

Num. 7:14, only ten shekels in weight, used to put out the incense belonging to the shew-bread upon the table (cf. Lev. 24:7 and Num. 7:14): LXX θυσίσκη, i.e., according to the *Etymol. Magn.*, σκάφη ἢ τὰ θύματα δεχομένη. There were also two vessels “to pour out,” sc., the drink-offering, or libation of wine: viz., קִשּׁוֹת, σπονδεῖα (LXX), sacrificial spoons to make the libation of wine with, and מִנְקִיִּת, κύαθοι (LXX), goblets into which the wine was poured, and in which it was placed upon the table. (See Exodus 37:16 and Num. 4:7, where the goblets are mentioned before the sacrificial spoons.)

**Exodus 25:30.** Bread of the face (לֶחֶם פָּנִים), the mode of preparing and placing which is described in Lev. 24:5ff., was to lie continually

before (לְפָנַי) Jehovah. These loaves were called “bread of the face” (shew-bread), because they were to lie before the face of Jehovah as a meat-offering presented by the children of Israel (Lev. 24:8), not as food for Jehovah, but as a symbol of the spiritual food which Israel was to prepare (John 6:27, cf. 4:32, 34), a figurative representation of the calling it had received from God; so that bread and wine, which stood upon the table by the side of the loaves, as the fruit of the labour bestowed by Israel upon the soil of its inheritance, were a symbol of its spiritual labour in the kingdom of God, the spiritual vineyard of its Lord.

**Exodus 25:31–40** (cf. 37:17–24). The Candlestick was to be made of pure gold,

“beaten work.” מִקְשָׁה: see v. 18. For the form

תֵּינֶשֶׁה instead of תֵּעֲשֶׂה (which is probably the work of a copyist, who thought the reading should be תֵּעֲשֶׂה in the *Niphal*, as the ם is wanting in many MSS), see *Gesenius, Lehrgeb.* p. 52, and *Ewald*, § 83b. “Of it shall be (i.e., there shall issue from it so as to form one complete whole) its יֵרֶד” (lit., the loins, the upper part of

the thigh, which is attached to the body, and from which the feet proceed,—in this case the base or pedestal, upon which the candelabrum stood); its קִנְיָה, or reed, i.e., the hollow stem of the candelabrum rising up from the pedestal;—“its גְּבִיעִים,” cups, resembling the calix of a flower;—כַּפְתָּרִים, knobs, in a spherical shape (cf. Amos 9:1, Zeph. 2:14);—“and פְּרָחִים,” flowers, ornaments in the form of buds just bursting.

**Exodus 25:32.** From the sides of the candlestick, i.e., of the upright stem in the middle, there were to be six branches, three on either side.

**Exodus 25:33–34.** On each of these branches (the repetition of the same words expresses the distributive sense) there were to be “three cups in the form of an almond-flower, (with) knob and flower,” and on the shaft of the candlestick, or central stem, “four cups in the form of almond-flowers, its knobs and its flowers.” As both

כַּפְתָּרִיהָ וּפְרָחֶיהָ (v. 33) and כַּפְתָּר וּפְרָח (v. 34) are connected with the previous words without a copula, *Knobel* and *Thenius* regard these words as standing in explanatory apposition to the preceding ones, and suppose the meaning to be that the flower-cups were to consist of knobs with flowers issuing from them. But apart from the singular idea of calling a knob or bulb with a flower bursting from it a flower-cup, v. 31 decidedly precludes any such explanation; for cups, knobs, and flowers are mentioned there in connection with the base and stem, as three separate things which were quite as distinct the one from the other as the base and the stem. The words in question are appended in both verses to גְּבִיעִים מְשֻׁקְדִים

in the sense of subordination; ׀ is generally used in such cases, but it is omitted here before כַּפְתָּר, probably to avoid ambiguity, as the two

words to be subordinated are brought into closer association as one idea by the use of this copula. And if כַּפְתָּר and פְּרָח are to be

distinguished from גְּבִיעַ, the objection made

by *Thenius* to our rendering מְשֻׁקְדִים “almond-blossom-shaped,” namely, that neither the almond nor the almond-blossom has at all the shape of a basin, falls entirely to the ground; and there is all the less reason to question this rendering, on account of the unanimity with which it has been adopted in the ancient versions, whereas the rendering proposed by *Thenius*, “wakened up, i.e., a burst or opened calix,” has neither foundation nor probability.

**Exodus 25:35.** “and every pipe under the two branches shall be out from them (be connected with them) for the six (side) pipes going out from the candlestick;” i.e., at the point where the three pairs of the six side pipes or arms branched off from the main pipe or stem of the candlestick, a knob should be so placed that the arms should proceed from the knob, or from the main stem immediately above the knob.

**Exodus 25:36.** “Their knobs and their pipes (i.e., the knobs and pipes of the three pairs of arms) shall be of it (the candlestick, i.e., combined with it so as to form one whole), all one (one kind of) beaten work, pure gold.” From all this we get the following idea of the candlestick: Upon the vase there rose an upright central pipe, from which three side pipes branched out one above another on either side, and curved upwards in the form of a quadrant to the level of the central stem. On this stem a calix and a knob and blossom were introduced four separate times, and in such a manner that there was a knob wherever the side pipes branched off from the main stem, evidently immediately below the branches; and the fourth knob, we may suppose, was higher up between the top branches and the end of the stem. As there were thus four calices with a knob and blossom in the main stem, so again there were three in each of the branches, which were no doubt placed at equal distances from one another.

With regard to the relative position of the calix, the knob, and the blossom, we may suppose that the spherical knob was underneath the calix, and that the blossom sprang from the upper edge of the latter, as if bursting out of it. The candlestick had thus seven arms, and seven lights or lamps were to be made and placed

upon them (הַעֲלֶה). "And they (all the lamps)

are to give light upon the opposite side of its front" (v. 37): i.e., the lamp was to throw its light upon the side that was opposite to the

front of the candlestick. The פָּנִים of the candlestick (v. 37 and Num. 8:2) was the front shown by the seven arms, as they formed a

straight line with their seven points; and עֲבֵר does not mean the side, but the opposite side, as is evident from Num. 8:2, where we find אֵל

מִזְרָח instead. As the place assigned to the candlestick was on the south side of the dwelling-place, we are to understand by this opposite side the north, and imagine the lamp to be so placed that the line of lamps formed by the seven arms ran from front to back, by which arrangement the holy place would be better lighted, than if the candlestick had stood with the line of lamps from south to north, and so had turned all its seven lamps towards the person entering the holy place. The lamps were the receptacles for the wick and oil, which were placed on the top of the arms, and could be taken down to be cleaned. The hole from which the wick projected was not made in the middle, but at the edge, so that the light was thrown upon one side.

**Exodus 25:38.** The other things belonging to the candlestick were מְלִקְחִים tongs (Isa. 6:6),

i.e., snuffers, and מַחְתּוֹת snuff-dishes, i.e., dishes to receive the snuff when taken from the wicks; elsewhere the word signifies an ash-pan, or vessel used for taking away the coal from the fire (Exodus 27:3; Lev. 16:12; Num. 17:3ff.).

**Exodus 25:39.** "Of a talent of pure gold (i.e., 822,000 Parisian grains) shall he make it (the candlestick) and all these vessels," i.e., according to Exodus 37:24, all the vessels belonging to the candlestick. From this quantity of gold it was possible to make a candlestick of very considerable size. The size is not given anywhere in the Old Testament, but, according to Bähr's conjecture, it corresponded to the height of the table of shew-bread, namely, a cubit and a half in height and the same in breadth, or a cubit and a half between the two outside lamps.

The signification of the seven-armed candlestick is apparent from its purpose, viz., to carry seven lamps, which were trimmed and filled with oil every morning, and lighted every evening, and were to burn throughout the night (Exodus 27:20, 21; 30:7, 8; Lev. 24:3, 4). As the Israelites were to prepare spiritual food in the shew-bread in the presence of Jehovah, and to offer continually the fruit of their labour in the field of the kingdom of God, as a spiritual offering to the Lord; so also were they to present themselves continually to Jehovah in the burning lamps, as the vehicles and media of light, as a nation letting its light shine in the darkness of this world (cf. Matt. 5:14, 16; Luke 12:35; Phil. 2:15). The oil, through which the lamps burned and shone, was, according to its peculiar virtue in imparting strength to the body and restoring vital power, a representation of the Godlike spirit, the source of all the vital power of man; whilst the oil, as offered by the congregation of Israel, and devoted to sacred purposes according to the command of God, is throughout the Scriptures a symbol of the Spirit of God, by which the congregation of God was tilled with higher light and life. By the power of this Spirit, Israel, in covenant with the Lord, was to let its light shine, the light of its knowledge of God and spiritual illumination, before all the nations of the earth. In its seven arms the stamp of the covenant relationship was impressed upon the candlestick; and the almond-blossom with which it was ornamented represented the seasonable offering of the flowers and fruits of

the Spirit, the almond-tree deriving its name **שֶׁקֶד** from the fact that it is the earliest of all the trees in both its blossom and its fruit (cf. Jer. 1:11, 12). The symbolical character of the candlestick is clearly indicated in the Scriptures. The prophet Zechariah (Zech. 4) sees a golden candlestick with seven lamps and two olive-trees, one on either side, from which the oil-vessel is supplied; and the angel who is talking with him informs him that the olive-trees are the two sons of oil, that is to say, the representatives of the kingdom and priesthood, the divinely appointed organs through which the Spirit of God was communicated to the covenant nation. And in Rev. 1:20, the seven churches, which represent the new people of God, i.e., the Christian Church, are shown to the holy seer in the form of seven candlesticks standing before the throne of God.—On v. 40, see at v. 9.

## Exodus 26

**Exodus 26** (cf. 36:8–38). The Dwelling-Place.—This was to be formed of a framework of wood, and of tapestry and curtains. The description commences with the tapestry or tent-cloth (vv. 1–14), which made the framework (vv. 15–30) into a dwelling. The inner lining is mentioned first (vv. 1–6), because this made the dwelling into a tent (tabernacle). This *inner tent-cloth*

was to consist of ten curtains (**יְרִיעוֹת**, ἀυλαῖαι), or, as *Luther* has more aptly rendered it, *Teppiche*, pieces of tapestry, i.e., of cloth composed of byssus yarn, hyacinth, purple, and scarlet. **מְשֻׁזָּר** twisted, signifies yarn composed of various colours twisted together, from which the finer kinds of byssus, for which the Egyptians were so celebrated, were made (vid., *Hengstenberg*, *Egypt*, pp. 139ff.). The byssus yarn was of a clear white, and this was woven into mixed cloth by combination with dark blue, and dark and fiery red. It was not to be in simple stripes or checks, however; but the variegated yarn was to be woven (embroidered) into the white byssus, so as to

form artistic figures of cherubim (“cherubim, work of the artistic weaver, shalt thou make it”). **מַעֲשֵׂה חָשֵׁב** (lit., work or labour of the thinker) is applied to artistic weaving, in which either figures or gold threads (Exodus 28:6, 8, 15) are worked into the cloth, and which is to be distinguished from **מַעֲשֵׂה רֶקֶם** variegated weaving (v. 36).

**Exodus 26:2, 3.** The length of each piece was to be 28 cubits, and the breadth 4 cubits, one measure for all; and five of these pieces were to be “joined together one to another,” i.e., joined or sewed together into a piece of 28 cubits in length and 20 in breadth, and the same with the other five.

**Exodus 26:4, 5.** They were also to make 50 hyacinth loops “on the border of the one piece of tapestry, from the end in the join,” i.e., on the extreme edge of the five pieces that were sewed together; and the same “on the border of the last piece in the second joined tapestry.” Thus there were to be fifty loops in each of the two large pieces, and these loops were to be **מִקְבִּילֹת** “taking up the loops one the other;” that is to say, they were to be so made that the loops in the two pieces should exactly meet.

**Exodus 26:6.** Fifty golden clasps were also to be made, to fasten the pieces of drapery (the two halves of the tent-cloth) together, “that it might be a dwelling-place.” This necessarily leads to *Bähr’s* conclusion, that the tent-cloth, which consisted of two halves fastened together with the loops and clasps, answering to the two compartments of the dwelling-place (v. 33), enclosed the whole of the interior, not only covering the open framework above, but the side walls also, and therefore that it hung down inside the walls, and that it was not spread out upon the wooden framework so as to form the ceiling, but hung down on the walls on the outside of the wooden beams, so that the gilded beams were left uncovered in the inside. For if this splendid tent-cloth had been intended for the ceiling only, and therefore only

30 cubits had been visible out of the 40 cubits of its breadth, and only 10 out of the 28 of its length,—that is to say, if not much more than a third of the whole had been seen and used for the inner lining of the dwelling,—that is to say, if not much more than a third of the whole had been seen and used for the inner lining of the dwelling,—it would not have been called “the dwelling” so constantly as it is (cf. Exodus 36:8; 40:18), nor would the goats’-hair covering which was placed above it have been just as constantly called the “tent above the dwelling” (v. 7, Exodus 36:14; 40:19). This inner tent-cloth was so spread out, that whilst it was fastened to the upper ends of the beams in a way that is not explained in the text, it formed the ceiling of the whole, and the joining came just above the curtain which divided the dwelling into two compartments. One half therefore, viz., the front half, formed the ceiling of the holy place with its entire breadth of 20 cubits and 10 cubits of its length, and the remaining 18 cubits of its length hung down over the two side walls, 9 cubits down each wall,—the planks that formed the walls being left uncovered, therefore, to the height of 1 cubit from the ground. In a similar manner the other half covered the holy of holies, 10 cubits of both length and breadth forming the ceiling, and the 10 cubits that remained of the entire length covering the end wall; whilst the folds in the corners that arose from the 9 cubits that hung down on either side, were no doubt so adjusted that the walls appeared to be perfectly smooth. (For further remarks, see Exodus 39:33.)

**Exodus 26:7–13.** The *outer tent-cloth*, “for the tent over the dwelling,” was to consist of eleven lengths of goats’ hair, i.e., of cloth made of goats’ hair;<sup>59</sup> each piece being thirty cubits long and four broad.

**Exodus 26:9.** Five of these were to be connected (sewed together) by themselves

(לְבָדָה), and the other six in the same manner;

and the sixth piece was to be made double, i.e., folded together, towards the front of the tent,

so as to form a kind of gable, as *Josephus* has also explained the passage (Ant. iii. 6, 4).

**Exodus 26:10, 11.** Fifty loops and clasps were to be made to join the two halves together, as in the case of the inner tapestry, only the clasps were to be of brass or copper.

**Exodus 26:12, 13.** This tent-cloth was two cubits longer than the inner one, as each piece was 30 cubits long instead of 28; it was also two cubits broader, as it was composed of 11 pieces, the eleventh only reckoning as two cubits, as it was to be laid double. Consequently

there was an excess (הַעֲדָרָה that which is over) of two cubits each way; and according to vv. 12 and 13 this was to be disposed of in the following manner: “*As for the spreading out of the excess in the tent-cloths, the half of the cloth in excess shall spread out over the back of the dwelling; and the cubit from here and from there in the excess in the length of the tent-cloths (i.e., the cubit over in the length in each of the cloths) shall be spread out on the sides of the dwelling from here and from there to cover it.*”

Now since, according to this, one half of the two cubits of the sixth piece which was laid double was to hang down the back of the tabernacle, there only remained one cubit for the gable of the front. It follows, therefore, that the joining of the two halves with loops and clasps would come a cubit farther back, than the place where the curtain of the holy of holies divided the dwelling. But in consequence of the cloth being a cubit longer in every direction, it nearly reached the ground on all three sides, the thickness of the wooden framework alone preventing it from reaching it altogether.

**Exodus 26:14.** “*The other coverings were placed on the top of this tent: one made of rams’ skins dyed red, “as a covering for the tent,” and another upon the top of this, made of*

the skins of the sea-cow (תְּחָשִׁים), see at Exodus 25:5).

**Exodus 26:15–30.** The *wooden framework*.—Vv. 15, 16. The boards for the dwelling were to be made “of acacia-wood standing,” i.e., so that

they could stand upright; each ten cubits long and one and a half broad. The thickness is not given; and if, on the one hand, we are not to imagine them too thin, as *Josephus* does, for example, who says they were only four fingers thick (Ant. iii. 6, 3), we have still less reason for following *Rashi*, *Lund*, *Bähr* and others, who suppose them to have been a cubit in thickness, thus making simple boards into colossal blocks, such as could neither have been cut from acacia-trees, nor carried upon desert roads.<sup>60</sup> To obtain boards of the required breadth, two or three planks were no doubt joined together according to the size of the trees.

**Exodus 26:17.** Every board was to have two יְדוֹת (lit., hands or holders) to hold them upright, pegs therefore; and they were to be “bound to one another” (מִשְׁלֵב, from שֻׁלַב in

Chald. to connect, hence שְׁלֵבִים in 1 Kings 7:28, the corner plates that hold together the four sides of a chest), not “pegged into one another,” but joined together by a fastening dovetailed into the pegs, by which the latter were fastened still more firmly to the boards, and therefore had greater holding power than if each one had been simply sunk into the edge of the board.

**Exodus 26:18–21.** Twenty of these boards were to be prepared for the side of the dwelling that was turned towards the south, and forty sockets (אֲדָנִים foundations, Job 38:6) or bases for the pegs, i.e., to put the pegs of the boards into, that the boards might stand upright; and the same number of boards and sockets for the north side. תִּימְנָה, “southward,” is added to

לְפָאֵת נִגְבָּה in v. 18, to give a clearer definition of *negeb*, which primarily means the dry, and then the country to the south; an evident proof that at that time *negeb* was not established as a geographical term for the south, and therefore that it was not written here by a Palestinian, as *Knobel* supposes, but

by Moses in the desert. The form of the “sockets” is not explained, and even in Exodus 38:27, in the summing up of the gifts presented for the work, it is merely stated that a talent of silver (about 93 lb.) was applied to every socket.

**Exodus 26:22–24.** Six boards were to be made for the back of the dwelling westwards (יָמָה), and two boards “for the corners or angles of the dwelling at the two outermost (hinder) sides.”

לְמִקְצָעַת (for cornered), from מִקְצָע,

equivalent to מִקְצוֹעַ an angle (v. 24; Ezek.

46:21, 22), from קָצַע to cut off, lit., a section, something cut off, hence an angle, or corner-piece. These corner boards (v. 24) were to be

“doubled (תִּאֲמָם) from below, and whole

(תְּמִים, *integri*, forming a whole) at its head (or

towards its head, cf. אֵלֶּךָ Exodus 36:29) with regard to the one ring, so shall it be to both of them (so shall they both be made); to the two corners shall they be” (i.e., designed for the two hinder corners). The meaning of these words, which are very obscure in some points, can only be the following: the two corner beams at the tack were to consist of two pieces joined together at a right angle, so as to form as double boards one single whole from the bottom to the top. The expressions “from below” and “up to its head” are divided between the two

predicates “doubled” (תִּאֲמָם) and “whole”

(תְּמִים), but they belong to both of them. Each of the corner beams was to be double from the bottom to the top, and still to form one whole. There is more difficulty in the words

אֶל־הַטֶּבַעַת הָאֶחָת in v. 24. It is impossible to attach any intelligible meaning to the rendering “to the first ring,” so that even *Knobel*, who proposed it, has left it unexplained.

There is hardly any other way of explaining it, than to take the word **אַל** in the sense of “having regard to a thing,” and to understand the words as meaning, that the corner beams were to form one whole, from the face that each received only one ring, probably at the corner, and not two, viz., one on each side. This one ring was placed half-way up the upright beam in the corner or angle, in such a manner that the central bolt, which stretched along the entire length of the walls (v. 28), might fasten into it from both the side and back.

**Exodus 26:25.** Sixteen sockets were to be made for these eight boards, two for each.—Vv. 26–29. To fasten the boards, that they might not separate from one another, bars of acacia-wood were to be made and covered with gold, five for each of the three sides of the dwelling; and though it is not expressly stated, yet the reference to rings in v. 29 as holders of the bars

(**בְּתֵימִים לְבָרֵיחִים**) is a sufficient indication that they were passed through golden rings fastened into the boards.

**Exodus 26:28.** “*And the middle bar in the midst of the boards* (i.e., at an equal distance from both top and bottom) *shall be fastening*

(**מִמְּבֵרֵיחַ**) *from one end to the other.*” As it thus expressly stated with reference to the middle bar, that it was to fasten, i.e., to reach along the walls from one end to the other, we necessarily conclude, with *Rashi* and others, that the other four bars on every side were not to reach the whole length of the walls, and may therefore suppose that they were only half as long as the middle one, so that there were only three rows of bars on each wall, the upper and lower being composed of two bars each.

**Exodus 26:30.** “*And set up the dwelling according to its right, as was shown thee upon the mountain*” (cf. Exodus 25:9). Even the setting up and position of the dwelling were not left to human judgment, but were to be carried out **בְּמִשְׁפָּטוֹ**, i.e., according to the direction

corresponding to its meaning and purpose. From the description which is given of the separate portions, it is evident that the dwelling was to be set up in the direction of the four quarters of the heavens, the back being towards the west, and the entrance to the east; whilst the whole of the dwelling formed an oblong of thirty cubits long, ten broad, and ten high. The length we obtain from the twenty boards of a cubit and a half in breadth; and the breadth, by adding to the nine cubits covered by the six boards at the back, half a cubit as the inner thickness of each of the corner beams. The thickness of the corner beams is not given, but we may conjecture that on the outside which formed part of the back they were three-quarters of a cubit thick, and that half a cubit is to be taken as the thickness towards the side. In this case, on the supposition that the side beams were a quarter of a cubit thick, the inner space would be exactly ten cubits broad and thirty and a quarter long; but the surplus quarter would be taken up by the thickness of the pillars upon which the inner curtain was hung, so that the room at the back would form a perfect cube, and the one at the front an oblong of exactly twenty cubits in length, ten in breadth, and ten in height.

**Exodus 26:31–37.** To divide the *dwelling* into two rooms, a *curtain* was to be made, of the same material, and woven in the same artistic manner as the inner covering of the walls (v. 1).

This was called **פְּרֻכָּת**, lit., division, separation,

from **פָּרַד** to divide, or **פְּרֻכָּת מִסָּדָה** (Exodus 35:12; 39:34; 40:21) division of the covering, i.e., to hang this “*upon four pillars of gilded acacia-wood and their golden hooks, (standing) upon four silver sockets,*” under the loops

(**קִרְסִים**) which held the two halves of the inner covering together (v. 6). Thus the curtain divided the dwelling into two compartments, the one occupying ten cubits and the other twenty of its entire length.

**Exodus 26:33.** “*Thither (where the curtain hands under the loops) within the curtain shalt*

thou bring the ark of testimony (Exodus 25:16–22), and the curtain shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy”

(קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים the holy of holies). The inner compartment was made into the most holy place through the ark of the covenant with the throne of grace upon it.

**Exodus 26:35.** The two other things (already described) were to be placed outside the curtain, viz., in the holy place; the candlestick opposite to the table, the former on the south side of the dwelling, the latter towards the north.

**Exodus 26:36, 37.** For the entrance to the tent they were also to make a curtain (מָסַךְ, lit., a

covering, from סָכַךְ to cover) of the same material as the inner curtain, but of work in mixed colours, i.e., not woven with figures upon it, but simply in stripes or checks. מַעֲשֵׂה

רֶקֶם does not mean coloured needlework, with figures or flowers embroidered with the needle upon the woven fabric (as I asserted in my *Archäologie*, in common with the Rabbins, *Gesenius*, *Bähr*, and others); for in the only other passage in which רֶקֶם occurs, viz., Ps.

139:15, it does not mean to embroider, but to weave, and in the Arabic it signifies to make points, stripes, or lines, to work in mixed colours (see *Hartmann die Hebräerin am Putztisch* iii. 138ff.). This curtain was to hang on five gilded pillars of acacia-wood with golden hooks, and for these they were to cast sockets of brass. In the account of the execution of this work in Exodus 36:38, it is still further stated, that the architect covered the heads (capitals)

of the pillars and their girders (חֲשֻׁקִים, see Exodus 27:10) with gold. From this it follows, that the pillars were not entirely gilded, but only the capitals, and that they were fastened together with gilded girders. These girders were either placed upon the hooks that were

fastened to the tops of the pillars, or, what I think more probable, formed a kind of architrave above the pillars, in which case the covering as well as the inner curtain merely hung upon the hooks of the columns. But if the pillars were not gilded all over, we must necessarily imagine that curtain as hung upon that side of the pillars which was turned towards the holy place, so that none of the white wood was to be seen inside the holy place; and the gilding of the capitals and architrave merely served to impress upon the forefront of the tabernacle the glory of a house of God.

If we endeavour to understand the reason for building the dwelling in this manner, there can be no doubt that the design of the wooden walls was simply to give stability to the tabernacle. Acacia-wood was chosen, because the acacia was the only tree to be found in the desert of Arabia from which planks and beams could be cut, whilst the lightness and durability of this wood rendered it peculiarly suitable for a portable temple. The wooden framework was covered both within and without with hangings of drapery and other coverings, to give it the character of a tent, which is the term really applied to it in Exodus 27:21, and in most instances afterwards. The sanctuary of Jehovah in the midst of His people was to be a tent, because, so long as the people were wandering about and dwelt in tents, the dwelling of their God in the midst of them must be a tent also. The division of the dwelling into two parts corresponded to the design of the tabernacle, where Jehovah desired not to dwell alone by Himself, but to come and meet with His people (Exodus 25:22). The most holy place was the true dwelling of Jehovah, where He was enthroned in a cloud, the visible symbol of His presence, above the cherubim, upon the capporeth of the ark of the covenant (see p. 431). The holy place, on the other hand, was the place where His people were to appear before Him, and draw near to Him with their gifts, the fruits of their earthly vocation, and their prayers, and to rejoice before His face in the blessings of His covenant grace. By the

establishment of the covenant of Jehovah with the people of Israel, the separation of man from God, of which the fall of the progenitors of our race had been the cause, was to be brought to an end; an institution was to be set up, pointing to the reunion of man and God, to true and full vital communion with Him; and by this the kingdom of God was to be founded on earth in a local and temporal form. This kingdom of God, which was founded in Israel, was to be embodied in the tabernacle, and shadowed forth in its earthly and visible form as confined within the limits of time and space. This meaning was indicated not only in the instructions to set up the dwelling according to the four quarters of the globe and heavens, with the entrance towards sunrise and the holy of holies towards the west, but also in the quadrangular form of the building, the dwelling as a whole assuming the form of an oblong of thirty cubits in length, and ten in breadth and height, whilst the most holy place was a cube of ten cubits in every direction. In the symbolism of antiquity, the square was a symbol of the universe or *cosmos*; and thus, too, in the symbolism of the Scriptures it is a type of the world as the scene of divine revelation, the sphere of the kingdom of God, for which the world from the very first had been intended by God, and to which, notwithstanding the fall of man, who was created lord of the earth, it was to be once more renewed and glorified. Hence the seal of the kingdom of God was impressed upon the sanctuary of God in Israel through the quadrangular form that was given to its separate rooms. And whilst the direction in which it was set up, towards the four quarters of the heavens, showed that the kingdom of God that was planted in Israel was intended to embrace the entire world, the oblong shape given to the whole building set forth the idea of the present incompleteness of the kingdom, and the cubic form of the most holy place its ideal and ultimate perfection.<sup>61</sup> Yet even in its temporal form, it was perfect of its kind, and therefore the component parts of the quadrangular building were regulated by the number ten, the stamp of completeness.

The splendour of the building, as the earthly reflection of the glory of the kingdom of God, was also in harmony with this explanation of its meaning. In the dwelling itself everything was either overlaid with gold or made of pure gold, with the exception of the foundations or sockets of the boards and inner pillars, for which silver was used. In the gold, with its glorious, yea, godlike splendour (Job 37:22), the glory of the dwelling-place of God was reflected; whilst the silver, as the symbol of moral purity, shadowed forth the holiness of the foundation of the house or kingdom of God. The four colours, and the figures upon the drapery and curtains of the temple, were equally significant. Whilst the *four* colours, like the same number of coverings, showed their general purpose as connected with the building of the kingdom of God, the brilliant white of the byssus stands prominently out among the rest of the colours as the ground of the woven fabrics, and the colour which is invariably mentioned first. The splendid white byssus represented the holiness of the building; the hyacinth, a dark blue approaching black rather than bright blue, but the true colour of the sky in southern countries, its heavenly origin and character; the purple, a dark rich red, its royal glory; whilst the crimson, a light brilliant red, the colour of blood and vigorous life, set forth the strength of imperishable life in the abode and kingdom of the holy and glorious God-King. Lastly, through the figures of cherubim woven into these fabrics the dwelling became a symbolical representation of the kingdom of glory, in which the heavenly spirits surround the throne of God, the heavenly Jerusalem with its myriads of angels, the city of the living God, to which the people of God will come when their heavenly calling is fulfilled (Heb. 12:22, 23).

## Exodus 27

**Exodus 27:1-8.** The Altar of Burnt-Offering (cf. Exodus 38:1-7).—*“Make the altar (the altar of burnt-offering, according to Exodus 38:1) of acacia-wood, five cubits long, and five cubits*

*broad* (רְבוּעַ "foured," i.e., four-sided or quadrangular), and *three cubits high*. At its four corners shall its horns be from (out of) it," i.e., not removable, but as if growing out of it. These horns were projections at the corners of the altar, formed to imitate in all probability the horns of oxen, and in these the whole force of the altar was concentrated. The blood of the sin-offering was therefore smeared upon them (Lev. 4:7), and those who fled to the altar to save their lives laid hold of them (vid., Exodus 21:14, and 1 Kings 1:50; also my commentary on the passage). The altar was to be covered with copper or brass, and all the things used in connection with it were to be made of brass. These were,—(1) the *pans*, to cleanse it of the ashes of the fat (v. 3: דִּישׁוֹן, a *denom.* verb from

דִּישׁוֹן the ashes of fat, that is to say, the ashes that arose from burning the flesh of the sacrifice upon the altar, has a privative meaning, and signifies "to ash away," i.e., to cleanse from ashes); (2) יְעִים *shovels*, from יָעָה to take away (Isa. 28:17); (3) מְזַרְקוֹת *things used for sprinkling the blood*, from זָרַק to sprinkle; (4) מְזַלְגוֹת *forks, flesh-hooks* (cf. מְזַלְג 1 Sam. 3:13); (5) מַחְתֹּת *coal-scoops* (cf. 25:38). לְכָל־כֵּלָיו וְגו'. either "for all the vessels thereof thou shalt make brass," or "as for all its vessels, thou shalt make (them) of brass."

**Exodus 27:4.** The altar was to have מְכַבֵּר *a grating*, מַעֲשֵׂה רְשֵׁת *net-work*, i.e., a covering of brass made in the form of a net, of larger dimensions than the sides of the altar, for this grating was to be under the "compass" (כְּרֶכֶב) of the altar from beneath, and to reach to the

half of it (half-way up, v. 5); and in it, i.e., at the four ends (or corners) of it, four brass rings were to be fastened, for the poles to carry it with. כְּרֶכֶב (from כִּרְכַּב *circumdedit*) only occurs here and in Exodus 38:4, and signifies a border (סֹבְבָא *Targums*), i.e., a projecting framework or bench running round the four sides of the altar, about half a cubit or a cubit broad, nailed to the walls (of the altar) on the outside, and fastened more firmly to them by the copper covering which was common to both. The copper grating was below this bench, and on the outside. The bench rested upon it, or rather it hung from the outer edge of the bench and rested upon the ground, like the inner chest, which it surrounded on all four sides, and in which there were no perforations. It formed with the bench or *carcob* a projecting footing, which caused the lower half of the altar to look broader than the upper on every side. The priest stood upon this *carcob* or bench when offering sacrifice, or when placing the wood, or doing anything else upon the altar. This

explains Aaron's coming down (יָרַד) from the altar (Lev. 9:22); and there is no necessity to suppose that there were steps to the altar, as *Knobel* does in opposition to Exodus 20:26. For even if the height of the altar, viz., three cubits, would be so great that a bench half-way up would be too high for any one to step up to, the earth could be slightly raised on one side so as to make the ascent perfectly easy; and when the priest was standing upon the bench, he could perform all that was necessary upon the top of the altar without any difficulty.

**Exodus 27:6, 7.** The poles were to be made of acacia-wood, and covered with brass, and to be placed in the rings that were fixed in the two sides for the purpose of carrying the altar. The additional instructions in v. 8, "hollow with tables shalt thou make it, as it was showed thee in the mount" (cf. 25:9), refer apparently, if we judge from Exodus 20:24, 25, simply to the wooden framework of the altar, which was covered with brass, and which was filled with

earth, or gravel and stones, when the altar was about to be used, the whole being levelled so as to form a hearth. The shape thus given to the altar of burnt-offering corresponded to the other objects in the sanctuary. It could also be carried about with ease, and fixed in any place, and could be used for burning the sacrifices without the wooden walls being injured by the fire.

**Exodus 27:9–19** (cf. Exodus 38:9–20). The

Court of the dwelling was to consist of קְלָעִים “hangings” of spun byssus, and pillars with brass (copper) sockets, and hooks and fastenings for the pillars of silver. The pillars were of course made of acacia-wood; they were five cubits high, with silvered capitals (Exodus 38:17, 19), and carried the hangings, which were fastened to them by means of the hooks and fastenings. There were twenty of them on both the southern and northern sides, and the length of the drapery on each of these sides was 100 cubits (מֵאָה בְּאַמָּה, 100 [sc., measured] by the cubit), so that the court was a hundred cubits long (v. 18).

**Exodus 27:12, 13.** “As for the breadth of the court on the west side, (there shall be) curtains fifty cubits; their pillars twenty; and the breadth of the court towards the front, on the east side, fifty cubits.” The front is divided in vv. 14–16 into two בְּתָרִי, lit., shoulders, i.e., sides or side-pieces, each consisting of 15 cubits of hangings and three pillars with their sockets, and a doorway (שַׁעַר), naturally in the middle, which was covered by a curtain (מִסְדָּה) formed of the same material as the covering at the entrance to the dwelling, of 20 cubits in length, with four pillars and the same number of sockets. The pillars were therefore equidistant from one another, viz., 5 cubits apart. Their total number was 60 (not 56), which was the number required, at the distance mentioned, to surround a quadrangular space of 100 cubits long and 50 cubits broad.<sup>62</sup>

**Exodus 27:17.** *All the pillars of the court round about (shall be) bound with connecting rods of silver.*” As the rods connecting the pillars of the court were of silver, and those connecting the pillars at the entrance to the dwelling were of wood overlaid with gold, the former must have been intended for a different purpose from the latter, simply serving as rods to which to fasten the hangings, whereas those at the door of the dwelling formed an architrave. The height of the hangings of the court and the covering of the door is given in Exodus 38:17 as 5 cubits, corresponding to the height of the pillars given in v. 18 of the chapter before us; but the expression in Exodus 38:18, “the height in the breadth,” is a singular one, and רֹחַב

probably to be understood in the sense of רֹחַב door-place or door-way,—the meaning of the passage being, “the height of the covering in the door-way.” In v. 18, “50 everywhere,” πεντήκοντα ἐπὶ πενήκοντα (LXX), lit., 50 by 50, is to be understood as relating to the extent towards the north and south; and the reading of the Samaritan text, viz., בְּאַמָּה for בַּחֲמִשִּׁים, is merely the result of an arbitrary attempt to bring the text into conformity with the previous מֵאָה בְּאַמָּה, whilst the LXX, on the other hand, by an equally arbitrary change, have rendered the passage ἑκατὸν ἐφ’ ἑκατόν.

**Exodus 27:19.** “All the vessels of the dwelling in all the work thereof (i.e., all the tools needed for the tabernacle), and all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, (shall be of) brass or copper.” The vessels of the dwelling are not the things required for the performance of worship, but the tools used in setting up the tabernacle and taking it down again.

If we inquire still further into the design and meaning of the court, the erection of a court surrounding the dwelling on all four sides is to be traced to the same circumstance as that which rendered it necessary to divide the dwelling itself into two parts, viz., to the fact, that on account of the unholiness of the nation,

it could not come directly into the presence of Jehovah, until the sin which separates unholy man from the holy God had been atoned for. Although, by virtue of their election as the children of Jehovah, or their adoption as the nation of God, it was intended that the Israelites should be received by the Lord into His house, and dwell as a son in his father's house; yet under the economy of the law, which only produced the knowledge of sin, uncleanness, and unholiness, their fellowship with Jehovah, the Holy One, could only be sustained through mediators appointed and sanctified by God: viz., at the institution of the covenant, through His servant Moses; and during the existence of this covenant, through the chosen priests of the family of Aaron. It was through them that the Lord was to be approached, and the nation to be brought near to Him. Every day, therefore, they entered the holy place of the dwelling, to offer to the Lord the sacrifices of prayer and the fruits of the people's earthly vocation. But even they were not allowed to go into the immediate presence of the holy God. The most holy place, where God was enthroned, was hidden from them by the curtain, and only once a year was the high priest permitted, as the head of the whole congregation, which was called to be the holy nation of God, to lift this curtain and appear before God with the atoning blood of the sacrifice and the cloud of incense (Lev. 16). The access of the nation to its God was restricted to the court. There it could receive from the Lord, through the medium of the sacrifices which it offered upon the altar of burnt-offering, the expiation of its sins, His grace and blessing, and strength to live anew. Whilst the dwelling itself represented the house of God, the dwelling-place of Jehovah in the midst of His people (Exodus 23:19; Josh. 6:24; 1 Sam. 1:7, 24, etc.), the palace of the God-King, in which the priestly nation drew near to Him (1 Sam. 1:9; 3:3; Ps. 5:8; 26:4, 6); the court which surrounded the dwelling represented the kingdom of the God-King, the covenant land or dwelling-place of Israel in the kingdom of its God. In accordance with this purpose, the court was in the form of an oblong, to exhibit its character as part of the

kingdom of God. But its pillars and hangings were only five cubits high, i.e., half the height of the dwelling, to set forth the character of incompleteness, or of the threshold to the sanctuary of God. All its vessels were of copper-brass, which, being allied to the earth in both colour and material, was a symbolical representation of the earthly side of the kingdom of God; whereas the silver of the capitals of the pillars, and of the hooks and rods which sustained the hangings, as well as the white colour of the byssus-hangings, might point to the holiness of this site for the kingdom of God. On the other hand, in the gilding of the capitals of the pillars at the entrance to the dwelling, and the brass of their sockets, we find gold and silver combined, to set forth the union of the court with the sanctuary, i.e., the union of the dwelling-place of Israel with the dwelling-place of its God, which is realized in the kingdom of God.

The design and significance of the court culminated in the altar of burnt-offering, the principal object in the court; and upon this the burnt-offerings and slain-offerings, in which the covenant nation consecrated itself as a possession to its God, were burnt. The heart of this altar was of earth or unhewn stones, having the character of earth, not only on account of its being appointed as the place of sacrifice and as the hearth for the offerings, but because the earth itself formed the real or material sphere for the kingdom of God in the Old Testament stage of its development. This heart of earth was elevated by the square copper covering into a vessel of the sanctuary, a place where Jehovah would record His name, and come to Israel and bless them (Exodus 20:24, cf. 29:42, 44), and was consecrated as a place of sacrifice, by means of which Israel could raise itself to the Lord, and ascend to Him in the sacrifice. And this significance of the altar culminated in its horns, upon which the blood of the sin-offering was smeared. Just as, in the case of the horned animals, their strength and beauty are concentrated in the horns, and the horn has become in consequence a symbol of strength, or of fulness of vital energy; so the significance of

the altar as a place of the saving and life-giving power of God, which the Lord bestows upon His people in His kingdom, was concentrated in the horns of the altar.

**Exodus 27:20, 21.** The instructions concerning the Oil For the Candlestick, and the daily trimming of the lamps by the priests, form a transition from the fitting up of the sanctuary to the installation of its servants.

**Exodus 27:20.** The sons of Israel were to bring to Moses (lit., fetch to thee) olive oil, *pure* (i.e., prepared from olives “which had been cleansed from leaves, twigs, dust, etc., before they were crushed”), *beaten*, i.e., obtained not by crushing in oil-presses, but by beating, when the oil which flows out by itself is of the finest quality and a white colour. This oil was to be “for the candlestick to set up a continual light.”

**Exodus 27:21.** Aaron and his sons were to prepare this light in the tabernacle outside the curtain, which was over the testimony (i.e., which covered or concealed it), from evening to morning, before Jehovah. “The tabernacle of the congregation,” lit., tent of assembly: this expression is applied to the sanctuary for the first time in the present passage, but it afterwards became the usual appellation, and accords both with its structure and design, as it was a tent in style, and was set apart as the place where Jehovah would meet with the Israelites and commune with them (Exodus 25:22). The ordering of the light from evening to morning consisted, according to Exodus 30:7, 8, and Lev. 24:3, 4, in placing the lamps upon the candlestick in the evening and lighting them, that they might give light through the night, and then cleaning them in the morning and filling them with fresh oil. The words “a statute for ever unto their generations (see at Exodus 12:14) on the part of the children of Israel,” are to be understood as referring not merely to the gift of oil to be made by the Israelites for all time, but to the preparation of the light, which was to be regarded as of perpetual obligation and worth. “For ever,” in the same sense as in Gen. 17:7 and 13 (see p. 145).

## Exodus 28

**Exodus 28** (cf. 39:1–31). Appointment and Clothing of the Priests.—Vv. 1, 5. “*Let Aaron thy brother draw near to thee from among the children of Israel, and his sons with him, that he may be a priest to Me.*” Moses is distinguished from the people as the mediator of the covenant. Hence he was to cause Aaron and his sons to come to him, i.e., to separate them from the people, and install them as priests, or perpetual mediators between Jehovah and His people. The primary meaning of *cohen*, the priest, has been retained in the Arabic, where it signifies *administrator alieni negotii*, viz., to act as a mediator for a person, or as his plenipotentiary, from which it came to be employed chiefly in connection with priestly acts. Among the heathen Arabs it is used “*maxime de hariolis vatibusque;*” by the Hebrews it was mostly applied to the priests of Jehovah; and there are only a few placed in which it is used in connection with the higher officers of state, who stood next to the king, and acted as it were as mediators between the king and the nation (thus 2 Sam. 8:18; 20:26; 1 Kings 4:5). For the duties of their office the priests were to receive “*holy garments for glory and for honour.*” Before they could draw near to Jehovah the Holy One (Lev. 11:45), it was necessary that their unholiness should be covered over with holy clothes, which were to be made by men endowed with wisdom, whom Jehovah had filled with the spirit of wisdom. “*Wise-hearted,*” i.e., gifted with understanding and judgment; the heart being regarded as the birth-place of the thoughts. In the Old Testament *wisdom* is constantly used for practical intelligence in the affairs of life; here, for example, it is equivalent to artistic skill surpassing man’s natural ability, which is therefore described as being filled with the divine spirit of wisdom. These clothes were to be used “*to sanctify him (Aaron and his sons), that he might be a priest to Jehovah.*” Sanctification, as the indispensable condition of priestly service, was not merely the removal of the uncleanness which flowed from sin, but, as

it were, the transformation of the natural into the glory of the image of God. In this sense the holy clothing served the priest for glory and ornament. The different portions of the priest's state-dress mentioned in v. 4 are described more fully afterwards. For making them, the skilled artists were to take *the* gold, *the* hyacinth, etc. The definite article is used before gold and the following words, because the particular materials, which would be presented by the people, are here referred to.

**Exodus 28:6–14.** The *first* part mentioned of Aaron's holy dress, i.e., of the official dress of the high priest, is the *ephod*. The etymology of this word is uncertain; the *Sept.* rendering is ἐπωμίς (*Vulg. superhumale*, shoulder-dress; *Luther*, "body-coat"). It was to be made of gold, hyacinth, etc., artistically woven,—of the same material, therefore, as the inner drapery and curtain of the tabernacle; but instead of having the figures of cherubim woven into it, it was to be worked throughout with gold, i.e., with gold thread. According to Exodus 39:3, the gold plates used for the purpose were beaten out, and then threads were cut (from them), to be worked into the hyacinth, purple, scarlet, and byssus. It follows from this, that gold threads were taken for every one of these four years, and woven with them.<sup>63</sup>

**Exodus 28:7.** "Two connecting shoulder-pieces shall it have for its two ends, that it may be bound together." If we compare the statement in Exodus 39:4,—"shoulder-pieces they made for it, connecting; at its two ends was it connected,"—there can hardly be any doubt that the ephod consisted of two pieces, which were connected together at the top upon (over) the shoulders; and that *Knobel* is wrong in supposing that it consisted of a single piece, with a hole cut on each side for the arms to be put through. If it had been a compact garment, which had to be drawn over the head like the robe (vv. 31, 32), the opening for the head would certainly have been mentioned, as it is in the case of the latter (v. 32). The words of the text point most decidedly to the rabbinical idea, that it consisted of two pieces reaching to about

the hip, one hanging over the breast, the other down the back, and that it was constructed with two shoulder-pieces which joined the two together. These shoulder-pieces were not made separate, however, and then sewed upon one of the pieces; but they were woven along with the front piece, and that not merely at the top, so as to cover the shoulders when the ephod was worn, but according to v. 25 (? 27), reaching down on both sides from the shoulders to the girdle (v. 8).

**Exodus 28:8.** "And the girdle of its putting on which (is) upon it, shall be of it, like its work, gold, etc." There was to be a girdle upon the ephod, of the same material and the same artistic work as the ephod, and joined to it, not separated from it. The חֶשֶׁב mentioned along with the ephod cannot mean ὑφασμα, *textura* (LXX, *Cler.*, etc.), but is to be traced to חֶשֶׁב =

חֶבַשׁ to bind, to fasten, and to be understood in the sense of *cingulum*, a girdle (compare Exodus 29:5 with Lev. 8:7, "he girded him with the girdle of the ephod"). אֶפְדָּה is no doubt to

be derived from אָפַד, and signifies the putting on of the ephod. In Isa. 30:22 it is applied to the covering of a statue; at the same time, this does not warrant us in attributing to the verb, as used in Exodus 9:5 and Lev. 8:7, the meaning, to put on or clothe. This girdle, by which the two parts of the ephod were fastened tightly to the body, so as not to hang loose, was attached to the lower part or extremity of the ephod, so that it was fastened round the body below the breastplate (cf. vv. 27, 28, Exodus 39:20, 21).

**Exodus 28:9–12.** Upon the shoulder-piece of the ephod two beryls (previous stones) were to be placed, one upon each shoulder; and upon these the names of the sons of Israel were to be engraved, six names upon each "according to their generations," i.e., according to their respective ages, or, as *Josephus* has correctly explained it, so that the names of the six elder sons were engraved upon the previous stone on

the right shoulder, and those of the six younger sons upon that on the left.

**Exodus 28:11.** “*Work of the engraver in stone, of seal-cutting shalt thou engrave the two stones according to the names of the sons of Israel.*” The engraver in stone: lit., one who works stones; here, one who cuts and polishes precious stones. The meaning is, that just as precious stones are cut, and seals engraved upon them, so these two stones were to be engraved according to the name of the sons of Israel, i.e., so that the engraving should answer to their names, or their names be cut into the stones. “*Surrounded by gold-twist shalt thou make it.*”

מְשַׁבְּצוֹת זָהָב, from שָׁבַץ to twist, is used in v. 39 (cf. Ps. 45:14) for a texture woven in checks; and here it denotes not merely a simple gold-setting, but, according to v. 13, gold-twists or ornaments representing plaits, which surrounded the golden setting in which the stones were fixed, and not only served to fasten the stones upon the woven fabric, but formed at the same time clasps or brooches, by which the two parts of the ephod were fastened together. Thus Josephus says (Ant. iii. 7, 5) there were two sardonyxes upon the shoulders, to be used for clasps.

**Exodus 28:12.** The precious stones were to be upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, stones of memorial for the sons of Israel; and Aaron was to bear their names before Jehovah upon his two shoulders for a memorial, i.e., that Jehovah might remember the sons of Israel when Aaron appeared before Him clothed with the ephod (cf. v. 29). As a shoulder-dress, the ephod was *par excellence* the official dress of the high priest. The burden of the office rested upon the shoulder, and the insignia of the office were also worn upon it (Isa. 22:22). The duty of the high priest was to enter into the presence of God and made atonement for the people as their mediator. To show that as mediator he brought the nation to God, the names of the twelve tribes were engraved upon precious stones on the shoulders of the ephod. The precious stones, with their richness and

brilliancy, formed the most suitable earthly substratum to represent the glory into which Israel was to be transformed as the possession of Jehovah (Exodus 19:5); whilst the colours and material of the ephod, answering to the colours and texture of the hangings of the sanctuary, indicated the service performed in the sanctuary by the person clothed with the ephod, and the gold with which the coloured fabric was worked, the glory of that service.

**Exodus 28:13, 14.** There were also to be made for the ephod two (see v. 25) golden plaits, golden borders (probably small plaits in the form of rosettes), and two small chains of pure gold: “*close shalt thou make them, corded*” (lit., work of cords or strings), i.e., not formed of links, but of gold thread twisted into cords, which were to be placed upon the golden plaits or fastened to them. As these chains served to fasten the *choshen* to the ephod, a description of them forms a fitting introduction to the account of this most important ornament upon the state-dress of the high priest.

**Exodus 28:15–30.** The *second* ornament consisted of the *choshen* or *breastplate*. *Choshen mishpat*, λογειδὼν τῶν κρίσεωων (LXX), *rationale*

*judicii* (Vulg.). חֲשֹׁן probably signifies an ornament (*Arab. pulcher fuit; Ges.*); and the appended word *mishpat*, right, decision of right, points to its purpose (see at v. 30). This breastplate was to be a woven fabric of the same material and the same kind of work as the ephod. “*Foured shall it be, doubled (laid together), a span (half a cubit) its length, and a span its breadth.*” The woven cloth was to be laid together double like a kind of pocket, of the length and breadth of half a cubit, i.e., the quarter of a square cubit.

**Exodus 28:17.** “*And fill thereon (put on it) a stone-setting, four rows of stones,*” i.e., fix four rows of set jewels upon it. The stones, so far as their names can be determined with the help of the ancient versions, the researches of *L. de Dieu* (*animadv. ad Exodus 28*) and *Braun* (*vestit. ii. c. 8–10*), and other sources pointed out in *Winer’s R. W.* (s. v. *Edensteine*), were the

following:—In the *first* or upper row, *odem* (σάρδιος), i.e., our cornelian, of a blood-red colour; *pitdah*, τοπάζιον, the golden topaz; *bareketh*, lit., the flashing, σμάραγδος, the emerald, of a brilliant green. In the *second* row, *nophek*, ἄνθραξ, *carunculus*, the ruby or carbuncle, a fire-coloured stone; *sappir*, the sapphire, of a sky-blue colour; *jahalom*, ἴασπις according to the LXX, but this is rather to be found in the *jaspeh*,—according to the *Graec.*, *Ven.*, and *Pers.*, to *Aben Ezra*, etc., the diamond, and according to others the *onyx*, a kind of chalcedony, of the same colour as the nail upon the human finger through which the flesh is visible. In the *third* row, *lesehm*, λιγύριον, *lugurius*, i.e., according to *Braun* and others, a kind of hyacinth, a transparent stone chiefly of an orange colour, but running sometimes into a reddish brown, at other times into a brownish or pale red, and sometimes into an approach to a pistachio green; *shevo*, ἀχάτης, a composite stone formed of quartz, chalcedony, cornelian, flint, jasper, etc., and therefore glittering with different colours; and *achlaham*, ἀμέθυστος, amethyst, a stone for the most part of a violet colour. In the *fourth* row, *tarshish*, χρυσόλιθος, chrysolite, a brilliant stone of a golden colour, not like what is now called a chrysolite, which is of a pale green with a double refraction; *shoham*, beryl (see at Gen. 2:12); and *jaspeh*, no doubt the jasper, an opaque stone, for the most part of a dull red, often with cloudy and flame-like shadings, but sometimes yellow, red, brown, or some other colour.

**Exodus 28:20.** “Gold borders shall be on their settings” (see at vv. 11 and 13). The golden capsules, in which the stones were “filled,” i.e., set, were to be surrounded by golden ornaments, which not only surrounded and ornamented the stones, but in all probability helped to fix them more firmly and yet more easily upon the woven fabric.

**Exodus 28:21.** “And the stones shall be according to the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names; seal-engraving according to each one’s name shall be for the

*twelve tribes.*” (On אִישׁ before עַל-שְׁמוֹ see at Gen. 15:10.)

**Exodus 28:22–25.** To bind the *choshen* to the ephod there were to be two close, corded chains of pure gold, which are described here in precisely the same manner as in v. 14; so that v. 22 is to be regarded as a simple repetition of v. 14, not merely because these chains are only mentioned once in the account of the execution of the work (Exodus 39:15), but because, according to v. 25, these chains were to be fastened upon the rosettes notice in v. 14, exactly like those described in v. 13. These chains, which are called cords or strings at v. 24, were to be attached to two golden rings at the two (upper) ends of the *choshen*, and the two ends of the chains were to be put, i.e., bound firmly to the golden settings of the shoulder-pieces of the ephod (v. 13), upon the front of it (see at Exodus 26:9 and 25:37).

**Exodus 28:26.** Two other golden rings were to be “put at the two ends of the *choshen*, at its edge, which is on the opposite side (see at Exodus 25:37) of the ephod inwards,” i.e., at the two ends or corners of the lower border of the *choshen*, upon the inner side—the side turned towards the ephod.

**Exodus 28:27, 28.** Two golden rings were also to be put “upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod underneath, toward the fore-part thereof, near the joining above the girdle of it,” and to fasten the *choshen* from its (lower) rings to the (lower) rings of the ephod with threads of hyacinth, that it might be over the girdle (above it), and not move away (נָחַץ Niphel of נָחַץ, in Arabic *removit*), i.e., that it might keep its place above the girdle and against the ephod without shifting.

**Exodus 28:29.** In this way Aaron was to bear upon his breast the names of the sons of Israel engraved upon this breastplate, as a memorial before Jehovah, whenever he went into the sanctuary.

**Exodus 28:30.** Into this *choshen* Moses was to put the *Urim* and *Thummim*, that they might be

upon his heart when he came before Jehovah, and that he might thus constantly bear the right (*mishpat*) of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah. It is evident at once from this, that the Urim and Thummim were to bring the right of the children of Israel before the Lord, and that the breastplate was called *choshen mishpat* because the Urim and Thummim were in it. Moreover it also follows

from the expression לְאֵתָהֶם, both here and in Lev. 8:8, that the Urim and Thummim were not only distinct from the *choshen*, but were placed in it, and not merely suspended upon it, as *Knobel* supposes. For although the LXX have adopted the rendering ἐπιτιθέναι ἐπί, the phrase is constantly used to denote putting or laying one thing into another, and never (not even in 1 Sam. 6:8 and 2 Sam. 11:16) merely placing one thing upon or against another. For this, לְעַלְיוֹן is the expression invariably used in the account before us (cf. vv. 14 and 23ff.).

What the *Urim* and *Thummim* really were, cannot be determined with certainty, either from the names themselves, or from any other circumstances connected with them.<sup>64</sup> The LXX render the words δήλωσις (or δῆλος) καὶ ἀλήθεια, i.e., revelation and truth. This expresses with tolerable accuracy the meaning of *Urim* (אֲרִיִּם light, illumination), but

*Thummim* (תְּמִיִּם) means *integritas*, inviolability, perfection, and not ἀλήθεια. The rendering given by *Symm.* and *Theod.*, viz., φωτισμοὶ καὶ τελειώσεις, illumination and completion, is much better; and there is no good ground for giving up this rendering in favour of that of the LXX, since the analogy between the Urim and Thummim and the ἄγαλμα of sapphire-stones, or the ζώδιον of precious stones, which was worn by the Egyptian high priest suspended by a golden chain, and called ἀλήθεια (*Aelian. var. hist.* 14, 34; *Diod. Sic.* i. 48, 75), sufficiently explains the rendering ἀλήθεια, which the LXX have given to *Thummim*, but it by no means warrants *Knobel's*

conclusion, that the Hebrews had adopted the Egyptian names along with the thing itself. The words are therefore to be explained from the Coptic. The Urim and Thummim are analogous, it is true, to the εἰκῶν τῆς ἀληθείας, which the Egyptian ἀρχιδικαστής hung round his neck, but they are by no means identical with it, or to be regarded as two figures which were a symbolical representation of revelation and truth. If Aaron was to bring the right of the children of Israel before Jehovah in the breastplate that was placed upon his breast with the Urim and Thummim, the latter, if they were intended to represent anything, could only be symbolical of the right or rightful condition of Israel. But the words do not warrant any such conclusion. If the Urim and Thummim had been intended to represent any really existing thing, their nature, or the mode of preparing them, would certainly have been described. Now, if we refer to Num. 27:21, where Joshua as the commander of the nation is instructed to go to the high priest Eleazar, that the latter may inquire before Jehovah, through the right of Urim, how the whole congregation should walk and act, we can draw no other conclusion, than that the Urim and Thummim are to be regarded as a certain medium, given by the Lord to His people, through which, whenever the congregation required divine illumination to guide its actions, that illumination was guaranteed, and by means of which the rights of Israel, when called in question or endangered, were to be restored, and that this medium was bound up with the official dress of the high priest, though its precise character can no longer be determined. Consequently the Urim and Thummim did not represent the illumination and right of Israel, but were merely a promise of these, a pledge that the Lord would maintain the rights of His people, and give them through the high priest the illumination requisite for their protection. Aaron was to bear the children of Israel upon his heart, in the precious stones to be worn upon his breast with the names of the twelve tribes. The heart, according to the biblical view, is the centre of the spiritual life,—not merely of

the willing, desiring, thinking life, but of the emotional life, as the seat of the feelings and affections (see *Delitzsch bibl. Psychologie*, pp. 203ff.). Hence to bear upon the heart does not merely mean to bear in mind, but denotes “that personal intertwining with the life of another, by virtue of which the high priest, as *Philo* expresses it, was τοῦ σύμπαντος ἔθνους συγγενῆς καὶ ἀγχιστεὺς κοινός (*Spec. leg.* ii. 321), and so stood in the deepest sympathy with those for whom he interceded” (*Oehler* in *Herzog’s Cycl.*). As he entered the holy place with this feeling, and in this attitude, of which the *choshen* was the symbol, he brought Israel into remembrance before Jehovah that the Lord might accept His people; and when furnished with the Urim and Thummim, he appeared before Jehovah as the advocate of the people’s rights, that he might receive for the congregation the illumination required to protect and uphold those rights.

**Exodus 28:31–35.** The *third* portion of Aaron’s official dress was the *robe*. To the ephod there also belonged a **מַעֲלֵל** (from **מַעַל** to cover or envelope), an upper garment, called the robe of the ephod, the robe belonging to the ephod, “*all of dark-blue purple*” (hyacinth), by which we are not to imagine a cloak or mantle, but a long, closely-fitting coat; not reaching to the feet, however, as the ALExodus rendering ποδήρης might lead us to suppose, but only to the knees, so as to show the coat (v. 39) which was underneath.

**Exodus 28:32.** “*And the opening of the head thereof shall be in the middle of it;*” i.e., there was to be an opening in the middle of it to put the head through when it was put on;—“*a hem shall be round the opening of it, weavers’ work, like the opening of the habergeon shall it (the seam) be to it; it shall not be torn.*” By the habergeon (θώραξ), or coat-of-mail, we have to understand the λινοθώραξ, the linen coat, such as was worn by Ajax for example (Il. 2, 529). Linen habergeons of this kind were made in Egypt in a highly artistic style (see *Hengstenberg, Egypt, etc.*, pp. 141–2). In order

that the *meil* might not be torn when it was put on, the opening for the head was to be made with a strong hem, which was to be of weavers’ work; from which it follows as a matter of course that the robe was woven in one piece, and not made in several pieces and then sewed together; and this is expressly stated in Exodus 39:22. *Josephus* and the Rabbins explain the

words **מַעֲשֵׂה אֲרָג** (ἔργον ὑφαντόν) in this way, and observe at the same time that the *meil* had no sleeves, but only arm-holes.

**Exodus 28:33, 34.** On the lower hem (**שׁוּלִים** the tail or skirt) there were to be pomegranates of dark-blue and dark-red purple and crimson, made of twisted yarn of these colours (Exodus 39:24), and little golden bells between them round about, a bell and a pomegranate occurring alternately all round. According to *Rashi* the pomegranates were “*globi quidam rotundi instar malorum punicorum, quasi essent ova gallinarum.*” **פַּעֲמוֹת** (from **פָּעַם** to strike of knock, like the old High German *cloccon, clochon*, i.e., to smite) signifies a little bell, not a spherical ball.

**Exodus 28:35.** Aaron was to put on this coat, to minister, i.e., to perform the duties of his holy office, “*that his sound might be heard when he went into the holy place before Jehovah, and when he came out, and he might not die.*” These directions are referred to in Ecclus. 45:9, and explained as follows: “He compassed him with pomegranates and with many golden bells round about, that as he went there might be a sound, and a noise made, that might be heard in the temple, for a memorial to the children of his people.” The probable meaning of these words is either that given by *Hiskuni* (in *Drusius*), *ut sciant tempus cultus divini atque ita praeparent cor suum ad patrem suum, qui est in coelis*, or that given by *Oehler*, viz., that the ringing of the bells might announce to the people in the court the entrance of the high priest and the rites he was performing, in order that they might accompany him with their thoughts and prayers. But this is hardly correct. For not only

is the expression, “for a memorial to the children of Israel,” evidently intended by the writer of Ecclesiasticus as a translation of the words זָכָרָן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in v. 12 (cf. v. 29), so that he has transferred to the bells of the *meil* what really applies to the precious stones on the ephod, which contained the names of the twelve sons of Israel, but he has misunderstood the words themselves; for Aaron was to bear the names of the sons of Israel before Jehovah in these precious stones for a reminder, i.e., to remind Jehovah of His people. Moreover, the words “and he shall not die” are not in harmony with this interpretation. *Bähr*, *Oehler*, and others, regard the words as referring to the whole of the high priest’s robes, and understand them as meaning, that he would be threatened with death if he appeared before Jehovah without his robes, inasmuch as he was merely a private individual without this holy dress, and could not in that case represent the nation. This is so far justifiable, no doubt, although not favoured by the position of the words in the context, that the bells were inseparably connected with the robe, which was indispensable to the ephod with the *choshen*, and consequently the bells had no apparent significance except in connection with the whole of the robes. But even if we do adopt this explanation of the words, we cannot suppose that Aaron’s not dying depended upon the prayers of the congregation which accompanied his going in and out before Jehovah; for in that case the intercession of the high priest would have lost its objective meaning altogether, and his life would have been actually given up in a certain sense to the caprice of the people. All that remains, therefore, is to take the words as they occur: Aaron was not to appear before the Lord without the sound of the bells upon his robe being heard, in order that he might not die; so that to understand the reason for his not saying, we must inquire what the ringing of the bells signified, or rather, what was the signification of Aaron’s robe, with its border of pomegranates and ringing bells. The trivial

explanation given by *Abraham ben David*, viz., that the ringing was to take the place of knocking at the door of Jehovah’s palace, as an abrupt entrance into the presence of a great king was punished with death, is not more deserving of a serious refutation than *Knobel’s* idea, for which there is no foundation, that the sounding of the bells was to represent a reverential greeting, and a very musical offering of praise (!).

The special significance of the *meil* cannot have resided in either its form or its colour; for the only feature connected with its form, that was at all peculiar to it, was its being woven in one piece, which set forth the idea of wholeness or spiritual integrity; and the dark-blue colour indicated nothing more than the heavenly origin and character of the office with which the robe was associated. It must be sought for, therefore, in the peculiar pendants, the meaning of which is to be gathered from the analogous instructions in Num. 15:38, 39, where every Israelite is directed to make a fringe in the border of his garment, of dark-blue purple thread, and when he looks at the fringe to remember the commandments of God and do them. In accordance with this, we are also to seek for allusions to the word and testimony of God in the pendant of pomegranates and bells attached to the fringe of the high priest’s robe. The simile in Prov. 25:11, where the word is compared to an apple, suggests the idea that the pomegranates, with their pleasant odour, their sweet and refreshing juice, and the richness of their delicious kernel, were symbols of the word and testimony of God as a sweet and pleasant spiritual food, that enlivens the soul and refreshes the heart (compare Ps. 19:8–10; 119:25, 43, 50, with Deut. 8:3, Prov. 9:8, Eccles. 15:3), and that the bells were symbols of the sounding of this word, or the revelation and proclamation of the word. Through the robe, with this pendant attached, Aaron was represented as the recipient and medium of the word and testimony which came down from heaven; and this was the reason why he was not to appear before the Lord without that sound, lest he should forfeit his life. It was not

because he would simply have appeared as a private person if he had gone without it, for he would always have the holy dress of a priest upon him, even when he was not clothed in the official decorations of the high priest; but because no mere priest was allowed to enter the immediate presence of the Lord. This privilege was restricted to the representative of the whole congregation, viz., the high priest; and even he could only do so when wearing the robe of the word of God, as the bearer of the divine testimony, upon which the covenant fellowship with the Lord was founded.

**Exodus 28:36–38.** The *fourth* article of the high priest's dress was the *diadem* upon his

head-band. צִיץ, from צוץ to shine, a plate of

pure gold, on which the words קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה, "holiness (i.e., all holy) to Jehovah," were engraved, and which is called the "crown of holiness" in consequence, in Exodus 39:30. This gold plate was to be placed upon a riband of dark-blue purple, or, as it is expressed in Exodus 39:31, a riband of this kind was to be fastened to it, to attach it to the head-band, "upon the fore-front (as in Exodus 26:9) of the head-band," from above (Exodus 39:31); by which we are to understand that the gold plate was placed above the lower coil of the head-band and over Aaron's forehead. The word

מִצְנֶפֶת, from צָנַף to twist or coil (Isa. 22:18), is only applied to the head-band or turban of the high priest, which was made of simply byssus (v. 39), and, judging from the etymology, was in the shape of a turban. This is all that can be determined with reference to its form. The diadem was the only thing about it that had any special significance. This was to be placed above (upon) Aaron's forehead, that he "might bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel sanctified, with regard to all their holy gifts, ... as an acceptableness for them

before Jehovah." נִשָּׂא עוֹן: to bear iniquity (sin) and take it away; in other words, to exterminate it by taking it upon one's self. The

high priest was exalted into an atoning mediator of the whole nation; and an atoning, sin-extermimating intercession was associated with his office. The qualification for this he received from the diadem upon his forehead with the inscription, "holiness to the Lord." Through this inscription, which was fastened upon his head-dress of brilliant white, the earthly reflection of holiness, he was crowned as the sanctified of the Lord (Ps. 106:16), and endowed with the power to exterminate the sin which clung to the holy offerings of the people on account of the unholiness of their nature, so that the gifts of the nation became well-pleasing to the Lord, and the good pleasure of God was manifested to the nation.<sup>65</sup>

**Exodus 28:39.** In addition to the distinguishing dress of the high priest, Aaron was also to wear, as the official costume of a priest, a *body-coat* (*cetoneth*) made of byssus, and woven in checks or cubes; the *head-band* (for the diadem), also made of simple byssus; and a *girdle* (*abnet*, of uncertain etymology, and only applied to the priest's girdle) of variegated work, i.e., made of yarn, of the same four colours as the holy things were to be made of (cf. Exodus 39:29).

**Exodus 28:40–43.** The *official dress of the sons of Aaron*, i.e., of the ordinary priests, was to consist of just the same articles as Aaron's priestly costume (v. 39). But their *body-coat* is called weavers' work in Exodus 39:27, and was therefore quite a plain cloth, of white byssus or cotton yarn, though it was whole throughout, ἀόρατος without seam, like the robe of Christ (John 19:23). It was worn close to the body, and, according to Jewish tradition, reached down to the ankles (cf. *Josephus*, iii. 7, 2). The *head-dress* of an ordinary priest is called

מִגְבֵּעַ, related to גָּבַע a basin or cup, and therefore seems to have been in the form of an inverted cup, and to have been a plain white cotton cap. The *girdle*, according to Exodus 39:29, was of the same material and work for Aaron and his sons. This dress was to be for glory and for beauty to the priests, just as Aaron's dress was to him (v. 2). The glory

consisted in the brilliant white colour, the symbol of holiness; whilst the girdle, which an oriental man puts on when preparing for the duties of an office, contained in the four colours of the sanctuary the indication that they were the officers of Jehovah in His earthly kingdom.

**Exodus 28:41.** But since the clothing prescribed was an official dress, Moses was to put it upon Aaron and his sons, to anoint them and fill their hands, i.e., to invest them with the requisite sacrificial gifts (see at Lev. 7:37), and so to sanctify them that they should be priests of Jehovah. For although the holiness of their office was reflected in their dress, it was necessary, on account of the sinfulness of their nature, that they should be sanctified through a special consecration for the administration of their office; and this consecration is prescribed in Exodus 29 and carried out in Lev. 8.

**Exodus 28:42, 43.** The covering of their nakedness was an indispensable prerequisite. Aaron and his sons were therefore to receive

**מְכַסְּיִם** (from **כָּסַף** to cover or conceal, lit., concealers), short drawers, reaching from the hips to the thighs, and serving “to cover the flesh of the nakedness.” For this reason the directions concerning them are separated from those concerning the different portions of the dress, which were for glory and beauty. The material of which these drawers were to be made is called **בָּד**. The meaning of this word is uncertain. According to Exodus 39:28, it was made of twined byssus or cotton yarn; and the rendering of the LXX, *λίνα* or *λίνεος* (Lev. 6:3), is not at variance with this, as the ancients not only apply the term *λίνον*, *linum*, to flax, but frequently use it for fine white cotton as well. In all probability *bad* was a kind of white cloth, from **בָּדַף** to be white or clean, primarily to separate.

**Exodus 28:43.** These drawers the priests were to put on whenever they entered the sanctuary, that they might not “bear iniquity and die,” i.e., incur guilt deserving of death, either through

disobedience to these instructions, or, what was still more important, through such violation of the reverence due to the holiness of the dwelling of God as they would be guilty of, if they entered the sanctuary with their nakedness uncovered. For as the consciousness of sin and guilt made itself known first of all in the feeling of nakedness, so those members which subserve the natural secretions are especially *pudenda* or objects of shame, since the mortality and corruptibility of the body, which sin has brought into human nature, are chiefly manifested in these secretions. For this reason these members are also called the “flesh of nakedness.” By this we are not to understand merely “the sexual member as the organ of generation or birth, because the existence and permanence of sinful, mortal human nature are associated with these,” as *Bähr* supposes. For the frailty and nakedness of humanity are not manifested in the organ and act of generation, which rather serve to manifest the inherent capacity and creation of man for imperishable life, but in the impurities which nature ejects through those organs, and which bear in themselves the character of corruptibility. If, therefore, the priest was to appear before Jehovah as holy, it was necessary that those parts of his body especially should be covered, in which the impurity of his nature and the nakedness of his flesh were most apparent. For this reason, even in ordinary life, they are most carefully concealed, though not, as *Baumgarten* supposes, “because the sin of nature has its principal seat in the flesh of nakedness.”—“A statute for ever:” as in Exodus 27:31.

## Exodus 29

**Exodus 29:1-37.** Consecration of Aaron and his Sons through the anointing of their persons and the offering of sacrifices, the directions for which form the subject of vv. 1-35. This can only be fully understood in connection with the sacrificial law contained in Lev. 1-7. It will be more advisable therefore to defer the examination of this ceremony till we come to Lev. 8, where the consecration itself is described. The same may also be said of the

expiation and anointing of the altar, which are commanded in vv. 36 and 37, and carried out in Lev. 8:11.

**Exodus 29:38–46.** The Daily Burnt-Offering, Meat-Offering, and Drink-Offering.—The directions concerning these are attached to the instructions for the consecration of the priests, because these sacrifices commenced immediately after the completion of the tabernacle, and, like the shew-bread (Exodus 25:30), the daily trimming of the lamps (Exodus 27:20, 21), and the daily incense-offering (Exodus 30:7ff.), were most intimately connected with the erection of the sanctuary.

**Exodus 29:38.** “*And this is what thou shalt make (offer) upon the altar; yearling lambs two a day continually,*” one in the morning, the other between the two evenings (see at Exodus 12:6); to every one a meat-offering (*minchah*) of a tenth of fine wheaten flour (*soleth*, see at Lev. 2:1), mixed with a quarter of a hin of beaten oil (*cathith*, see at Exodus 27:20), and a drink-offering (*neseke*) of a quarter of a hin of wine.

עֲשִׂירִית (a tenth) is equivalent to עֲשָׂרֹן

הָאֵיפָה, the tenth part of an ephah (Num.

28:5), or 198–5 Parisian cubic inches according to *Bertheau's* measurement. *Thenius*, however, sets it down at 101–4 inches, whilst the Rabbins reckon it as equivalent to 43 hen's eggs of average size, i.e., somewhat more than 2 1/4 lbs. A *hin* (a word of Egyptian origin) is 330–9 inches according to *Bertheau*, 168–9 according to *Thenius*, or 72 eggs, so that a quarter of a hin would be 18 eggs.

**Exodus 29:41.** לֶהֱ is to be understood *ad*

*sensum* as referring to עֹלָה. The daily morning and evening sacrifices were to be “for a sweet savour, a firing unto Jehovah” (see at Lev. 1:9). In these Israel was to consecrate its life daily unto the Lord (see at Lev. 1 and 2). In order that the whole of the daily life might be included, it was to be offered continually every morning and evening for all future time

(“throughout your generations” as at Exodus 12:14) at the door of the tabernacle, i.e., upon the altar erected there, before Jehovah, who would meet with the people and commune with them there (see Exodus 25:22). This promise is carried out still further in vv. 43–46. First of all, for the purpose of elucidating and strengthening the words, “I will meet with you there” (v. 42), the presence and communion of God, which are attached to the ark of the covenant in Exodus 25:22, are ensured to the whole nation in the words, “And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and it (Israel) shall be sanctified through My glory.” As the people were not allowed to approach the ark of the covenant, but only to draw near to the altar of burnt-offering in the sanctuary, it was important to declare that the Lord would manifest Himself to them even there, and sanctify them by His glory. Most of the commentators have taken the altar to be the subject of “shall be sanctified;” but this is certainly an error, not only because the altar is not mentioned in the previous clause, and only slightly hinted at in the לֶהֱ in v. 41, but

principally because the sanctification of the altar is noticed by itself afterwards in v. 44. The correct exegesis is that adopted by *Baumgarten* and others, who supply the word *Israel* (*viz.*, regarded as a nation), which they take from the expression “children of Israel” in the previous clause. In v. 44, the sanctification of the tabernacle and altar on the part of God is promised, also that of His servants, and finally, in vv. 45, 46, the abode of God in the midst of the children of Israel, with an allusion to the blessings that would follow from Jehovah's dwelling in the midst of them as their God (Gen. 17:7).

## Exodus 30

**Exodus 30:1–10.** The Altar of Incense and Incense-Offering bring the directions concerning the sanctuary to a close. What follows, from 30:11–31:17, is shown to be merely supplementary to the larger whole by the formula “and Jehovah spake unto Moses,”

with which every separate command is introduced (cf. vv. 11, 17, 22, 24, 31:1, 12).

**Exodus 30:1–5** (cf. Exodus 37:25–28). Moses was directed to make an *altar of burning of incense* (lit., incensing of incense), of acacia-wood, one cubit long and one broad, four-cornered, two cubits high, furnished with horns like the altar of burnt-offering (Exodus 27:1, 2),

and to plate it with pure gold, the roof (גָּגֵן) thereof (i.e., its upper side or surface, which was also made of wood), and its walls round about, and its horns; so that it was covered with gold quite down to the ground upon which it stood, and for this reason is often called the golden altar (Exodus 39:38; 40:5, 26; Num. 4:11). Moreover it was to be ornamented with a golden wreath, and furnished with golden rings at the corners for the carrying-poles, as the ark of the covenant and the table of shew-bread were (Exodus 25:11ff., 25ff.); and its place was to be in front of the curtain, which concealed the ark of the covenant (Exodus 26:31), “before the capporeth” (Exodus 40:5), so that, although it really stood in the holy place between the candlestick on the south side and the table on the north (Exodus 26:35; 40:22, 24), it was placed in the closest relation to the *capporeth*, and for this reason is not only connected with the most holy place in 1 Kings 6:22, but is reckoned in Heb. 9:4 as part of the furniture of the most holy place (see *Delitzsch* on Heb. 9:4).

**Exodus 30:7–9**. Upon this altar Aaron was to burn fragrant incense, the preparation of which is described in vv. 34ff., every morning and evening before Jehovah, at the time when he trimmed the lamps. No “strange incense” was to be offered upon it,—i.e., incense which Jehovah had not appointed (cf. Lev. 10:1), that is to say, which had not been prepared according to His instructions,—nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat-offering; and no drink-offering was to be poured upon it. As the altar of incense was not only marked as a place of sacrifice by its name

מִזְבֵּחַ, “place of slain-offering,” but was put on a par with the altar of sacrifice by its square shape and its horns, it was important to

describe minutely what sacrifices were to be offered upon it. For the burning of fragrant incense is shown to be a sacrifice, by the fact that it was offered upon a place of sacrifice, or altar. Moreover the word הַקְטִיר, to cause to

ascend in smoke and steam, from קָטַר to smoke or steam, is not only applied to the lighting of incense, but also to the lighting and burning of the bleeding and bloodless sacrifices upon the altar of incense. Lastly, the connection between the incense-offering and the burnt-offering is indicated by the rule that they were to be offered at the same time. Both offerings shadowed forth the devotion of Israel to its God, whilst the fact that they were offered every day exhibited this devotion as constant and uninterrupted. But the distinction between them consisted in this, that in the burnt or whole offering Israel consecrated and sanctified its whole life and action in both body and soul to the Lord, whilst in the incense-offering its prayer was embodied as the exaltation of the spiritual man to God (cf. Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8; 8:3, 4); and with this there was associated the still further distinction, that the devotion was completed in the burnt-offering solely upon the basis of the atoning sprinkling of blood, whereas the incense-offering presupposed reconciliation with God, and on the basis of this the soul rose to God in this embodiment of its prayer, and was thus absorbed into His Spirit. In this respect, the incense-offering was not only a spiritualizing and transfiguring of the burnt-offering, but a completion of that offering also.

**Exodus 30:10**. Once a year Aaron was to expiate the altar of incense with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement, because it was most holy to the Lord, that is to say, as is expressly observed in the directions concerning this expiatory act (Lev. 16:18, 19), to purify it from the uncleannesses of the children of Israel.

כִּפֹּר, with עַל *objecti constr.*, signifies literally to cover over a thing, then to cover over sin, or make expiation. In the second clause we have

“upon it” (the altar) instead of “upon the horns of it,” because the altar itself was expiated in its horns. The use of **מִן** in **מִדָּם** is to be explained on the ground that only a part of the blood of the sin-offering was smeared with the finger upon the horns. (For further remarks, see at Lev. 16:18, 19.) The term “most holy” is not only applied to this altar, in common with the inner division of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:33), but also to the altar of burnt-offering (Exodus 29:37; 40:10), and all the vessels of the sanctuary (Exodus 30:29), which were anointed with holy oil; then to the whole of the tabernacle in its holiest aspect (Num. 18:10); and lastly, to all the sacrifices, which were given up entirely to Jehovah (see at Lev. 2:3);—consequently to everything which stood in so intimate a relation to Jehovah as to be altogether removed, not only from use and enjoyment on the part of man, but also from contact on the part of unsanctified men. Whoever touched a most holy thing was sanctified thereby (compare v. 29 with Exodus 29:37).

**Exodus 30:11–16.** The Atonement-Money, which every Israelite had to pay at the numbering of the people, has the first place among the supplementary instructions concerning the erection and furnishing of the sanctuary, and serves to complete the demand for freewill-offerings for the sanctuary (Exodus 25:1–9).

**Exodus 30:12.** “When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel according to them that are numbered, they shall give every one an expiation for his soul to the Lord at their numbering, that a plague may not strike them (happen to them) at their numbering.” **פָּקַד**, lit., *adspexit*, then *inspexit explorandi causa*, hence to review, or number an army or a nation, for the purpose of enrolling for military service. **לְפָקְדֵיהֶם** with reference to the numbered, *qui in censum veniunt*. **כֹּפֶר** (expiation, expiation-money,

from **כִּפֵּר** to expiate) is to be traced to the idea that the object for which expiation was made was thereby withdrawn from the view of the person to be won or reconciled. It is applied in two ways: (1) on the supposition that the face of the person to be won was covered by the gift (Gen. 32:21; 1 Sam. 12:3); and (2) on the supposition that the guilt itself was covered up (Ps. 32:1), or wiped away (Jer. 18:23), so far as the eye of God was concerned, as though it had no longer any existence, and that the sinful man was protected from the punishment of the judge in consequence of this covering. In this

way **כֹּפֶר** has acquired the meaning *λύτρον*, a payment by which the guilty are redeemed (Exodus 21:30; Num. 35:31); and this is the meaning which it has in the passage before us, where the soul is said to be protected by the *copher*, so as to be able to come without danger into the presence of the holy God (Num. 8:19. See *Oehler* in *Herzog's Cycl.*). Such an approach to God took place at the numbering of the people for the purpose of enrolling them in the army of Jehovah (Num. 1:3, cf. Exodus 7:4; 12:41). Hence “every one who passed over to those that were numbered,” who was enrolled among them, i.e., in the army of Jehovah,—that is to say, every male Israelite of 20 years old and upwards (v. 14),—was to pay half a shekel of the sanctuary as atonement-money; the rich no more, the poor no less (v. 15), because all were equal in the sight of Jehovah; and this payment was to be a “heave” (*terumah*, see Exodus 25:2) for Jehovah for the expiation of the souls. The shekel of the sanctuary, which contained 20 s, was no doubt the original shekel of full weight, as distinguished from the lighter shekel which was current in ordinary use. In Exodus 38:26 the half shekel is called

**בִּקְעָה**, lit., the split, i.e., half, from **בָּקַעַ** to split; and we find it mentioned as early as the time of the patriarchs as a weight in common use for valuing gold (Gen. 24:22), so that, no doubt, even at that time there were distinct silver pieces of this weight, which were probably

called shekels when employed for purposes of trade, since the word *shekel* itself does not denote any particular weight, as we may perceive at once from a comparison of 1 Kings 10:17 and 2 Chron. 9:16, at least so far as later times are concerned. The sacred shekel, to judge from the weight of Maccabean shekels, which are in existence still, and vary from 256 to 272 Parisian grains, weighed 274 s, and therefore, according to present valuation, would be worth 26 groschen (about 2s. 7d.), so that the half-shekel of bekah would be 13 groschen (1s. 3 1/2d.).

**Exodus 30:16.** This atonement-money Moses was to appropriate to the work of the sanctuary (cf. Exodus 38:25–28, where the amount and appropriation are reported). Through this appropriation it became “*a memorial to the children of Israel before the Lord to expiate their souls,*” i.e., a permanent reminder of their expiation before the Lord, who would henceforth treat them as reconciled because of this payment. It was no ordinary tribute, therefore, which Israel was to pay to Jehovah as its King, but an act demanded by the holiness of the theocratic covenant. As an expiation for souls, it pointed to the unholiness of Israel’s nature, and reminded the people continually, that by nature it was alienated from God, and could only remain in covenant with the Lord and live in His kingdom on the ground of His grace, which covered its sin. It was not till this sinful nature had been sanctified by a perfect atonement, and servitude under the law had been glorified and fully transformed into that sonship to which Israel was called as the first-born son of Jehovah, that as children of the kingdom they had no longer to pay this atonement-money for their souls (Matt. 17:25, 26).—According to Num. 1:1, 18, as compared with Exodus 40:17, the census of the nation was not taken till a month after the building of the tabernacle was completed, and yet the atonement-money to be paid at the taking of the census was to be appropriated to the purpose of the building, and must therefore have been paid before. This apparent discrepancy may be reconciled by the simple

assumption, that immediately after the command of God had been issued respecting the building of the tabernacle and the contributions which the people were to make for the purpose, the numbering of the males was commenced and the atonement-money collected from the different individuals, that the tabernacle was then built and the whole ceremonial instituted, and that, after all this had been done, the whole nation was enrolled according to its tribes, fathers’ houses, and families, on the basis of this provisional numbering, and thus the census was completed. For this reason the census gave exactly the same number of males as the numbering (cf. Exodus 38:26 and Num. 1:46), although the one had been carried out nine months before the other.

**Exodus 30:17–21** (cf. Exodus 38:8). The Brazen Laver, and its use.—The making of this vessel is not only mentioned in a supplementary manner, but no description is given of it because of the subordinate position which it occupied, and from the fact that it was not directly connected with the sanctuary, but was only used by the priests to cleanse themselves for the performance of their duties.

**כִּיּוֹר**: a basin, a round, caldron-shaped vessel.

**כַּנּוֹ** (its support): by this we are not to understand the pedestal of the caldron, but something separate from the basin, which was no doubt used for drawing off as much water as was required for washing the officiating priests.

For although **כַּנּוֹ** belongs to **כִּיּוֹר**, the fact that it is always specially mentioned in connection with the basin necessarily leads to the conclusion, that it had a certain kind of independence (cf. Exodus 31:9; 35:16; 39:39; 40:11; Lev. 8:11). These two vessels were to be made of brass or copper, like the other things in the court; and, according to Exodus 38:8, they were made of the brass of the mirrors of the women who served before the door of the tabernacle. **בְּמִרְאֵת הַצַּבָּאוֹת** does not mean

either “provided with mirrors of the women” (*Bähr*, i. pp. 485–6), or ornamented “with forms, figures of women, as they were accustomed to appear at the sanctuary” (*Knobel*). But these views are overthrown by the fact, that **בְּ** never signifies *with* in the sense of an outward addition, but always denotes the means, “not an independent object, but something accompanying and contributing to the action referred to” (*Ewald*, § 217, f. 3). In this case **בְּ** can only apply to the material used, whether we connect it with **וַיַּעַשׂ** as in Exodus 31:4, or, what seems decidedly more correct, with **נְהַשֵּׁת** as a more precise definition; so that **בְּ** would denote that particular quality which distinguished the brass of which the basin was made (*Ewald*, § 217f.),—apart altogether from the fact, that neither the mirrors of women, nor the figures of women, would form a fitting ornament for the basin, as the priests did not require to look at themselves when they washed their hands and feet; and there is still less ground for *Knobel*’s fiction, that Levitical women went to the sanctuary at particular times, forming a certain procession, and taking things with them for the purpose of washing, cleaning, and polishing. The true meaning is given by the Septuagint, ἐκ τῶν κατόπτρων. According to 1 Sam. 2:22, the **צַבָּאוֹת** were women, though not washer-women, but women who dedicated their lives to the service of Jehovah, and spent them in religious exercises, in fasting and in prayer, like Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, mentioned in Luke 2:37.<sup>66</sup> **צַבָּא** denotes spiritual warfare, and is accordingly rendered by the LXX νηστεύειν, by *Onkelos*, *orare*, with which the Rabbins agree. The mirrors of the women had been used for the purpose of earthly adorning. But now the pious Israelites renounced this earthly adorning, and offered it to the Lord as a

heave-offering to make the purifying laver in front of the sanctuary, in order that “what had hitherto served as a means of procuring applause in the world might henceforth be the means of procuring the approbation of God” (*Hengstenberg*, Dissert. vol. ii.).—The laver was to be placed between the tabernacle, i.e., the dwelling, and the altar in the court (v. 18), probably not in a straight line with the door of the dwelling and the altar of burnt-offering, but more sideways, so as to be convenient for the use of the priests, whether they were going into the tabernacle, or going up to the altar for service, to kindle a firing for Jehovah, i.e., to offer sacrifice upon the altar. They were to wash their hands, with which they touched the holy things, and their feet, with which they trod the holy ground (see Exodus 3:5), “that they might not die,” as is again emphatically stated in vv. 20 and 21. For touching holy things with unclean hands, and treading upon the floor of the sanctuary with dirty feet, would have been a sin against Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, deserving of death. These directions do not imply “that, notwithstanding all their consecration, they were regarded as still defiled by natural uncleanness” (*Baumgarten*), but rather that consecration did not stamp them with a *character indelebilis*, or protect them from the impurities of the sinful nation in the midst of which they lived, or of their own nature, which was still affected with mortal corruption and sin.

**Exodus 30:22–33.** The Holy Anointing Oil.—This was to be prepared from the best

perfumes (**בְּשָׂמִים רִאשִׁים**, where **רִאשִׁים**, *caput*, the principal or chief, is subordinate to

**בְּשָׂמִים**), viz., of four fragrant spices and olive-oil. The spices were, (1) *liquid myrrh*, as distinguished from the dry gum;—(2)

**קִנְמֹן־בְּשֵׂם**, *cinnamon of fragrance*, the name having been introduced to the Semitic nations along with the thing itself, and then by the Phoenicians to the Greeks and Romans (*κίναμωμὸν cinnamum*): whether it came from

Ceylon, the great mart of cinnamon, is very doubtful, as there is not word that can be discovered in the Indian dialects corresponding to *cinnamon*;—(3) *cane of fragrance*, the κάλαμος ἀρωματικός, *calamus odoratus*, of the Greek and Romans, i.e., the scented calamus which is imported from India;—and (4) *kiddah*, probably *cassia*, and possibly the species called

κίττω in Dioscor. 1, 12, in which case קָצִיעָה (Ps. 45:9) is either the generic name for cassia, or else refers to a different species. The proportion in which these spices were to be taken was 500 shekels or 14 1/2 s. of myrrh, half the quantity, i.e., 7 s, of cinnamon, and the same of calamus and cassia; in all, therefore, 21 s. of dry spices, which were to be mixed with one hin of oil (about 5 quarts) and 14 s. of liquid myrrh. These proportions preclude the supposition, that the spices were pulverized and mixed with the oil and myrrh in their natural condition, for the result in that case would have been a thick mess: they rather favour the statement of the Rabbins, that the dry spices were softened in water and boiled, to extract their essence, which was then mixed with oil and myrrh, and boiled again until all the watery part had evaporated. An artificial production of this kind is also indicated by the expressions רֶקַח מִרְקַחַת “*spice-work of*

*spice-mixture*,” and מַעֲשֵׂה רֶקַח “*labour (work) of the perfumer or ointment-maker.*”

**Exodus 30:26ff.** With this holy anointing oil the tabernacle and all its furniture were to be anointed and sanctified, that they might be most holy; also Aaron and his sons, that they might serve the Lord as priests (see at Lev. 8:10ff.). This anointing oil was holy, either because it was made from the four fragrant substances according to the proportions commanded by Jehovah, or because God declared this kind of mixture and preparation holy (cf. v. 32), and forbade for all time, on pain of death (v. 31), not only the use of ointment so prepared for any ordinary anointings, but even an imitation of it. “*Upon man’s flesh shall it not*

*be poured*,” i.e., it is not to be used for the ordinary practice of anointing the human body (v. 32). “*Man*,” i.e., the ordinary man in

distinction from the priests. בְּמִתְכַנְתּוֹ according to its measure, i.e., according to the proportions prescribed for its manufacture. רֵץ (v. 33) a stranger, is not only the non-Israelite, but laymen or non-priests in general. On the expression, “*cut off from his people*,” see at Gen. 17:14.

**Exodus 30:34–38.** The Holy Incense was also to be made of four ingredients, viz., (1) *nataph* (στακτή, *stacte*), i.e., not the resinous myrrh, or sap obtained from the fragrant myrrh and dried, but a kind of *storax* gum resembling myrrh, which was baked, and then used, like incense, for fumigating;—(2) *shecheleth* (ὄνυξ, *unguis odoratus*), the shell of a shell-fish resembling the *purpura*, of an agreeable odour;—(3) *chelbenah* (χαλβάνη), a resin of a pungent, bitter flavour, obtained, by means of an incision in the bark, from the *ferula*, a shrub which grows in Syria, Arabia, and Abyssinia, and then mixed with fragrant substances to give greater pungency to their odour;—and (4) *lebonah* (λίβανος or λιβανωτός), frankincense, a resin of a pleasant smell, obtained from a tree in Arabia Felix or India, but what tree has not been discovered. זָכָה pure, i.e., unadulterated.

The words בַּד בְּבַד יְהִיָּה “*part for part shall it be*,” are explained by the LXX as meaning ἴσον ἴσῳ ἔσται, *Vulg. aequalis ponderis erunt omnia*, i.e., with equal parts of all the different substances. But this is hardly correct, as בַּד

literally means separation, and the use of בַּד in this sense would be very striking. The explanation given by *Aben Ezra* is more correct, viz., “*every part shall be for itself*,” that is to say, each part was to be first of all prepared by itself, and then all the four to be mixed together afterwards.

**Exodus 30:35.** Of this Moses was to make incense, spicework, etc. (as in v. 25), salted, seasoned with salt (מִמֶּלַח, a *denom.* from

מֶלַח salt), like the meat-offering in Lev. 2:13.

The word does not mean μειγμένον, *mixtum* (LXX, *Vulg.*), or rubbed to powder, for the rubbing or pulverizing is expressed by

שֶׁחַקְתָּהֶדֶק in the following verse.

**Exodus 30:36.** Of this incense (a portion) was to be placed “before the testimony in the tabernacle,” i.e., not in the most holy place, but where the altar of incense stood (cf. 30:6 and Lev. 16:12). The remainder was of course to be kept elsewhere.

**Exodus 30:37, 38.** There is the same prohibition against imitating or applying it to a strange use as in the case of the anointing oil (vv. 32, 33). “To smell thereto,” i.e., to enjoy the perfume of it.

### Exodus 31

**Exodus 31:1–11.** The Builders (cf. Exodus 35:30–36:1).—After having given directions for the construction of the sanctuary, and all the things required for the worship, Jehovah pointed out the builders, whom He had called to carry out the work, and had filled with His Spirit for that purpose. To “call by name” is to choose or appoint by name for a particular work (cf. Isa. 45:3, 4). *Bezaleel* was a grandson of *Hur*, of the tribe of Judah, who is mentioned in Exodus 17:10; 24:14, and was called to be the master-builder, to superintend the whole of the building and carry out the artistic work; consequently he is not only invariably mentioned first (Exodus 35:30; 36:1, 2), but in the accounts of the execution of the separate portions he is mentioned alone (Exodus 37:1; 38:22). Filling with the Spirit of God signifies the communication of an extraordinary and supernatural endowment and qualification, “in wisdom,” etc., i.e., consisting of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and every kind of workmanship, that is to say, for the performance of every kind of work. This did not

preclude either natural capacity or acquired skill, but rather presupposed them; for in v. 6 it is expressly stated in relation to his assistants, that God had put wisdom into all that were wise-hearted (see at Exodus 28:3). Being thus endowed with a supernaturally exalted gift, *Bezaleel* was qualified “to think out inventions,” i.e., ideas or artistic designs. Although everything had been minutely described by Jehovah, designs and plans were still needed in carrying out the work, so that the result should correspond to the divine instructions.

**Exodus 31:6.** There were associated with *Bezaleel* as assistants, *Oholiab*, the son of *Achisamach*, of the tribe of Dan, and other men endowed with understanding, whom God had filled with wisdom for the execution of His work. According to Exodus 38:23, *Oholiab* was both *faber*, a master in metal, stone, and wood work, and also an artistic weaver of colours. In vv. 7–11, the words to be executed, which have been minutely described in Exodus 24–30, are mentioned singly once more; and, in addition to

these, we find in v. 10 בְּגָדֵי הַשָּׂרָד mentioned, along with, or rather before, the holy dress of Aaron. This is the case also in Exodus 35:19 and 39:41, where there is also the additional clause, “to serve (שִׁרְתָּ *ministrare*) in the sanctuary.”

They were composed, according to Exodus 39:1, of blue and red purple, and crimson. The meaning of the word *serad*, which only occurs in these passages, is quite uncertain. The Rabbins understand by the *bigde hasserad* the wrappers in which the vessels of the sanctuary were enclosed when the camp was broken up, as these are called *begadim* of blue and red purple, and crimson, in Num. 4:6ff. But this rendering is opposed to the words which follow, and which indicate their use in the holy service, i.e., in the performance of worship, and therefore are quite inapplicable to the wrappers referred to. There is even less ground for referring them, as *Gesenius* and others do, to the inner curtains of the tabernacle, or the inner hangings of the dwelling-place. For, apart from the uncertainty of the rendering given to

*serad*, viz., netted cloth, *filet*, it is overthrown by the fact that these curtains of the dwelling-place were not of net-work; and still more decisively by the order in which the *bigde hasserad* occur in Exodus 39:41, viz., not till the dwelling-place and tent, and everything belonging to them, have been mentioned, even down to the hangings of the court and the pegs of the tent, and all that remains to be noticed is the clothing of the priests. From the definition “to serve in the sanctuary,” it is obvious that the *bigde serad* were clothes used in the worship, *στολαὶ λειτουργικαί*, as the LXX have rendered it in agreement with the rest of the ancient versions,—that they were, in fact, the rich robes which constituted the official dress of the high priest, whilst “the holy garments for Aaron” were the holy clothes which were worn by him in common with the priests.

**Exodus 31:12–17** (cf. Exodus 35:2, 3). God concludes by enforcing the observance of His Sabbaths in the most solemn manner, repeating the threat of death and extermination in the case of every transgressor. The repetition and further development of this command, which was included already in the decalogue, is quite in its proper place here, inasmuch as the thought might easily have occurred, that it was allowable to omit the keeping of the Sabbath, when the execution of so great a work in honour of Jehovah had been commanded. “*My Sabbaths:*” by these we are to understand the weekly Sabbaths, not the other sabbatical festivals, since the words which follow apply to the weekly Sabbath alone. This was “*a sign between Jehovah and Israel for all generations, to know* (i.e., by which Israel might learn) *that it was Jehovah who sanctified them,*” viz., by the sabbatical rest (see at Exodus 20:11). It was therefore a holy thing for Israel (v. 14), the desecration of which would be followed by the punishment of death, as a breach of the covenant. The kernel of the Sabbath commandment is repeated in v. 15; the seventh day of the week, however, is not simply designated a “Sabbath,” but *שַׁבַּת שְׁבִתוֹן* “a high Sabbath” (the repetition of the same word,

or of an abstract form of the concrete noun, denoting the superlative; see *Ges.* § 113, 2), and “holy to Jehovah” (see at Exodus 16:23). For this reason Israel was to keep it in all future generations, i.e., to observe it as an eternal covenant (v. 16), as in the case of circumcision, since it was to be a sign for ever between Jehovah and the children of Israel (v. 20). The eternal duration of this sign was involved in the signification of the sabbatical rest, which is pointed out in Exodus 20:11, and reaches forward into eternity.

**Exodus 31:18.** When Moses had received all the instructions respecting the sanctuary to be erected, Jehovah gave him the two tables of testimony,—tables of stone, upon which the decalogue was written with the finger of God. It was to receive these tables that he had been called up the mountain (Exodus 24:12). According to Exodus 32:16, the tables themselves, as well as the writing, were the work of God; and the writing was engraved upon them (*תְּרִיבֹתַי* from *תָּרַבַּת* = *χαράττειν*), and the tables were written on both their sides (Exodus 32:15). Both the choice of stone as the material for the tables, and the fact that the writing was engraved, were intended to indicate the imperishable duration of these words of God. The divine origin of the tables, as well as of the writing, corresponded to the direct proclamation of the ten words to the people from the summit of the mountain by the mouth of God. As this divine promulgation was a sufficient proof that they were the immediate word of God, unchanged by the mouth and speech of man, so the writing of God was intended to secure their preservation in Israel as a holy and inviolable thing. The writing itself was not a greater miracle than others, by which God has proved Himself to be the Lord of nature, to whom all things that He has created are subservient for the establishment and completion of His kingdom upon earth; and it can easily be conceived of without the anthropomorphic supposition of a material finger being possessed by God. Nothing is said about the dimensions of the tables: at the same

time, we can hardly imagine them to have been as large as the inside of the ark; for stone slab 2 1/2 cubits long and 1 1/2 cubits broad, which must necessarily have been some inches in thickness to prevent their breaking in the hand, would have required the strength of Samson to enable Moses to carry them down the mountain "in his hand" (Exodus 32:15), or even "in his two hands" (Deut. 9:15, 17). But if we suppose them to have been smaller than this, say at the most a cubit and a half long and one cubit broad, there would have been plenty of room on the four sides for the 172 words contained in the decalogue, with its threats and promises (Exodus 20:2-17), without the writing being excessively small.

## Exodus 32

### THE COVENANT BROKEN AND RENEWED.—CH. 32-34.

**Exodus 32:1-6.** The long stay that Moses made upon the mountain rendered the people so impatient, that they desired another leader, and asked Aaron, to whom Moses had directed the people to go in all their difficulties during his absence (Exodus 24:14), to make them a god to go before them. The protecting and helping presence of God had vanished with Moses, of whom they said, "We know not what has become of him," and whom they probably supposed to have perished on the mountain in the fire that was burning there. They came to Aaron, therefore, and asked him, not for a leader, but for a god to go before them; no doubt with the intention of trusting the man as their leader who was able to make them a god. They were unwilling to continue longer without a God to go before them; but the faith upon which their desire was founded was a very perverted one, not only as clinging to what was apparent to the eye, but as corrupted by the impatience and unbelief of a natural heart, which has not been pervaded by the power of the living God, and imagines itself forsaken by Him, whenever His help is not visibly and

outwardly at hand. The delay (בַּשֵּׁשׁ, from

בּוֹשׁ to act bashfully, or with reserve, then to hesitate, or delay) of Moses' return was a test for Israel, in which it was to prove its faith and confidence in Jehovah and His servant Moses (Exodus 19:9), but in which it gave way to the temptation of flesh and blood.

**Exodus 32:2.** Aaron also succumbed to the temptation along with the people. Instead of courageously and decidedly opposing their proposal, and raising the despondency of the people into the strength of living faith, by pointing them to the great deeds through which Jehovah had proved Himself to be the faithful covenant God, he hoped to be able to divert them from their design by means of human craftiness. "*Tear off the golden ornaments in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me:*" this he said in the hope that, by a demand which pressed so heavily upon the vanity of the female sex and its love of display, he might arouse such opposition as would lead the people to desist from their desire. But his cleverness was put to shame. "All the people" tore off their golden ornaments and brought them to him (v. 3); for their object was not merely "to accomplish an act of pure self-will, in which case there is no sacrifice that the human heart is not ready to make," but to secure a pledge of the protection of God through a visible image of the Deity. The weak-minded Aaron had no other course left than to make (i.e., to cause to be made) an image of God for the people.

**Exodus 32:4.** *He took (the golden ear-rings) from their hands, and formed it (the gold) with the graving-tool, or chisel, and made it a molten calf.* Out of the many attempts that have been

made at interpreting the words וַיִּצֶר אֹתוֹ

בְּחֶרֶט, there are only two that deserve any notice, viz., the one adopted by *Bochart* and *Schroeder*, "he bound it up in a bag," and the one given by the earlier translators, "he

fashioned (יָצַר, as in 1 Kings 7:15) the gold with the chisel." No doubt וַיִּצַר (from צוּר = צָרָה) does occur in the sense of binding in 2 Kings 5:23, and חָרַט may certainly be used for חָרִיט a bag; but why should Aaron first tie up the golden ear-rings in a bag? And if he did so, why this superfluous and incongruous allusion to the fact? We give in our adhesion to the second, which is adopted by the LXX, *Onkelos*, the *Syriac*, and even *Jonathan*, though the other rendering is also interpolated into the text. Such objections, as that the calf is expressly spoken of as molten work, or that files are used, and not chisels, for giving a finer finish to casts, have no force whatever. The latter is not even correct. A graving-knife is quite as necessary as a file for chiselling, and giving a finer finish to things cast in a mould; and *cheret* does not necessarily mean a chisel, but may signify any tool employed for carving, engraving, and shaping hard metals. The other objection rests upon the supposition that *massecah* means an image made entirely of metal (e.g., gold). But this cannot be sustained. Apart from the fact, that most of the larger idols worshipped by the ancients had a wooden centre, and were merely covered with gold plate, such passages as Isa. 40:19 and 30:22 prove, not only that the casting of gold for idols consisted merely in casting the metal into a flat sheet, which the goldsmith hammered out and spread into a coating of gold plate, but also that a wooden image, when covered in this way with a coating of gold, was actually called *massecah*. And Aaron's molten calf was also made in this way: it was first of all formed of wood, and then covered with gold plate. This is evident from the way in which it was destroyed: the image was first of all burnt, and then beaten or crushed to pieces, and pounded or ground to powder (Deut. 9:21); i.e., the wooden centre was first burnt into charcoal, and then the golden covering beaten

or rubbed to pieces (v. 20 compared with Deut. 9:21).

The "golden calf" (עֵגֶל a young bull) was copied from the Egyptian *Apis* (vid., *Hengstenberg*, Dissertations); but for all that, it was not the image of an Egyptian deity,—it was no symbol of the generative or bearing power of nature, but an image of Jehovah. For when it was finished, those who had made the image, and handed it over to the people, said, "This is thy God (*pluralis majest.*), O Israel, who brought thee out of Egypt." This is the explanation adopted in Ps. 106:19, 20.

**Exodus 32:5, 6.** When Aaron saw it, he built an altar in front of the image, and called aloud to the people, "*To-morrow is a feast of Jehovah;*" and the people celebrated this feast with burnt-offerings and thank-offerings, with eating and drinking, i.e., with sacrificial meals and sports (צַחֲקִים), or with loud rejoicing, shouting, antiphonal songs, and dances (cf. vv. 17–19), in the same manner in which the Egyptians celebrated their feast of *Apis* (*Herod.* 2, 60, and 3, 27). But this intimation of an Egyptian custom is no proof that the feast was not intended for Jehovah; for joyous sacrificial meals, and even sports and dances, are met with in connection with the legitimate worship of Jehovah (cf. Exodus 15:20, 21). Nevertheless the making of the calf, and the sacrificial meals and other ceremonies performed before it, were a shameful apostasy from Jehovah, a practical denial of the inimitable glory of the true God, and a culpable breach of the second commandment of the covenant words (Exodus 20:4), whereby Israel had broken the covenant with the Lord, and fallen back to the heathen customs of Egypt. Aaron also shared the guilt of this transgression, although it was merely out of sinful weakness that he had assented to the proposals of the people and gratified their wishes (cf. Deut. 9:20). He also fell with the people, and denied the God who had chosen him, though he himself was unconscious of it, to be His priest, to bear the sins of the people, and to expiate them before Jehovah. The apostasy of

the nation became a temptation to him, in which the unfitness of his nature for the office was to be made manifest, in order that he might ever remember this, and not excuse himself from the office, to which the Lord had not called him because of his own worthiness, but purely as an act of unmerited grace.

**Exodus 32:7-14.** Before Moses left the mountain, God told him of the apostasy of the people (vv. 7, 8). *“Thy people, which thou hast brought out of Egypt:”* God says this not in the sense of an *“obliqua exprobratio,”* or *“Mosen quodammodo vocare in partem criminis quo examinetur ejus tolerantia et plus etiam maeroris ex rei indignitate concipiat”* (Calvin), or even because the Israelites, who had broken the covenant, were no longer the people of Jehovah; but the transgression of the people concerned Moses as the mediator of the covenant.

**Exodus 32:8.** *“They have turned aside quickly* (lit., hurriedly):” this had increased their guilt, and made their ingratitude to Jehovah, their Redeemer, all the more glaring.

**Exodus 32:9, 10.** *“Behold, it is a stiff-necked people* (a people with a hard neck, that will not bend to the commandment of God; cf. Exodus 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut. 9:6, etc.): *now therefore suffer Me, that My wrath may burn against them, and I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation.”* Jehovah, as the unchangeably true and faithful God, would not, and could not, retract the promises which He had given to the patriarchs, or leave them unfulfilled; and therefore if in His wrath He should destroy the nation, which had shown the obduracy of its nature in its speedy apostasy, He would still fulfil His promise in the person of Moses, and make of him a great nation, as He had promised Abraham in Gen. 12:2. When God says to Moses, *“Leave Me, allow Me, that My wrath may burn,”* this is only done, as Gregory the Great expresses it, *deprecandi ansam praeberere*. God puts the fate of the nation into the hand of Moses, that he may remember his mediatorial office, and show himself worthy of his calling. This condescension on the part of God, which placed the preservation or destruction of Israel

in the hands of Moses, coupled with a promise, which left the fullest freedom to his decision, viz., that after the destruction of the people he should himself be made a great nation, constituted a great test for Moses, whether he would be willing to give up his own people, laden as they were with guilt, as the price of his own exaltation. And Moses stood the test. The preservation of Israel was dearer to him than the honour of becoming the head and founder of a new kingdom of God. True to his calling as mediator, he entered the breach before God, to turn away His wrath, that He might not destroy the sinful nation (Ps. 106:23).—But what if Moses had not stood the test, had not offered his soul for the preservation of his people, as he is said to have done in v. 32? Would God in that case have thought him fit to make into a great nation? Unquestionably, if this had occurred, he would not have proved himself fit or worthy of such a call; but as God does not call those who are fit and worthy in themselves, for the accomplishment of His purposes of salvation, but chooses rather the unworthy, and makes them fit for His purposes (2 Cor. 3:5, 6), He might have made even Moses into a great nation. The possibility of such a thing, however, is altogether an abstract thought: the case supposed could not possibly have occurred, since God knows the hearts of His servants, and foresees what they will do, though, notwithstanding His omniscience, He gives to human freedom room enough for self-determination, that He may test the fidelity of His servants. No human speculation, however, can fully explain the conflict between divine providence and human freedom. This promise is referred to by Moses in Deut. 9:14, when he adds the words which God made use of on a subsequent occasion of a similar kind (Num. 14:12), “I will make of thee a nation stronger and more numerous than this.”

**Exodus 32:11.** *“And Moses besought the Lord his God.”* חָלָה אֶת־פָּנָי יי, lit., to stroke the face of Jehovah, for the purpose of appeasing His anger, i.e., to entreat His mercy, either by means of sacrifices (1 Sam. 13:12) or by

intercession. He pleaded His acts towards Israel (v. 11), His honour in the sight of the Egyptians (v. 12), and the promises He had made to the patriarchs (v. 13), and prayed that for His own sake, and the sake of His honour among the heathen, He would show mercy instead of

justice. **בְּרָעָה** (v. 12) does not mean μετὰ πονηρίας (LXX), or *callide* (Vulg.), but “for their hurt,”—the preposition denoting the manner in which, or according to which, anything took place.

**Exodus 32:14.** “And Jehovah repented of the evil, etc.”—On the repentance of God, see at Gen. 6:6. *Augustine* is substantially correct in saying that “an unexpected change in the things which God has put in His own power is called repentance” (*contra adv. leg.* 1, 20), but he has failed to grasp the deep spiritual idea of the repentance of God, as an anthropopathic description of the pain which is caused to the love of God by the destruction of His creatures.—V. 14 contains a remark which anticipates the development of the history, and in which the historian mentions the result of the intercession of Moses, even before Moses had received the assurance of forgiveness, for the purpose of bringing the account of his first negotiations with Jehovah to a close. God let Moses depart without any such assurance, that He might display before the people the full severity of the divine wrath.

**Exodus 32:15–24.** When Moses departed from God with the two tables of the law in his hand (see at Exodus 31:18), and came to Joshua on the mountain (see at Exodus 24:13), the latter heard the shouting of the people (lit., the voice of the people in its noise, **רָעוּ** for **רָעוּ**, from

**רָעוּ** noise, tumult), and took it to be the noise of war; but Moses said (v. 18), “It is not the sound of the answering of power, nor the sound of the answering of weakness,” i.e., they are not such sounds as you hear in the heat of battle from the strong (the conquerors) and the weak (the conquered); “the sound of antiphonal songs I

hear.” (**עָנָה**) is to be understood, both here and in Ps. 88:1, in the same sense as in Exodus 15:21.)

**Exodus 32:19.** But when he came nearer to the camp, and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned, and he threw down the tables of the covenant and broke them at the foot of the mountain, as a sign that Israel had broken the covenant.

**Exodus 32:20.** He then proceeded to the destruction of the idol. “He burned it in (with) fire,” by which process the wooden centre was calcined, and the golden coating either entirely or partially melted; and what was left by the fire he ground till it was fine, or, as it is expressed in Deut. 9:21, he beat it to pieces, grinding it well (i.e., crushing it with and between stones), till it was as fine as dust.<sup>67</sup> The dust, which consisted of particles of charcoal and gold, he then *strewed upon the water*,” or, according to Deuteronomy, “threw it into the brook which flowed down from the mountain, and made the children of Israel drink,” i.e., compelled them to drink the dust that had been thrown in along with the water of the brook. The object of this was certainly not to make them ashamed, by showing them the worthlessness of their god, and humiliating them by such treatment as compelling them to swallow their own god (as *Knobel* supposes). It was intended rather to set forth in a visible manner both the sin and its consequences. The sin was poured as it were into their bowels along with the water, as a symbolical sign that they would have to bear it and atone for it, just as a woman who was suspected of adultery was obliged to drink the curse-water (Num. 5:24).

**Exodus 32:21.** After the calf had been destroyed, Moses called Aaron to account. “What has this people done to thee (“done” in a bad sense, as in Gen. 28:45; Exodus 13:11), that thou hast brought a great sin upon it?” Even if Aaron had merely acted from weakness in carrying out the will of the people, he was the most to blame, for not having resisted the urgent entreaty of the people firmly and with

strong faith, and even at the cost of his life. Consequently he could think of nothing better than the pitiful subterfuge, *“Be not angry, my lord* (he addresses Moses in this way on account of his office, and because of his anger, cf. Num. 12:11): *thou knowest the people, that it is in wickedness”* (cf. 1 John 5:19), and the admission that he had been overcome by the urgency of the people, and had thrown the gold they handed him into the fire, and that this calf had come out (vv. 22–24), as if the image had come out of its own accord, without his intention or will. This excuse was so contemptible that Moses did not think it worthy of a reply, at the same time, as he told the people afterwards (Deut. 9:20), he averted the great wrath of the Lord from him through his intercession.

**Exodus 32:25–29.** Moses then turned to the unbridled nation, whom Aaron had set free from all restraint, *“for a reproach among their foes,”* inasmuch as they would necessarily become an object of scorn and derision among the heathen on account of the punishment which their conduct would bring down upon them from God (compare v. 12 and Deut. 28:37), and sought to restrain their licentiousness and ward off the threatened destruction of the nation through the infliction of a terrible punishment. If the effect of this punishment should show that there were still some remains of obedience and faithfulness towards God left in the nation, Moses might then hope, that in accordance with the pleading of Abraham in Gen. 18:23ff., he should obtain mercy from God for the whole nation for the sake of those who were righteous. He therefore went into the gate of the camp (the entrance to the camp) and cried out: *“Whoever (belongs) to the Lord, (come) to me?”* and his hope was not disappointed. *“All the Levites gathered together to him.”* Why the Levites? Certainly not merely, nor chiefly, “because the Levites for the most part had not assented to the people’s sin and the worship of the calf, but had been displeased on account of it” (*C. a Lapide*); but partly because the Levites were more prompt in their determination to confess their crime, and

return with penitence, and partly out of regard to Moses, who belonged to their tribe, in connection with which it must be borne in mind that the resolution and example of a few distinguished men was sure to be followed by all the rest of their tribe. The reason why no one came over to the side of Moses from any of the other tribes, must also be attributed, to some extent, to the bond that existed among members of the same tribe, and is not sufficiently explained by *Calvin’s* hypothesis, that “they were held back, not by contempt or obstinacy, so much as by shame, and that they were all so paralyzed by their alarm, that they waited to see what Moses was about to do and to what length he would proceed.”

**Exodus 32:27.** The Levites had to allow their obedience to God to be subjected to a severe test. Moses issued this command to them in the name of Jehovah the God of Israel: *“Let every one gird on his sword, and go to and fro through the camp from one gate (end) to the other, and put to death brothers, friends, and neighbours,”* i.e., all whom they met, without regard to relationship, friendship, or acquaintance. And they stood the test. About 3000 men fell by their sword on that day. There are several difficulties connected with this account, which have furnished occasion for doubts as to its historical credibility. The one of least importance is that which arises from the supposed severity and recklessness of Moses’ proceedings. The severity of the punishment corresponded to the magnitude of the crime. The worship of an image, being a manifest transgression of one of the fundamental laws of the covenant, was a breach of the covenant, and as such a capital crime, bringing the punishment of death or extermination in its train. Now, although the whole nation had been guilty of this crime, yet in this, as in every other rebellion, the guilt of all would not be the same, but many would simply follow the example of others; so that, instead of punishing all alike, it was necessary that a separation should be made, if not between the innocent and guilty, yet between the penitent and the stiff-necked transgressors. To effect this separation, Moses

called out into the camp: "Over to me, whoever is for the Lord!" All the Levites responded to his call, but not the other tribes; and it was necessary that the refractory should be punished. Even these, however, had not all sinned to the same extent, but might be divided into tempters and tempted; and as they were all mixed up together, nothing remained but to adopt that kind of punishment, which has been resorted to in all ages in such circumstances as these. "If at any time," as *Calvin* says, "mutiny has broken out in an army, and has led to violence, and even to bloodshed, by *universal law* a commander proceeds to *decimate* the guilty." He then adds, "How much milder, however, was the punishment here, when out of six hundred thousand only three thousand were put to death!" This decimation Moses committed to the Levites; and just as in every other decimation the selection must be determined by lot or accidental choice, so here Moses left it to be determined by chance, upon whom the sword of the Levites would fall, knowing very well that even the so-called chance would be under the direction of God.

There is apparently a greater difficulty in the fact, that not only did the Levites execute the command of Moses without reserve, but the people let them pass through the camp, and kill every one who came within reach of their sword, without offering the slightest resistance. To remove this difficulty, there is no necessity that we should either assume that the Levites knew who were the originators and ringleaders of the worship of the calf, and only used their swords against them, as *Calvin* does, or that we should follow *Kurtz*, and introduce into the text a "formal conflict between the two parties, in which some of Moses' party were also slain," since the history says nothing about "the men who sided with Moses gaining a complete victory," and merely states that in obedience to the word of Jehovah the God of Israel, as declared by Moses, they put 3000 men of the people to death with the sword. The obedience of the Levites was an act of faith, which knows neither the fear of man nor regard to person. The unresisting attitude of the people generally

may be explained, partly from their reverence for Moses, whom God had so mightily and marvellously accredited as His servant in the sight of all the nation, and partly from the despondency and fear so natural to a guilty conscience, which took away all capacity for opposing the bold and determined course that was adopted by the divinely appointed rulers and their servants in obedience to the command of God. It must also be borne in mind, that in the present instance the sin of the people was not connected with any rebellion against Moses.

Very different explanations have been given of the words which were spoken by Moses to the Levites (v. 29): "*Fill your hand to-day for Jehovah; for every one against his son and against his brother, and to bring a blessing upon you to-day.*" "To fill the hand for Jehovah" does not mean to offer a sacrifice to the Lord, but to provide something to offer to God (1 Chron. 29:5; 2 Chron. 29:31). Thus *Jonathan's* explanation, which *Kurtz* has revived in a modified form, viz., that Moses commanded the Levites to offer sacrifices as an expiation for the blood that they had shed, or for the rent made in the congregation by their reckless slaughter of their blood-relations, falls to the ground; though we cannot understand how the fulfilment of a divine command, or an act of obedience to the declared will of God, could be regarded as blood-guiltiness, or as a crime that needed expiation. As far as the clause which follows is concerned, so much is clear, viz., that the words can neither be rendered, "for every one is *in* his son," etc., nor "for every one *was* against his son," etc. To the former it is impossible to attach any sense; and the latter

cannot be correct, because the preterite הָיָה could not be omitted after an imperative, if the explanatory clause referred to what was past. If כִּי were a causal particle in this case, the meaning could only be, "for every one shall be against his son," etc. But it is much better to understand it as indicating the object, "that every one may be against his son and against

his brother;" i.e., that in the cause of the Lord every one may not spare even his nearest relative, but deny either son or brother for the Lord's sake (Deut. 33:9). "*And to give*" (or bring), i.e., so that ye may bring, *a blessing upon yourselves to-day.*" The following, then, is the thought contained in the verse: Provide yourselves to-day with a gift for the Lord, consecrate yourselves to-day for the service of the Lord, by preserving the obedience you have just shown towards Him, by not knowing either son or brother in His service, and thus gain for yourselves a blessing. In the fulfilment of the command of God, with the denial of their own flesh and blood, Moses discerns such a disposition and act as would fit them for the service of the Lord. He therefore points to the blessing which it would bring them, and exhorts them by their election as the peculiar possession of Jehovah (Num. 3, 4), which would be secured to them from this time forward, to persevere in this fidelity to the Lord. "The zeal of the tribe-father burned still in the Levites; but this time it was for the glory of God, and not for their own. Their ancestor had violated both truth and justice by his vengeance upon the Shechemites, from a false regard to blood-relationship, but now his descendants had saved truth, justice, and the covenant by avenging Jehovah upon their own relations" (*Kurtz*, and *Oehler* in *Herzog's Cycl.*), so that the curse which rested upon them (Gen. 49:7) could now be turned into a blessing (cf. Deut. 33:9).

**Exodus 32:30–35.** After Moses had thus avenged the honour of the Lord upon the sinful nation, he returned the next day to Jehovah as a mediator, who is not a mediator of one (Gal. 3:20), that by the force of his intercession he might turn the divine wrath, which threatened destruction, into sparing grace and compassion, and that he might expiate the sin of the nation. He had received no assurance of mercy in reply to his first entreaty (vv. 11–13). He therefore announced his intention to the people in these words: "*Peradventure I can make an atonement for your sin.*" But to the Lord he said (vv. 31, 32), "*The sin of this people is a great sin; they*

*have made themselves a god of gold,*" in opposition to the clear commandment in Exodus 20:23: "*and now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin, and if not, blot me out of the book that Thou hast written.*" The book which Jehovah has written is the book of life, or of the living (Ps. 69:29; Dan. 12:1). This expression is founded upon the custom of writing the names of the burgesses of a town or country in a burgess-list, whereby they are recognised as natives of the country, or citizens of the city, and all the privileges of citizenship are secured to them. The book of life contains the list of the righteous (Ps. 69:29), and ensures to those whose names are written there, life before God, first in the earthly kingdom of God, and then eternal life also, according to the knowledge of salvation, which keeps pace with the progress of divine revelation, e.g., in the New Testament, where the heirs of eternal life are found written in the book of life (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8, etc.),—an advance for which the way was already prepared by Isa. 4:3 and Dan. 12:1. To blot out of Jehovah's book, therefore, is to cut off from fellowship with the living God, or from the kingdom of those who live before God, and to deliver over to death. As a true mediator of his people, Moses was ready to stake his own life for the deliverance of the nation, and not to live before God himself, if Jehovah did not forgive the people their sin. These words of Moses were the strongest expression of devoted, self-sacrificing love. And they were just as deep and true as the wish expressed by the Apostle Paul in Rom 9:3, that he might be accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren according to the flesh. *Bengel* compares this wish of the apostle to the prayer of Moses, and says with regard to this unbounded fulness of love, "It is not easy to estimate the measure of love in a Moses and a Paul; for the narrow boundary of our reasoning powers does not comprehend it, as the little child is unable to comprehend the courage of warlike heroes" (Eng. Tr.). The infinite love of God is unable to withstand the importunity of such love. God, who is holy love, cannot sacrifice the righteous and good for the

unrighteous and guilty, nor can He refuse the mediatorial intercession of His faithful servant, so long as the sinful nation has not filled up the measure of its guilt, in which case even the intercession of a Moses and a Samuel would not be able to avert the judgment (Jer. 15:1, cf. Ezek. 14:16). Hence, although Jehovah puts back the wish and prayer of Moses with the

words, “Whoever (מִי אֲשֶׁר, both here and in 2 Sam. 20:11, is more emphatic than either one or the other alone) *has sinned, him will I blot out of My book,*” He yields to the entreaty that He will ensure to Moses the continuance of the nation under His guidance, and under the protection of His angel, which shall go before it (see at Exodus 33:2, 3), and defer the punishment of their sin until the day of His visitation.

**Exodus 32:35.** “Thus Jehovah smote the people because they had made the calf.” With these words the historian closes the first act of Moses’ negotiations with the Lord on account of this sin, from which it was apparent how God had repented of the evil with which He had threatened the nation (v. 14). Moses had obtained the preservation of the people and their entrance into the promised land, under the protection of God, through his intercession, and averted from the nation the abrogation of the covenant; but the covenant relation which had existed before was not restored in its integrity. Though grace may modify and soften wrath, it cannot mar the justice of the holy God. No doubt an atonement had been made to justice, through the punishment which the Levites had inflicted upon the nation, but only a passing and imperfect one. Only a small portion of the guilty nation had been punished, and that without the others showing themselves worthy of forgiving grace through sorrow and repentance. The punishment, therefore, was not remitted, but only postponed in the long-suffering of God, “until the day of retribution” or visitation. The day of visitation came at length, when the stiff-necked people had filled up the measure of their sin through repeated rebellion against Jehovah and His servant Moses, and were sentenced at Kadesh to die out

in the wilderness (Num. 14:26ff.). The sorrow manifested by the people (Exodus 33:4), when the answer of God was made known to them, was a proof that the measure was not yet full.

### Exodus 33

**Exodus 33:1–6.** Moses’ negotiations with the people, for the purpose of bringing them to sorrow and repentance, commenced with the announcement of what Jehovah had said. The words of Jehovah in vv. 1–3, which are only a still further expansion of the assurance contained in Exodus 32:34, commence in a similar manner to the covenant promise in Exodus 23:20, 23; but there is this great difference, that whereas the name, i.e., the presence of Jehovah Himself, was to have gone before the Israelites in the angel promised to the people as a leader in Exodus 23:20, now, though Jehovah would still send an angel before Moses and Israel, He Himself would not go up to Canaan (a land flowing, etc., see at 3:8) in the midst of Israel, lest He should destroy the people by the way, because they were stiff-necked (אֲבָלָהֶם for אֲבָלָהֶם, see Ges. § 27, 3, Anm. 2).

**Exodus 33:4.** The people were so overwhelmed with sorrow by this evil word, that they all put off their ornaments, and showed by this outward sign the trouble of their heart,

**Exodus 33:5.** That this good beginning of repentance might lead to a true and permanent change of heart, Jehovah repeated His threat in a most emphatic manner: “*Thou art a stiff-necked people; if I go a moment in the midst of thee, I destroy thee:*” i.e., if I were to go up in the midst of thee for only a single moment, I should be compelled to destroy thee because of thine obduracy. He then issued this command: “*Throw thine ornament away from thee, and I shall know (by that) what to do to thee.*”

**Exodus 33:6.** And the people obeyed this commandment, renouncing all that pleased the eye. “*The children of Israel spoiled themselves (see at Exodus 12:36) of their ornament from*

*Mount Horeb onwards.*” Thus they entered formally into a penitential condition. The expression, “from Mount Horeb onwards,” can hardly be paraphrased as it is by *Seb. Schmidt*, viz., “going from Mount Horeb into the camp,” but in all probability expresses this idea, that from that time forward, i.e., after the occurrence of this event at Horeb, they laid aside the ornaments which they had hitherto worn, and assumed the outward appearance of perpetual penitence.

**Exodus 33:7–11.** Moses then took a tent, and pitched it outside the camp, at some distance off, and called it “*tent of meeting*.” The “tent” is neither the sanctuary of the tabernacle described in Exodus 25ff., which was not made till after the perfect restoration of the covenant (Exodus 35ff.), nor another sanctuary that had come down from their forefathers and was used before the tabernacle was built, as *Clericus, J. D. Michaelis, Rosenmüller*, and others suppose; but a tent belonging to Moses, which was made into a temporary sanctuary by the fact that the pillar of cloud came down upon it, and Jehovah talked with Moses there, and which was called by the same name as the

tabernacle, viz., אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד (see at Exodus 27:21), because Jehovah revealed Himself there, and every one who sought Him had to go to this tent outside the camp. There were two reasons for this: in the first place, Moses desired thereby to lead the people to a fuller recognition of their separation from their God, that their penitence might be deepened in consequence; and in the second place, he wished to provide such means of intercourse with Jehovah as would not only awaken in the minds of the people a longing for the renewal of the covenant, but render the restoration of the covenant possible. And this end was answered. Not only did every one who sought Jehovah go out to the tent, but the whole nation looked with the deepest reverence when Moses went out to the tent, and bowed in adoration before the Lord, every one in front of his tent, when they saw the pillar of cloud come down upon the tent and stand before the door. Out of this

cloud Jehovah talked with Moses (vv. 7–10) “*face to face, as a man talks with his friend*” (v. 11); that is to say, not from the distance of heaven, through any kind of medium whatever, but “mouth to mouth,” as it is called in Num. 12:8, as closely and directly as friends talk to one another. “These words indicate, therefore, a familiar conversation, just as much as if it had been said, that God appeared to Moses in some peculiar form of manifestation. If any one objects to this, that it is at variance with the assertion which we shall come to presently, ‘Thou canst not see My face,’ the answer is a very simple one. Although Jehovah showed Himself to Moses in some peculiar form of manifestation, He never appeared in His own essential glory, but only in such a mode as human weakness could bear. This solution contains a tacit comparison, viz., that there never was any one equal to Moses, or who had attained to the same dignity as he” (*Calvin*). When Moses returned to the tent, his servant Joshua remained behind as guard.—This condescension on the part of Jehovah towards Moses could not fail to strengthen the people in their reliance upon their leader, as the confidant of Jehovah. And Moses himself was encouraged thereby to endeavour to effect a perfect restoration of the covenant bond that had been destroyed.

**Exodus 33:12–23.** Jehovah had commanded Moses to lead the people to Canaan, and promised him the guidance of an angel; but He had expressly distinguished this angel from His own personal presence (vv. 1–3). Moreover, though it has not been mentioned before, Jehovah had said to Moses, “*I have known thee by name*,”— i.e., I have recognised thee as Mine, and chosen and called thee to execute My will (cf. Isa. 43:1; 49:1), or put thee into “a specifically personal relation to God, which was peculiar to Moses, and therefore was associated with his name” (*Oehler*);—“*and thou hast also found grace in My eyes*,” inasmuch as God had granted a hearing to his former intercession. Moses now reminded the Lord of this divine assurance with such courage as can only be produced by faith, which wrestles with God and

will not let Him go without a blessing (Gen. 32:27); and upon the strength of this he presented the petition (v. 13), "*Let me know Thy way* (the way which Thou wilt take with me and with this people), *that I may know Thee, in order that I may find grace in Thine eyes, and see that this people is Thy people.*" The meaning is this: If I have found grace in Thy sight, and Thou hast recognised me as Thy servant, and called me to be the leader of this people, do not leave me in uncertainty as to Thine intentions concerning the people, or as to the angel whom Thou wilt give as a guide to me and the nation, that I may know Thee, that is to say, that my finding grace in Thine eyes may become a reality;<sup>68</sup> and if Thou wilt lead the people up to Canaan, consider that it is Thine own people, to whom Thou must acknowledge Thyself as its God. Such boldness of undoubting faith presses to the heart of God, and brings away the blessing. Jehovah replied (v. 14), "*My face will go, and I shall give thee rest,*"—that is to say, shall bring thee and all this people into the land, where ye will find rest (Deut. 3:20). The "face" of Jehovah is Jehovah in His own personal presence, and is identical with the "angel" in whom the name of Jehovah was (Exodus 23:20, 21), and who is therefore called in Isa. 63:9 "the angel of His face."

With this assurance on the part of God, the covenant bond was completely restored. But to make more sure of it. Moses replied (vv. 15, 16), "*If Thy face is not going (with us), lead us not up hence. And whereby shall it be known that I have found grace in thine eyes, I and Thy people, if not (lit., is it not known) in Thy going with us, that we, I and Thy people, are distinguished (see at Exodus 8:18) before every nation upon the face of the earth?*" These words do not express any doubt as to the truth of the divine assurance, "but a certain feeling of the insufficiency of the assurance," inasmuch as even with the restoration of the former condition of things there still remained "the fear lest the evil root of the people's rebellion, which had once manifested itself, should break forth again at any moment" (*Baumgarten*). For this reason Jehovah assured him that this

request also should be granted (v. 17). "There was nothing extraordinary in the fact that Moses desired for himself and his people that they might be distinguished before every nation upon the face of the earth; this was merely the firm hold of faith upon the calling and election of God (Exodus 19:5, 6)."

**Exodus 33:18.** Moses was emboldened by this, and now prayed to the Lord, "*Let me see Thy glory.*" What Moses desired to see, as the answer of God clearly shows, must have been something surpassing all former revelations of the glory of Jehovah (Exodus 16:7, 10; 24:16, 17), and even going beyond Jehovah's talking with him face to face (v. 11). When God talked with him face to face, or mouth to mouth, he merely saw a "similitude of Jehovah" (Num. 12:8), a form which rendered the invisible being of God visible to the human eye, i.e., a manifestation of the divine glory in a certain form, and not the direct or essential glory of Jehovah, whilst the people saw this glory under the veil of a dark cloud, rendered luminous by fire, that is to say, they only saw its splendour as it shone through the cloud; and even the elders, at the time when the covenant was made, only saw the God of Israel in a certain form which hid from their eyes the essential being of God (Exodus 24:10, 11). What Moses desired, therefore, was a sight of the glory or essential being of God, without any figure, and without a veil.

Moses was urged to offer this prayer, as *Calvin* truly says, not by "*stulta curiositas, quae ut plurimum titillat hominum mentes, ut audacter penetrare tentent usque ad ultima caelorum arcana,*" but by "a desire to cross the chasm which had been made by the apostasy of the nation, that for the future he might have a firmer footing than the previous history had given him. As so great a stress had been laid upon his own person in his present task of mediation between the offended Jehovah and the apostate nation, he felt that the separation, which existed between himself and Jehovah, introduced a disturbing element into his office. For if his own personal fellowship with Jehovah

was not fully established, and raised above all possibility of disturbance, there could be no eternal foundation for the perpetuity of his mediation" (*Baumgarten*). As a man called by God to be His servant, he was not yet the perfect mediator; but although he was faithful in all his house, it was only as a servant, called εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν λαληθησομένων (Heb. 3:5), i.e., as a herald of the saving revelations of God, preparing the way for the coming of the perfect Mediator. Jehovah therefore granted his request, but only so far as the limit existing between the infinite and holy God and finite and sinful man allowed. "I will make all My goodness pass before thy face, and proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee (קָרָא בְּשֵׁם) see at Gen. 4:26), and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. Thou canst not see My face, for man cannot see Me and live." The words וְחָנְתִּי וְגו' although only connected with the previous clause by the cop. ו, are to be understood in a causative sense, as expressing the reason why Moses' request was granted, viz., that it was an act of unconditional grace and compassion on the part of God, to which no man, not even Moses, could lay any just claim. The apostle Paul uses the words in the same sense in Rom. 9:15, for the purpose of overthrowing the claims of self-righteous Jews to participate in the Messianic salvation.—No mortal man can see the face of God and remain alive; for not only is the holy God a consuming fire to unholy man, but a limit has been set, in and with the σῶμα χοϊκόν and ψυχικόν (the earthly and psychical body) of man, between the infinite God, the absolute Spirit, and the human spirit clothed in an earthly body, which will only be removed by the "redemption of our body," and our being clothed in a "spiritual body," and which, so long as it lasts, renders a direct sight of the glory of God impossible. As our bodily eye is dazzled, and its power of vision destroyed, by looking directly at the brightness of the sun, so would our whole nature be

destroyed by an unveiled sight of the brilliancy of the glory of God. So long as we are clothed with this body, which was destined, indeed, from the very first to be transformed into the glorified state of the immortality of the spirit, but has become through the fall a prey to the corruption of death, we can only walk in faith, and only see God with the eye of faith, so far as He has revealed His glory to us in His works and His word. When we have become like God, and have been transformed into the "divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4), then, and not till then, shall we see Him as He is; then we shall see His glory without a veil, and live before Him for ever. For this reason Moses had to content himself with the passing by of the glory of God before his face, and with the revelation of the name of Jehovah through the medium of the word, in which God discloses His inmost being, and, so to speak, His whole heart to faith. In v. 22 "My glory" is used for "all My goodness," and in Exodus 34:6 it is stated that *Jehovah* passed by before the face of Moses. טוֹב is not to be understood in the sense of beautiful, or beauty, but signifies goodness; not the brilliancy which strikes the senses, but the spiritual and ethical nature of the Divine Being. For the manifestation of Jehovah, which passed before Moses, was intended unquestionably to reveal nothing else than what Jehovah expressed in the proclamation of His name.

The manifested glory of the Lord would so surely be followed by the destruction of man, that even Moses needed to be protected before it (vv. 21, 22). Whilst Jehovah, therefore, allowed him to come to a place upon the rock near Him, i.e., upon the summit of Sinai (Exodus 34:2), He said that He would put him in a cleft of the rock whilst He was passing by, and cover him with His hand when He had gone by, that he might see His back, because His face could not be seen. The back, as contrasted with the face, signifies the reflection of the glory of God that had just passed by. The words are transferred anthropomorphically from man to God, because human language and human thought can only conceive of the nature of the

absolute Spirit according to the analogy of the human form. As the inward nature of man manifests itself in his face, and the sight of his back gives only an imperfect and outward view of him, so Moses saw only the back and not the face of Jehovah. It is impossible to put more into human words concerning this unparalleled vision, which far surpasses all human thought and comprehension. According to Exodus 34:2, the place where Moses stood by the Lord was at the top (the head) of Sinai, and no more can be determined with certainty concerning it. The cleft in the rock (v. 22) has been supposed by some to be the same place as the "cave" in which Elijah lodged at Horeb, and where the Lord appeared to him in the still small voice (1 Kings 19:9ff.). The real summit of the Jebel Musa consists of "a small area of huge rocks, about 80 feet in diameter," upon which there is now a chapel that has almost fallen down, and about 40 feet to the south-west a dilapidated mosque (*Robinson, Palestine*, vol. i. p. 153). Below this mosque, according to *Seetzen (Reise* iii. pp. 83, 84), there is a very small grotto, into which you descend by several steps, and to which a large block of granite, about a fathom and a half long and six spans in height, serves as a roof. According to the Mussulman tradition, which the Greek monks also accept, it was in this small grotto that Moses received the law; though other monks point out a "hole, just large enough for a man," near the altar of the Elijah chapel, on the small plain upon the ridge of Sinai, above which the loftier peak rises about 700 feet, as the cave in which Elijah lodged on Horeb (*Robinson, Pal. ut supra*).

### Exodus 34

**Exodus 34:1-10.** When Moses had restored the covenant bond through his intercession (Exodus 33:14), he was directed by Jehovah to hew out two stones, like the former ones which he had broken, and to come with them the next morning up the mountain, and Jehovah would write upon them the same words as upon the first,<sup>69</sup> and thus restore the covenant record. It was also commanded, as in the former case (Exodus 19:12, 13), that no one should go up

the mountain with him, or be seen upon it, and that not even cattle should feed against the mountain, i.e., in the immediate neighbourhood (v. 3). The first tables of the covenant were called "tables of stone" (Exodus 24:12; 31:18); the second, on the other hand, which were hewn by Moses, are called "tables of stones" (vv. 1 and 4); and the latter expression is applied indiscriminately to both of them in Deut. 4:13; 5:19; 9:9-11; 10:1-4. This difference does not indicate a diversity in the records, but may be explained very simply from the fact, that the tables prepared by Moses were hewn from two stones, and not both from the same block; whereas all that could be said of the former, which had been made by God Himself, was that they were of stone, since no one knew whether God had used one stone or two for the purpose. There is apparently far more importance in the following distinction, that the second tables were delivered by Moses and only written upon by God, whereas in the case of the former both the writing and the materials came from God. This cannot have been intended either as a punishment for the nation (*Hengstenberg*), or as "the sign of a higher stage of the covenant, inasmuch as the further the reciprocity extended, the firmer was the covenant" (*Baumgarten*). It is much more natural to seek for the cause, as *Rashi* does, in the fact, that Moses had broken the first in pieces; only we must not regard it as a sign that God disapproved of the manifestation of anger on the part of Moses, but rather as a recognition of his zealous exertions for the restoration of the covenant which had been broken by the sin of the nation. As Moses had restored the covenant through his energetic intercession, he should also provide the materials for the renewal of the covenant record, and bring them to God, for Him to complete and confirm the record by writing the covenant words upon the tables.

On the following morning, when Moses ascended the mountain, Jehovah granted him the promised manifestation of His glory (vv. 5ff.). The description of this unparalleled occurrence is in perfect harmony with the

mysterious and majestic character of the revelation. *"Jehovah descended (from heaven) in the cloud, and stood by him there, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah; and Jehovah passed by in his sight, and proclaimed Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious,"* etc. What Moses saw we are not told, but simply the words in which Jehovah proclaimed all the glory of His being; whilst it is recorded of Moses, that he bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped. This "sermon on the name of the Lord," as *Luther* calls it, disclosed to Moses the most hidden nature of Jehovah. It proclaimed that God is love, but that kind of love in which mercy, grace, long-suffering, goodness, and truth are united with holiness and justice. As the merciful One, who is great in goodness and truth, Jehovah shows mercy to the thousandth, forgiving sin and iniquity in long-suffering and grace; but He does not leave sin altogether unpunished, and in His justice visits the sin of the fathers upon the children and the children's children even unto the fourth generation. The Lord had already revealed Himself to the whole nation from Mount Sinai as visiting sin and showing mercy (Exodus 20:5ff.). But whereas on that occasion the burning zeal of Jehovah which visits sin stood in the foreground, and mercy only followed afterwards, here grace, mercy, and goodness are placed in the front. And accordingly all the words which the language contained to express the idea of grace in its varied manifestations to the sinner, are crowded together here, to reveal the fact that in His inmost being God is love. But in order that grace may not be perverted by sinners into a ground of wantonness, justice is not wanting even here with its solemn threatenings, although it only follows mercy, to show that mercy is mightier than wrath, and that holy love does not punish till sinners despise the riches of the goodness, patience, and long-suffering of God. As Jehovah here proclaimed His name, so did He continue to bear witness of it to the Israelites, from their departure from Sinai till their entrance into Canaan, and from that time forward till their dispersion among the heathen, and even now in

their exile showing mercy to the thousandth, when they turn to the Redeemer who has come out of Zion.

**Exodus 34:9.** On this manifestation of mercy, Moses repeated the prayer that Jehovah would go in the midst of Israel. It is true the Lord had already promised that His face should go with them (Exodus 33:14); but as Moses had asked for a sign of the glory of the Lord as a seal to the promise, it was perfectly natural that, when this petition was granted, he should lay hold of the grace that had been revealed to him as it never had been before, and endeavour to give even greater stability to the covenant. To this end he repeated his former intercession on behalf of the nation, at the same time making this confession, "For it is a stiff-necked people; therefore forgive our iniquity and our sin, and make us the inheritance." Moses spoke collectively, including himself in the nation in the presence of God. The reason which he assigned pointed to the deep root of corruption that had broken out in the worship of the golden calf, and was appropriately pleaded as a motive for asking forgiveness, inasmuch as God Himself had assigned the natural corruption of the human race as a reason why He would not destroy it again with a flood (Gen. 8:21). Wrath was mitigated by a regard to the natural

condition.—**נָחַל** in the *Kal*, with an accusative of the person, does not mean to lead a person into the inheritance, but to make a person into an inheritance; here, therefore, to make Israel the possession of Jehovah (Deut. 4:20; 9:26, cf. Zech. 2:16). Jehovah at once declared (v. 10) that He would conclude a covenant, i.e., restore the broken covenant, and do marvels before the whole nation, such as had not been done in all the earth or in any nation, and thus by these His works distinguish Israel before all nations as His own property (Exodus 33:16). The nation was to see this, because it would be terrible; terrible, namely, through the overthrow of the powers that resisted the kingdom of God, every one of whom would be laid prostrate and destroyed by the majesty of the Almighty.

**Exodus 34:11–26.** To recall the duties of the covenant once more to the minds of the people, the Lord repeats from among the rights of Israel, upon the basis of which the covenant had been established (Exodus 21–23), two of the leading points which determined the attitude of the nation towards Him, and which constituted, as it were, the main pillars that were to support the covenant about to be renewed. These were, *first*, the warning against every kind of league with the Canaanites, who were to be driven out before the Israelites (vv. 11–16); and, *secondly*, the instructions concerning the true worship of Jehovah (vv. 17–26). The warning against friendship with the idolatrous Canaanites (vv. 11–16) is more fully developed and more strongly enforced than in Exodus 23:23ff. The Israelites, when received into the covenant with Jehovah, were not only to beware of forming any covenant with the inhabitants of Canaan (cf. 23:32, 33), but were to destroy all the signs of their idolatrous worship, such as altars, monuments (see Exodus 23:24), and *asherim*, the idols of Astarte, the Canaanitish goddess of nature, which consisted for the most part of wooden pillars (see my Comm. on 1 Kings 14:23), and to worship no other god, because Jehovah was called jealous, i.e., had revealed Himself as jealous (see at Exodus 20:5), and was a jealous God. This was commanded, that the Israelites might not suffer themselves to be led astray by such an alliance; to go a whoring after their gods, and sacrifice to them, to take part in their sacrificial festivals, or to marry their sons to the daughters of the Canaanites, by whom they would be persuaded to join in the worship of idols. The use of the expression “go a whoring” in a spiritual sense, in relation to idolatry, is to be accounted for on the ground, that the religious fellowship of Israel with Jehovah was a covenant resembling the marriage tie; and we meet with it for the first time, here, immediately after the formation of this covenant between Israel and Jehovah. The phrase is all the more expressive on account of the literal prostitution that was frequently associated with the worship of Baal and Astarte (cf. Lev. 17:7; 20:5, 6; Num. 14:33, etc.). We may

see from Num. 25:1ff. how Israel was led astray by this temptation in the wilderness.

**Exodus 34:17–26.** The true way to worship Jehovah is then pointed out, first of all negatively, in the prohibition against making molten images, with an allusion to the worship of the golden calf, as evinced by the use of the expression **אֱלֹהֵי מִסֵּכָה**, which only occurs again in Lev. 19:4, instead of the phrase “gods of silver and gold” (Exodus 20:23); and then positively, by a command to observe the feast of *Mazzoth* and the consecration of the first-born connected with the Passover (see at Exodus 13:2, 11, and 12), also the Sabbath (v. 21), the feasts of Weeks and Ingathering, the appearance of the male members of the nation three times a year before the Lord (v. 22, see at Exodus 23:14–17), together with all the other instructions connected with them (vv. 25, 26). Before the last, however, the promise is introduced, that after the expulsion of the Canaanites, Jehovah would enlarge the borders of Israel (cf. 23:31), and make their land so secure, that when they went up to the Lord three times in the year, no one should desire their land, sc., because of the universal dread of the might of their God (Exodus 23:27).

**Exodus 34:27–35.** Moses was to write down these words, like the covenant rights and laws that had been given before (Exodus 24:4, 7), because Jehovah had concluded the covenant with Moses and Israel according to the tenor of them. By the renewed adoption of the nation, the covenant in Exodus 24 was *eo ipso* restored; so that no fresh conclusion of this covenant was necessary, and the writing down of the fundamental conditions of the covenant was merely intended as a proof of its restoration. It does not appear in the least degree “irreconcilable,” therefore, with the writing down of the covenant rights before *Knobel*).

**Exodus 34:28.** Moses remained upon the mountain forty days, just as on the former occasion (cf. 24:18). “*And He (Jehovah) wrote upon the tables the ten covenant words*” (see at v. 1).

**Exodus 34:29ff.** The sight of the glory of Jehovah, though only of the back or reflection of it, produced such an effect upon Moses' face, that the skin of it shone, though without Moses observing it. When he came down from the mountain with the tables of the law in his hand, and the skin of his face shone **בְּדָבְרוֹ אִתּוֹ**, i.e., on account of his talking with God, Aaron and the people were afraid to go near him when they saw the brightness of his face. But Moses called them to him,—Viz. first of all Aaron and the princes of the congregation to speak to them, and then all the people to give them the commandments of Jehovah; but on doing this (v. 33), he put a veil upon (before) his face, and only took it away when he went in before Jehovah to speak with Him, and then, when he came out (from the Lord out of the tabernacle, of course after the erection of the tabernacle), he made known His commands to the people. But while doing this, he put the veil upon his face again, and always wore it in his ordinary intercourse with the people (vv. 34, 35). This reflection of the splendour thrown back by the glory of God was henceforth to serve as the most striking proof of the confidential relation in which Moses stood to Jehovah, and to set forth the glory of the office which Moses filled. The Apostle Paul embraces this view in 2 Cor. 3:7ff., and lays stress upon the fact that the glory was to be done away, which he was quite justified in doing, although nothing is said in the Old Testament about the glory being transient, from the simple fact that Moses died. The apostle refers to it for the purpose of contrasting the perishable glory of the law with the far higher and imperishable glory of the Gospel. At the same time he regards the veil which covered Moses' face as a symbol of the obscuring of the truth revealed in the Old Testament. But this does not exhaust the significance of this splendour. The office could only confer such glory upon the possessor by virtue of the glory of the blessings which it contained, and conveyed to those for whom it was established. Consequently, the brilliant light on Moses' face also set forth the glory of

the Old Covenant, and was intended both for Moses and the people as a foresight and pledge of the glory to which Jehovah had called, and would eventually exalt, the people of His possession.

## Exodus 35

### ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE, AND PREPARATION OF THE APPARATUS OF WORSHIP.—CH. 35– 39.

**Exodus 35:1–36:7.** Preliminaries to the Work.—Ch. 35:1–29. After the restoration of the covenant, Moses announced to the people the divine commands with reference to the holy place of the tabernacle which was to be built. He repeated first of all (vv. 1–3) the law of the Sabbath according to Exodus 31:13–17, and strengthened it by the announcement, that on the Sabbath no fire was to be kindled in their dwelling, because this rule was to be observed even in connection with the work to be done for the tabernacle. (For a fuller comment, see at Exodus 20:9ff.). Then, in accordance with the command of Jehovah, he first of all summoned the whole nation to present freewill-offerings for the holy things to be prepared (vv. 4, 5), mentioning one by one all the materials that would be required (vv. 5–9, as in Exodus 25:3–7); and after that he called upon those who were endowed with understanding to prepare the different articles, as prescribed in Exodus 25–30, mentioning these also one by one (vv. 11–19), even down to the pegs of the dwelling and court (Exodus 27:19), and “their cords,” i.e., the cords required to fasten the tent and the hangings round the court to the pegs that were driven into the ground, which had not been mentioned before, being altogether subordinate things. (On the “cloths of service,” v. 19, see at Exodus 31:10.) In vv. 20–29 we have an account of the fulfilment of this command. The people went from Moses, i.e., from the place where they were assembled round Moses, away to their tents, and willingly offered the things

required as a heave-offering for Jehovah; every one "whom his heart lifted up," i.e., who felt himself inclined and stirred up in his heart to do this. The men along with (עַל as in Gen. 32:12; see *Ewald*, § 217) the women brought with a willing heart all kinds of golden rings and jewellery: *chak*, lit., hook, here a clasp or ring; *nezem*, an ear or nose-ring (Gen. 35:4; 24:47); *tabbaath*, a finger-ring; *cumaz*, *globulus aureus*, probably little golden balls strung together like beads, which were worn by the Israelites and Midianites (Num. 31:50) as an ornament round the wrist and neck, as *Diod. Sic.* relates that they were by the Arabians (3, 44). "All kinds of golden jewellery, and every one who had waved (dedicated) a wave (offering) of gold to Jehovah," sc., offered it for the work of the tabernacle. The meaning is, that in addition to the many varieties of golden ornaments, which were willingly offered for the work to be performed, every one brought whatever gold he had set apart as a wave-offering (a sacrificial gift) for Jehovah. הִנְיָ to wave, lit., to swing or move to and fro, is used in connection with the sacrificial ritual to denote a peculiar ceremony, through which certain portions of a sacrifice, which were not intended for burning upon the altar, but for the maintenance of the priests (Num. 18:11), were consecrated to the Lord, or given up to Him in a symbolical manner (see at Lev. 7:30). *Tenuphah*, the wave-offering, accordingly denoted primarily those portions of the sacrificial animal which were allotted to the priests as their share of the sacrifices; and then, in a more general sense, every gift or offering that was consecrated to the Lord for the establishment and maintenance of the sanctuary and its worship. In this wider sense the term *tenuphah* (wave-offering) is applied both here and in Exodus 38:24, 29 to the gold and copper presented by the congregation for the building of the tabernacle. So that it does not really differ from *terumah*, a lift of heave-offering, as every gift intended for the erection and maintenance of the sanctuary was called, inasmuch as the offerer lifted it off from his

own property, to dedicate it to the Lord for the purposes of His worship. Accordingly, in v. 24 the freewill-offerings of the people in silver and gold for the erection of the tabernacle are called *terumah*; and in Exodus 36:6, all the gifts of metal, wood, leather, and woven materials, presented by the people for the erection of the tabernacle, are called תְּרוּמַת קֹדֶשׁ. (On heaving and the heave-offering, see at Exodus 25:2 and Lev. 2:9.)

**Exodus 35:25, 26.** All the women who understood it (were wise-hearted, as in Exodus 28:3) spun with their hands, and presented what they spun, viz., the yarn required for the blue and red purple cloth, the crimson and the byssus; from which it is evident that the coloured cloths were dyed in the yarn or in the wool, as was the case in Egypt according to different specimens of old Egyptian cloths (see *Hengstenberg*, *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, p. 144). Other women spun goats' hair for the upper or outer covering of the tent (Exodus 26:7ff.). Spinning was done by the women in very early times (*Plin. hist. n.* 8, 48), particularly in Egypt, where women are represented on the monuments as busily engaged with the spindle (see *Wilkinson*, *Manners* ii. p. 60; iii. p. 133, 136), and at a later period among the Hebrews (Prov. 31:19). At the present day the women in the peninsula of Sinai spin the materials for their tents from camels' and goats' hair, and prepare sheep's wool for their clothing (*Rüppell*, *Nubien*, p. 202); and at Neswa, in the province of *Omän*, the preparation of cotton yarn is the principal employment of the women (*Wellstedt*, i. p. 90). Weaving also was, and still is to a great extent, a woman's work (cf. 2 Kings 23:7); it is so among the Arab tribes in the Wady Gharandel, for example (*Russegger*, iii. 24), and in Nubia (*Burckhardt*, *Nub.* p. 211); but at Neswa the weaving is done by the men (*Wellstedt*). The woven cloths for the tabernacle were prepared by men, partly perhaps because the weaving in Egypt was mostly done by the men (*Herod.* 2, 35; cf. *Hengstenberg*, p. 143), but chiefly for this reason, that the cloths for the hangings and curtains were artistic works,

which the women did not understand, but which the men had learned in Egypt, where artistic weaving was carried out to a great extent (*Wilkinson*, iii. pp. 113ff.).<sup>70</sup>

**Exodus 35:27, 28.** The precious stones for the robes of the high priest, and the spices for the incense and anointing oil, were presented by the princes of the congregation, who had such costly things in their possession.

### Exodus 36

**Exodus 35:30–36:7.** Moses then informed the people that God had called *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* as master-builders, to complete the building and all the work connected with it, and had not only endowed them with His Spirit, that they might draw the plans for the different works and carry them out, but “had put it into his (Bezaleel’s) heart to teach” (v. 34), that is to say, had qualified him to instruct labourers to prepare the different articles under his supervision and guidance. “*He and Aholiab*” (v. 34) are in apposition to “*his heart:*” into his and Aholiab’s heart (see Ges. § 121, 3; Ewald, § 311 a). The concluding words in v. 35 are in

apposition to אֹתָם (*them*): “*them* hath He filled with wisdom ... as performers of every kind of work and inventors of designs,” i.e., that they may make every kind of work and may invent designs. In Exodus 36:1, וַעֲשֶׂה with *vav consec.*

is dependent upon what precedes, and signifies either, “and so will make,” or, so that he will make (see *Ewald*, § 342 b). The idea is this, “Bezaleel, Aholiab, and the other men who understand, into whom Jehovah has infused (נָתַן) wisdom and understanding, that they may know how to do, shall do every work for the holy service (worship) with regard to (לְ) as in Exodus 28:38, etc.) all that Jehovah has commanded.”

**Exodus 36:2–7.** Moses then summoned the master-builders named, and all who were skilled in art, “*every one whom his heart lifted up to come near to the work to do it*” (i.e., who felt

himself stirred up in heart to take part in the work), and handed over to them the heaven-offering presented by the people for that purpose, whilst the children of Israel still continued bringing freewill-offerings every morning.

**Exodus 36:4.** Then the wise workmen came, every one from his work that they were making, and said to Moses, “*Much make the people to bring, more than suffices for the labour* (the finishing, as in Exodus 27:19) *of the work,*” i.e., they are bringing more than will be wanted

for carrying out the work (the מִן in מְדִי is comparative); whereupon Moses let the cry go through the camp, i.e., had proclamation made, “No one is to make any more property

(מְלֶאכָה as in Exodus 22:7, 10, cf. Gen. 33:14)

for a holy heave-offering,” i.e., to prepare anything more from his own property to offer for the building of the sanctuary; and with this he put a stop to any further offerings.

**Exodus 36:7.** “*And there was enough* (דָּיְקָם their sufficiency, i.e., the requisite supply for the different things to be made) *of the property for every work to make it, and over*” (lit., and to leave some over). By this liberal contribution of freewill gifts, for the work commanded by the Lord, the people proved their willingness to uphold their covenant relationship with Jehovah their God.

### Exodus 37 and 38

**Exodus 36:8–38:20.** Execution of the Work.—Preparation of the *dwelling-place*: viz., the hangings and covering (Exodus 36:8–19, as in Exodus 26:1–14); the wooden boards and bolts (vv. 20–34, as in Exodus 26:15–30); the two curtains, with the pillars, hooks, and rods that supported them (vv. 35–38, as in Exodus 26:31–37). As these have all been already explained, the only thing remaining to be

noticed here is, that the verbs עָשָׂה in v. 8,

וַיַּחֲבֵר in v. 10, etc., are in the third person

singular with an indefinite subject, corresponding to the German *man* (the French *on*).—Preparation of the *vessels of the dwelling*: viz., the ark of the covenant (Exodus 37:1–9, as in Exodus 25:10–22); the table of shew-bread and its vessels (vv. 10–16, as in Exodus 25:23–30); the candlestick (vv. 17–24, as in Exodus 25:31–40); the altar of incense (vv. 25–28, as in Exodus 30:1–10); the anointing oil and incense (v. 29), directions for the preparation of which are given in Exodus 30:22–38; the altar of burnt-offering (Exodus 38:1–7, as in Exodus 27:1–8); the laver (v. 8, as in Exodus 30:17–21); and the court (vv. 9–20, as in Exodus 27:9–19). The order corresponds on the whole to the list of the separate articles in Exodus 35:11–19, and to the construction of the entire sanctuary; but the holy chest (the ark), as being the most holy thing of all, is distinguished above all the rest, by being expressly mentioned as the work of Bezaleel, the chief architect of the whole.

**Exodus 38:21–31.** Estimate of the Amount of Metal Used.—V. 21. *“These are the numbered things of the dwelling, of the dwelling of the testimony, that were numbered at the command of Moses, through the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest.”*

פְּקוּדֵיִם does not mean the numbering

(equivalent to מִפְּקָד 2 Sam. 4:9, or פְּקֻדָּה 2 Chron. 17:14; 26:11), as *Knobel* supposes, but here as elsewhere, even in Num. 26:63, 64, it signifies “the numbered;” the only difference being, that in most cases it refers to persons, here to things, and that the reckoning consisted not merely in the counting and entering of the different things, but in ascertaining their weight and estimating their worth. *Lyra* has given the following correct rendering of this heading: *“haec est summa numeri ponderis eorum, quae facta sunt in tabernaculo ex auro, argento et aere.”* It was apparently superfluous to enumerate the different articles again, as this had been repeatedly done before. The weight of the different metals, therefore, is all that is given. The “dwelling” is still further described as “the dwelling of the testimony,” because the

testimony, i.e., the decalogue written with the finger of God upon the tables of stone, was kept in the dwelling, and this testimony formed the base of the throne of Jehovah, and was the material pledge that Jehovah would cause His name, His manifested presence, to dwell there, and would thus show Himself to His people in grace and righteousness. “That which was numbered” is an explanatory apposition to the previous clause, “the numbering of the

dwelling;” and the words עֲבַדַּת הַלְוִיִּם, which follow, are an *accusative* construed freely to indicate more particularly the mode of numbering (*Ewald*, § 204 a), viz., “through the service,” or “by means of the service of the Levites,” not *for* their service. “By the hand of Ithamar:” who presided over the calculations which the Levites carried out under his superintendence.

**Exodus 38:22, 23.** The allusion to the service of the Levites under Ithamar leads the historian to mention once more the architects of the whole building, and the different works connected with it (cf. Exodus 31:2ff.).

**Exodus 38:24.** “(As for) *all the gold that was used (הַעֲשׂוּי) for the work in every kind of holy work, the gold of the wave-offering* (the gold that was offered as a wave-offering, see at Exodus 35:22) *was (amounted to) 29 talents and 730 shekels in holy shekel,*” that is to say, 87,370 shekels or 877,300 thalers (L.131,595), if we accept *Thenius*’ estimate, that the gold shekel was worth 10 thalers (L.1, 10s.), which is probably very near the truth.

**Exodus 38:25ff.** Of the silver, all that is mentioned is the amount of atonement-money raised from those who were numbered (see at Exodus 30:12ff.) at the rate of half a shekel for every male, without including the freewill-offerings of silver (Exodus 35:24, cf. Exodus 25:3), whether it was that they were too insignificant, or that they were not used for the work, but were placed with the excess mentioned in Exodus 36:7. The result of the numbering gave 603,550 men, every one of

whom paid half a shekel. This would yield 301,775 shekels, or 100 talents and 1775 shekels, which proves by the way that a talent contained 3000 shekels. A hundred talents of this were used for casting 96 sockets for the 48 boards, and 4 sockets for the 4 pillars of the inner court,—one talent therefore for each socket,—and the 1775 shekels for the hooks of the pillars that sustained the curtains, for silvering their capitals, and “for binding the pillars,” i.e., for making the silver connecting rods for the pillars of the court (Exodus 27:10, 11; 38:10ff.).

**Exodus 38:29ff.** The copper of the wave-offering amounted to 70 talents and 2400 shekels; and of this the sockets of the pillars at the entrance of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:37), the altar of burnt-offering with its network and vessels, the supports of the pillars of the court, all the pegs of the dwelling and court, and, what is not expressly mentioned here, the laver with its support (Exodus 30:18), were made. עֲשֶׂה

עָ to work in (with) copper, i.e., to make of copper.

If this quantity of the precious metals may possibly strike some readers as very large, and was in fact brought forward years ago as a reason for questioning the historical credibility of our account of the building of the tabernacle, it has been frequently urged, on the other hand, that it looks quite small, in comparison with the quantities of gold and silver that have been found accumulated in the East, in both ancient and modern times. According to the account before us, the requisite amount of silver was raised by the comparatively small payment of half a shekel, about fifteen pence, for every male Israelite of 20 years old and upwards. Now no tenable objection can be raised against the payment of such a tribute, since we have no reason whatever for supposing the Israelites to have been paupers, notwithstanding the oppression which they endured during the closing period of their stay in Egypt. They were settled in the most fertile part of Egypt; and coined silver was current in western Asia even

in the time of the patriarchs (Gen. 23:16). But with reference to the quantities of gold and copper that were delivered, we need not point to the immense stores of gold and other metals that were kept in the capitals of the Asiatic kingdoms of antiquity,<sup>71</sup> but will merely call to mind the fact, that the kings of Egypt possessed many large gold mines on the frontiers of the country, and in the neighbouring lands of Arabia and Ethiopia, which were worked by criminals, prisoners of war, and others, under the harshest pressure, and the very earliest times copper mines were discovered on the Arabian peninsula, which were worked by a colony of labourers (*Lepsius*, Letters from Egypt, p. 336). Moreover, the love of the ancient Egyptians for valuable and elegant ornaments, gold rings, necklaces, etc., is sufficiently known from the monuments (see *Rosellini* in *Hengstenberg's* Egypt, p. 137). Is it not likely, then, that the Israelites should have acquired a taste for jewellery of this kind, and should have possessed or discovered the means of procuring all kinds of gold and silver decorations, not to mention the gold and silver jewellery which they received from the Egyptians on their departure? The liking for such things even among nomad tribes is very well known. Thus, for example, after the defeat of the Midianites, the Israelites carried off so much gold, silver, copper, and other metals as spoil, that their princes alone were able to offer 16,750 shekels of gold as a heave-offering to Jehovah from the booty that had been obtained in this kind of jewellery (Num. 31:50ff.). *Diodorus Sic.* (3, 44) and *Strabo* (xvi. p. 778) bear witness to the great wealth of the Nabateans and other Arab tribes on the Elanitic Gulf, and mention not only a river, said to flow through the land, carrying gold dust with it, but also gold that was dug up, and which was found, “not in the form of sand, but of nuggets, which did not require much cleaning, and the smallest of which were of the size of a nut, the average size being that of a medlar, whilst the largest pieces were as big as a walnut. These they bored, and made necklaces or bracelets by stringing them together alternately with

transparent stones. They also sold the gold very cheap to their neighbours, giving three times the quantity for copper, and double the quantity for iron, both on account of their inability to work these metals, and also because of the scarcity of the metals which were so much more necessarily for daily use" (*Strabo*). The Sabaeans and Gerrhaeans are also mentioned as the richest of all the tribes of Arabia, through their trade in incense and in cinnamon and other spices.<sup>72</sup> From the Arabs, who carried on a very extensive caravan trade through the desert even at that time, the Israelites would be able to purchase such spices and materials for the building of the tabernacle as they had not brought with them from Egypt; and in Egypt itself, where all descriptions of art and handicraft were cultivated from the very earliest times (for proofs see *Hengst. Egypt*, pp. 133–139), they might so far have acquired all the mechanical and artistic ability required for the work, that skilled artisans could carry out all that was prescribed, under the superintendence of the two master-builders who had been specially inspired for the purpose.

### Exodus 39

**Exodus 39:1–31.** *Preparation of the priests' clothes.*—Previous to the description of the dress itself, we have a statement in v. 1 of the materials employed, and the purpose to which they were devoted ("cloths of service," see at Exodus 31:10). The robes consisted of the *ephod* (vv. 2–7, as in Exodus 28:6–12), the *choshen* or breastplate (vv. 8–21, as in Exodus 28:15–29), the *meil* or over-coat (vv. 22–26, as in Exodus 28:31–34); the *body-coats*, *turbans*, *drawers*, and *girdles*, for Aaron and his sons (vv. 27–29, as in Exodus 28:39, 40, and 42). The Urim and Thummim are not mentioned (cf. Exodus 28:30). The head-dresses of the ordinary priests, which are simply called "bonnets" in Exodus 28:40, are called "goodly bonnets" or "ornamental caps" in v. 28 of this chapter (פְּאֵרִי מְגַבְעוֹת, from פְּאֵרָאן

ornament, cf. פְּאֵרָאן *ornatus fuit*). The singular, "girdle," in v. 29, with the definite article, "the girdle," might appear to refer simply to Aaron's girdle, i.e., the girdle of the high priest; but as there is no special description of the girdles of Aaron's sons (the ordinary priests) in Exodus 29:40, where they are distinctly mentioned and called by the same name (*abnet*) as the girdle of Aaron himself, we can only conclude that they were of the same materials and the same form and make as the latter, and that the singular,

הָאֲבֵנִי, is used here either in the most general manner, or as a generic noun in a collective sense (see *Ges.* § 109, 1). The last thing mentioned is the diadem upon Aaron's turban (vv. 30, 31, as in Exodus 28:36–38), so that the order in which the priests' robes are given here is analogous to the position in which the ark of the covenant and the golden altar stand to one another in the directions concerning the sacred things in Exodus 25–30. "For just as all the other things are there placed between the holy ark and the golden altar as the two poles, so here all the rest of the priests' robes are included between the shoulder-dress, the principal part of the official robes of the high priest, and the golden frontlet, the inscription upon which rendered it the most striking sign of the dignity of his office" (*Baumgarten*).

**Exodus 39:32–43.** *Delivery of the work to Moses.*—The different things are again mentioned one by one. By "the tent," in v. 33, we are to understand the two tent-cloths, the one of purple and the other of goats' hair, by which the *dwelling* (מִשְׁכָּן, generally rendered tabernacle) was made into a *tent* (אֹהֶל). From this it is perfectly obvious, that the variegated cloth formed the inner walls of the dwelling, or covered the boards on the inner side, and that the goats' hair-cloth formed the other covering. Moreover it is also obvious, that this is the way in which הָאֹהֶל is to be understood, from the fact, that in the list of the things belonging to

the *ohel* the first to be mentioned are the gold and copper hooks (Exodus 26:6, 11) with which the two halves of the drapery that formed the tent were joined together, and then after that the boards, bolts, pillars, and sockets, as though subordinate to the tent-cloths, and only intended to answer the purpose of spreading them out into a tent of dwelling.

**Exodus 39:37.** “*The lamps of the order,*” i.e., the lamps set in order upon the candlestick. In addition to all the vessels of the sanctuary, shew-bread (v. 36), holy oil for the candlestick and for anointing, and fragrant incense (v. 38), were also prepared and delivered to Moses,—everything, therefore, that was required for the institution of the daily worship, as soon as the tabernacle was set up.

**Exodus 39:40.** “*Vessels of service:*” see Exodus 27:19.

**Exodus 39:43.** When Moses had received and examined all the different articles, and found that everything was made according to the directions of Jehovah, he blessed the children of Israel. The readiness and liberality with which the people had presented the gifts required for this work, and the zeal which they had shown in executing the whole of the work in rather less than half a year (see at Exodus 40:17), were most cheering signs of the willingness of the Israelites to serve the Lord, for which they could not fail to receive the blessing of God.

## Exodus 40

### Erection and Consecration of the Tabernacle

**Exodus 40:1–16.** After the completion of all the works, the command was given by God to Moses to set up the dwelling of the tabernacle on the first day of the first month (see at Exodus 19:1), sc., in the second year of the Exodus (see v. 17), and to put all the vessels, both of the dwelling and court, in the places appointed by God; also to furnish the table of shew-bread with its fitting out (עָרַךְ = עָרְפוּ)

לָחֶם v. 23), i.e., to arrange the bread upon it in the manner prescribed (v. 4 cf. Lev. 24:6, 7),

and to put water in the laver of the court (v. 7). After that he was to anoint the dwelling and everything in it, also the altar of burnt-offering and laver, with the anointing oil, and to sanctify them (vv. 9–11); and to consecrate Aaron and his sons before the door of the tabernacle, and clothe them, anoint them, and sanctify them as priests (vv. 12–15). When we read here, however, that the dwelling and the vessels therein would be rendered “*holy*” through the anointing, but the altar of burnt-offering “*most holy,*” we are not to understand this as attributing a higher degree of holiness to the altar of burnt-offering than to the dwelling and its furniture; but the former is called “*most holy*” merely in the sense ascribed to it in Exodus 30:10 namely, that every one who touched it was to become holy; in other words, the distinction has reference to the fact, that, standing as it did in the court, it was more exposed to contact from the people than the vessels in the dwelling, which no layman was allowed to enter. In this relative sense we find the same statement in Exodus 30:29, with reference to the tabernacle and all the vessels therein, the dwelling as well as the court, that they would become *most holy* in consequence of the anointing (see the remarks on Exodus 30:10). It is stated provisionally, in v. 16, that this command was fulfilled by Moses. But from the further history we find that the consecration of the priests did not take place contemporaneously with the erection of the tabernacle, but somewhat later, or not till after the promulgation of the laws of sacrifice (cf. Lev. 8 and Lev. 1:1ff.).

**Exodus 40:17–33.** On the day mentioned in v. 2 the dwelling and court were erected. As not quite nine months had elapsed between the arrival of the Israelites at Sinai, in the third month after the Exodus (Exodus 19:1), and the first day of the second year, when the work was finished and handed over to Moses, the building, and all the work connected with it, had not occupied quite half a year; as we have to deduct from the nine months (or somewhat less) not only the eighty days which Moses spent upon Sinai (Exodus 24:18; 34:28), but the

days of preparation for the giving of the law and conclusion of the covenant (Exodus 19:1–24:11), and the interval between the first and second stay that Moses made upon the mountain (Exodus 32 and 33). The erection of the dwelling commenced with the fixing of the sockets, into which the boards were placed and fastened with their bolts, and the setting up of the pillars for the curtains (v. 18). “He (Moses) then spread the tent over the dwelling, and laid the covering of the tent upon the top.” By the “covering of the tent” we are to understand the two coverings, made of red rams’ skins and the skins of the sea-cow (Exodus 26:14). In analogy

with this, פָּרֶשׁ אֶת-הָאֵלֶּל denotes not only the roofing with the goats’ hair, but the spreading out of the inner cloth of mixed colours upon the wooden frame-work.

**Exodus 40:20–21.** *Arrangement of the ark.* “He took and put the testimony into the ark.”

הַעֲדוּת does not mean “the revelation, so far as it existed already, viz., with regard to the erection of the sanctuary and institution of the priesthood (Exodus 25–31), and so forth,” as *Knobel* arbitrarily supposes, but “the testimony,” i.e., the decalogue written upon the two tables of stone, or the tables of the covenant with the ten words; “the testimony,” therefore, is an abbreviated expression for “the tables of testimony” (Exodus 31:18, see at Exodus 25:16). After the ark had been brought into the dwelling, he “hung the curtain” (vail, see at Exodus 26:31; lit., placed it upon the hooks of the pillars), “and so covered over the ark of the testimony,” since the ark, when placed in the back part of the dwelling, was covered or concealed from persons entering the dwelling or the holy place.

**Exodus 40:22–28.** *Arrangement of the front room of the dwelling.* The table was placed on the right side, towards the north, and the shew-bread was laid upon it. עֵרֶךְ לֶחֶם does not signify “a row of bread,” but the “position or placing of bread;” for, according to Lev. 24:6, 7, the twelve loaves of shew-bread were placed

upon the table in two rows, corresponding to the size of the tables (two cubits long and one cubit broad). The candlestick was placed upon the left side, opposite to the table, and the golden altar in front of the curtain, i.e., midway between the two sides, but near the curtain in front of the most holy place (see at Exodus 30:6). After these things had been placed, the curtain was hung in the door of the dwelling.

**Exodus 40:29–32.** The altar of burnt-offering was then placed “before the door of the dwelling of the tabernacle,” and the laver “between the tabernacle and the altar;” from which it is evident that the altar was not placed close to the entrance to the dwelling, but at some distance off, though in a straight line with the door. The laver, which stood between the altar and the entrance to the dwelling, was probably placed more to the side; so that when the priests washed their hands and feet, before entering the dwelling or approaching the altar, there was no necessity for them to go round the altar, or to pass close by it, in order to get to the laver. Last of all the court was erected round about the dwelling and the altar, by the setting up of the pillars, which enclosed the space round the dwelling and the altar with their drapery, and the hanging up of the curtain at the entrance to the court. There is no allusion to the anointing of these holy places and things, as commanded in vv. 9–11, in the account of their erection; for this did not take place till afterwards, viz., at the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests (Lev. 8:10, 11). It is stated, however, on the other hand, that as the vessels were arranged, Moses laid out the shew-bread upon the table (v. 23), burned sweet incense upon the golden altar (v. 27), and offered “the burnt-offering and meat-offering,” i.e., the daily morning and evening sacrifice, upon the altar of burnt-offering (Exodus 29:38–42). Consequently the sacrificial service was performed upon them before they had been anointed. Although this may appear surprising, there is no ground for rejecting a conclusion, which follows so naturally from the words of the text. The tabernacle and its furniture were not made holy things for the first time by the

anointing; this simply sanctified them for the use of the nation, i.e., for the service which the priests were to perform in connection with them on behalf of the congregation (see at Lev. 8:10, 11). They were made holy things and holy vessels by the fact that they were built, prepared, and set up, according to the instructions given by Jehovah; and still more by the fact, that after the tabernacle had been erected as a dwelling, the "glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (v. 34). But the glory of the Lord entered the dwelling before the consecration of the priests, and the accompanying anointing of the tabernacle and its vessels; for, according to Lev. 1:1ff., it was from the tabernacle that Jehovah spake to Moses, when He gave him the laws of sacrifice, which were promulgated before the consecration of the priests, and were carried out in connection with it. But when the glory of the Lord had found a dwelling-place in the tabernacle, Moses was not required to offer continually the sacrifice prescribed for every morning and evening, and by means of this sacrifice to place the congregation in spiritual fellowship with its God, until Aaron and his sons had been consecrated for this service.

**Exodus 40:34–38.** When the sanctuary, that had been built for the Lord for a dwelling in Israel, had been set up with all its apparatus, *"the cloud covering the tabernacle, and the glory of Jehovah filled the dwelling,"* so that Moses was unable to enter. The cloud, in which Jehovah had hitherto been present with His people, and guided and protected them upon their journeying (see at Exodus 13:21, 22), now came down upon the tabernacle and filled the dwelling with the gracious presence of the Lord. So long as this cloud rested upon the tabernacle the children of Israel remained encamped; but when it ascended, they broke up the encampment to proceed onwards. This sign was Jehovah's command for encamping or going forward "throughout all their journeys" (vv. 36–38). This statement is repeated still more elaborately in Num. 9:15–23. The mode in which the glory of Jehovah filled the dwelling, or in which Jehovah manifested His presence

within it, is not described; but the glory of Jehovah filling the dwelling is clearly distinguished from the cloud coming down upon the tabernacle. It is obvious, however, from Lev. 16:2, and 1 Kings 8:10, 11, that in the dwelling the glory of God was also manifested in a cloud. At the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:10, 11) the expression "the cloud filled the house of Jehovah" is used interchangeably with "the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah." To consecrate the sanctuary, which had been finished and erected as His dwelling, and to give to the people a visible proof that He had chosen it for His dwelling, Jehovah filled the dwelling in both its parts with the cloud which shadowed forth His presence, so that Moses was unable to enter it. This cloud afterwards drew back into the most holy place, to dwell there, above the outspread wings of the cherubim of the ark of the covenant; so that Moses and (at a later period) the priests were able to enter the holy place and perform the required service there, without seeing the sign of the gracious presence of God, which was hidden by the curtain of the most holy place. So long as the Israelites were on their journey to Canaan, the presence of Jehovah was manifested outwardly and visibly by the cloud, which settled upon the ark, and rose up from it when they were to travel onward.

With the completion of this building and its divine consecration, Israel had now received a real pledge of the permanence of the covenant of grace, which Jehovah had concluded with it; a sanctuary which perfectly corresponded to the existing circumstances of its religious development, and kept constantly before it the end of its calling from God. For although God dwelt in the tabernacle in the midst of His people, and the Israelites might appear before Him, to pray for and receive the covenant blessings that were promised them, they were still forbidden to go directly to God's throne of grace. The barrier, which sin had erected between the holy God and the unholy nation, was not yet taken away. To this end the law was given, which could only increase their consciousness of sin and unworthiness before

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God. But as this barrier had already been broken through by the promise of the Lord, that He would meet the people in His glory before the door of the tabernacle at the altar of burnt-offering (Exodus 24:42, 43); so the entrance of the chosen people into the dwelling of God was effected mediatorially by the service of the sanctified priests in the holy place, which also prefigured their eventual reception into the house of the Lord. And even the curtain, which still hid the glory of God from the chosen priests and sanctified mediators of the nation, was to be lifted at least once a year by the anointed priest, who had been called by God to be the representative of the whole

congregation. On the day of atonement the high priest was to sprinkle the blood of atonement in front of the throne of grace, to make expiation for the children of Israel because of all their sin (Lev. 16), and to prefigure the perfect atonement through the blood of the eternal Mediator, through which the way to the throne of grace is opened to all believers, that they may go into the house of God and abide there for ever, and for ever see God.