

Old Testament History

FOR JUNIOR CLASSES

BY

THE REV. T. H. STOKOE, D.D.

Late Head Master of King's College School, London

PART I

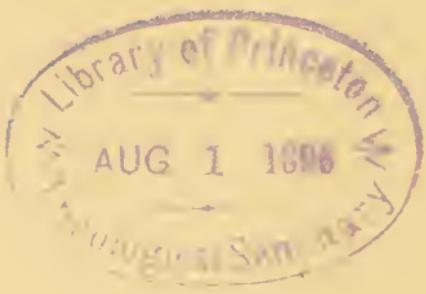
FROM THE CREATION
TO THE SETTLEMENT IN PALESTINE

OXFORD: AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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WITH MAPS

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is intended for the lower Forms of Public Schools, for Preparatory Schools, and for other elementary instruction in Scripture History.

It is an attempt to supply a want which has been expressed to me, and which I believe to be felt by many, who wish their pupils to be familiarized with the language of the Bible, and at the same time recognize the importance of some general knowledge of Old Testament History.

I have endeavoured, by clearness of arrangement and simplicity of language, to make the book intelligible to young learners; and, by leaving the use or omission of parts of the notes, and the manner of using them, to the discretion of Teachers, (as explained in the ‘Plan of the Work’ which follows), to adapt it to classes differing somewhat in age and attainment. I hope that, where it is considered unadvisable to include all these notes in the lessons to be learned, they may still be of some service to Teachers; many of whom, in the

pressure of general school-work, have little time for the careful preparation of Bible lessons.

I wish to express my thanks to Archdeacon Palmer, who has most kindly looked through the proofs of the work, and made many valuable suggestions; and to Mr. Courtier, who has been good enough to revise the geographical portions.

T. H. S.

OXFORD,
September, 1895.

PLAN OF THE WORK

THE Old Testament History is divided into three parts :—

PART I. From the Creation to the Settlement in Palestine.

PART II. From the Settlement to the Disruption of the Kingdom.

PART III. From the Disruption to the Return from the Captivity.

Each Part contains thirty-two or thirty-three passages, selected for their historical or practical importance, or both ; so as to provide one lesson for each week of the School year, allowing for times of revision, examination, &c. The notes to be learned with each selection are printed on the opposite page.

An abstract of the intervening history is given in each case, so as to make the position and connexion of the selections clear. One such abstract may be included in the same lesson with the selection immediately before or after it. Or, if this is considered too long for preparation, the abstract may be taken as a separate lesson, or read to the class before or after the lesson.

Any or all of the notes in smaller type opposite to the abstracts and at the foot of the selections may be used or not at discretion. If used, they may either be included in the lesson to be prepared, or read and explained by Masters

or Teachers, according to the capacity of the class, the time allowed for the lesson, &c.

The history is grouped round the leading personages of each period. The illustration of the chief events and characters by quotations from other parts of the Bible is made an important feature in the notes; and, to ensure attention to these, and avoid the waste of time in hunting out references, many of them are quoted in full. A full Index is added to each Part and some Maps taken (by permission) from the Oxford Helps to the Study of the Bible.

Passages from the Book of Psalms are taken from the more familiar Prayer Book Version.

LXX stands for the Septuagint, or Greek Version of the Old Testament.

R.V. stands for the Revised Version.

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PART I

FROM THE CREATION TO THE SETTLEMENT
IN PALESTINE

The fifth day is given to the creation of the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea.

To these are added on the sixth day the rest of the animal creation, the beasts and other living creatures of the earth.

On the same day, as the crowning work of creation, man is made ‘in God’s image, after His likeness.’ He is to have the dominion over all created things.

On the seventh day God ‘rests from all His work which He has made³.’

Man is placed in a garden ‘eastward in Eden,’ ‘to dress it and to keep it.’ He has leave to eat of every tree of the garden, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The animals are brought to him to name them.

Woman is made to be ‘an help meet for him.’

I. ADAM AND EVE. THE FALL.

GENESIS iii.

III. 1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

'a scientific account,' but it is a preface to all the revelation which is to follow, showing the power and goodness of God, and the high destiny of man 'made in the image of God.'

Some have said that the days are long periods of time. Others have called the account 'a Hymn'; others, again, a 'Vision' or 'Poem of Creation.'

³ This is the origin of the 'sabbath,' or 'day of rest.' For this, as we are told in the second commandment, God 'blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.'

The first account of the actual observance of the sabbath is in connexion with the giving of manna (*Exod. xvi. 23, 30*). In *Deut. v. 15* it is said that it was also to be a memorial of deliverance from the bondage in Egypt.

We know how this commandment was abused, and made an occasion of burdensome restrictions, which our Lord rebuked both by precept and example, declaring and showing that 'the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath' (*Mark ii. 27*).

With the change from the seventh to the first day, the day of our Lord's Resurrection, new ideas have been introduced. The motto of the Christian Sunday is, 'Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God' (*Col. iii. 1*).

In *Heb. iv. 9* the sabbath is made a type of the final rest: 'There remaineth therefore a rest (a sabbath-keeping) for the people of God.'

I. ADAM AND EVE. THE FALL.

GENESIS iii.

III. 1. The serpent is regarded by most Eastern nations as a figure of the spirit of evil.

St. Paul says, 'The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety' (*2 Cor. xi. 3*).

2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden :

3. But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die :

5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her ; and he did eat.

7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked ; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day : and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou ?

10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked ; and I hid myself.

11. And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked ? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat ?

12. And the man said, The woman whom thou

St. John speaks of ‘that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world’ (Rev. xii. 9).

6. We have here the three classes of temptations to sin, as described by St. John (1 John ii. 16) : ‘the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.’

The same are represented again in our Lord’s temptation. He is tempted to command that the stones be made bread, to satisfy the appetite ; to be led astray by the fair sight of the kingdoms of the world ; to cast Himself down in proud confidence from the pinnacle of the Temple (Matt. iv ; Luke iv).

St. Paul refers to this temptation of Adam and Eve in 1 Tim. ii. 14 : ‘Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.’

8. ‘God is a Spirit’ (John iv. 24). But, to make the accounts of what He does simpler, He is often spoken of in the Bible as if He were really like men. So we read of ‘the eyes,’ ‘the voice,’ ‘the arm of the Lord,’ &c. ^a

^a This is called ‘anthropomorphism’; from two Greek words, ἄνθρωπος, a man, and μορφή, shape.

gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;

18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

20. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

12, 13. Thus both the man and the woman try to make others bear the blame of their weakness and sin. This is the first instance of the common and mischievous habit of ‘making excuses.’

One of our Lord’s parables, the Great Supper, tells of those who make excuses for rejecting the invitation of God (Luke xiv. 16-24).

15. This is the first prophecy of the Messiah. It foretells the great conflict between good and evil, and the final triumph of good through the victory which Jesus Christ, who was the ‘seed’ of the woman, ‘born of the Virgin Mary,’ won over sin and death.

St. Paul speaks of this triumph as taking ‘the sting’ from death and ‘the victory’ from the grave; and says that ‘as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (1 Cor. xv. 55, 22).

He must have had these same words in his mind when he wrote to the Romans (xvi. 20): ‘The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.’

We may also compare with this 1 John iii. 8: ‘For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.’

19. Compare with the last part of this verse Eccles. xii. 7:

22. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23. Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

II. CAIN AND ABEL.

GENESIS iv. 1-16.

IV. 1. And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

2. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.'

24. These Cherubims were angels. In the 'Te Deum' they are coupled with the Seraphim : 'To Thee Cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry.' In Ps. xviii. 10 God is described as 'riding upon the Cherubims.'

Golden figures of Cherubims were afterwards placed at each end of the mercy-seat, or covering of the ark in the tabernacle (Exod. xxv. 19, 20), and in the Temple (1 Kings viii. 7).

These are referred to in Heb. ix. 5 as 'the Cherubims of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat.'

II. CAIN AND ABEL.

GENESIS iv. 1-16.

IV. 1. Cain means 'possession.' Eve's words seem to imply that she thought Cain was the promised 'seed.'

2. Abel means 'vapour' or 'vanity.' The name probably foretold his short life, or perhaps was given afterwards, as a memorial of his early death.

3. 'In process of time' may mean 'at the end of the year,' or 'after many years.'

This is the first actual mention of sacrifice, which was a very important part of ancient worship.

Heathens offered sacrifices as 'gifts to the gods,' to win their favour, or to avert their punishments, or to show thankfulness to them.

Under the law of Moses a complete system of sacrifices was sanctioned by God, all being typical of the 'one sufficient sacrifice' of Jesus Christ.

But the best and wisest Jews always felt that there was something higher than the offering of such victims to God;

6. And the **LORD** said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth ? and why is thy countenance fallen ?

7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother : and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9. And the **LORD** said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother ? And he said, I know not : *Am I* my brother's keeper ?

10. And he said, What hast thou done ? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11. And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand ;

12. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength ; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13. And Cain said unto the **LORD**, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear.

the sacrifice of our selfish desires and will. Thus Samuel told Saul that ‘to obey is better than sacrifice’ (1 Sam. xv. 22).

Jesus Christ has taught us by His life and death that the acceptable sacrifice is to live ‘not unto ourselves, but unto Him which died for us and rose again’ (2 Cor. v. 15) ^a.

4. In Heb. xi. 4 it is said that ‘by faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts ; and by it he being dead yet speaketh.’

7. ‘Sin lieth at the door’ may mean either :

- (a) That sin lieth or coucheth for the man who gives way to wicked thoughts, like a wild beast for its prey ; or,
- (b) That sin shuts the door against God’s favour ; or,
- (c) That the punishment for sin is at hand.

Others think that the word for sin means a sin-offering, which the sinner must at once offer to God.

If in the latter part of the verse Abel’s ‘desire’ is spoken of, the meaning is that Cain shall still have the privileges of the firstborn, and need not be jealous.

Others think the words mean that the evil passion ‘desires’ to get Cain into its power.

8. St. John (1 John iii. 12) speaks of ‘Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.’

St. Jude (ver. 11) selects Cain, with Balaam and Korah, as types of the wicked in all ages : ‘Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain,’ &c.

10. Our Lord speaks of ‘the blood of righteous Abel’ (Matt. xxiii. 35 ; Luke xi. 51).

In Heb. xii. 24 we read of ‘the blood of sprinkling’ (i. e.

^a In Ps. xl. 8 we find, ‘Sacrifice and meat offering Thou wouldest not, but Mine ears hast Thou opened.’ This passage is referred to our Lord in Heb. x. 5, with the remarkable change, ‘but a body hast Thou prepared Me,’ which words (taken from the LXX) seem to tell of the Incarnation, ‘the Word made flesh.’

14. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth ; and from thy face shall I be hid ; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth ; and it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

16. And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

2. FROM THE DEATH OF ABEL TO NOAH.

GENESIS iv. 17—vi. 8.

A third son of Adam and Eve is now mentioned, called Seth or ‘the appointed.’ This probably means that he is to be the progenitor of the chosen race, and of the promised seed.

In the time of his son Enos, men begin to worship or ‘call upon the name of’ the Lord.

Some suppose these words to mean that the name of Jehovah or the Lord, which was revealed long afterwards to Moses, as the most sacred name of the God of the Hebrews, already began to be used as a title of God.

Others explain it as meaning that the descendants of Seth now began to call themselves by the name of the Lord, to distinguish themselves from the descendants of Cain¹.

The ‘sons of God’ now take wives of ‘the daughters of men.’

the blood of Jesus Christ), ‘which speaketh better things than that of Abel^b.’

11. Meaning either that the earth should yield no fruit to him, or that he should be driven out of the land as accursed.

13. These words may mean, not that his punishment was intolerable, but that his sin was too great for forgiveness.

16. Nod means exile, or wandering, as being the land of ‘nomads,’ or tribes who roamed about in search of pasture, water, &c.

^b Hymns Ancient and Modern, No. 107.

‘Abel’s blood for vengeance Pleaded to the skies ;
But the Blood of Jesus For our pardon cries.’

2. FROM THE DEATH OF ABEL TO NOAH.

GENESIS iv. 17—vi. 8.

¹ Among the descendants of Cain was Lamech, who is the author of the first piece of poetry recorded (Gen. iv. 23, 24).

The song, addressed to his two wives, is an instance of what is called ‘parallelism,’ which we constantly find in Hebrew poetry. It consists in the same idea being repeated, commonly in two lines which come together, sometimes (as in Ps. cxxxv. 15–18; Rev. iii. 21) in stanzas differently arranged.

The meaning of the song is very doubtful. It does not necessarily tell of an actual murder. *The words may mean ‘if I have slain,’ or ‘have I slain?’ Some connect them with the invention of armour by one of Lamech’s sons.

Three sons of Lamech are mentioned :

Jabal, the founder of the ‘nomadic’ tribes ; such, that is, as ‘dwell in tents and have cattle.’

Jubal, the inventor of musical instruments.

Tubal-cain, an artificer in copper and iron.

This means either that the descendants of Seth² and Cain intermarry, or that the servants of the true God take wives of those families who have forsaken Him.

God, seeing the wickedness that prevails, and especially the violence of the ‘giants’ or oppressors, says, ‘My Spirit shall not always strive with man.’

Then, as wickedness still increases, He determines to destroy man and all the animal world.

One man alone, Noah, the son of Lamech, ‘finds grace in the sight of the Lord.’

III. NOAH. THE ARK.

GENESIS vi. 9-22.

VI. 9. These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God.

10. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

13. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

We thus find that men were becoming civilized, and cultivating the arts.

² The most important of the descendants of Seth is Enoch. He ‘walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him’ (Gen. v. 24).

In Heb. xi. 5 we are told that ‘by faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.’

St. Jude (ver. 14) speaks of Enoch, ‘the seventh from Adam,’ prophesying the judgement of the wicked. The passage is probably a quotation from a book called ‘the Book of Enoch,’ written shortly before our Lord’s time.

III. NOAH. THE ARK.

GENESIS vi. 9-22.

VI. 9. Noah means ‘rest.’ His father Lamech may have given him this name, either as implying that he would be a comfort to his parents ; or because he foresaw that this son would show the way of rest and comfort to a wicked generation ; or because he knew that the promised Deliverer was to be descended from him.

By the prophet Ezekiel (xiv. 14, 20) Noah, Daniel, and Job are selected as the most righteous of men : ‘Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it’ (i. e. in the land that sinneth grievously), ‘they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness.’

13. Our Lord compares ‘the coming of the Son of man’ to the flood. He says that men were ‘eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away’ (Matt. xxiv. 38, 39 ; Luke xvii. 27).

14. Make thee an ark of gopher wood ; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

15. And this *is the fashion* which thou shalt make it *of*: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above ; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it.

17. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven ; *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die.

18. But with thee will I establish my covenant ; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

19. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every *sort* shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep *them* alive with thee ; they shall be male and female.

20. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every *sort* shall come unto thee, to keep *them* alive.

21. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather *it* to thee ; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

22. Thus did Noah ; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

St. Peter says that ‘God spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly’ (2 Pet. ii. 5).

14. In Heb. xi. 7 we are told that ‘by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.’

St. Peter speaks of the time when ‘the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water’; and he makes this a figure of Christian baptism, which ‘doth also now save us’ (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21)^a.

‘Gopher wood’ is supposed to be the wood of the cypress. The ‘pitching’ would make it waterproof.

17. St. Peter again refers to the flood in 2 Pet. iii. 6, ‘whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.’

There are a great many traditions or stories, preserved by other nations, of a destructive deluge. The Chaldaeans, Syrians, Indians, Persians, and Chinese all have such legends, bearing more or less resemblance to the account in the Bible (see notes on next abstract).

18. This is the first mention of a ‘covenant’ or agreement between God and man. The Greek word, which represents it^b, is translated in the Gospels and Epistles sometimes by ‘covenant,’ sometimes by ‘testament.’ The latter translation is the origin of our expressions, ‘Old’ and ‘New Testaments.’

^a So in the first prayer in the service of Public Baptism, we speak of God having ‘saved Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water’; and we pray that the child may be ‘received into the ark of Christ’s Church.’

^b This word δινθήκη commonly means a ‘disposition of property by will.’ ‘Testament’ and ‘testator’ are so used in Heb. ix. 16, 17.

3. THE DELUGE.

GENESIS vii, viii.

When the ark is completed, Noah and his wife and his sons with their wives take refuge in it. They bring into it two of every kind of living creatures, and food of every kind.

After seven days torrents of rain begin to descend, and last for forty days. The waters prevail upon the earth for 150 days¹.

About two months later the ark grounds on Mount Ararat, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains appear.

After forty days more Noah sends forth first a raven, which does not return, and then after seven days a dove, which comes back with an olive leaf, showing that the trees in the valleys, where olives grow, are reappearing. It is sent forth again seven days later, and does not return.

Noah now, looking forth from the ark, finds that the waters have abated, and is told by God to leave the ark, and take all that are in it with him.

When he has gone out, he builds an altar unto the Lord, and offers sacrifice as a thanksgiving for his preservation.

He now receives a promise from God that such punishment shall not be repeated, and that, ‘while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.’

IV. THE BLESSING ON NOAH.

GENESIS ix. 1-19.

IX. 1. And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

3. THE DELUGE.

GENESIS vii, viii.

¹ ‘The story of the Deluge is a universal tradition among all branches of the human family, with the one exception of the black’ (Geikie, *The Bible in Modern Light*, i. 187).

Of these traditions, that which is most like the Scriptural account is the legend of the Accadians or Chaldaeans. The Xisuthros of their story corresponds to the Noah of the Bible. He builds a ship, in which he collects for safety his followers and treasures, and animals of various kinds.

There are even such minute resemblances in the two stories as the sending out birds, the appearance of the rainbow, the offering of sacrifice after the flood, and the assurance that such punishment shall not be repeated.

But there are many points of difference, and these are the very differences we should expect to find between the ideas of a heathen nation, worshipping many gods, and of those to whom a knowledge of the one true God had been given. The contrast here is just like that between the Scriptural account of Creation and that of the monumental inscriptions. We must remember that Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race, came from Ur of the Chaldees.

There is a well-known Greek story about Deucalion, son of Prometheus, and his wife Pyrrha, who were said to have been the only survivors of a flood in Hellas. They too were saved in a ship, which they built and provisioned. The story goes on to tell how they repeopled the earth by throwing behind them stones, the bones of their mother earth, which became men and women.

IV. THE BLESSING ON NOAH.

GENESIS ix. 1-19.

IX. 2. As Noah is to be the second father of mankind, the blessings given to Adam are renewed to him (see Gen. i. 28-30).

2. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea ; into your hand are they delivered.

3. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you ; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

4. But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require ; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man ; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed : for in the image of God made he man.

7. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply ; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

8. And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

9. And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you ;

10. And with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you ; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

11. And I will establish my covenant with you ; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood ; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

4. According to the law of Moses, blood, which was shed in sacrifice, was not to be part of food. We find this prohibition renewed to the Christian converts in Acts xv. 29, to avoid offending those who had been Jews.

6. This is the first reference to what is called ‘the law of retaliation.’ This, as our Lord reminded His hearers, ordained that there should be ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’ (Lev. xxiv. 20; Matt. v. 38). Here it is ‘a life for a life a.’

9. The covenant between God and His creatures is now made afresh, and the promise not to destroy the earth again with a flood is solemnly renewed. This promise, that ‘the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth,’ is made by Isaiah (liv. 9) a figure of God’s mercies to the Gentiles, which shall endure for ever.

13. The rainbow is a sign of this covenant, because it seems to join heaven and earth. In Rev. iv. 3 St. John tells of ‘a rainbow round about the throne’ of God, as the symbol of His mercy b.

18. Shem was the father of those nations which are included in what is called the Shemitic or Semitic family ; which, roughly speaking, comprises the Syrians and Jews, the Chaldaeans, the inhabitants of parts of Assyria and Persia, and of Arabia.

Noah pronounces this blessing on Shem (ver. 26) : ‘Blessed

^a This is the Divine authority for capital punishment, in respect of which St. Paul says that the ruler, who is ‘the minister of God, beareth not the sword in vain’ (Rom. xiii. 4).

^b ‘My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a man ;
So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die ! ’

(Wordsworth, *Poems referring to Childhood*, i.)

12. And God said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations :

13. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud :

15. And I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16. And the bow shall be in the cloud ; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

17. And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

18. And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth : and Ham *is* the father of Canaan.

19. These *are* the three sons of Noah : and of them was the whole earth overspread.

4. BABEL. THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES.

GENESIS xi. 1-9.

The only event of importance recorded in the Book of Genesis between the time of Noah and that of Abraham is

be the Lord God of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant^c.'

The first part refers to the privileges to be granted to his descendants the Jews ; the last part to the conquest of the Canaanites by the Israelites.

The most important of the descendants of Ham were the Cushites or Ethiopians, the Phoenicians, and the Egyptians. In the Book of Psalms Egypt is sometimes called 'the land of Ham' (Ps. lxxviii. 52, cv. 23, cvi. 22).

Noah says (ver. 25), 'Cursed be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.' This has been explained in the blessing on Shem.

The blessing on Japheth (ver. 27) is, 'God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant.'

The name Japheth means 'enlarged.' His descendants have peopled the greater part of the world, India and most of Persia in the east, and all or most of Europe, from which they have spread to America and Australia.

The words about Japheth 'dwelling in the tents of Shem' may refer to the conquest of the descendants of Shem by Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, and afterwards by the Romans. But they are generally regarded as a prophecy, telling how the Gentiles, descended from Japheth, should learn the knowledge of the true God and of His Son Jesus Christ from the Jews, the descendants of Shem.

^c The Jews had a tradition that Shem was the same person as Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 18).

4. BABEL. THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES.

GENESIS xi. 1-9.

¹ Shinar or Sumir was the original name of one division of Babylonia. The other was called Accad (Gen. x. 10). The

the building of the tower of Babel, and the consequent dispersion of mankind.

The descendants of Noah, we are told, journeying from the east, settle in the plain of Shinar¹, or Babylon. There they resolve to build a tower, whose top shall reach unto heaven.

The words, however, may mean only ‘a very lofty tower’; just as the cities of the Canaanites are said to have been great and ‘walled (or fenced) up to heaven’ (*Deut. i. 28, ix. 1*).

In any case the building of this tower is a proof of impiety and rebellion against God. Men’s language, therefore, is ‘confounded,’ so that they may no longer combine in such designs; and they are ‘scattered abroad upon the face of the earth².’

To commemorate this, the tower or city is called Babel, or ‘confusion³.’

This confusion of tongues, to prevent the unlawful estab-

Accadians were the authors of the cuneiform writing used in those inscriptions, the discovery of which has thrown so much light on the earlier books of the Bible. The country was afterwards conquered by the Babylonians.

² There is a similar story in the cuneiform inscriptions of men building a hill-like tower, and their counsels and speech being divided.

There is also a legend something like this in Greek and Roman mythology, about the Titans or giants trying to scale heaven by piling up the three great mountains of Thessaly; Olympus, Ossa and Pelion.

We read in the Greek historian Herodotus (i. 181) of a very high tower in Babylon, on the top of which was the temple of the god Belus.

³ Babel has been said to signify really the 'gate of God,' the word for 'confusion' being Balbel. But the spelling and meaning of names change in course of time, and Babel seems originally to have meant 'confusion.'

⁴ All attempts to discover an original language of mankind have failed. But, wide though the differences between the families of speech are now, there is nothing which may not be reconciled with the belief in a common origin (Max Müller, *Science of Language*, i. 342).

This account probably describes the separation of the three great races who originally inhabited the same district of Central Asia.

The three chief divisions of mankind, according to their language, are commonly described as the Aryan, the Semitic, and the Turanian.

(1) The Aryan 'family' includes the languages of the Hindus eastward, and of the Celtic and Teutonic and the Greek and Latin races westward. Nearly all the languages of modern Europe belong to this family.

(2) The Semitic family comprises the languages of the Chaldaeans, Syrians, Hebrews, Phoenicians, Arabians, &c.

(3) The Turanian is not a 'family' in the same sense as the other two; but under this name languages which differ widely from each other are grouped together, because they belong to

lishment of a universal ‘kingdom of this world,’ may be contrasted with the ‘gift of tongues’ on the day of Pentecost, to enable the apostles to found the world-wide spiritual kingdom (Acts ii. 4)⁴.

V. THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

GENESIS xi. 27—xii. 9.

XI. 27. Now these *are* the generations of Terah : Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran ; and Haran begat Lot.

28. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

29. And Abram and Nahor took them wives : the name of Abram’s wife *was* Sarai ; and the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

30. But Sarai was barren ; she *had* no child.

31. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram’s wife ; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan ; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years : and Terah died in Haran.

XII. 1. Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get

neither of the two great ‘families of speech.’ Such are the languages of the Mongolian tribes, the Turks, the Chinese, the Japanese, and some other Asiatic races, and the American Indians.

V. THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

GENESIS xi. 27—xii. 9.

XI. 27. We learn from Joshua xxiv. 2 that Terah and most of his family were idolaters. Joshua speaks to the people of their fathers, when they ‘dwelt on the other side of the flood, . . . and served other gods^a.’

‘The flood’ here is the river Euphrates. The name ‘Hebrew,’ first used in Gen. xiv. 13, probably means ‘the man from the other side’ of the river^b.

The name Abram, which means ‘high father,’ was afterwards changed to Abraham, ‘father of a great multitude^c,’ (Gen. xvii. 5). For the first part of the name we may compare ‘Abba, Father’ in Mark xiv. 36 and Rom. viii. 15.

28. There has been much doubt as to the position of Ur. The name Chaldaea has been used of two different districts of Asia. Ur used to be regarded as the same with Orfa or Edessa, in the more northern of these. But there is now little doubt that it is the same as a town called Mugheir, south of Babylon, which was once the capital of the district (see Map I).

^a The chief of these, according to one of the Chaldaean inscriptions, seems to have been the Moon-god.

There is a tradition or story that Nimrod tried to burn Abraham for refusing to worship these idols, and that God ‘redeemed’ (Isa. xxix. 22) or rescued him. (This is like the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in Dan. iii.)

^b The word used in the LXX is ὁ περάτης.

^c The names Abraham and Sarah are used throughout in these notes.

The inscriptions on the monuments show that other Babylonians had the same name or title of Abram.

thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee :

2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4. So Abram departed, as the **LORD** had spoken unto him ; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran ; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan ; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite *was* then in the land.

7. And the **LORD** appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land : and there builded he an altar unto the **LORD**, who appeared unto him.

8. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, *having* Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east : and there

31. Haran, or, as it is called in Acts vii. 4, Charran, was probably the same place as Carrhae, where the Roman forces under Crassus were defeated by the Parthians in B.C. 53. It was in the north of Mesopotamia.

If Ur were the same as Orfa, it would be only a few hours' journey from this to Haran. But from the place now called Mugheir to Haran would be a long journey.

The name Haran means 'the road.' It was on the high-road to Syria and Palestine.

XII. 1. The most important references to the Call of Abraham in the New Testament are these :—

Acts vii. 2, 3 (St. Stephen's speech) : 'The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.'

Heb. xi. 8 : 'By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed ; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.'

5. The most important place on the road from Haran to Canaan was Damascus.

There is a tradition that Abraham was for a time king of Damascus. We find a trace of his halting there in his having afterwards as his steward one 'Eliezer of Damascus' (Gen. xv. 2).

After leaving this city, he probably travelled southwards, and entered Canaan by the valley of the Jabbok ; the same route as that by which Jacob afterwards returned, when he left Laban. Thence he would cross the Jordan, and enter the rich plains on the western side.

6. Sichem is the same as Shechem, and was an important place afterwards in Jewish history. It was the first capital of the separate kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 25)^d.

^d The Sychar mentioned in John iv. 5, where our Lord conversed with the woman of Samaria, was, perhaps, the same place.

he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

9. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

5. HISTORY TO THE WAR OF THE KINGS.

GENESIS xii. 10—xiv. 12.

A famine in Canaan soon drives Abraham into Egypt¹. There he passes Sarah off as his sister². Pharaoh takes her into his palace, but discovering the deception, which has brought a pestilence on his household, he sends Abraham back to Canaan.

Abraham returns, enriched with servants and cattle, to the old pastures near Beth-el; and as these are now insufficient for both himself and Lot, they agree to separate. Lot moves off eastward into the valley of the Jordan. Abraham soon after migrates southward to Mamre or Hebron.

An attack is now made on the dwellers in the Jordan valley by a powerful confederacy under Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam³. The native princes, after paying tribute to this ruler for twelve years, have at last revolted. The kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, and three other cities join battle with the invaders in the vale of Siddim, but are utterly defeated. The conquerors retire northwards, carrying off ‘all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah’; and among the prisoners they have taken is Lot, Abraham’s nephew.

8. Beth-el. The real name of the town was now Luz. Jacob gave the name of Beth-el, or 'house of God,' to the place near this, where he dreamed of the ladder reaching to heaven (Gen. xxviii. 19); and the name of the town was afterwards changed to this (see page 69).

5. HISTORY TO THE WAR OF THE KINGS.

GENESIS xii. 10—xiv. 12.

¹ Thus Abraham is brought into contact with the nation, who are to play such an important part in the history of his descendants.

Egypt was in the north-east corner of Africa. It was divided into Upper or Southern, and Lower or Northern Egypt. Watered by the overflowing of the Nile, it was not dependent on rain, like other countries. Hence it was the refuge for neighbouring tribes in times of drought, as we afterwards find in the case of Jacob and his family.

² This, as it has been said, 'was true in word, but false in effect,' as they had the same father.

Abraham afterwards so described her to Abimelech, and from Gen. xx. 13 it would appear that the same account of their relationship had been constantly given.

³ Elam was a country lying south-east of Assyria, and north-west of Persia. It was afterwards a province of Babylon (Dan. viii. 2).

Jews from this country were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 9).

The story of Chedorlaomer's invasion is confirmed by the monuments. He is there called Kudur-Mabug, and his son Eri-Aku (Arioch) is also mentioned.

We find, too, from these, that still earlier attacks had been made on Palestine from the east. Sargon, king of Accad, appears to have marched four times into the land of the Amorites.

VI. ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK.

GENESIS xiv. 13-24.

XIV. 13. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these *were* confederate with Abram.

14. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* unto Dan.

15. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which *is* on the left hand of Damascus.

16. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

17. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which *is* the king's dale.

VI. ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK.

GENESIS xiv. 13-24.

XIV. 13. We find Abraham is now a chief, with a considerable following of his own retainers, and on a footing of equality with the native princes, with whom he has formed an alliance.

14. It is uncertain whether this Dan is the place which was at first called Laish, the name of which was changed when a party of Danites settled there (*Judges xviii. 29*). That town does not seem to have been on the direct road to Damascus, and so some suppose this to have been another Dan in Gilead, east of Jordan.

15. Hobah was probably a few miles north of Damascus. The country was one which Abraham would know well from his sojourn at Damascus on his way to Canaan.

17. Shaveh means 'a dale' or level place. It is doubtful where this dale was. It depends on the position of the Salem mentioned in ver. 18.

We read in *2 Sam. xviii. 18* of 'the king's dale,' where Absalom set up a pillar to mark the place for his tomb. Some suppose this to have been close to Jerusalem, in the valley of the Kidron. Others think it was a valley on the east of Jordan.

18. Melchizedek is referred to in *Ps. cx. 4* as a type of the Messiah: 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'

These words are applied in the Epistle to the Hebrews to Jesus Christ (v. 10, vi. 20, vii. 17). We are also told in that book (vii. 1-3) that Melchizedek was 'king of Salem, priest of the most high God^a'; that king of Salem means 'king of

^a It was not uncommon for the same man to be both king and priest.

18. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine : and he *was* the priest of the most high God.

19. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth :

20. And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

21. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the L ORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23. That I will not *take* from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that

peace^b, and that his name itself means ‘king of righteousness.’ Also that he was ‘without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life^c.’ We know nothing about his parentage, or birth, or death.

There were various traditions about him. According to one of these he was the same person (see page 25) as Shem, the son of Noah. He, like Job, Balaam, and others living among the heathen, was a worshipper of the true God.

Jerusalem is called Salem in Ps. lxxvi. 2 : ‘At Salem is His tabernacle, and His dwelling in Sion.’

This may have been its old name, changed afterwards to Jebus, the two being at last combined in Jerusalem.

Others think that this Salem is the place called Shalem in Gen. xxxiii. 18, which was near to Shechem; and there is a tradition that Abraham and Melchizedek met there on Mount Gerizim.

Others again suppose Salem to have been further north, near Beth-shan, and the same as the Salim, near to which we read of John the Baptist baptizing (John iii. 23).

We read in Joshua x. 1 of a king of Jerusalem called Adoni-zedec, which means ‘lord of righteousness.’ This looks as if Salem were Jerusalem; and Melchizedek a title rather than a name, like Pharaoh in Egypt.

20. Abraham gave Melchizedek ‘tithe’ or a tenth of all the spoils, thereby acknowledging his priestly office and authority.

In Heb. vii. 4, &c., it is maintained that this proves the priesthood of Christ, of whom Melchizedek was a type,

^b Jerusalem means ‘city of peace.’ The title ‘Prince of Peace’ is used in a spiritual sense in Isaiah’s prophecy of Messiah (ix. 6).

^c This expression may mean that his office was not hereditary, not derived from father or mother.

In recently discovered inscriptions in Egypt a king of Jerusalem is represented as writing to Pharaoh for help, when threatened by the ‘Kabiri’ or Confederates, who describes himself as having received his office by a divine oracle, and not by inheritance.

is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich :

24. Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre ; let them take their portion.

VII. THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM.

GENESIS XV. 1-18.

XV. 1. After these things the word of the **LORD** came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram : *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*

2. And Abram said, Lord **God**, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus ?

3. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed : and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4. And, behold, the word of the **LORD** *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir ; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them : and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6. And he believed in the **LORD** ; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

7. And he said unto him, *I am the **LORD** that*

to be superior to that of Levi, who was descended from Abraham^d.

^d The bread and wine given to the weary troops have often been compared with the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which are the 'outward and visible sign' of the Body and Blood of Christ, given for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls in our struggle with sin.

VII. THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM.

GENESIS XV. 1-18.

XV. 2. This probably means that, as Abraham was childless, Eliezer, the next in rank, would be his heir^a.

3. 'One born in my house,' or 'the son of my house,' commonly describes a retainer adopted into the family, as contrasted with slaves bought with money.

6. This faith of Abraham in God's promise of numerous offspring is referred to, and these words are quoted in Rom. iv. 3 and Gal. iii. 6.

7. The promise to Abraham, that 'the land should be given to him for a possession, and to his seed after him,' is referred to in Acts vii. 5.

Also in Heb. xi. 9: 'By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.'

10. The ancient custom in making a covenant was to divide the victims into halves, and lay the portions opposite to each other. The two persons making the covenant then passed between the halves.

Here Abraham probably did so, and there then followed

^a In R.V. it is given as 'he that shall be the possessor of my house.'

brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8. And he said, Lord God; whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it ?

9. And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

10. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another : but the birds divided he not.

11. And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away.

12. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram ; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not their's, and shall serve them ; and they shall afflict them four hundred years ;

14. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge : and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace ; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again : for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.

17. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

the smoking furnace and lamp of fire, which were the signs of God's presence.

This custom was probably first practised in Babylonia, and so would be familiar to Abraham, when he lived in Ur of the Chaldees.

13. St. Stephen gives the same number of 400 years in Acts vii. 6. But the time of 'sojourning' is more exactly stated as 430 years in Exod. xii. 40. St. Paul, in Gal. iii. 17, gives the same interval of 430 years between this covenant and the giving of the law.

The numbers probably include the whole time of sojourning both in Canaan and in Egypt, until the Israelites 'possessed' the promised land.

14. This means that God would punish the Egyptians with plagues, and that the Israelites should spoil them (Exod. xii. 36).

16. The Amorites were the dwellers in the highlands or mountains, as contrasted with the Canaanites proper, or lowlanders. But here the name Amorites is used for all the old inhabitants, who, when their wickedness had reached its height, were to be defeated and driven out by the Israelites.

17. We may compare with this 'smoking furnace and burning lamp' the 'pillar of fire and of the cloud,' which followed the Israelites out of Egypt; and the Shechinah^b, which rested on the mercy-seat between the Cherubim in the tabernacle and the Temple.

18. This was the covenant between God and man, which gave its name to the 'Old Testament,' as we call the books which relate to it collectively.

The river of Egypt is probably the Nile, though Palestine never really reached to this. The names of the two great rivers seem to be used for the two powers, Egypt and

^b This word is not found in the Bible, but was used by the Jews to describe the visible majesty of God's presence.

18. In the same day the **LORD** made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

6. HISTORY TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

GENESIS XVI—xviii.

The first child born to Abraham is Ishmael, whose mother is Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian handmaid. The name Ishmael means 'God shall hear.' It is foretold by an angel that he shall be 'a wild man, whose hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him.' His descendants, the Ishmaelites¹, have always been a wild, lawless race, never entirely subdued.

Thirteen years later, when Abraham is ninety-nine years old, God renews the covenant with him, changing his name from Abram to Abraham, because he is to be the father of many nations. The rite of circumcision² is now instituted, and the promise of Isaac's birth³ is given.

Not long afterwards three mysterious visitors³ arrive at Mamre, who are entertained by Abraham⁴. They renew the promise of a son to be born of Sarah, who at first ridicules this on account of her age. But her doubts are soon removed⁵.

The visitors have another message for Abraham, to announce the impending destruction of the wicked cities of the plain, or Jordan valley. When the others have departed, Abraham intercedes for Sodom, urging that the righteous should not be destroyed with the wicked. His appeal, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' is answered

Assyria, between which should lie the land of Abraham's descendants^c.

^c Solomon's empire is sometimes described as extending from the Euphrates to 'the border' or 'brook of Egypt.' This probably means the water-course in the wilderness of Shur, which formed the natural boundary of Egypt. It is called 'Shihor' in Josh. xiii. 3 and 1 Chron. xiii. 5. But this name (which means 'the river') is used by Isaiah (xxiii. 3) and Jeremiah (ii. 18) of the Nile.

6. HISTORY TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

GENESIS xvi—xviii.

¹ Now called the Bedouin Arabs.

² Circumcision was made the rite of admission to the Jewish Church, and so corresponds to Baptism with us.

Jewish children were circumcised when eight days old. But the Ishmaelites or Arabs have always kept to thirteen years, the age at which Ishmael was circumcised. Our Lord was circumcised (Luke ii. 21), that He might be 'obedient to the law for man' (Collect for Circumcision).

³ These 'three men' have been regarded as a figure of the 'three Persons in one God.'

One of them, whom Abraham addresses as 'the Lord,' is clearly above the other two; and many have maintained that this was the Son or Word of God, appearing in human form, attended by two angels.

This story has been chosen as one of the Lessons for Trinity Sunday.

⁴ We have here a simple and pretty picture of Eastern hospitality. The visitors rest in the shade; the patriarch washes their dusty feet; and a meal of cakes, butter (or clotted cream), milk, and meat is set before them.

We may compare with the washing the feet the account of our Lord washing His disciples' feet in John xiii. 1-15.

by an assurance that the city shall be spared, if only a few righteous are found there. The other two angels go on to Sodom, to warn Lot.

VIII. THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

GENESIS xix. 12-29.

XIX. 12. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides ? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place :

13. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD ; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

14. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place ; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

15. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here ; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters ; the LORD being merciful unto him : and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17. And it came to pass, when they had brought

⁵ We are told in Heb. xi. 11 that ‘through faith Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed.’

VIII. THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

GENESIS xix. 12-29.

XIX. 12. Lot, when he separated from Abraham, had chosen the fertile Jordan valley, and had continued to live in Sodom, in spite of its wickedness.

There may be a reference to his entertaining these angels in Heb. xiii. 2 : ‘Be not forgetful to entertain strangers : for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.’

17. The angels’ charge to Lot to ‘escape for his life’ from the doomed cities has often been made a type of our renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil. Here, too, there must be no halting or looking back.

19. ‘Hast magnified thy mercy’ means hast shown great mercy. Commonly the word means, not to ‘make great,’ but to ‘pronounce great’ or extol. So in the ‘Magnificat’: ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord.’

22. Zoar means ‘little.’ The name of the place before was Bela (Gen. xiv. 2). It was spared to be a refuge for Lot, who was too old and infirm to reach the mountains.

It was believed to have been destroyed later by an earthquake, as five cities are said to have perished ^a. The other four were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which are mentioned together in Deut. xxix. 23.

^a Wisd. of Sol. x. 6: ‘When the ungodly perished, she (Wisdom) delivered the righteous man, who fled from the fire which fell down upon the five cities.’

them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain ; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

18. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord :

19. Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life ; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die :

20. Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one : Oh, let me escape thither, (*is it not a little one?*) and my soul shall live.

21. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

22. Haste thee, escape thither ; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

23. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven ;

25. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

27. And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD :

25. The site of these cities was probably on the shore of the Dead Sea ; not, as was once believed, under its waters.

This sea is nearly 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, being lower in position than any other water in the world.

In Deut. xxix. 23 the whole district is thus described : 'The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon.'

Modern travellers speak of it as 'a scene of gloomy desolation ; precipitous crags hanging over dull and heavy waters '^b.

26. Lot's wife lingered, instead of 'escaping for her life.' and was overtaken by the storm, and encrusted over with sulphurous matter.

Our Lord refers to her fate in Luke xvii. 32 : 'Remember Lot's wife.'

29. The wickedness and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are spoken of in several passages both of the Old and New Testaments.

Our Lord speaks of its being 'more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgement' than for those cities which should refuse to receive His disciples (Matt. x. 15) ; or those, like Capernaum, in which His mighty works had been done (Matt. xi. 23, 24). He also makes the destruction of Sodom a figure of the day of judgement (Luke xvii. 28-30).

St. Peter sees in the rescue of Lot a proof of God's justice in delivering the righteous, when He punishes the wicked (2 Pet. ii. 6-8).

St. Jude (ver. 7) makes this same visitation a sign of the vengeance in store for the ungodly.

We learn from the passage in St. Peter that Lot was not

^b Some suppose the cities to have been to the south of the Dead Sea, others to the north.

28. And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

29. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

7. HISTORY TO THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

GENESIS XX, XXI.

We now find Abraham migrating southwards to Gerar. There Sarah is once more described by him as his sister. His relations however with Abimelech¹, the king of the country, remain friendly, and he is allowed to dwell where he pleases in the land.

In due time the promised son Isaac is born, and circumcised on the eighth day. His name means 'laughter,' and tells of the rejoicing at his birth.

Sarah, angry at seeing the son of Hagar mocking² her child, urges Abraham to drive out both mother and son; and he, though grieved at having to do so, complies with her request.

He is told by God that 'in Isaac shall his seed be called,' and that Ishmael too shall be the father of a great nation. The two fugitives are without food and water in the wilderness; when an angel shows Hagar a well, and the dying boy revives. He becomes a famous archer; and, marrying an Egyptian wife, is the father of the powerful tribe of the Ishmaelites.

himself guilty of the sins of these people, but he weakly and foolishly continued to live among them ^c.

^c Opinions differ as to the manner in which these cities were destroyed. The Jewish historian Josephus says it was by lightning setting on fire the asphalt or bitumen, of which the district is full. We read in Gen. xiv. 10 that 'the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits,' that is of asphalt. Among the inscriptions lately discovered there is a story of cities being destroyed by a 'flood burning like fire.'

Others suppose they were destroyed by an earthquake; and the region is volcanic. Probably all three, lightning, tempest, and earthquake, were combined.

The Moabites and Ammonites were descended from Lot.

7. HISTORY TO THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

GENESIS XX, XXI.

¹ Abimelech was probably a title, not a name. We read of an Abimelech again in the time of Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 1). He is there described as the king of the Philistines. This race, afterwards such formidable enemies of the Israelites, came from Caphtor, which is generally supposed to be Cyprus or Crete.

In the Septuagint they are called 'foreigners' (*ἀλλόφυλοι*). The Hebrews often described them as the 'uncircumcised.'

Professor Sayce suggests that Philistines is used here by anticipation, meaning the country which was afterwards Philistine.

² St. Paul describes this as 'persecuting,' and tells how 'the son of the bondwoman' was 'cast out, that he should not be heir with the son of the freewoman.'

He speaks of this part of the history as 'an allegory,' making Hagar and Sarah figures of the two covenants; Hagar repre-

A covenant is now made by Abraham with Abimelech and his chief captain Phichol; and thus a well is secured for Abraham's use. The place is called Beer-sheba, or the 'well of the oath.' It is often mentioned afterwards as the southernmost place in Palestine.

IX. THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

GENESIS xxii. 1-19.

XXII. 1. And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, *here I am.*

2. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide

senting that from Mount Sinai, ‘which gendereth (bringeth forth children) to bondage.’ This means the Jewish race, who were in bondage to the law. Sarah he makes a type of the ‘Jerusalem which is above,’ which is free. ‘We,’ he says, ‘like Isaac, are the children of promise.’ The Gospel, he means, is ‘a service,’ which is ‘perfect freedom’ (Gal. iv. 24-31).

IX. THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

GENESIS xxii. 1-19.

XXII. 1. The word for ‘tempt’ really means, as it is rendered in R. V., ‘prove^a.’

The words ‘tempt’ and ‘temptation’ are used in the English Bible in two senses: (1) to test or try; (2) to entice into sin. The first refers to the discipline, through which alone we can reach Christian manhood. Thus St. James says, ‘Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.’ But immediately afterwards, using the word in the other sense, he adds, ‘Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed’ (Jas. i. 12, 14).

It is in this latter sense that we use the word, when we pray, ‘Lead us not into temptation.’

2. This appears from inscriptions to have been already a sacred place, where Melchizedek had been priest. It is called in these Haret, or ‘the mount of God.’

Some have supposed that Moriah is the same as Moreh or Sichem (Gen. xii. 6); and that the scene of the sacrifice was the neighbouring Mount Gerizim.

Others believe it to have been the Moriah, which was one of the four hills^b on which Jerusalem stood, where Solomon

^a In an old translation of the Bible it is given ‘assaiede’ (assayed) or proved.

^b These four hills were Zion and Acra on the west, and Moriah and Bezetha on the east.

ye here with the ass ; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son ; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife ; and they went both of them together.

7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father : and he said, Here *am I*, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood : but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering ?

8. And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering : so they went both of them together.

9. And they came to the place which God had told him of ; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11. And the angel of the L ORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham : and he said, Here *am I*.

12. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him : for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns : and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

14. And Abraham called the name of that place

built the Temple (2 Chron. iii. 1) on the threshing-floor of Araunah (or Ornan) the Jebusite (2 Sam. xxiv. 24; 1 Chron. xxi. 25).

The offering of children to their gods was common among the neighbouring tribes. We find that human victims were made to 'pass through the fire,' as an offering to Moloch or Milcom, the god of the Ammonites; and we read in 2 Kings iii. 26, 27 of a king of Moab thus offering up his eldest son after his defeat in battle^c. The prophet Micah (vi. 7) refers to men giving 'the firstborn for the transgression, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul.'

We are told in Heb. xi. 17 that 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.' St. James (ii. 21, 22) gives this same obedience as an instance of the works by which true faith is always manifested. 'Was not Abraham our father,' he says, 'justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?'

8. This was an unconscious prophecy of the great sacrifice: 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John i. 29).

If the scene of Isaac's sacrifice was, as has been commonly believed, Mount Moriah, then it was near the same spot that Jesus Christ was crucified.

16. This is referred to in Heb. vi. 13, where it is said that God, 'because He could swear by no greater, sware by Himself.'

The promises of numerous descendants and of victory over his enemies are now renewed to Abraham, and he is

^c Among most ancient nations a father had absolute power, even of life and death, over his child. We find a trace of this a little later, when Reuben says to Jacob, as an assurance of Benjamin's safe return from Egypt, 'Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee' (Mozley, *Lectures on Old Testament*, p. 40).

Jehovah-jireh : as it is said *to* this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

15. And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16. And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*:

17. That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ;

18. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

19. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba ; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

8. HISTORY TO THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM.

GENESIS xxiii—xxv. 10.

After this Abraham appears to have returned to his own home at Kirjath-arba or Hebron¹; for we are told that Sarah died and was buried there. Abraham had purchased a piece of land as a burying-place of Ephron the Hittite for 400 shekels of silver². It was the only possession of Abraham's in Canaan, and became the family sepulchre. Abraham himself was afterwards buried there, as were Isaac and Jacob, and their wives, except Rachel.

told that 'all nations' shall be 'blessed' in him (Gal. iii. 8) ^d.

This story is in many ways typical of the 'one sufficient sacrifice' of the cross ^e:

(a) Like Abraham, God the Father gave His only begotten Son (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9).

(b) Like Isaac, the Son 'became obedient unto death' (Phil. ii. 8).

(c) As Isaac carried the wood, so Jesus bare His own cross (John xix. 17), until it was transferred to Simon the Cyrenian (Matt. xxvii. 32).

(d) As Abraham, 'accounting that God was able to raise Isaac up, even from the dead,' received him thence 'in a figure' or parable (Heb. xi. 19), so Jesus Christ was actually raised from the dead.

^d So we see that the tempting or trial of Abraham was a test not only of his submission to God's will, but also of his faith, in believing that the child, whose birth had been so wonderful, would survive even this crisis, to secure the blessing promised through his seed.

^e Hence this chapter is chosen as a Proper Lesson for Good Friday.

8. HISTORY TO THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM.

GENESIS XXIII—XXV. 10.

¹ Kirjath-arba means 'the stronghold of Arba.' We are told in Joshua xiv. 15 that 'Arba was a great man among the Anakims.' He was the founder of this race of giants, Anak being his son.

The name Hebron means 'confederacy.' We are told in Num. xiii. 22 that it 'was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.' Probably a sanctuary was established there first, and a fortified town built later on the slope of the hill.

It was afterwards an important place (see notes on Joshua xiv).

Abraham now sends Eliezer to the old home in Chaldaea, to seek a wife for Isaac of his own kindred. On reaching the end of his long journey, Eliezer meets with Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, Abraham's nephew, who helps him to water his camels. He is entertained by Laban, Rebekah's brother; and explains his errand, telling of Abraham's wealth, and producing valuable presents. Bethuel and Laban agree to Rebekah's betrothal to Isaac, and she travels back with Eliezer. They find Isaac, on their arrival in the field, 'meditating' or sorrowing for his mother. Rebekah becomes Isaac's wife, and so 'Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.'

The last thing we read about Abraham is that he takes another wife, called Keturah, whose sons are the fathers of the Midianites and other tribes. These sons are sent away, to avoid any collision between them and Isaac, and they settle in the 'east country.' Abraham dies at the age of 175, and is buried by Isaac and Ishmael in the cave of Machpelah³.

9. LIFE OF ISAAC TO BLESSING JACOB AND ESAU.

GENESIS XXV. 19—XXVII. 20.

The life of Isaac is quiet and uneventful. There are in it no great changes, like the migration of Abraham from Mesopotamia to Canaan, or that of Jacob from Canaan to Egypt.

After some years twin sons are born of Rebekah, Esau and Jacob. When they grow up, they are very different in mode of life and in character¹. Esau is 'a cunning hunter, a man of the field,' leading a wild roving life. Jacob is a plain (or upright) man, 'dwelling in tents,' engaged in peaceful

² These Hittites appear to have been an offshoot of the powerful Hittite race. We learn from the monuments that they once had a great empire, extending from the Euphrates on the east to Asia Minor on the west. Their capitals were Kadesh on the Orontes, and Carchemish on the Euphrates.

In appearance they seem to have been something like the Chinese.

³ The three great proofs of Abraham's faith mentioned in Heb. xi are :

(a) His going out, 'not knowing whither he went' (ver. 8).

(b) His 'sojourning in the land of promise, as in a strange country' (ver. 9).

(c) His readiness to offer up 'his only begotten son' (ver. 17).

There are many references to him in the New Testament. St. Paul describes him in Rom. iv. 16 as 'the father of us all.' Hence he is often called 'the Father of the faithful.' St. James ii. 23) tells us he was called 'the Friend of God' (cf. 2 Chron. xx. 7; Isa. xli. 8).

9. LIFE OF ISAAC TO BLESSING JACOB AND ESAU.

GENESIS XXV. 19—XXVII. 20.

¹ The contrast between the two characters is very instructive. Esau at first wins our affection and sympathy. He is frank, careless, generous. Jacob, on the contrary, is mean, crafty, calculating.

But Jacob's character is gradually purged of the baser elements, and he sets before him a fixed purpose, in the pursuit of which he never wavers. While he is thus firm and patient, Esau is impulsive and unstable; with no higher aim than the gratification of appetite, or than worldly prosperity.

² Both were to be founders of great nations; Esau of the Edomites, Jacob of the Israelites.

pastoral occupations. Esau is his father's, Jacob his mother's favourite².

We read next of Isaac being driven by a famine to Gerar. While there he uses a similar device for protecting his wife to that employed before by Abraham, and is rebuked by the king, Abimelech. In spite of annoyance by the Philistines, who fill up his wells, he becomes very prosperous, dwelling in the valley of Gerar. After a quarrel between his and the king's herdsmen, he removes to Beer-sheba. There he is visited by Abimelech, with whom a covenant of peace is made, and the name Beer-sheba is confirmed.

When Isaac is old and nearly blind, and thinks that his end is at hand, he wishes to bless his elder and favourite son Esau. But, while Esau has gone to get venison, Rebekah persuades Jacob to pretend that he is Esau, and so get the blessing designed for his elder brother.

X. ISAAC. THE BLESSING JACOB AND ESAU.

GENESIS XXVII. 21-40.

XXVII. 21. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou *be* my very son Esau or not.

22. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau.

23. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

24. And he said, *Art thou my very son Esau?* And he said, *I am.*

25. And he said, Bring *it* near to me, and I will

The former lived in Mount Seir, to the south of Moab. In Gen. xxv. 30 the name Edom or 'red' is said to have been given to Esau from the red pottage. It was probably afterwards transferred to the country on account of its red sandstone cliffs.

The Edomites were always a turbulent race. The Herods, mentioned in the New Testament, belonged to it. The most important of these were :

(a) Herod the Great, who ordered the massacre of the Innocents at Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 16-18).

(b) Herod Antipas, who put John the Baptist to death (Mark vi. 27), and to whom our Lord was sent by Pontius Pilate (Luke xxiii. 7).

Others were Archelaus, the successor of Herod the Great in Judaea (Matt. ii. 22); Philip the Tetrarch (Luke iii. 1); Philip, the first husband of Herodias (Mark vi. 17); Herod Agrippa I, who beheaded James, the son of Zebedee, and imprisoned Peter (Acts xii. 1-3); and Herod Agrippa II, before whom St. Paul made his defence at Caesarea (Acts xxvi).

X. ISAAC. THE BLESSING JACOB AND ESAU.

GENESIS XXVII. 21-40.

XXVII. 22. Rebekah had put on Jacob the 'goodly raiment' of Esau, which some suppose to have been the priestly vestments of the firstborn. She had covered his hands and neck with skins of kid, to resemble his hairy brother, and had given him savoury meat of the kids.

27. This blessing of Jacob and Esau is referred to in Heb. xi. 20: 'By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.'

eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought *it* near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son *is* as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

28. Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

29. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee.

30. And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31. And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who *art* thou? And he said, I *am* thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

33. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where *is* he that hath taken venison, and brought *it* me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, *and* he shall be blessed.

29. The promise of lordship to Jacob's descendants was fulfilled in three ways :

- (a) When Joseph was promoted to high position in Egypt.
- (b) When David and Solomon made the neighbouring nations tributary, including the Edomites, who were descended from Esau.
- (c) In the spiritual dominion of Christ.

36. The name Jacob ^a, one who 'supplants' or takes by the heel, was given him at his birth (Gen. xxv. 26).

The history of taking away the birthright is told in Gen. xxv. 29-34. Esau, returning faint and weary from hunting, finds Jacob cooking a mess of herbs, and asks for some of it. Jacob demands in exchange the rights of the firstborn, and Esau weakly consents. 'Thus Esau despised his birthright.'

His conduct is a warning to all those who are ready to forfeit their spiritual privileges for carnal indulgences. The story is so treated in Heb. xii. 15-17. We are there told that Esau, 'who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, ... afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, was rejected : for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears ^b.'

39. The words probably mean 'away from the fatness of the earth,' &c., implying that Esau's descendants should not inhabit a fertile land, but should live as freebooters in a wild and barren region. Their country, Mount Seir, was of this

^a It is the same name as James, and is so translated in the New Testament.

^b Because we know that the truly penitent are never rejected, some have explained these words as meaning 'he found no place (in Isaac) for change of mind.' But Esau's was not genuine repentance. He was only sorry for the consequences of his sin, for the loss of position and power.

34. And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, *even* me also, O my father.

35. And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing.

36. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

37. And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

38. And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, *even* me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

39. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

40. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

10. REMAINDER OF ISAAC'S LIFE.

GENESIS xxvii. 41—xxviii. 9, and xxxv. 27-29.

Isaac recovers from this illness, and lives for many years after; but we are told little more about him.

character, though it had some fertile districts. Their capital was Eozrah, mentioned in Isa. Ixiii. 1^c.

40. In 2 Sam. viii. 14 we read of David's 'putting garrisons in Edom,' and of the Edomites 'becoming David's servants.'

They were afterwards subject to the kings of Judah, but revolted several times, and at last recovered their independence in the reign of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii. 17).

The Edomites showed throughout hostility to the Israelites. The king of Edom refused them a passage through his country on their way from Egypt to Canaan (Num. xx. 21), and this enmity seems to have continued till the time of the Captivity. In Ps. cxxxvii. 7 there is a prayer that they may be punished for their malicious rejoicing at the destruction of Jerusalem. They are described as saying, 'Down with it, down with it, even to the ground ^d.'

^c In Gen. xxxii. 3 we read of 'the land of Seir, the country (or field, R.V.) of Edom,' where Esau was living when Jacob returned from Laban. This, which was in the land of Canaan, must be distinguished from the Mount Seir, or kingdom of Edom, to which Esau afterwards removed (Deut. ii. 5, 8; Joshua xxiv. 4, &c.). The later province of Idumaea included the country of the Amalekites, over which the Edomites had spread.

^d In another Psalm, Edom is spoken of as a bitter enemy: 'Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe.' Some suppose these words to mean that Edom should be like the slave, to whom the shoe or sandal was cast, when taken off for washing.

10. REMAINDER OF ISAAC'S LIFE.

GENESIS XXVII. 41—XXVIII. 9, AND XXXV. 27-29.

¹ A cousin was probably regarded as having the first claim to marriage, as is still the custom among the Arabs.

Rebekah, having heard that Esau, in his indignation at the trick played upon him, threatens to take Jacob's life, persuades the latter to go for a time for safety to her brother Laban at Haran. She gains Isaac's consent to this, representing that it is well for Jacob to seek a wife from among his own kindred¹, instead of marrying a daughter of the idolatrous Canaanites. Isaac blesses him again before his departure for Padan-aram².

Esau, finding that his father disapproves of Canaanitish wives, such as he has taken, marries a daughter of Ishmael.

Isaac is not mentioned again till Jacob, some time after his return, visits his aged father at Mamre or Hebron. He dies at the age of 180 years, and is buried by Esau and Jacob in the cave of Machpelah.

His character is that of one who is throughout gentle, patient, and affectionate. The submission which he shows, when he goes with Abraham to the proposed sacrifice on Mount Moriah, is conspicuous through all his life. His mourning for his mother, his faithfulness to his wife, his care for his children, all show the goodness of his heart. Though his quiet life makes him far less prominent in the history than Abraham or Jacob, his name is always coupled with theirs, as deserving of the same honour³.

XI. JACOB'S DREAM.

GENESIS XXVIII. 10-22.

XXVIII. 10. And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

11. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he

² Bethuel is called in Gen. xxv. 20 'the Syrian of Padan-aram.' Some suppose from Gen. xxviii. 5 that he was now dead.

The meaning of Padan-aram is somewhat uncertain. Padan probably means 'a plain,' and Aram means 'high'; and the compound name was thus given to the higher, though flat country of Syria, as contrasted with the 'Canaan' lowlands. The same country is called in Gen. xxiv. 10 Aram-Naharaim, or 'Aram of the two rivers' (Mesopotamia), because it lay between the Tigris and Euphrates.

³ Thus God speaks of Himself as 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' (Exod. iii. 6; Matt. xxii. 32). We find this description in many other places. God is spoken of as 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel' or 'Jacob' by David (1 Chron. xxix. 18), by Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 36), and by St. Peter (Acts iii. 13).

In other passages the three patriarchs are thus joined, as where our Lord speaks of many from the east and west 'sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. viii. 11; cp. Luke xiii. 28).

XI. JACOB'S DREAM.

GENESIS XXVIII. 10-22.

XXVIII. 10. Jacob afterwards (Gen. xxxii. 10) describes this solitary journey as 'passing over Jordan with his staff,' and contrasts it with his prosperous return with 'two bands.'

We may also contrast it with the journey of Abraham's

took of the stones of that place, and put *them* for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

6

12. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I *am* the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac : the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed ;

14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south : and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15. And, behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land ; for I will not leave thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of.

16. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he

servant on the same road, with servants and camels and treasures, when he went ‘to take a wife’ for Isaac of his own kindred (Gen. xxiv. 10, 53).

12. In his dream the bare rocks around him seemed to form themselves into a staircase reaching up to heaven, on which those angels, who are God’s ministering spirits, were ascending and descending.

The Jews said that the scene of this vision was Mount Moriah, but the place afterwards called Beth-el was about ten miles north of Jerusalem.

The vision seems to have been given in answer to prayer. Jacob afterwards (Gen. xxxv. 3) speaks of God ‘answering him in his distress’.

This ladder or staircase may be regarded as a figure of the Incarnation, which united for ever God and man, heaven and earth. It may also be taken as symbolizing that prayer by which the sorrows and wants of man are, as it were, carried up to God ; and the answer to prayer, in which comfort and succour are brought down to man.

The story may also recall our Lord’s words to Nathanael (John i. 51) : ‘Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.’

16. The old belief was that God could only be found and worshipped in certain consecrated places. Our Lord explained the contrast between this and the new faith, when he said to the woman of Samaria, ‘The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain (Mount Gerizim), nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father’ (John iv. 21).

Abraham, when he first came into Canaan, had built an altar near this place (Gen. xii. 8).

17. ‘The gate of heaven’ means the place where men offer their prayers and sacrifices, and so have access to God.

18. Setting up stones as pillars was a common way of marking a spot as sacred, or as a place of worship. The stones themselves sometimes became objects of worship.

said, Surely the LORD is in this place ; and I knew it not.

17. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place ! this *is* none other but the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven.

18. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put *for* his pillows, and set it up *for* a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19. And he called the name of that place Beth-el : but the name of that city *was called* Luz at the first.

20. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21. So that I come again to my father's house in peace ; then shall the LORD be my God :

22. And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house : and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

We find such monuments of the worship of the Druids in England. The Christians in the early times used to set up crosses in the same way^a.

Pouring oil on a person or thing was a form of consecration.

19. Beth-el means ‘house of God’.^b We find the first part of the word in many names of places, such as Beth-lehem, ‘house of bread’; Bethsaida, ‘house of fishes’; Bethany, ‘house of dates.’ The second part we find in Israel, ‘prince of God’; Peniel, ‘face of God’; Emmanuel, ‘God with us,’ &c.

20–22. We find from Gen. xxxv. 15 that Jacob fulfilled this vow on his return, restoring the pillar, and solemnly renewing the name of Beth-el^c.

We have already had an instance of giving ‘tithe’ or tenth in the story of Abraham and Melchizedek. (Gen. xiv. 20). The duty of giving such proportion of worldly goods to God’s service was afterwards confirmed in the law of Moses.

^a The Jews had a tradition that this stone set up by Jacob was transferred to the second Temple, built after the Captivity, and was one support of the Ark of the Covenant placed there.

^b It is the same name as that of the chief Mahometan sanctuary at Mecca—Beit-allah.

^c From Joshua xvi. 2 it would seem that the name of the sanctuary was transferred to the town long afterwards. We read there of ‘the wilderness from Beth-el to Luz.’

It was at Bethel and at Dan, the southern and northern boundaries of his kingdom, that Jeroboam set up the golden calves (1 Kings xii. 28, 29).

Josiah afterwards destroyed the altar there (2 Kings xxiii. 15), as had been predicted (1 Kings xiii. 2).

Amos (iii. 14, v. 5, &c.) foretells the destruction of Beth-el. Hosea (x. 5) speaks of ‘the calves of Beth-aven.’ This, which means ‘the house of vanity,’ was the name of a neighbouring place (Joshua vii. 2, and was given to Beth-el, when it had become ‘a house of idols’)

11. JACOB'S SERVICE WITH LABAN AND RETURN.

GENESIS XXIX—XXXI. 35.

Jacob now continues his journey to Mesopotamia. On reaching Haran, he finds some shepherds waiting to water their sheep; and, on Rachel appearing with her father's flock, he waters them for her, and tells her that he is her father's 'brother,' or nephew¹.

He is kindly received by Laban, and agrees to serve him seven years, on condition of receiving Rachel as his wife. At the end of this time Laban treacherously substitutes Leah²; and, when reproached for this, pleads the custom of the country that the elder sister must be married first. Jacob then agrees to serve seven years more for Rachel.

Leah has several children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and a daughter called Dinah. Rachel after some time gives birth to Joseph³. Besides these, Jacob has two sons, Dan and Naphtali, whose mother is Rachel's maid, Bilhah; and two, Gad and Asher, whose mother is Zilpah, Leah's maid⁴.

Jacob now wishes to return to his old home, but is persuaded by Laban to serve six years longer, for which he is to receive part of the flocks. But Laban again tries to defraud him; and as soon as the term of service is over, Jacob resolves on flight.

Encouraged by the assurance of God's approval, he sets out with his wives and children and goods, while Laban is absent at a sheep-shearing. He crosses the Euphrates, and makes for the land east of the Jordan, afterwards called Gilead. There Laban, who has at last discovered his flight, overtakes him. After mutual reproaches, they make a treaty, and Laban returns.

11. JACOB'S SERVICE WITH LABAN AND RETURN.

GENESIS XXIX—XXXI. 35.

¹ Travellers in the East say that this is just like the scenes among Arab tribes now. The wells are the common meeting-places, and the girls of the household are sent to water the flocks there.

Eliezer had found Rebekah beside the well (Gen. xxiv. 15). And so afterwards we read of the daughters of Reuel drawing water for the flocks, when Moses met with them (Exod. ii. 16–18).

Rachel was probably at this time a young girl, of not more than ten or twelve years old.

² The bride was always closely veiled, which would prevent Jacob discovering the imposture.

³ The name Joseph seems to have had a double meaning :

(a) To take away (that is, Rachel's reproach, as being childless).

(b) To add.

Names with the Hebrews either described the circumstances of the child's birth, or some event which happened at or before that time, or else they forecasted the character and future fortunes of the child.

⁴ These sons gave their names to the twelve tribes of the Israelites ; except that, instead of a tribe of Joseph, we have two tribes named after his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

XII. JACOB'S TREATY WITH LABAN.

GENESIS xxxi. 36—xxxii. 2.

XXXI. 36. And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban : and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What *is* my trespass ? what *is* my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me ?

37. Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set *it* here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.

38. This twenty years *have I been* with thee ; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.

39. That which was torn *of beasts* I brought not unto thee ; I bare the loss of it ; of my hand didst thou require it, *whether* stolen by day, or stolen by night.

40. *Thus I was* ; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night ; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

41. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house ; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle : and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

42. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked *thee* yesternight.

43. And Laban answered and said unto Jacob,

XII. JACOB'S TREATY WITH LABAN.

GENESIS XXXI. 36—XXXII. 2.

XXXI. 37. Laban had made a thorough search, hoping to discover the missing ‘images’ or teraphim. Rachel had stolen them (xxxi. 19), though Jacob was not aware of this. She now succeeds in hiding them from Laban.

These teraphim were probably images in human form, worshipped as household gods, like the Roman Penates, and used for purposes of divination. Jacob afterwards (Gen. xxxv. 2) calls upon his household to put away these strange gods^a.

38-41. Jacob appeals to his honesty and sufferings when in Laban's service, and retorts by charging Laban with defrauding him of his due. He tells of his painful experiences when watching his flocks; of extreme heat by day, followed in that climate by intense cold at night.

42. ‘The fear of Isaac’ means He whom Isaac reverenced or feared, that is, God. So Isaiah says (viii. 13), ‘Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.’

43. Laban has no answer to make to Jacob's charges, and now changes his tone. ‘How,’ he says, ‘could he think of injuring his own daughters and their children?’ He proposes to make a friendly covenant; and here again, as at Beth-el, Jacob sets up a pillar as a monument.

^a We read of these teraphim in several passages of the Old Testament. In Judges xvii. 5 we are told that Micah, a man of Mount Ephraim, had ‘an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim.’ Michal, David’s wife, had them (1 Sam. xix. 13, R.V.). They were used by many who professed to worship the true God.

These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

44. Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

45. And Jacob took a stone, and set it up *for* a pillar.

46. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.

47. And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.

48. And Laban said, This heap *is* a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;

49. And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.

50. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take *other* wives beside my daughters, no man *is* with us; see, God *is* witness betwixt me and thee.

51. And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold *this* pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee;

52. This heap *be* witness, and *this* pillar *be* witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.

53. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor,

47. Laban uses a Syriac or Chaldaean word; Jacob a Hebrew word. They both mean 'the heap of witness.' Here is the origin of the name Gilead, so often found in the later history.

48. Mizpah means a 'watch-tower.' Laban here adopts the Hebrew name, and shows by the words he uses his belief in the God of Jacob.

We read of this 'Mizpeh of Gilead' in the story of Jephthah (*Judges xi. 29*). There were several other places of this name in Palestine.

50. 'No man is with us' means that he does not appeal to man, but to God, to witness and punish such wrong.

51. Laban also now erects a pillar. These pillars, and the cairn or heap of stones, were to mark the boundary between their two territories. This is a common custom still among Arab tribes.

53. It is doubtful whether Laban uses 'the God of Nahor' as another name for 'the God of Abraham,' or means by this the god whom Nahor and Terah had worshipped before Abraham's call.

The ancients commonly believed that each country or district was under the special protection of its own gods^b; and Laban, though acknowledging the true God, seems to have retained something of this superstition.

XXXII. 1. Danger from Laban is now at an end, but Jacob is drawing nearer to Esau, from whose anger he had

^b These 'tutelary gods' were called by the Greeks Θεοὶ ἐγχώριοι, by the Latins 'Di patrii' (*Virgil, Georgics i. 498*).

the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.

54. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread : and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.

55. And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them : and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

XXXII. 1. And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This *is* God's host : and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

XIII. JACOB'S WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL AND MEETING WITH ESAU.

GENESIS xxxii. 24—xxxiii. 11.

XXXII. 24. And Jacob was left alone ; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh ; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27. And he said unto him, What *is* thy name ? And he said, Jacob.

fled. In his anxiety he is once more reassured by a vision of angels.

2. Mahanaim^c means ‘two hosts’ or ‘camps’; so called either because the angels appeared as encamped on each side of Jacob, to protect him from Laban on the one hand and Esau on the other, or in reference to the two hosts of the angels and his own followers.

^c This was afterwards the site of an important town, on the border of Gad and Manasseh. It was twice made a rival capital. Here Abner crowned Ish-boseth, the son of Saul, who held his court here for two years, disputing the succession with David (2 Sam. ii. 8, 9); and hither David himself retreated when Jerusalem had been seized by Absalom (2 Sam. xvii. 24).

XIII. JACOB'S WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL AND MEETING WITH ESAU.

GENESIS xxxii. 24—xxxiii. 11.

XXXII. 24. Jacob has sent messengers to propitiate Esau, who bring back word that he is advancing with a force of 400 men. At this news Jacob is greatly afraid, and earnestly prays for deliverance in this fresh peril. He has also prepared a valuable present of cattle for Esau, and has sent his wives and children and followers across the ravine of the Jabbok^a, a tributary of the Jordan (xxxii. 3-23). He is thus left alone.

We are told here that ‘a man wrestled with him.’ In Hos. xii. 4 he is called an angel: ‘Yea, he (Jacob) had power over the angel, and prevailed.’ Jacob presently describes him as God: ‘I have seen God,’ he says, ‘face to face’ (ver. 30).

^a Now called the Zerka, or Blue River.

28. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

29. And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore *is* it *that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

31. And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

32. Therefore the children of Israel eat not *of* the sinew which shrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

XXXIII. 1. And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

2. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.

3. And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

5. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women

25. ‘When he (that is, the angel) saw that he prevailed not against him (Jacob).’ We see in this struggle a figure of the way in which men may wrestle with God in prayer, and, if they are in earnest, prevail. We may, as our Lord describes it, obtain what we ask because of our importunity (Luke xi. 8; cp. xviii. 7).

The mark of this struggle was left in the dislocation of Jacob’s hip^b.

26. They ‘wrestled’ through the silence of the night. At daybreak the angel must depart, but Jacob first craved a blessing. For this Hosea (xii. 4) tells us Jacob ‘wept, and made supplication unto him.’

28. The change of name from Jacob, ‘the supplanter,’ to Israel, ‘the prince of God,’ or ‘prevailer with God,’ marks a crisis or turning-point in Jacob’s life and character. The long years of suffering and discipline, his gratitude to the God who has preserved him through all his troubles, and the prospect of His protection in the coming dangers have made a new man of him^c.

29, 30. The name of the angel is not disclosed to Jacob, but he recognizes that the promise is God’s, and calls the place Peniel, or ‘face of God^d.’

XXXIII. 2, 3. Jacob, now assured of Divine protection,

^b For such physical proof of severe mental struggle we may compare Zacharias’ dumbness (Luke i. 20), and St. Paul’s blindness (Acts ix. 9).

^c ‘The dark crafty character of the youth has been by trial and affliction changed into the princely, godlike character of his manhood’ (Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 65).

^d We may compare with the angel’s words here the answer of the angel to Manoah, Samson’s father: ‘Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?’ (Judges xiii. 18).

We read of this Peniel or Penuel again in Judges viii. 8, 9, 17, when Gideon ‘beats down the tower and slays the men of the city,’ for not giving bread to his famishing troops.

and the children ; and said, Who *are* those with thee ? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

6. Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

7. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves : and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

8. And he said, What *meanest* thou by all this drove which I met ? And he said, *These are* to find grace in the sight of my lord.

9. And Esau said, I have enough, my brother ; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

10. And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand : for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

11. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee ; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took *it*.

12. HISTORY TO SELLING JOSEPH INTO EGYPT.

GENESIS xxxiii. 12—xxxvii. 14.

Esau now urges Jacob to accompany him, but he declines to do so. So Esau returns to his home in the land of Seir, while Jacob settles for a time at a place on the east side of the Jordan valley, which he calls Succoth, because he makes 'booths' for his cattle there.

goes on in front to meet Esau. There is still need of precaution, and he arranges his wives and children according to their rank and his affection for them, placing Rachel and Joseph in the rear.

4. Esau, with all his roughness, was a man of warm and tender feelings. He greets Jacob much as the father in the Parable of the Prodigal welcomes the returning son (Luke xv. 20).

8. The ‘drove^e’ was the present of cattle, which Jacob had sent on for Esau.

10. Jacob urges Esau to accept his gift. His kindly greeting, he says, has made his presence seem something like the reassuring vision of God, which he had seen at Peniel.

11. ‘My blessing’ means my present^f. The word is often so used.

^e The word really means a ‘camp’ or ‘band,’ as when Jacob called the place Mahanaim or ‘two camps’ (xxxii. 2), and divided his followers into two ‘bands’ (xxxii. 7).

^f As in Judges i. 15, when Achsah, Caleb’s daughter, asks Othniel for ‘a blessing’; and when Abigail brings ‘a blessing’ for David’s followers (1 Sam. xxv. 27); and when Naaman asks Elisha to take ‘a blessing’ in return for healing him (2 Kings v. 15).

12. HISTORY TO SELLING JOSEPH INTO EGYPT.

GENESIS xxxiii. 12—xxxvii. 14.

¹ This is the first mention of Beth-lehem, afterwards the birth-place of David, and of Jesus Christ, whose birth there was foretold by the prophet Micah (v. 2). The prophecy is quoted by St. Matthew (ii. 6): ‘And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda : for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel.’

Thence he moves to Shalem, near to Shechem, buying a piece of ground of a chief called Hamor.

After staying there some time, he is compelled to leave by hostilities between his sons and the natives. These are caused by the insult offered by Shechem, son of Hamor, to Jacob's daughter Dinah. In spite of friendly proposals from Hamor, and the consent of the Shechemites to be circumcised, Simeon and Levi treacherously slay all the men of Shechem. Their conduct distresses and alarms Jacob, who migrates to Beth-el, and builds an altar there, to commemorate the vision he saw when on his way to Padanaram.

Moving southwards, Jacob and his followers now come to Ephrath or Beth-lehem¹, where Benjamin² is born, and Rachel dies and is buried³. Jacob continues his journey to Hebron, and settles there.

His evident preference for Joseph, and especially the gift to him of ‘a coat of many colours⁴,’ provokes the jealousy of his other sons. This is increased by Joseph’s account of two dreams, which seem to imply that he is to have the dominion over them. When he is seventeen years old, he is sent to Shechem with a message to his brethren, who are in charge of the flocks there, and they resolve to get rid of him.

XIV. JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

GENESIS xxxvii. 15-36.

XXXVII. 15. And a certain man found him, and, behold, *he was* wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

16. And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed *their flocks*.

17. And the man said, They are departed hence;

In the passage of Micah the place is called Beth-lehem Ephratah. It is also called Ephratah in Ps. cxxxii. 6.

² His mother had called him Benoni, ‘son of my sorrow’; but Jacob changed this to Benjamin, ‘son of my right hand.’

³ So the words of Jeremiah (xxxii. 15), which tell of ‘Rahel weeping for her children,’ are referred by St. Matthew (ii. 17, 18) to the massacre of the Innocents at Beth-lehem.

⁴ This, like the ‘goodly raiment’ of the eldest son mentioned in Gen. xxvii. 15, has been supposed by some to have been a priestly garment. If this were so, it would account for the jealousy felt by the brethren, as Jacob’s gift would show that he wished to transfer the rights of the firstborn to Joseph, the elder son of his favourite wife Rachel.

Aaron’s vestment was of blue and purple and scarlet (Exod. xxxix. 1). We may also compare with this the ‘little coat’ brought yearly to Samuel by his mother Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 19).

Others suppose that this was a long coat reaching to the ankles, and with long sleeves, of finer stuff than the common shepherds’ coats; and that this dress showed his brethren that Joseph was to be the heir (Geikie, *Bible by Modern Light*, i. 421).

XIV. JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

GENESIS XXXVII. 15-36.

XXXVII. 15. Joseph wanders about on the lonely downs, finding no traces of his brothers, who, having exhausted the pastures of Shechem, have moved on to Dothan^a, some thirteen miles further north.

^a Dothan was an important halting-place on the caravan road from Damascus to Egypt. The name means ‘two wells.’ It is

for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

18. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21. And Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit that *is* in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, *his* coat of *many* colours that *was* on him;

24. And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was* empty, *there was* no water in it.

25. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

26. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27. Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites,

18. This is the first instance of a conspiracy to persecute the righteous.

The first martyr was Abel. Our Lord speaks of the blood of all the prophets, from that ‘of righteous Abel’ (Matt. xxiii. 35). Joseph was the next victim of persecution, but he was saved to do a great work in preserving the lives of others.

22. The ‘pit’ was a deep well or cistern, dug to catch the rain water^b. In this, but for Reuben and Judah, the brothers would have left Joseph to die.

We learn from the words of the brothers in xlvi. 21 that Joseph had begged for mercy in vain. ‘We saw,’ they say, ‘the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear.’

25. These traders are called Midianites in ver. 28. Probably the company included both. Both tribes were descendants of Abraham, the Ishmaelites through Ishmael, the Midianites through Midian, the son of Abraham’s last wife, Keturah. They both dwelt to the south of Palestine, and were almost as one tribe^c.

Gilead, on the east of Jordan (Gen. xxxi. 47), was famous for its balsam or ‘balm.’ The ‘spicer’ was probably a sort of gum, like myrrh. We find balm, spices, and myrrh among the presents afterwards sent by Jacob to Joseph, when governor in Egypt (Gen. xlvi. 11)^d.

mentioned again in the history of Elisha, when the king of Syria sends troops to take the prophet, who are smitten with blindness (2 Kings vi. 13-18).

^b Such places were often used as dungeons. We read in Isa. xxiv. 22 of ‘prisoners gathered in the pit’; and Jeremiah seems to have been imprisoned in such a well (Jer. xxxviii. 6).

^c The price for which Joseph was sold, twenty shekels or ‘pieces of silver,’ was that fixed by the law of Moses for a male slave between five and twenty years old. Our Lord, of whom Joseph was a type, was betrayed by Judas for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. xxvi. 15).

^d ‘Myrrh, aloes, and cassia’ are mentioned as precious perfumes in Ps. xlv. 9. Myrrh was one of the gifts (with gold and

and let not our hand be upon him ; for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh. And his brethren were content.

28. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen ; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver : and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29. And Reuben returned unto the pit ; and, behold, Joseph *was* not in the pit ; and he rent his clothes.

30. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, 'The child *is* not ; and I, whither shall I go ?

31. And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood ;

32. And they sent the coat of *many* colours, and they brought *it* to their father ; and said, This have we found : know now whether it *be* thy son's coat or no.

33. And he knew it, and said, *It is* my son's coat ; an evil beast hath devoured him ; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him ; but he refused to be comforted ; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

36. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, *and* captain of the guard.

35. Dinah is the only daughter of Jacob of whom we hear, but he probably had several others. His daughters are mentioned again in Gen. xlvi. 7.

The word for ‘grave’ here means the place of departed spirits. Jacob supposed Joseph to have been devoured by wild beasts, and not buried.

36. This Potiphar was one of Pharaoh’s courtiers or chamberlains, perhaps at the head of the royal household. ‘Captain of the guard’ probably means ‘captain of the executioners,’ who formed the king’s body-guard, and carried out the sentences on criminals. Others suppose he was superintendent of the state police ^e.

Pharaoh is not a name, but was the title of all the kings of Egypt. It means either ‘the great house,’ and was given to the king as owner of the palace ; or, according to some, ‘the sun,’ because he was supposed to be the representative on earth of the sun-god ^f.

Sometimes we have the description ‘king of Egypt’ added to Pharaoh ; sometimes the proper name is added, as Pharaoh - nechoh (2 Kings xxiii. 29), Pharaoh - hophra (Jer. xliv. 30).

St. Stephen tells how ‘the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt’ (Acts vii. 9).

frankincense) brought to the infant Jesus by the wise men (Matt. ii. 11).

Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes to bury the body of Jesus (John xix. 39).

These spices would be used in Egypt for embalming the dead.

^e Potiphar means either ‘gift of the risen one’ or ‘devoted to the palace.’ There is another name very like it in Gen. xli. 45. Poti-pherah; whose daughter Joseph marries. This means ‘gift of’ or ‘devoted to the sun.’

^f We may compare the title of Porte, or ‘palace-gate,’ commonly used for the Sultan.

13. JOSEPH'S LIFE IN EGYPT BEFORE HIS PROMOTION.

GENESIS XXXIX—XLI. 13.

Joseph, being thus sold as a slave, at first finds favour with his master, and is promoted to be ‘overseer’ or steward of his house. But a wicked charge is brought against him by Potiphar’s wife, and he is thrown into the dungeon where state prisoners are kept¹. After some time, however, he gains the confidence of the keeper of the prison, and is placed in charge of the other prisoners.

Among these prisoners are two officers of the royal household, who have offended Pharaoh : the chief of the ‘butlers’ or cup-bearers, and the chief of the ‘bakers’². Each of these has a remarkable dream, which Joseph interprets for him. That of the butler, about a vine with three branches, the grapes of which he presses into Pharaoh’s cup, means that he will be restored to his post in three days. The baker’s dream, about birds eating the bakemeats out of three baskets on his head, means that within three days he will be hanged.

Both dreams are fulfilled, as Joseph has predicted ; but the butler forgets Joseph’s request that he will try to get him released, and he remains two years longer in prison. Then, when the king is perplexed about his two dreams of seven fat kine devoured by seven lean ones, and of seven good ears of corn devoured by seven thin ones, the chief butler tells him how his own and the chief baker’s dreams were explained by their fellow-prisoner, and Pharaoh summons Joseph to his presence³.

XV. JOSEPH AND PHARAOH.

GENESIS XLI. 14–41.

XLI. 14. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph,

13. JOSEPH'S LIFE IN EGYPT BEFORE HIS PROMOTION.

GENESIS XXXIX—XLI. 13.

¹ This part of Joseph's history is almost the same as a story discovered on the monuments, called 'The Tale of the Two Brothers.'

He was probably confined in the White Castle of Memphis. In Ps. cv. 18 we are told that they hurt his feet 'in the stocks ; the iron entered into his soul.'

² These were responsible positions. It was the duty of these officers to protect the king from being poisoned.

³ Joseph probably entered Egypt towards the close of the dominion of the Hyksos, or Shepherd-kings.

These, who had ruled for some time, were a nomadic tribe of Syria, who had either been attracted by the fame and fertility of Egypt, or had themselves been driven out by the powerful nations in their rear.

The Egyptians called them 'Shasu' or 'Shepherds.' The name Hyksos was afterwards given them from 'Hyk,' the title of their chief.

We are told in Gen. xlvi. 34 that 'every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians'; and we find from Gen. xlvii. 4-6 that Jacob and his followers, when they came into Egypt, desired to dwell apart in the land of Goshen, and that Pharaoh understood and granted their request. The Egyptians hated all foreigners, and would resent the arrival of these new-comers. But the king and court would welcome Asiatics.

The position of the Israelites became very different when 'a new king arose over Egypt, which knew not Joseph' (Exod. i. 8); when, that is, the Hyksos were driven out, and a new dynasty was founded.

XV. JOSEPH AND PHARAOH.

GENESIS XLI. 14-41.

XLI. 14. This was part of the necessary purification, before he could be admitted to the royal presence.

and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon : and he shaved *himself*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it : and I have heard say of thee, *that* thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

16. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is* not in me : God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

17. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river :

18. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured ; and they fed in a meadow :

19. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness :

20. And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine :

21. And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them ; but they *were* still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good :

23. And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, *and* blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them :

24. And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears : and I told *this* unto the magicians ; but *there was* none that could declare *it* to me.

16. Joseph claims no power of his own to explain dreams. He had said to Pharaoh's officers in the prison, 'Do not interpretations belong to God?' (Gen. xl. 8).

So Daniel, when summoned to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the meaning of which had been revealed to him in a vision, says, 'There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets' (Dan. ii. 28).

17. 'The river' is of course the Nile, by which Egypt was fertilized. No rain falls there, and the country depends entirely on the overflow of the river.

Arabian historians tell us of a terrible famine in Egypt in the eleventh century, lasting like this for seven years, when, from the failure of rain higher up the country, there was no overflow ^a.

18. The Egyptians were a very idolatrous race, and worshipped many animals. The ox or cow was the most sacred of all, and was regarded as the symbol of cultivation.

Seven was the Egyptian sacred number.

20. This meant that all the produce of the seven years of plenty should be consumed in the seven years of famine.

23. The wind referred to is probably the south-east wind, which, blowing from the deserts of Arabia, scorches and withers up the grass.

^a The monuments also contain references to a famine many years earlier than the time of Joseph.

25. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh *is* one : God hath shewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do.

26. The seven good kine *are* seven years ; and the seven good ears *are* seven years : the dream *is* one.

27. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them *are* seven years ; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.

28. This *is* the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh : What God *is* about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

29. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt :

30. And there shall arise after them seven years of famine ; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt ; and the famine shall consume the land ;

31. And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following ; for it *shall be* very grievous.

32. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice ; *it is* because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

33. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34. Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

35. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

24. These ‘magicians’ or ‘revealers of secrets’ were priests, who could read and explain the hieroglyphics, or sacred writings, and were therefore called ‘the holy scribes.’ They are mentioned again in the account of Moses’ interviews with Pharaoh, when they tried to copy his miracles. They are there also called ‘the sorcerers’ (*Exod. vii. 11*)^b.

32. The repetition or ‘doubling’ of a dream or prediction was supposed to make it certain. Joseph’s own promotion had been thus twice foretold in the two dreams of the sheaves and the stars making obeisance.

34. This may mean that a fifth part was to be purchased and laid aside. But some suppose that a tithe or tenth of the produce was always paid to the king of Egypt, and that what Joseph did was to double this tax^c.

39. Joseph had told Pharaoh that the answer would come from God, and, inspired by Divine wisdom, he had not only interpreted the dream, but told the king how to make provision for the coming famine.

^b They professed to work magic and to interpret dreams; and were astrologers, like those at Babylon, of whom we read in *Dan. i. 20, ii. 2*.

^c We read afterwards of Joseph making this ‘a law over the land of Egypt’ (*Gen. xlvi. 26*). He thus made the people what we should call ‘crown tenants,’ holding the land subject to the payment of this tribute of 20 per cent. An exception was made in favour of the priests.

36. And that food shall be or store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37. And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*?

39. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*:

40. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

14. JOSEPH'S PROMOTION.

GENESIS xli. 42-57.

Joseph is now invested with all the symbols of high office among the Egyptians: the signet ring, the robes of fine linen, and the golden necklace. He rides in a royal chariot, and is saluted with shouts of welcome by the people¹. Pharaoh gives him an Egyptian name, which probably means 'the saviour of the world' or 'of the age'². Thus formally installed as chief minister, Joseph marries Asenath³, the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On⁴, or of the sun. He is now thirty years old. He has two sons, the elder of whom is called Manasseh, or 'causing to forget,' because in this

40. Joseph was to be the prime minister or grand vizier. He was made next in power to the sovereign, who, however, should retain all his royal rights and dignity, being greater than Joseph ‘in (possession of) the throne^d.’

41. Joseph’s promotion is described in Ps. cv. 20-22: ‘The king sent, and delivered him; the prince of the people let him go free. He made him lord also of his house, and ruler of all his substance,’ &c.

St. Stephen tells how God delivered Joseph ‘out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh,’ who ‘made him governor over Egypt and all his house’ (Acts vii. 10).

^d Some translate, instead of ‘according unto thy word,’ &c., ‘on thy mouth shall all my people kiss’; meaning that they should do homage to him. Others, again, explain it as ‘shall arm themselves at thy order’; meaning that Joseph was to be the commander-in-chief.

14. JOSEPH’S PROMOTION.

GENESIS xli. 42-57.

¹ They are to cry before him, ‘Abrech,’ or ‘Bow the knee.’ Some however explain the word as meaning ‘a great seer.’

² The name is ‘Zaphnath-paaneah.’ Some expound it ‘a revealer of secrets’; others, ‘governor of the place of life’; and other explanations are given.

³ Asenath means ‘devoted to Neith.’ Neith was an Egyptian goddess, corresponding to the Greek Athene or Latin Minerva.

⁴ On was called by the Greeks Heliopolis, or ‘the city of the sun.’ It was not far from the site of the modern Cairo.

new life and these new interests Joseph forgets his trouble. The younger is called Ephraim, or ‘fruitful.’

The seven years of plenty come, as has been foretold ; and during these Joseph lays by abundant provision for the dearth which is to follow. Out of these stores he first sells corn to the people for money, and, when money fails, barters it for their flocks and cattle. These too being at last exhausted, he buys up the land for Pharaoh, removing the people to the cities, in which the food is stored. The only exception made is in favour of the priests, who have a portion of the supplies assigned them by Pharaoh without charge, and so retain their lands⁵.

After the famine their lands appear to have been restored to the people, on the understanding that they paid the fifth of the produce to Pharaoh.

15. THE VISITS OF JOSEPH'S BRETHREN TO EGYPT.

GENESIS xlii—xliv.

The drought affects neighbouring countries, and Jacob, hearing of the stores laid up in Egypt, sends all his sons, except Benjamin, to buy corn there¹. Joseph knows them at once, but *they do not recognize him*. He accuses them of being spies², puts them all in prison for three days, and then keeps Simeon bound, until they shall return with their youngest brother. They feel that this is a punishment for their former cruelty, with which Reuben again reproaches them.

On their journey home, they are alarmed to find one of their sacks filled with corn and the money restored, thinking that this has been done to find a fresh charge against them. On their arrival, they tell their story to Jacob, and then find that *all* the money is restored. Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go, though Reuben offers his own two sons as sureties for his return.

⁵ This policy of Joseph's has been much criticized. It is said that he thereby impoverished the people, and reduced a free nation to slavery. But it would rather appear that what he did was to make all the people servants of Pharaoh, instead of being the vassals of many petty princes; a change which would be to their advantage. Moreover, he thus substituted a regular system of taxation for the power of demanding taxes as the king pleased.

The people seem to have gladly accepted the new constitution; and such a policy was at any rate necessary to save the lives of the improvident Egyptians in this famine. Their land was afterwards restored to them, subject to a tax; which was by no means excessive, as compared with those often exacted by despots.

15. THE VISITS OF JOSEPH'S BRETHREN TO EGYPT.

GENESIS xlii—xliv.

¹ It may seem strange that Joseph should never have sent any news of his fate to his sorrowing father. Communication between Egypt and Canaan was easy, as 'caravans,' or companies of traders, were constantly coming and going.

If this implied cruel indifference, then it would be another proof that Scripture presents to us no character as faultless, except that of Him who was 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (Heb. iv. 15).

But Joseph tells his brethren (Gen. xlv. 5) that God 'sent him before them to preserve life,' and the same is implied in Ps. cv. 17. We may therefore regard Joseph's silence as part of the Divine plans for the preservation and future fortunes of the chosen race.

² He tells them that they had come 'to see the nakedness,' that is, the defenceless condition of the land.

The famine however becomes severe, and Jacob orders his sons to go again to Egypt; and at last consents to their taking Benjamin, for whom Judah now offers to be surety. They take with them double money and presents. On their arrival, they are alarmed at being brought into Joseph's house, but are reassured by the steward³. Simeon is now released and joins them. Joseph receives them kindly, and is much moved at the sight of Benjamin. At the meal which follows they sit by themselves, but portions of food are sent them from Joseph's own table, Benjamin's mess or portion being five times as great as any other⁴.

Next day they set out homewards, with plenty of corn, and with their money restored. But Joseph's steward overtakes them, and charges them with stealing his master's divining cup⁵. It is found in Benjamin's sack. They return to Joseph, offering to be his servants, but he requires that Benjamin alone shall remain. Judah earnestly pleads with him, telling how this will 'bring down their father's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

XVI. JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

GENESIS xlv.

XLV. 1. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

The Egyptians were always in dread of attacks from the north-east. They had had wars with the formidable Hittites, and the Arab tribes frequently made raids upon their fertile lands. The invasion of the Hyksos itself came from the same quarter.

³ The contrast between the pomp of the grand vizier's mansion and their own simple mode of life must have been very startling to them. At the entertainments of Egyptians of high rank every luxury was provided.

⁴ This is still a custom of Eastern nations, when a special welcome is to be given to guests.

⁵ The custom of 'divining' by bowls filled with water, used as 'magical mirrors,' has been common, and is still found among Eastern nations.

XVI. JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

GENESIS xlvi.

XLV. 1. When he had heard Judah's account of his father's anxiety about Benjamin, Joseph could not restrain his feelings any longer.

6. 'Earing' is an old English word for ploughing, as in 1 Sam. viii. 12 : 'He will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest.' (It is so used also in Exod. xxxiv. 21 ; Deut. xxi. 4 ; Isa. xxx. 24.)

4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6. For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earring nor harvest.

7. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8. So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11. And there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

7, 8. So Joseph reassures them again after Jacob's death, saying that God 'meant unto good' what they had done to him, 'to save much people alive' (Gen. l. 20).

In Ps. cv. 17 it is said that God 'had sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold to be a bond-servant.'

8. 'A father to Pharaoh' means Pharaoh's chief minister, this title being often given to the grand viziers of Eastern kings.

10. The land of Goshen was in the north-east of Egypt, on the borders of Arabia. In the LXX it is described as 'of Arabia.' In Gen. xlvi. 11 it is called 'the land of Rameses.' In Ps. lxxviii. 13, 44 it is called the 'field of Zoan'; Zoan being a neighbouring city, also called Tanis^a.

Goshen was well suited for pasture, and there the Hebrew shepherds would dwell apart from the Egyptians^b.

Joseph probably lived either at On or at Memphis, neither of which was far distant.

11. Jacob's 'household' would include all his servants and

^a Hebron and Zoan are coupled together in Num. xiii. 22, where we are told that 'Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.'

'Patriarchal history is grouped round these two places' (Sayce, *Fresh Light from Ancient Monuments*, p. 65).

^b Perhaps, too, Pharaoh thought that the occupation of Goshen by these immigrants would protect Egypt from invasion from that quarter. Moreover, a retreat thence to their own country would be easy, in case they were attacked by the Egyptians.

14. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept ; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them : and after that his brethren talked with him.

16. And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come : and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

17. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye ; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan ;

18. And take your father and your households, and come unto me : and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19. Now thou art commanded, this do ye ; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20. Also regard not your stuff ; for the good of all the land of Egypt *is* your's.

21. And the children of Israel did so : and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment ; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23. And to his father he sent after this *manner* ; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24. So he sent his brethren away, and they

followers, probably some hundreds. He had described them as ‘two bands,’ when he came back from Laban.

12. He speaks with them now as their brother, and in their own language.

20. ‘Regard not your stuff’ means that they were not to mind leaving some of their ‘vessels’ or furniture behind them, as these would be replaced on their reaching Egypt.

24. Joseph was afraid that they might dispute on their journey who was most to blame for their evil treatment of him.

Some translate the words ‘do not be afraid of the journey.’ But they had already travelled backwards and forwards, and would hardly need this encouragement.

26. Jacob at first could hardly believe the good news to be true. After his long sorrowing for Joseph as dead, and his anxiety about Benjamin, the shock stunned him for a time.

27. These wagons were two-wheeled vehicles, drawn by oxen. We find them so represented on Egyptian monuments. They were already used on the level country of Egypt, but probably unknown as yet in Palestine.

departed : and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

25. And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

26. And told him, saying, Joseph *is* yet alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them : and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived :

28. And Israel said, *It is* enough ; Joseph my son *is* yet alive : I will go and see him before I die.

16. JACOB'S MIGRATION TO EGYPT.

GENESIS xlvi—xlviii.

Jacob sets out for Egypt, with all his belongings¹. On the frontier plain of Beer-sheba, hallowed as a sanctuary, he halts to consult God as to his enterprise, and then, reassured by the promise of the Divine blessing, he crosses the desert. On the borders of Egypt Joseph meets him.

Joseph now introduces to Pharaoh five of his brethren², and afterwards Jacob himself. They are settled, apart from the Egyptians, in the land of Goshen³.

During the remainder of the seven years of famine, Joseph carries out the policy already described, by which

The sight of these, which implied great kindness and a strong desire to see him in Egypt, convinced Jacob that the report about Joseph was true.

28. The spirit of the old patriarch now revived, and he determined to undertake the journey ^c.

^c The establishment of the Israelites in Egypt is very remarkable. It shows the great influence Joseph had gained, for it was apparently unopposed. The ready consent of the king was natural, if, as is probable, he was one of the Shepherd-kings. But the native Egyptians regarded nomadic or pastoral tribes as very inferior to an agricultural people like themselves. Shepherds are always represented on the monuments as mean and rough.

16. JACOB'S MIGRATION TO EGYPT.

GENESIS xlvi—xlviii.

¹ For this migration cp. Ps. cv. 23 : ‘ Israel also came into Egypt, and Jacob was a stranger in the land of Ham.’

² These five were probably the four eldest, who were sons of Leah, and Benjamin.

³ An Egyptian document describes Goshen (LXX Gesem) as not cultivated, but left as pasture for cattle, because of the strangers.

Jacob's own family numbered some seventy souls. St. Stephen (Acts vii. 14), following the LXX account, gives the number as seventy-five. Jacob had besides a number of dependents.

⁴ Jacob describes the days of his life as ‘ few and evil.’ He had lived to the age of 130 years; but Abraham reached 175 years, and Isaac 180.

Jacob had suffered many hardships and sorrows. His long exile, his unjust treatment by Laban, the loss of his dearly loved wife Rachel, the conduct of his sons, his sorrow for the supposed death of Joseph, his anxieties just before his journey to Egypt,

Pharaoh becomes owner of all the land of Egypt, except the priests' portion.

The time of Jacob's death now draws near, and he exacts a promise from Joseph to bury him with his fathers in Palestine⁴. Joseph now brings his two sons into his father's presence, to receive his blessing⁵. The old man, in spite of Joseph's remonstrance, gives the greater blessing to Ephraim, the younger son, on whose head he has placed his right hand⁶. Thus the rights of the firstborn are again transferred, as in the case of Esau and Jacob himself. Jacob promises to Joseph and his descendants, on their return to Palestine, a special portion⁷ 'above his brethren,' taken from the Amorites.

XVII. JACOB'S BLESSINGS ON HIS SONS.

Part I.

GENESIS xl ix. 1-12.

XLIX. 1. And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you *that* which shall befall you in the last days.

2. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

3. Reuben, thou *art* my firstborn, my might, and

and this further unsettlement in his old age—all these might well make him look back upon his life as one of trouble.

⁵ This blessing is referred to in Heb. xi. 21: ‘By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.’

⁶ Ephraim’s descendants were much the more numerous, and this tribe became so powerful that it was the rival of Judah. After the disruption into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the name of Ephraim was often given by the prophets to the whole of the northern kingdom.

⁷ Some explain this as ‘a shoulder’ or ‘mountain.’ Others refer it to the town of Shechem, which was in the portion of Ephraim.

Some think that these words foretell the double portion to be given to the sons of Joseph, when the land should be conquered.

XVII. JACOB’S BLESSINGS ON HIS SONS.

Part I.

GENESIS xl ix. 1-12.

XLIX. 1. The expression ‘in the last days’ commonly means at the coming of Messiah; ‘the fulness of the time,’ as St. Paul calls it (Gal. iv. 4). But here it seems to cover the whole of Old Testament history from the settlement in Palestine.

4. Reuben forfeited the privileges of the firstborn for his incest with Bilhah, which showed his wanton character. The double portion was transferred to Joseph; the priesthood to Levi; the supremacy to Judah^a.

Reuben’s descendants never ‘excelled.’ They never did any famous deed, or produced any famous leader.

5-7. Jacob describes Simeon and Levi as ‘brethren,’ that

* 1 Chron. v. 2: ‘For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph’s.’

the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power :

4. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel ; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed ; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch.

5. Simeon and Levi *are* brethren ; instruments of cruelty *are in* their habitations.

6. O my soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united : for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall.

7. Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce ; and their wrath, for it was cruel : I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

8. Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall

is, alike in character. He declares that he did not connive at or sympathize with their treachery and cruelty in the massacre of the people of Shechem (Gen. xxxiv).

'They slew a man' probably means a number of men. 'They digged down a wall' must mean that they made a breach in the wall of Shechem ^b.

Simeon's descendants had no territory of their own assigned in the division of Palestine, but only certain towns in the portion of Judah.

The curse on Levi was afterwards changed into a blessing for slaying the worshippers of the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. 26-28), when they were 'consecrated to the Lord' as the priestly tribe ^c. But they were literally 'scattered,' being stationed in forty-eight cities in different parts of Palestine (Joshua xxi).

8, 9. Judah means 'praise' (Gen. xxix. 35). He is described as victorious over his enemies, and lord over his brethren. This was fulfilled in the time of David and Solomon. But, as we may judge from the words which follow, the prophecy also refers to the Messiah, who was to be born of the tribe of Judah (Mic. v. 2; Matt. ii. 6).

10. This has always been regarded, both by Jews and Christians, as a prophecy of Messiah.

The 'sceptre' or sovereignty is not to 'depart from Judah,' nor a 'lawgiver' or scribe from among his descendants, 'until the Messiah shall come ^d.'

^b But these words may be translated, as in R. V., 'they houghed (or hamstrung) an ox'; referring to the slaughter of Hamor, an ox being sometimes put for a prince.

^c Moses describes them as 'blessed' in his last predictions about the twelve tribes (Deut. xxxiii. 8-11). He passes over Simeon without mention.

^d The word for 'lawgiver' is translated by some 'ruler's staff' (R. V.). 'Shiloh' may mean either 'He that should come' (Matt. xi. 3), or 'He whose right it is' (Ezek. xxi. 27), or 'the Peacemaker' (Isa. ix. 6; Eph. ii. 14).

Other explanations of this difficult passage have been suggested.

praise: thy hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

9. Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

10. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

11. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

12. His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

XVIII. JACOB'S BLESSINGS ON HIS SONS.

Part II.

GENESIS xlix. 13-27.

XLIX. 13. Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he *shall be* for an haven of ships; and his border *shall be* unto Zidon.

'The gathering of the people' should be (as in R. V.) 'the obedience of the peoples.' The words foretell how 'the Gentiles shall come to His (Christ's) light' (Isa. lx. 3), and His shall be a universal dominion.

11. These words may describe the fertility of Judah's portion, where vines shall be as the commonest trees, and the juice of the grapes shall be used like water.

Some have supposed that these words refer to the True Vine, Jesus Christ (John xv. 1); or that the vine means the Jewish people, and the 'ass's colt' the Gentiles, who are to be brought into Christ's Church.

With the words 'washing his garments in wine,' &c., we may compare Isa. lxiii. 1-3, where the description of one whose garments are 'like him that treadeth in the winefat,' and who hath 'trodden the winepress alone,' is commonly referred to our Lord, either as a sufferer or as an avenger^e.

12. These words may mean 'brighter than wine,' &c., describing the beauty and prosperity of Judah's portion, or the brightness and purity of the Gospel of Christ.

^e Hence it is chosen as the Epistle for the Monday before Easter.

XVIII. JACOB'S BLESSINGS ON HIS SONS.

Part II.

GENESIS xl ix. 13-27.

XLIX. 13. The portion of Zebulun lay between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean. Its westernmost point was Mount Carmel, not far from the southern frontier of Phoenicia, of which Tyre and Sidon were the chief cities^a.

^a Moses speaks of this tribe as 'sucking of the abundance of

14. Issachar *is* a strong ass couching down between two burdens :

15. And he saw that rest *was* good, and the land that *it was* pleasant ; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

16. Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

18. I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

19. Gad, a troop shall overcome him : but he shall overcome at the last.

20. Out of Asher his bread *shall be* fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

14, 15. Issachar is described as a pastoral or agricultural tribe, quiet and peaceable, ready to pay tribute rather than make war for independence.

A ‘strong ass’ means one only fit for rough work. ‘Between two burdens’ should probably be ‘between two sheepfolds’ (R. V.)^b.

16, 17. The word Dan means ‘judge.’ Though only the son of Bilhah, the handmaiden, he should be independent.

The words about the ‘adder’ or arrow-snake seem to refer to the craftiness and cruelty of the Danites, as shown in their attack upon Laish (Judges xviii. 27)^c.

18. These words may mean that he, who had been changed from Jacob, ‘the supplanter,’ to Israel, ‘the prince of God,’ now trusts in God’s protection, and not in such subtlety as that of the Danites.

19. This is in R. V. ‘Gad, a troop shall press upon him : but he shall press upon their heel.’ The portion of Gad, on the east of Jordan, was exposed to attacks of wild Arab tribes. The Gadites, who were very warlike, are represented as pressing on the rear of such marauders.

In Gen. xxx. 11 Gad is said to mean ‘a troop.’

20. The portion of Asher, in the extreme north-west, was very fertile, producing corn, wine, and oil in abundance.

Asher means ‘happy’ or ‘fortunate’ (Gen. xxx. 13).

21. Different explanations are given. (1) That Naphtali, living in a rocky region between Mount Lebanon and the Sea of Galilee, is therefore compared to a wild goat. (2) That the words refer to his vigour in war. (3) That they

the seas’ (Deut. xxxiii. 19). The Phoenicians were the great mercantile nation of the ancient world, and the people of Zebulun probably joined them in trading.

^b The word is so rendered in Judges v. 16.

^c Or they may describe the position of Dan as a border tribe, first in the south, and then in the north, lying in wait for an invading enemy.

Some suppose that they predict the cunning of Samson, who was a Danite, and that the preceding verse refers to his being one of the judges.

21. Naphtali *is* a hind let loose : he giveth goodly words.

22. Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well ; *whose* branches run over the wall :

23. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him :

24. But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob ; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel :)

25. *Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee ; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb :

26. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills : they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

27. Benjamin shall ravin *as* a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

predict the ‘letting loose’ or sending forth of our Lord’s Apostles, Naphtali being afterwards part of Galilee ^d.

22. This probably describes the number of Joseph’s descendants, the two large tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh; or his saving the lives of many during the famine, which saving extended beyond the frontier ‘wall’ of Egypt.

23, 24. This passage, too, is variously explained. Some think the words refer to Joseph’s past sufferings, the ‘archers’ being his brethren; and to his surviving, through his faith in God, to be ‘the shepherd’ or preserver, the ‘stone’ or support of his family in the famine.

But, as all the other blessings relate to the future, others suppose that these words foretell the strength and success of the warlike tribes descended from him, with perhaps a special reference to Joshua, who was an Ephraimite ^e.

25, 26. Joseph’s portion shall be fertilized both by rain and rivers, and he shall have abundant offspring. Jacob’s blessings on him exceed in this respect those pronounced by Abraham and Isaac on *their* children, and these blessings shall be as lasting as the hills.

Joseph was ‘separate’ from his brethren when he was sold into Egypt, and when he was promoted there.

27. This describes the character of the tribe of Benjamin as a race of warriors.

The warlike King Saul belonged to this tribe.

^d The last alone furnishes any satisfactory explanation of ‘giveth goodly words’ (Isa. lii. 7; Rom. x. 15).

^e Others regard this as predicting the persecution and triumph of that ‘Shepherd of Israel,’ Jesus Christ, who is the chief corner-stone of the Church (Eph. ii. 20), and of whom Joseph was a type.

17. HISTORY TO JOSEPH'S DEATH.

GENESIS xlix. 28—1.

Jacob's last instructions are that he should be buried beside his fathers in the cave of Machpelah¹. He dies at the age of 147 years. His body is embalmed after the Egyptian fashion, and, when the days of mourning are over, Joseph obtains Pharaoh's permission to carry out his father's last wishes. As a mark of respect to Joseph and his family, Pharaoh's officers and the 'elders' of Egypt accompany the funeral procession².

At a place called Atad they halt, and make a great mourning for seven days. The inhabitants, mistaking the object of this, call the place Abel-mizraim, or 'the mourning of the Egyptians.' Joseph and his brethren then proceed to Mamre or Hebron, and bury Jacob in the family burial-place.

Joseph's brethren are now afraid that he will punish them for their former cruelty to him. He is grieved at this suspicion, and at once reassures them. He lives to see his 'children's children'; and then, feeling that his end is at hand, he calls his brethren together, and tells them that God will one day 'visit' them, and bring them back to their own land³. He exacts a promise that, when this return takes place, his bones shall be removed there. He dies at the age of 110, and his body is embalmed and put in a coffin⁴.

17. HISTORY TO JOSEPH'S DEATH.

GENESIS xl ix. 28—1.

¹ No difficulty as to carrying out this request seems to have been feared. The Hyksos, who were now rulers in Egypt, perhaps belonged to the Hittite race, which would account for this confidence.

² Some suppose that, instead of taking the direct route, they travelled round by the east of the Dead Sea, probably fearing an attack from the Philistines. Others think that they marched direct to Hebron, which was north-east of Goshen. The question as to the route depends on the site of Atad. It has been said to be the same as Beth-hogla, mentioned in Joshua xv. 6.

³ This, as showing his confidence in God's promise, is given in Heb. xi. 22 as an instance of faith: 'By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.'

⁴ When the Israelites came out of Egypt, Moses took with him 'the bones of Joseph' (Exod. xiii. 19), and Joshua afterwards buried them at Shechem, in the piece of ground which 'Jacob had bought of the sons of Hamor,' and which 'became the inheritance of the children of Joseph' (Joshua xxiv. 32).

18. SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON THE Patriarchal Age.

A. The Book of Genesis may be divided into two parts :

1. A short general introduction on the origin and first ages of the world (i—xi. 26).
2. The lives of the patriarchs, or ancestors of the chosen race (xi. 27—I).

The history of the Jewish Church and nation commences with the Call of Abraham. But in the Book of Genesis it is biography rather than history ; the lives, that is, of persons or families, rather than the account of a whole people. The history proper commences with Exodus.

From these narratives in Genesis, apart from their higher purpose, we may learn much that is interesting as to the mode of life and state of society in those early days. There are several beautiful pictures of old-world life, such as the story of Abraham's entertaining the three visitors (xviii) ; the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael (xxi) ; and Eliezer's journey to Mesopotamia and meeting with Rebekah (xxiv), &c.

B. We may trace some progress in civilization in such matters as these^a:

1. The purely pastoral life of Abraham is combined in the case of Isaac with the agricultural, or tillage of the soil.
2. Between the times of Abraham and Jacob the rights of ownership of land have become defined. Abraham settles for a time where he pleases, without question, and only purchases a burying-place. Jacob has to buy the field in which he has pitched his tent (xxxiii. 19).
3. In the same interval a regular caravan traffic with Egypt and the East seems to have been established.
4. Some of the luxuries of life are introduced. Isaac loves 'savoury meat' and drinks wine (xxvii. 4, 25). Abraham had only milk to set before his guests; though wine was already known to the native tribes, as seen in the story of Melchizedek (xiv. 18).
5. The stories of Rebekah (xxiv) and of Rachel (xxxv) show us that ornaments are already used.

C. It is important to notice the following:

1. The picture of home life, especially the absolute authority of the father. He can transfer the rights of the firstborn. He has even the power of life and death. He is both chief and priest. Polygamy (or having more than one wife) is allowed.
2. The character of the patriarchs. These are perfectly natural, and in keeping with the ideas and habits of the age. The knowledge of the true God has been revealed to them,

^a See Milman, *History of the Jews*, i. 38, 39.

but their morality is imperfect. Their ideas of right and wrong are very different from ours^b. The accounts given of them, in which their faults are not concealed or extenuated, and in which they are seen to be ‘men of like passions’ with ourselves, are a witness to the truthfulness of the Scriptural narrative. We may notice also that their characters are not all of one type, but vary, showing what we call ‘individuality.’

3. The religion and worship of the age. The following ‘traces of a patriarchal Church’ have been discovered^c:

- (a) Places of worship. Prayers are offered ‘before the Lord’; altars are built for sacrifice, &c.
- (b) Persons set apart to perform rites of worship. The chief instance of a priest is ‘Melchizedek, king of Salem.’ But the firstborn of each family probably had these duties assigned to him.
- (c) Priestly dress; as in Esau’s ‘goodly raiment,’ and Joseph’s ‘coat of many colours.’
- (d) Forms of worship; sacrificing, consecrating with oil, laying on of hands, &c.
- (e) Set times of worship; the sabbath, ordained at the Creation, recalled in the frequent mention of the ‘week,’ or ‘of seven days.’
- (f) Regulations as to vows, oaths, punishments, purifications, payment of tithes, &c.
- (g) The ‘sacrament’ of circumcision.

^b ‘The patriarchs, those in the Old Testament most distinguished by Divine favour, are not to be regarded as premature Christians’ (Milman, *History of the Jews*, i. 42).

^c Blunt, *Scriptural Coincidences*, part i, pp. 9-25.

4. The promise of the Saviour of mankind. This may be seen, not only in the well-known prophecies of the Messiah (Gen. iii. 15, xxii. 18, xl ix. 10), and in the types of our Lord (Isaac, Joseph, &c.), but as the central idea of the whole history. It is the explanation of much that would otherwise seem strange to us; the great anxiety to have children, the jealousy in families, and the like.

19. THE BONDAGE IN EGYPT.

EXODUS i.

We have no history of the period between the death of Joseph and the events with which the Book of Exodus commences¹. Even the length of the interval is doubtful. It depends on whether we must date the 430 years of the sojourning (Exod. xii. 40) from the Call of Abraham, or from the Migration into Egypt².

There is also much uncertainty as to the history of the Egyptians during this interval ; but there is little doubt that ‘a new king’ (ver. 8) means a new dynasty or line of kings. At any rate the services of Joseph have been forgotten.

The new ‘Pharaoh³’, alarmed at the rapid increase of the Hebrew population, and fearing their alliance with the hostile border tribes, resolves to check their ‘growth and to crush their spirit. He compels them to labour at the public works⁴, and especially to build the treasure cities, or ‘magazines’ for ammunition of war, called Pithom and Raamses⁵. But the more they are oppressed, the more they ‘grow and multiply.’ They are subjected to still greater hardships, but to no purpose ; and the cruel plan is at last resorted to of ordering the Hebrew midwives to destroy every male child as soon as it is born⁶. But these

19. THE BONDAGE IN EGYPT.

EXODUS i.

¹ There are a few allusions in 1 Chron., from which it would seem that some of the Israelites made expeditions into and settled in the old country. Thus we are told that :

(a) The sons of Ephraim made a raid on the Philistines, and reached Gath (1 Chron. vii. 21).

(b) Sherah, a daughter of Ephraim, built Upper and Lower Beth-horon. These afterwards belonged to Ephraim (1 Chron. vii. 24).

(c) The grandsons of Judah ‘had the dominion in Moab’ (1 Chron. iv. 22).

² In Gen. xv. 13 and Acts vii. 6 the time is given in round numbers as 400 years (see page 41).

³ There seems little doubt that the Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites was Rameses II, who is called by the Greeks Sesostris. We find that he carried on a war with the great Hittite empire of Western Asia.

The Shepherd-kings, who were of a race akin to the Israelites, had now been driven out, and this quite changed the position and treatment of the ‘sojourners.’ It is possible that the Israelites may have sided with their kinsmen, when the Egyptians made their successful attempt to expel the usurpers (see page 89).

⁴ This was a plan often resorted to by tyrants. The Greek philosopher Aristotle gives as instances of it the construction of the pyramids in Egypt, and the great works carried out under the ‘tyrants’ at Corinth, and under Polycrates the ‘tyrant’ of Samos (Arist. *Politics*, v. 11). To these we may add the works carried out in the time of Tarquinius Superbus, the last of the seven Kings of Rome.

⁵ Raamses was named after the king. Pithom means ‘the city of the setting sun.’ The site of the latter has been discovered. Besides this sacred name of Pithom, it was called Succoth. So the Israelites are described as starting from Succoth (Exod. xiii. 20).

⁶ ‘Infanticide’ was very common among ancient nations. The

women, fearing God, disregard this order, and the king now commands the people to throw every male child into the river Nile.

XIX. THE BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE OF MOSES.

EXODUS ii. 1-22.

II. 1. And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took *to wife* a daughter of Levi.

2. And the woman conceived, and bare a son : and when she saw him that he *was a* goodly *child*, she hid him three months.

3. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein ; and she laid *it* in the flags by the river's brink.

4. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

5. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash *herself* at the river ; and her maidens walked along by the river's side ; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.

6. And when she had opened *it*, she saw the child : and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This *is one* of the Hebrews' children.

7. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee ?

8. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

Spartans used to expose every weakly infant on the mountains. In some other countries parents might rear their children or not, as they pleased.

XIX. THE BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE OF MOSES.

EXODUS ii. 1-22.

II. 1, 2. The names of Moses' parents were Amram and Jochebed ^a. Jochebed had already two children, Aaron and Miriam. Miriam is the same name as Mary. She is probably the 'sister' spoken of in ver. 4.

'A goodly child' refers to his size and beauty. St. Stephen, from whose speech we learn a good deal about the early life of Moses, describes the infant as 'exceeding fair,' or 'fair unto God' (Acts vii. 20). In Heb. xi. 23 we are told that Moses was hid by his parents for three months, because they saw he was a 'proper (or beautiful) child ^b.' This hiding is there described as an act of faith, showing that 'they were not afraid of the king's commandment.'

Perhaps the king's officers made a search for children every three months.

3. He was put in an 'ark' or chest, made of the papyrus plant. This was smeared over with bitumen, like Noah's ark, to make it watertight. It was then placed among the 'flags' or rushes ^c.

^a Jochebed means 'whose glory is Jehovah.' This shows that, while many of the Israelites had fallen into idolatry, this family were still worshippers of the true God.

The name Moses is explained (ver. 10) as 'drawn out' of or 'saved from the water.' The name may also mean 'the hero' or 'leader'; or 'the son,' referring to his adoption by Pharaoh's daughter.

^b The word in Acts vii. 20 and Heb. xi. 23 is the same—*ἀστέρος*.

^c There is a story recorded on the monuments of Sargon I, king of Chaldaea, having been exposed in the same way. This legend may have suggested to Jochebed the plan for saving her child.

9. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give *thee* thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

10. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

11. And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

12. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

13. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

14. And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

15. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

16. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew *water*, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

17. And the shepherds came and drove them away:

10. Moses was adopted by the princess and educated as one of the royal household. St. Stephen tells us (Acts vii. 22) that he was 'learned (or educated) in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and in deeds ^d.'

11. St. Stephen says he was now 'full forty years old' (Acts vii. 23).

The Egyptian was probably one of the 'taskmasters' or overseers of the works, who was abusing his authority, for the Hebrew was 'suffering wrong' (Acts vii. 24).

According to tradition, the princess died while Moses was still a young man, and then he probably discovered his true parentage. So now, as St. Stephen describes it, 'it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel' (Acts vii. 23).

In Heb. xi. 24-26 it is given as a proof of Moses' faith that, 'when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ ^e greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.'

13. St. Stephen describes Moses as saying, 'Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?' (Acts vii. 26).

15. The Midianites, who were descended from Abraham and Keturah, dwelt on the east of the Akabah arm of the Red Sea. But some suppose that they had also a settlement on the west side, and that it was to this district Moses fled.

16-18. Reuel and his family probably worshipped the

^d He would probably be instructed in 'arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, medicine, and music; also in Egyptian hieroglyphics and other writings; and in some branches of engineering' (Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. 165).

According to a tradition recorded by Josephus, he showed himself 'mighty in deeds' by leading an expedition against the Ethiopians.

^e The ingratitude of his countrymen now and later was for Moses like 'the reproach of Christ,' who 'came unto His own, and His own received Him not' (John i. 11).

but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

18. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How *is it that* ye are come so soon to day?

19. And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock.

20. And he said unto his daughters, And where *is* he? why *is it that* ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread.

21. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.

22. And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

XX. THE BURNING BUSH AND CALL OF MOSES.

EXODUS iii.

III. 1. Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb.

2. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed.

3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside

true God; and this may account for the rudeness of the shepherds, who belonged to idolatrous tribes. His name is given in Num. x. 29 as Raguel, which means ‘friend of God.’ Like Melchizedek, he seems to have been both prince and priest. He is generally supposed to be the same as Jethro^f (Exod. iii. 1). Some, however, think that Jethro was the brother-in-law of Moses, and the same as Hobab, who is called in Num. x. 29 the son of Raguel or Reuel.

19. They no doubt mistook Moses for an Egyptian from his dress and language.

21. St. Stephen (Acts vii. 29, 30) describes Moses as dwelling ‘as a stranger in the land of Midian’ for forty years.

He calls his firstborn son Gershom, that is, ‘stranger’ or ‘sojourner’ (ver. 22).

^f Josephus says that Jethro, meaning ‘excellency,’ was his title.

XX. THE BURNING BUSH AND CALL OF MOSES.

EXODUS iii.

III. 1. We learn from Acts vii. 30 that Moses was at this time eighty years old. He fled to Midian when forty years old (Acts vii. 23), and was there for forty years.

In the western part of the wilderness of Arabia is a mountain range with two high peaks, of which the highest, the south-eastern, is called Sinai, and the north-western Horeb. ‘The mountain of God’ means Sinai, where God afterwards gave the law to the Israelites. It has commonly been supposed to be the height called Jebel Mûsa, the Mount of Moses; but other parts of the range have been suggested. In several passages (Deut. iv. 10, 15, v. 2,

to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am I.*

5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither : put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground.

6. Moreover he said, I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face ; for he was afraid to look upon God.

7. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters ; for I know their sorrows ;

8. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey ; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me : and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11. And Moses said unto God, Who *am I*, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt ?

12. And he said, Certainly I will be with thee ;

xxix. 1 ; Mal. iv. 4) the law is spoken of as given in Horeb. The latter was probably the name given to the district generally.

2. ‘The angel of the Lord’ has been sometimes regarded as meaning the second Person of the Trinity, the same as He with whom Abraham pleaded for Sodom (Gen. xviii. 22–33), and who afterwards appeared to Joshua as the ‘Captain of the host of the Lord’ (Joshua v. 13–15). Thus each of these appearances may have foreshadowed the Incarnation.

5. Putting off the shoes or sandals was a common mark of respect or reverence among Eastern nations. The same order was given to Joshua (Joshua v. 15). The priests used afterwards to enter the Temple barefoot.

6. Our Lord quotes these words in answering the Sadducees, who said there was no resurrection (Matt. xxii. 32 ; Mark xii. 26).

He means that God’s describing Himself as the God of the patriarchs was a proof that they had not really perished ; for ‘He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.’

8. ‘Flowing with milk and honey’ is a figurative expression for ‘very rich and fertile.’

To the list of native tribes here given a seventh is added in Deut. vii. 1, the Girgashites.

11. Moses is said to have been ‘very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth’ (Num. xii. 3) ^a.

^a Some, however, explain the word for ‘meek’ as ‘afflicted.’

and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

13. And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?

14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

15. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

16. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt:

17. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

18. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the

St. Stephen, as we have seen, speaks of Moses as ‘mighty in words and in deeds.’ And yet Moses afterwards (Exod. iv. 10) describes himself as ‘not eloquent.’ But in spite of his education, he might, after his long life of seclusion in the desert, have felt himself unfitted for such a work as that proposed to him.

12. St. Paul tells us that ‘God’s strength is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Cor. xii. 9). Moses is here reassured by the promise of Divine help, and by the prediction that the Israelites, when they have come out of Egypt, shall worship on this same mountain. This was fulfilled when they halted before Sinai (Exod. xix).

13. We may compare with this Jacob’s question to the angel at Peniel, ‘Tell me, I pray thee, thy name^b’ (Gen. xxxii. 29).

14. The name Jehovah signifies real, unchanging, eternal existence. It is the description of Him ‘which is, and which was, and which is to come’ (Rev. i. 4, 8). It is commonly rendered in our Bible ‘the LORD^c’

^b Moses here asks by which of God’s attributes he must describe Him.

^c In vi. 3 God speaks of this as a new revelation. To the patriarchs He had revealed Himself as El-Shaddai, or ‘God Almighty.’ The name ‘El’ is found in Beth-el, Peniel, Israel, &c (see page 69). The name of God is generally, however, Elohim, which is plural, and has been thought to imply the three Persons in one God. Afterwards God was sometimes known as Jehovah-Sabaoth, or ‘the Lord of Hosts.’

The word Jehovah was not unknown before, being found in

wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

19. And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

20. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

21. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:

22. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put *them* upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

20. THE CONFIRMATION OF MOSES' COMMISSION.

EXODUS iv.

Moses, still distrusting the success of the great enterprise before him, is further reassured by two miracles. His staff or shepherd's crook is changed into a serpent¹, and his hand made leprous, and then restored. He is also told that he shall have power to turn water into blood. He once more objects that he is 'not eloquent, but slow of speech and of a slow tongue.' He is rebuked for this want of faith, and is told that Aaron shall be the spokesman².

Having obtained Jethro's leave, he now sets out for Egypt, with his wife Zipporah and his two sons Gershom and Eliezer. At an 'inn' or resting-place by the way he is stricken with a dangerous illness. His wife, concluding that

19. ‘Not by a mighty hand’ means except after the display of God’s power ‘in signs and wonders.’ God afterwards speaks of having ‘raised up Pharaoh, to show in him His power’ (Exod. ix. 16). St. Paul quotes this in Rom. ix. 17.

22. The word here may mean to ask either as a loan or as a gift: R. V. has ‘ask’ instead of ‘borrow.’

such names as Jochebed, and used by other Semitic races. But henceforth it was to be the distinctive title for the Jews, contrasting the one true God with all false gods.

The Jews regarded the name Jehovah as too awful to be pronounced. They wished to stone our Lord for blasphemy when He claimed this name for Himself in the words, ‘Before Abraham was, I am’ (John viii. 58, 59).

20. THE CONFIRMATION OF MOSES' COMMISSION.

EXODUS iv.

¹ The serpent was worshipped in various parts of Egypt. It was regarded as the symbol of power or of death. The figure of a serpent used to be borne in front of the crown of the Pharaohs.

² It was said, ‘He shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God’ (ver. 16). In vii. 1 we read that the Lord said to Moses, ‘I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.’

Moses was to receive and communicate the counsels of God; Aaron was probably to be the interpreter, he being familiar with both the Hebrew and Egyptian languages; whereas Moses, brought up in the Egyptian court, perhaps could not speak his native tongue so fluently.

this is a punishment for not having circumcised their child³, at once performs the rite, and Moses recovers. She and her children seem after this to have returned to Midian.

Moses, whom Aaron has now joined at Horeb, continues his journey. On their arrival they summon ‘the elders’ or heads of the tribes, to whom Aaron explains their mission, and this is attested by the performance of ‘signs’ or miracles⁴. A general assembly of the people is then convened. They at once believe in the message, and accept the appointed leaders, worshipping God, who has ‘looked upon their affliction.’

XXI. MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

EXODUS V—VI. I.

V. 1. And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2. And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

3. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

4. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

5. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the

³ This neglect shows how lax the Israelites had become about observances enjoined on their fathers.

⁴ Such supernatural evidence of a Divine commission was needed to convince the people then, as it was in our Lord's day by those of whom He said, ' Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe ' (John iv. 48).

So Nicodemus expresses his conviction that Jesus is a teacher sent from God in the words : ' No man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him ' (John iii. 2).

XXI. MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

EXODUS V—VI. I.

V. 1. The capitals of Egypt were On (Heliopolis) and Memphis. But Pharaoh's court appears now to have been at a city called Tanis, or in Scripture Zoan. He had probably moved to this strongly fortified town on account of disturbances with the border tribes on the north-east ^a.

In Ps. lxxviii. 13 God's signs and wonders are described as wrought 'in the field of Zoan.'

2. Pharaoh may mean by this either that he did not know the name Jehovah, or that he did not acknowledge the God of the Israelites.

3. It was necessary that they should go out of the reach

^a This king was Menephtah II, son of Rameses II. In the fifth year of his reign Egypt appears to have been invaded by a large force of Libyans and Greeks, who were at last driven back with heavy loss.

land now *are* many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

6. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying,

7. Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

8. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish *ought* thereof: for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.

9. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

10. And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.

11. Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.

12. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.

13. And the taskmasters hasted *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw.

14. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, *and* demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

15. Then the officers of the children of Israel

of the Egyptians before they could offer sacrifice. For in Egypt itself they would certainly be attacked by the people, who regarded the animals which would be offered as themselves gods.

Moses also here appeals to Pharaoh's fears, as a pestilence, or an attack by neighbouring tribes, would involve danger to the Egyptians themselves.

4. 'Let' here means 'hinder^b.' In R. V. the word is 'loose.'

6. These 'taskmasters' were Egyptian overseers, who carried out the directions of the superintendents mentioned in Exod. i and ii. The word for the latter is a different one. These superintendents again had under them 'officers' or scribes, probably Hebrews, who kept account of the 'tale^c,' or number of bricks made.

7. The buildings of Egypt were chiefly of brick, which was made of mud and chopped straw mixed together. The searching for and preparing the 'stubble instead of straw' would double the amount of labour.

13. 'Hasted them' means 'urged them on,' probably beating them. In R. V. it is 'were urgent.'

^b Compare Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent: 'we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us.'

^c 'Tale' in old English means 'account' in the sense of number; 'to tell' means to reckon. So in Gen. xv. 5, 'tell the stars, if thou be able to number them'; and in Ps. xlvi. 11, 'Walk about Sion . . . tell the towers thereof.'

The Jews have a proverb, 'When the tale of bricks is doubled, then comes Moses' (Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 115).

came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants ?

16. There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick : and, behold, thy servants *are* beaten ; but the fault *is* in thine own people.

17. But he said, Ye *are* idle, *ye are* idle : therefore ye say, Let us go *and* do sacrifice to the LORD.

18. Go therefore now, *and* work ; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

19. And the officers of the children of Israel did see *that* they *were* in evil *case*, after it was said, Ye shall not minish *ought* from your bricks of your daily task.

20. And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh :

21. And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge ; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

22. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou *so* evil entreated this people ? why *is it that* thou hast sent me ?

23. For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people ; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

VI. 1. Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh : for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

14. These 'officers' were responsible, according to Eastern custom, for the proper amount of work being done, and severely punished if they had not exacted it. They were therefore 'demanded' or asked why the work was not completed, and then beaten.

21. The expression 'made our savour to be abhorred^d' may be compared with our phrase, 'to be in bad odour.' We find the same idea in a different form in Gen. xxxiv. 30 and 2 Sam. x. 6.

The opposite expression, 'a sweet savour,' is often used of acceptable offerings. St. Paul describes himself and other preachers of the gospel as 'a sweet savour of Christ unto God' (2 Cor. ii. 15). He also speaks of Christ's death as 'an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour' (Eph. v. 2).

These officers seem to have been really afraid of being beheaded to satisfy Pharaoh's anger.

22, 23. Moses is deeply grieved that his interference, instead of relieving his countrymen, seems only to have made matters worse for them. He now lays his grievance before the Lord.

VI. 1. He is answered by an assurance that, in the words of Isaiah (li. 9), the arm of the Lord shall put on strength; that is, that God's judgements shall compel Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

^d The words 'in the eyes,' used of that which belongs to the sense of smell, makes the expression here what is called a 'mixed metaphor.'

21. THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

EXODUS vi—xi.

Encouraged by another Divine promise of deliverance and of restoration to their own land, Moses and Aaron once more approach Pharaoh.

And now commences a contest between the servants of the Lord and the priests of Egypt, who are famed for their magical arts¹. These magicians, skilled in serpent-taming, imitate the miracle of Aaron's rod being changed into a serpent; but his rod swallows up their rods. They even 'with their enchantments' (that is, by some imposture) appear to copy the first two of the plagues which follow. But here the rivalry ends, and they acknowledge 'the finger of God.'

Again and again the appeal is made to Pharaoh, and he either refuses or offers to grant part of what is requested. His 'heart is hardened'². One plague after another is inflicted, till the people are panic-stricken, and the king is compelled to let the Israelites go.

The following are the ten plagues in order³:—

1. The *water* of the Nile, and all collected from it in tanks or in vessels for drinking, is turned into *blood*.
2. *Frogs* come out of the waters in great numbers, and cover the whole land.
3. There appear swarms of *lice*⁴, which are 'upon man and beast.'
4. These are followed by swarms of *flies*⁵, which 'corrupt' the land.
5. There is a 'very grievous *murrain*' or pestilence among all the cattle of the Egyptians.
6. *Boils and blains*, painful eruptions or ulcers, 'break forth upon man and beast.'
7. A terrible storm of *thunder* and *hail* bursts over the land, 'smiting' man and beast, and every herb and tree.

21. THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

EXODUS vi—xi.

¹ In 2 Tim. iii. 8 St. Paul gives the names of two of those who 'withstood Moses,' Jannes and Jambres.

² In Rom. ix. 17, 18, the case of Pharaoh is quoted as an instance of God 'hardening whom He will.'

³ These plagues sound terrible enough to us, as we read the story; but to understand how awful they were to those who suffered from them, we must take into account the peculiar character and customs and religion of the Egyptians.

(a) The Egyptians were the cleanliest of ancient nations. And these are the people who are invaded by swarms of loathsome vermin, by successive plagues of frogs and lice and flies.

(b) Egypt was the garden of the ancient world. Watered by the fertilizing Nile, it was the most productive of all lands, the great corn-growing country; to which, as we have seen, men resorted when, through drought, there was a failure of crops elsewhere. This is the land wasted by storm and locust.

(c) It was not only the Egyptians themselves and their property that were attacked by these plagues, but their gods. A direct blow was struck through these visitations at the Egyptian idolatries. It was the sacred Nile that was turned into blood. The crocodile and other fish of that river, which died, were sacred. The sacred bull (*Apis*), the sacred calf and ram and goat—these objects of national worship were infested by the vermin, and involved in the general destruction by 'murrain,' and 'boil and blain,' and storm.

To understand again the severity of the first plague, we must know that the Egyptians abhorred the very sight of blood. The seventh plague would be all the more startling, because rain was comparatively rare in most parts of Egypt, and in some districts was thought to portend a great calamity. Violent storms sometimes occurred in the early spring, but this was unlike any before it. The Red Sea also probably protected Egypt from the terrible plague of locusts (Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, ii. p. 14), which generally fly from east to west, and cannot fly far without resting on the ground. We have a terrible description of such a plague in Joel ii.

8. Swarms of *locusts* destroy all that has been left by the storm.

9. There is *darkness*, ‘which may be felt,’ over all the land.

10. The *firstborn* in every house dies, ‘from the firstborn of Pharaoh on his throne, to the firstborn of the captive that is in the dungeon ; and all the firstborn of cattle.’

XXII. THE PASSOVER.

EXODUS xii. 1-20.

XII. 1. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

2. This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you.

3. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house :

4. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

5. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:

6. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

There are short accounts of the plagues of Egypt in Ps. lxxviii. 44-52, and Ps. cv. 26-35. They are briefly referred to by St. Stephen in Acts vii. 36 as ‘wonders and signs in the land of Egypt’ (see Stanley, *Jewish Church*, Lecture V, vol. ii. pp. 116, 117; and Milman, *History of the Jews*, book ii, vol. ii. pp. 78-86).

⁴ Some suppose the word to mean ‘gnats’ or ‘mosquitoes.’

⁵ This again is explained by some as ‘dog-flies,’ or ‘mosquitoes,’ or ‘beetles.’

XXII. THE PASSOVER.

EXODUS xii. 1-20.

XII. 2. The year had before begun in the autumn, with the month Tisri. This arrangement was still retained for the ‘civil year,’ that is, for all except religious matters. But the sacred year was now to commence in the spring, with the month Abib, afterwards called Nisan.

4. If there were not enough persons in a family to eat the lamb at one meal, two or more households were to join together. Josephus gives the number required as from ten to twenty.

5. The paschal lamb was to be a type of the ‘Lamb of God,’ which should ‘take away the sin of the world’ (John i. 29).

St. Paul says, ‘Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast’ (1 Cor. v. 7, 8)^a.

St. Peter tells the converts they were redeemed with ‘the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot’ (1 Pet. i. 19).

7-11. The whole ceremony symbolized purification, haste, and deliverance.

The first was implied in sprinkling the blood with hyssop, which was often used for purifying, as in the case of lepers.

^a So this passage is selected as part of the ‘anthem’ used instead of the ‘Venite’ on Easter Day.

7. And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

8. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread ; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.

9. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast *with* fire ; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

10. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning ; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

11. And thus shall ye eat it ; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand ; and ye shall eat it in haste : it *is* the LORD's passover.

12. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast ; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment : I *am* the LORD.

13. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are* : and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt.

Also in the unleavened bread, leaven being often made a type of that which corrupts^b; as when our Lord told His disciples to ‘beware of the leaven’ or doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. xvi. 6).

Also probably in the roasting with fire, instead of the usual plan of ‘seething’ or boiling, and the burning that which remained.

The bread made without leaven, which there was no time to prepare, was to recall the haste with which they celebrated the first Passover, and they ate it with the clothes girt up, and sandals on the feet, and the staff in the hand, ready for flight.

Again, ‘these tasteless cakes’ are called in Deut. xvi. 3 ‘the bread of affliction.’ So these and the bitter herbs were to remind the people of their dreary life and bitter sufferings, which they were to contrast with the great deliverance.

12. The destruction of the firstborn of cattle was itself a ‘judgement’ upon the ‘gods of Egypt,’ as every Egyptian deity was represented by some beast, and each town or district had its sacred animal^c.

A tradition afterwards arose that the temples and idols were destroyed by earthquake or lightning. Some translate the word for ‘gods’ here by ‘princes.’

13. This sparing of every house sprinkled with the blood of the lamb is the origin of the name Passover (ver. 27).

14-19. The Passover was to be observed every year as a memorial of this deliverance. As an ‘ordinance for ever,’

^b St. Paul in this same passage (1 Cor. v. 7, 8) urges the Corinthians to ‘purge out the old leaven,’ and to ‘keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’ Both there (ver. 6) and in Gal. v. 9 he says that ‘a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump’; meaning that false doctrine or bad influence soon spreads through a whole community. Our Lord’s parable of the leaven (Matt. xiii. 33) is the only instance of leaven being used of that which is good.

^c Juvenal speaks of this wholesale animal-worship in Satire xv. 1-11.

14. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial ; and ye shall keep it a feast to the L ORD throughout your generations ; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

15. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread ; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses : for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

16. And in the first day *there shall be* an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you ; no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.

17. And ye shall observe *the feast of unleavened bread* ; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt : therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

18. In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

19. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses : for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.

20. Ye shall eat nothing leavened ; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

it is still observed by the Jews, but several changes have been made.

Some of the regulations here are clearly given with a view to later observances, as these could not have been carried out at the first Passover. The Jews distinguish between the 'Egyptian Passover' and the 'perpetual Passover.'

It has passed into the Christian Church as the great Easter festival, celebrated at the same season, and symbolizing the deliverance from the bondage of sin and of death ^d.

18. Hence the Passover was often called 'the feast of unleavened bread' (Luke xxii. 1) ^e.

^d It also corresponds to the great centre of Christian worship, the Holy Communion or Eucharist (see again 1 Cor. v. 7, 8; and the Proper Preface for Easter Day : 'For He is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world').

^e The word in the Greek Testament for paschal lamb or feast is *πάσχα*, which is a form of the Hebrew name. This was the old name for Easter, including Good Friday, of which we have a curious trace in the 'pasque' or 'paste eggs' used in the North of England at this season, as a symbol of the Resurrection. The French name is still *pâque* or *pâques*.

'Easter' is derived by some from Eostre, a Saxon goddess whose festival was about the same time of year; by others from an old Saxon word, 'urstan,' meaning 'to rise.'

The most important of the later observances of the Passover mentioned in the Bible are these :

(a) The Passover kept in the wilderness of Sinai (Num. ix. 5)
(b) That held at Gilgal at the end of the wanderings (Joshua v. 10).

(c) The 'great gathering' for this purpose at Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxx. 1, 21).

(d) The Passover, 'such as had not been holden from the days of the judges,' celebrated after Josiah's reformation (2 Kings xxiii. 22; 2 Chron. xxxv. 1).

(e) That on the return from the Captivity, after the dedication of the new Temple (Ezra vi. 19, 20).

(f) The Passover to which our Lord was taken up when twelve years old (Luke ii. 41).

(g) The Passover at the time of our Lord's betrayal and death (Matt. xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 7; John xix. 14, &c.).

XXIII. THE EXODUS.

EXODUS xii. 29-42 and xiii. 17-22.

XII. 29. And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that *was* in the dungeon ; and all the firstborn of cattle.

30. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians ; and there was a great cry in Egypt ; for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

31. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, *and* get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel ; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.

32. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone ; and bless me also.

33. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste ; for they said, We *be* all dead *men*.

34. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

35. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses ; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment :

36. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them

XXIII. THE EXODUS.

EXODUS xii. 29-42 and xiii. 17-22.

XII. 29. The Lord Himself is here described as ‘smiting the firstborn.’ So in Ps. cv. 35 we are told: ‘He smote all the firstborn in their land, even the chief of all their strength.’ And in Ps. lxxviii. 51, 52 it is said: ‘He gave their life over to the pestilence; and smote all the firstborn in Egypt.’

In ver. 23 ‘the destroyer’ or destroying angel is mentioned; and in Heb. xi. 28 we are told that ‘through faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed^a the firstborn should touch them.’

These are two different ways of regarding the same great truth. God employs personal or natural agencies to carry out His purposes^b.

31, 32. Pharaoh is at last completely humbled. He feels that those whom he has despised and insulted are really the messengers of God. He even asks them for a blessing! The Egyptians, too, are now only anxious to get rid of those whose presence has brought such disaster upon them^c.

^a In Greek, δὸλεθρεύων.

^b So, when ‘the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel’ in the time of David, ‘the angel of the Lord’ is described as ‘stretching out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it’ (2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16).

In the other account of such a plague, the destruction of Sennacherib’s army, we are told that ‘the angel of the Lord went out, and smote the camp of the Assyrians’ (2 Kings xix. 35).

^c The Egyptian story is a curious confusion of the Exodus with the Libyan invasion, and of Moses with Joseph. In this story King Amenophis (or Menephtah) resolves to clear the land of ‘the leprous and impure,’ which is a common name for foreigners. He condemns 80,000 to work in the quarries on the east of the Nile. They afterwards rise in rebellion, under Osarsiph (a name made up of that of the Egyptian god Osiris and of Joseph), priest of On. Aided by a force of 200,000, sent by the descendants of the Hyksos living at Jerusalem, they rule Egypt for thirteen years, and are then driven out. (Sayce, *Ancient Monuments and Higher Criticism*, pp. 245-247.)

such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

37. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were* men, beside children.

38. And a mixed multitude went up also with them ; and flocks, and herds, *even* very much cattle.

39. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened ; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

40. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, *was* four hundred and thirty years.

41. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the L ORD went out from the land of Egypt.

42. It *is* a night to be much observed unto the L ORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt : this *is* that night of the L ORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

XIII. 17. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near ; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt :

18. But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderness of the Red sea : and the

35, 36. The words here need not imply ‘borrowing’ or ‘lending.’ In R.V. they are rendered ‘asked’ and ‘let them have’ (see note on Exod. iii. 22, page 135) ^d.

37. Rameses is probably the same place as Raamses (Exod. i, ii). For the route taken by the Israelites, see Map II.

The 600,000 men would imply a total of about 2,000,000. The ‘seventy souls’ of Exod. i. 5 did not include the numerous retainers, and we know that the people increased in numbers rapidly.

38. The ‘mixed multitude’ were probably other slaves, who took this opportunity of escaping. We read of them again in Num. xi. 4, when they murmured at ‘the graves of lust.’

40. On the 430 years, see note on Gen. xv. 13 (p. 41).

XIII. 17. They were not allowed to take the shortest route, because they were not yet fit for war, and this road would have brought them into collision with the formidable Philistines. Perhaps it was for a like reason that Joseph did not go by the direct route when he took home the body of Jacob (Gen. l. 10).

18. ‘Harnessed’ may either mean ‘marshalled,’ drawn up, that is, like an army, or ‘armed’ (R. V.). Some suppose they were not likely to have arms, having been slaves in Egypt. But we have no account of their being disarmed, and if they

^d Josephus says the Egyptians honoured the Hebrews with gifts; some as a bribe to depart quickly, others because they had lived on friendly terms with them (Jos. *Ant.* book ii. c. 15).

‘Spoiling the Egyptians’ is often used to describe figuratively making the wisdom or power or wealth of those who are enemies of God minister to the establishment of His kingdom.

children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

19. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you ; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

20. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

21. And the LORD went before them, by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way ; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light ; to go by day and night :

22. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, *from* before the people.

XXIV. THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

EXODUS xiv. 5-31.

XIV. 5. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled : and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us ?

6. And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him :

7. And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

had been, Pharaoh would hardly have shown the fear he seems to have felt of their joining his enemies. We find too that they soon after had a battle with the Amalekites (Exod. xvii. 8) ^e.

21, 22. This pillar of ‘cloud by day and fire by night’ was the sign of God’s presence, like that which afterwards rested on the tabernacle and on the ark of God. In Ps. lxxviii. 15 we read: ‘In the day-time also He led them with a cloud, and all the night through with a light of fire.’ So in Ps. cv. 38: ‘He spread out a cloud to be a covering, and fire to give light in the night-season’.

^e Josephus says they were then armed with what they had taken from the bodies of the drowned Egyptians.

^f Alexander the Great and other generals employed signals by fire and smoke, when on the march. So the Lord leads His army by these.

XXIV. THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

EXODUS xiv. 5-31.

XIV. 5. The Israelites, up to their arrival at Etham, have had the sea on their right, as they marched towards the head of the gulf. They are now suddenly ordered to change their course, and make for Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol ^a (or ‘the tower’) and the shore. At Pi-hahiroth they are to encamp ^b.

^a There were two Migdols—one on the coast of the Mediterranean, near Pelusium; the other near the top of the Red Sea. Etham was not far from the latter.

^b There is a good deal of uncertainty as to these movements. It is said that the exact scene of the passage of the Red Sea,

8. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel : and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

9. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

10. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them ; and they were sore afraid : and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

11. And they said unto Moses, Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness ? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt ?

12. *Is* not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians ? For *it had been* better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

13. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day : for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

14. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

15. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me ? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward :

16. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine

Pharaoh probably expected them to return as soon as they had kept the festival at Etham, which was the reason given for their journey. His suspicions are now aroused ; and the panic occasioned by the plagues being over, he resolves to bring back these valuable workmen, who seem to be shut in between the mountains and the sea.

7. Many ancient nations used war-chariots. We read in Judges iv. 13 that Jabin, king of Hazor, had a force of 900 of them.

They were afterwards the chief strength of the Philistines and other of the native races of Canaan. The Egyptians relied mainly on them. We read of a later king, Shishak, invading Judah with 1,200 chariots in the time of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xii. 3).

10-12. The Israelites had gone out ‘with an high hand,’ that is, confident and exulting. Now their rejoicing is changed to dismay, and they ‘murmur’ against Moses.

and the route of the Israelites after leaving Etham, have yet to be discovered (*Sayce, Ancient Monuments and Higher Criticism*, p. 262).

They probably marched first along the line of the canal, made by Rameses II, uniting the Red Sea and the Nile (the modern ‘Freshwater Canal’). After this, they would naturally expect to go northward to Pelusium, and so along the coast of the Mediterranean to Gaza.

There was another road further south through ‘Shur,’ the wall, or line of fortifications, protecting Egypt on the east.

We are told in Exod. xiii. 18 that God led them through ‘the way of the wilderness of the Red sea’ (or ‘Yam Suph’). This name was commonly given to all the sea on the coasts of Arabia, but in the Bible the use of the name is narrower. It appears to be used of the more western gulf in Exod. x. 19. of the eastern or Gulf of Akabah in Num. xxi. 4 and 1 Kings ix. 26.

hand over the sea, and divide it : and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea.

17. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them : and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

18. And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

19. And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them ; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them :

20. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel ; and it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it gave light by night *to these*: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

21. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea ; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided.

22. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry *ground*: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, *even* all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians

In Ps. cvi. 7 we are told that they ‘remembered not God’s wonders in Egypt, but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red sea.’^c

13-15. Though Moses reassures them, telling them that the Lord will give them ‘salvation’ or rescue without effort of their own, he does not seem yet to have known *how* the deliverance is to be effected; for he ‘cries unto’ the Lord.

16. The way of ‘salvation’ is now disclosed to him. Hopeless though the movement may seem, the people are bidden to march straight down to the edge of the sea.

17. ‘I will get Me honour upon’ means ‘I will triumph over, will show My power by means of them.’

19, 20. The crossing took place by night (ver. 24), so that this, while it gave light to the Israelites, would conceal their movements from the Egyptians.

22. The waters were ‘a wall’ or protection to the Israelites on both sides. In xv. 8 we are told that ‘the floods stood upright as an heap.’ So in Ps. lxxviii. 14 it is said, ‘He divided the sea, and let them go through; He made the waters to stand on an heap’ (cf. Ps. lxvi. 5, cxxxvi. 13, 14). In Ps. lxxvii. 16-19 there is a wonderful description of this

^c They had already shown something of this resistance to Moses’ authority in Egypt. This is the first instance after the Exodus of that rebellious spirit, which broke out again and again during the wanderings. They are described in Ps. lxxviii. 9 as ‘a faithless and stubborn generation.’

through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,

25. And took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

26. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

27. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea:

28. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, *and* all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

29. But the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

30. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

31. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

deliverance, beginning, ‘The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee, and were afraid ; the depths also were troubled.’ So in Ps. cxiv. 3, ‘The sea saw that, and fled ^d.’

In Heb. xi. 29 we are told that ‘By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land : which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.’

St. Paul in 1 Cor. x. 2 speaks of the Israelites having been ‘baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea,’ meaning that this was for them the entrance on a new life ^e.

26, 27. At sunrise the wind ceased, and the waters returned. The Egyptians ‘fled against,’ or vainly tried to struggle back through them.

28. There was a tradition that Pharaoh himself escaped. But in Ps. cxxxvi. 15 we are told, ‘As for Pharaoh and his host, He overthrew them in the Red Sea ^f.’

^d According to Egyptian tradition, Moses waited for the ebb tide of the Red Sea. At such time it is said that a strong south-east wind would drive back the waters of the ‘Bitter Lake,’ leaving a passage between these and the Red Sea. But the Scriptural accounts imply that, though the Lord may have employed on this, as on other occasions, natural agencies, the passage was regarded as miraculous.

^e So in the Baptismal Service God’s ‘safely leading the children of Israel His people through the Red Sea’ is made a figure of Baptism.

^f There is however no account of his death at that time in the Egyptian annals, and it is possible the Psalmist’s words may refer to his discomfiture only, and not imply that he perished with his army.

22. THE JOURNEY TO SINAI.

EXODUS XV—XVIII.

The Israelites now celebrate this deliverance in the song of Moses and Miriam, the first Hebrew melody, telling how ‘the Lord hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea¹.’

The people then resume their journey. The following are the stages of their march through the desert to Sinai :

1. Marah², which they reach after travelling three days without water. Here they find a well, but the water is not drinkable, till it is sweetened by a branch being thrown into it. Hence the place is called Marah or ‘bitter.’ Here again they murmur against Moses.

2. Elim³, a pleasant resting-place, with twelve wells of water, and the shade of seventy palm trees. Here they halt for a month.

3. The wilderness of Sin⁴. Here their provisions fail altogether, and they bitterly reproach Moses and Aaron. Their wants are supplied by a flight of quails, which ‘cover the camp⁵,’ and a small round grain lying thick on the ground⁶. The latter they call ‘manna,’ meaning ‘what is it?’ or ‘a gift.’ This they are to gather from day to day, as it will not keep over night; but on the sixth day they are to gather a double quantity, which will last them over the sabbath⁷. This supply is continued during all the forty years’ wanderings.

4. Rephidim⁸. Here again the people are in danger of perishing by thirst, until Moses, at God’s command, smites the rock in Horeb, and water flows out⁹.

While at this place they are attacked by the Amalekites, the most powerful of the desert tribes¹⁰. Joshua, now mentioned for the first time, leads the Israelitish forces; while Moses, supported by Aaron and Hur, offers prayers for

22. THE JOURNEY TO SINAI.

EXODUS XV—XVIII.

¹ In Rev. xv. 3 the saints, who have gained the victory over ‘the beast,’ and entered into their rest, are described as singing ‘the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.’

² At this place, which is now called Hawarah, there is still a spring of bitter water. The heat in this region is described by travellers as intense, and the agonies of thirst as terrible.

³ Elim means ‘the trees.’ It is almost the largest ‘oasis,’ or fertile spot in the desert.

⁴ This was probably a sandy plain, some forty miles wide, about 1,000 feet above the sea.

⁵ Quails are migratory birds. Large swarms of them are often seen in these regions in the spring; and, when tired, they are easily caught.

⁶ This manna resembles in some respects the juice of the tamarisk, which grows in the desert. But the supply is here described as miraculous, and in the Psalms it is spoken of as ‘angels’ food,’ and as ‘the bread of heaven’ (Ps. lxxviii. 25, cv. 39).

When the Jews asked our Lord to show them such a sign as this feeding with manna, He answered by describing Himself as ‘the bread of life,’ or ‘the bread of God, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world’ (John vi. 31–35).

⁷ This was a renewal of the institution of the Sabbath. The words of Moses, ‘To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord’ (Exod. xvi. 23), imply that it was already observed.

⁸ In Num. xxxiii. 12, 13, two other halting-places are mentioned, before reaching Rephidim, Dophkah and Alush.

⁹ Later references to this are reserved for notes on the similar event near the end of the wanderings (see pages 188, 189).

¹⁰ The Amalekites were descended from Esau, but seem to

success. After a fierce struggle the Amalekites are defeated. The place is called Jehovah-nissi, ‘the Lord my banner.’

Here also Jethro meets Moses, bringing to him his wife and two sons. He advises Moses to choose officers, who may relieve him of deciding less important matters, he himself being a sort of ‘court of appeal.’

The people then march on to the wilderness of Sinai.

23. THE ENCAMPMENT AT SINAI.

Part I.

EXODUS xix—xxxii.

The dreary wilderness of Sinai, which the Israelites have now entered, is a great contrast both to the fertile valleys of Egypt and to the flat sandy desert over which they have been travelling. Here, amid these towering cliffs and awful solitudes, God is to reveal Himself to them and give them His law.

They encamp on the plain¹ before the mount, which Moses ascends alone. He returns with a message to the people, telling them that, if they will keep God’s covenant, they shall be to Him ‘a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, an holy nation².’

On the third day, after the people have purified themselves, and when bounds have been drawn round the mountain, the revelation of God is made. The Israelites no doubt expect some visible form, like the gods of the Egyptians; but they ‘see no similitude,’ they only ‘hear a voice’ (Deut. iv. 12). The summit of the mountain is wrapt in darkness, from which lightnings flash forth, with thunderings, and a loud voice as of a trumpet³.

Moses is again summoned to the top of the mountain, and descends with strict injunctions to the priests and

have kept distinct from the Edomites. They are described by Balaam (Num. xxiv. 20) as ‘the first of the nations.’ No doubt they regarded the Israelites as invaders, who wished to deprive them of their territory.

This encounter was the origin of the bitter hostility against the Amalekites, of which it was said, ‘The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation’ (Exod. xvii. 16; cp. 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3).

23. THE ENCAMPMENT AT SINAI.

Part I.

EXODUS xix—xxxii.

¹ This great plain, called El Rahah, was well suited for their encampment. ‘It was the only level ground in the whole district which could accommodate the multitude as a whole’ (Geikie, *Bible by Modern Light*, ii. 296).

² So St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 9) calls the Christian Church ‘a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.’

³ This scene is described in Heb. xii. 18-24, where ‘the mountain . . . that burned with fire’ is contrasted with ‘mount Sion . . . the heavenly Jerusalem.’ We read there of ‘blackness, and darkness, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words’; of the panic of the people, and the fear of Moses himself.

⁴ These Commandments are called ‘the Decalogue,’ or ‘Ten Words.’ They are also called ‘the Moral Law,’ to distinguish them from the ceremonial and civil precepts. The latter were for the Jews alone, to regulate their worship and national life. The Moral Law was for all mankind, and for all ages.

⁵ St. Paul (Gal. iii. 19, 20) describes the law as ‘ordained by

people not to draw too near. Then a mysterious voice proclaims the Ten Commandments⁴.

The people fly in terror from the mountain, crying, ‘Let not God speak with us, lest we die’; and pray that the word may be spoken to them through Moses. He once more ascends, and receives various instructions, which he is to convey to them⁵. The words are now written in the Book of the Covenant; and, after an altar has been built, and sacrifices offered, they are read to the people, who promise obedience. A vision of the God of Israel is granted to Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders.

The covenant having thus been formally ratified, Moses once more ascends the mount, with Joshua as his minister. On the seventh day God calls him to the summit, and he remains there forty days and forty nights, receiving instructions about the making of the tabernacle, about the priesthood and services, and about the sabbath. He then receives the ‘two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.’

XXV. THE GOLDEN CALF.

EXODUS xxxii. 1-24.

XXXII. 1. And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of

angels in the hand of a mediator' The word (*μεσίτης*) there used of Moses is the same as that applied to our Lord in Heb. xii. 24 and 1 Tim. ii. 5.

St. Stephen refers to 'the angel which spake to Moses in the mount Sina,' when he received the 'lively' or 'living oracles' (Acts vii. 38).

Among the other instructions now given are those about the three great Jewish festivals (Exod. xxiii. 14-17). These are:—

(a) 'The feast of unleavened bread.' This, which was the same as the Passover, has been already described (see pages 144-149).

(b) 'The feast of harvest,' called also 'the feast of weeks,' because it was seven weeks after the Passover. It lasted only one day. It was called later by the Greek name of Pentecost (*πεντηκοστή*) or fiftieth, because it was on the fiftieth day after the Passover (Acts ii. 1). It thus corresponds to our Whit-Sunday, fifty days after Easter.

(c) 'The feast of ingathering in the end of the year.' This, which lasted seven days, was also called 'the feast of tabernacles,' because during it the Israelites lived in booths made of woven branches of trees, to commemorate the living in tents during the wanderings.

XXV. THE GOLDEN CALF.

EXODUS XXXII. 1-24.

XXXII. 7, 8. The people have become impatient and alarmed at Moses' long absence. They are doubtful of his return, and have not yet learned to trust in an invisible God. They have therefore clamoured to Aaron to make them 'gods,' who shall lead them through the wilderness; and he has weakly given way. He has melted down their golden ornaments, and out of these fashions a calf or ox^a. He

^a This may have been meant as a representation of the sacred bull of the Egyptians; or it may have been a revival of the old Chaldaean worship, when their ancestors dwelt on the other side

your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me.

3. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron.

4. And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

5. And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow *is* a feast to the LORD.

6. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

7. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down ; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*:

8. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them : they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

9. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people:

10. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them : and I will make of thee a great nation.

11. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and

builds an altar before this image, and proclaims a feast unto the Lord ; apparently hoping to retain the worship of Jehovah under this form. But the people turn the feast into a licentious revel, such as those which were common in idolatrous worship^b.

9, 10. God here ‘tempts’ or tries Moses, as He had ‘tempted’ Abraham. He offers to destroy these faithless Israelites, and raise up ‘a great nation’ from Moses’ own descendants. But Moses now shows the spirit of self-sacrifice which we may see throughout his life.

11-13. This is another instance of what is called intercessory prayer, like that of Abraham for Sodom (Gen. xviii. 25-33). It is also an example of importunity or perseverance in prayer (Luke xi. 8, xviii. 5).

14. ‘God,’ says Balaam, ‘is not a man, that He should lie ;

of the flood. The winged bull is found as the symbol of Deity on Assyrian and Babylonian monuments.

We may compare with this the golden calves set up by Jeroboam at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings xii. 28, 29). He seems to have borrowed the idea from Egypt.

^b The description given in ver. 6 is quoted in 1 Cor. x. 7 : ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’

said, *LORD*, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand ?

12. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth ? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

13. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit *it* for ever.

14. And the *LORD* repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

15. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand : the tables *were* written on both their sides ; on the one side and on the other *were* they written.

16. And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

17. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, *There is a noise of war in the camp.*

18. And he said, *It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome : but the noise of them that sing do I hear.*

19. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing :

neither the son of man, that He should repent' (Num. xxiii. 19). But God is often said to 'repent Him of the evil' (Joel ii. 13; cp. Jonah iii. 10). This does not mean that He changes His purpose, but that in His mercy He remits the natural consequences of sin.

17, 18. Joshua, who has been on the mount with Moses, supposes the camp has been attacked in their absence by some of the wild desert tribes. But Moses recognizes the songs used in the idolatrous rites of the Egyptians.

19. Moses shows his indignation at the sight by breaking the tables of the newly proclaimed covenant, the commandments written on which have been so recklessly broken by the people.

20. This destruction of the calf is referred to in Deut. ix. 21, where it is described as the people's 'sin.'

22. Aaron pleads that he was compelled to make the idol. We are told in Deut. ix. 20 that 'the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him'; but Moses 'prayed for him.'

Moses then calls on all who are on the Lord's side to come

and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

20. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and strawed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*.

21. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them ?

22. And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot : thou knowest the people, that they *are set* on mischief.

23. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us : for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

24. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break *it* off. So they gave *it* me : then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

24. THE ENCAMPMENT AT SINAI.

Part II.

EXODUS xxxii. 25—xl, &c.

Moses now appeals to all who are 'on the Lord's side' to join him. The Levites alone respond. By his order they go through the camp from gate to gate, slaying 3,000 of the offenders with the sword. For this display of zeal for God's honour they are consecrated to the Lord¹.

On the morrow Moses ascends the mount, and 'makes atonement' for the people ; asking even that his own name may be 'blotted out' of the Lord's book, if they may be

to him. His fellow-tribesmen, the Levites, alone respond to his appeal and slay 3,000 of the idolaters^c.

24. This worship of the calf is often referred to afterwards. We read in Ps. cvi. 19, 20: ‘They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they turned their glory into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay.’ In Neh. ix. 18 it is written: ‘They made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt.’ St. Stephen also speaks of the people ‘making a calf, and offering sacrifice to the idol’ (Acts vii. 41).

Besides the slaughter of 3,000, we learn that the people were punished with a plague. In Ps. cvi. 23 we are told that the Lord ‘would have destroyed them, had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the gap’; that is to say, had he not interceded for them.

^c For their zeal on this occasion the ‘curse’ of Jacob was virtually withdrawn; and though, having no fixed portion, they were afterwards ‘scattered in Israel,’ they received, together with their promotion to the priesthood, their own forty-eight cities, conveniently distributed for their sacred duties (see pages 108, 109).

24. THE ENCAMPMENT AT SINAI.

Part II.

EXODUS xxxii. 25—xl, &c.

¹ The curse pronounced on this tribe by Jacob (Gen. xlix. 7) was thus virtually withdrawn; and though, having no fixed portion, they were afterwards ‘scattered in Israel,’ they received their own forty-eight cities, conveniently distributed throughout the land for their sacred duties (see pages 109, 234, 235).

² So St. Paul says, ‘I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh’ (Rom. ix. 3).

³ It is in reference to this that St. Paul speaks of an epistle written ‘not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart’

forgiven². His intercession saves the nation from being destroyed; but we are told that ‘the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made’ (Exod. xxxii. 35).

The assurance that they shall reach the promised land is now renewed, but they are told that, on account of this sin, the Lord will not ‘go up in their midst’; an announcement which is received with general lamentation. Moses now pitches the tent, which he calls the ‘tabernacle of the congregation’ (or ‘tent of meeting,’ R. V.), outside the camp, and retires there, Joshua alone accompanying him. The Cloudy Pillar descends and rests upon it, and the people are reassured by thus seeing the Lord talk with Moses ‘face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.’

Encouraged by this converse, Moses asks for a further vision of Divine glory. He is told that no man can look on the face of Jehovah and live; but is bidden to stand upon a rock, where all that may be revealed will be shown him. He is to take with him to the mount ‘two tables of stone like unto the first’; and on these, after he has seen the vision of ‘the Lord God, merciful and gracious,’ the Ten Commandments are to be written again³. He once more remains in the mount forty days, receiving further instructions. On his return, the people are unable at first to bear the glory of his countenance; and when he has spoken to them, he puts a veil over his face, to prevent their seeing this glory fade away⁴.

The remainder of the halt at Sinai is mainly occupied with the construction of the tabernacle⁵. The artificers, who are to make this under Moses’ direction, are called Bezaleel and Aholiab⁶. The ceremony of consecration lasts for seven days, and on the eighth day the priests enter on their office, amid much rejoicing. But Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, who offer ‘strange fire,’ are consumed by ‘fire from the Lord.’

(2 Cor. iii. 3). So, when the Ten Commandments have been read at the beginning of the Communion Service, as the rule of self-examination and repentance, we pray that God will ‘write all these laws in our hearts.’

Our Lord has taught us in His sermon on the mount (Matt. v. 21-28) how the Commandments, which in the letter forbid only deeds of sin, extend to words and thoughts; and the same truth seems to be implied in placing at the end of the Commandments that against covetousness, which St. Paul calls idolatry (Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 5), and which is the origin of so many sins.

⁴ This is referred to in 2 Cor. iii. 7-13, where we read that ‘the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance.’

⁵ As the tabernacle had to be carried about, it was of necessity small; about 45 feet long, 15 feet broad, and 15 feet high. The sides were made of boards of acacia wood, and it was covered with curtains.

It was divided by a veil into two parts:—

(a) The Holy Place, some 30 feet long, in which were the golden candlestick, or lamp of seven lights; the table of shew-bread, with twelve loaves to represent the twelve tribes, renewed every Sabbath; and the golden altar of incense.

(b) The Holy of Holies. Here was placed the ark of the covenant, with the stone tables of the law inside. The covering of this was called the mercy-seat, at either end of which were figures of Cherubim. It was only entered once a year, on the Day of Atonement, by the high priest alone.

Outside the tabernacle, in the court or enclosure, about 150 feet long and 75 feet broad, were the great altar of burnt offering and the brazen laver for purification.

⁶ The arrangements of the tabernacle are described in Heb. ix. 2-5. The ark of the covenant is there said to have contained ‘the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.’ The entrance of the high priest into the Holy of Holies is made a type of our Lord’s ascension and session at the right hand of God, where ‘He ever liveth to make intercession for us’ (Heb. vii. 25). But, whereas the high priest entered every year, Christ ‘entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us’ (Heb. ix. 12). The same arrangements were afterwards carried out in the Temple.

25. HISTORY OF THE WANDERINGS TO KADESH-BARNEA.

NUMBERS xi—xiv.

The encampment before Sinai lasts about a year. Then, after a census of all the fighting men has been taken, and the Passover has been kept, the people move on. The ark of God is carried in front of the host, and the tribes follow in order, that of Judah leading¹: Hobab acts as guide.

The various places mentioned are:—

1. Taberah, or ‘burning.’ Here the people again murmur, and a fire breaks out as a punishment, which is only checked in answer to Moses’ prayers.

2. Kibroth-hattaavah, or ‘the graves of lust.’ This name also describes what happened there. The people, tired of the manna, long for the food they used to have in Egypt. Flocks of quails are again sent to satisfy them, and ‘feathered fowls are rained like as the sand of the sea.’ So ‘they are not disappointed of their lust.’ But, ‘while the meat is yet in their mouths, the heavy wrath of God comes upon them,’ and ‘smites down the chosen men that are in Israel’ with a pestilence (Ps. lxxviii. 28–31)².

3. Hazeroth. Here Miriam, jealous of the ‘Ethiopian wife’ of Moses, who has arrived, ‘speaks against’ Moses, and Aaron sides with her. They are rebuked by a voice from the pillar of cloud³, and Miriam is smitten with leprosy⁴. On the intercession of Moses she is healed, but the people have to wait till the seven days of her purification are over.

4. Kadesh-Barnea, in the wilderness of Paran⁵, on the southern frontier of Palestine. Here twelve spies are sent out to inspect the promised land. After forty days’ absence they bring back a glowing account of its fertility, but alarm the people by their report of the gigantic sons of Anak. A panic ensues, and the host clamour to be led back to Egypt. Joshua and Caleb alone of the spies try to inspire

25. HISTORY OF THE WANDERINGS TO KADESH-BARNEA.

NUMBERS xi—xiv.

¹ They set out, chanting the words, ‘Rise up, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered’ (Ps. lxviii. 1); which were repeated whenever they recommenced their march.

² It is here too that Moses gathers the seventy elders, who are to help him in his work. These are all inspired and prophesy. Two of them, Eldad and Medad, who have not gone with the rest into the tabernacle, prophesy in the camp. Joshua, who asks Moses to forbid this as an irregularity, is rebuked by Moses for his intolerance.

³ The voice contrasts ordinary prophets, to whom God speaks in visions and dreams, with Moses, with whom He has spoken ‘mouth to mouth.’ Moses is described as ‘faithful in all his house’ (see Heb. iii. 2, 5), that is, in all kinds of work; not only in prophecy, like Miriam, or in the priesthood, like Aaron.

⁴ So Gehazi was afterwards punished (2 Kings v. 27); also King Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 20). Leprosy was the most loathsome of diseases. Those so afflicted were commonly shunned by all their fellow-men, and regarded as unclean. The disease, however, was probably not always infectious, for we find Naaman the leper commanding the armies of Syria. It was regarded by the Jews as the symbol of impurity, and the enforced seclusion of all lepers among them was probably a way of showing their horror of the sins, for which they regarded such visitations as sent from God (see Trench, *on Miracles*, 213–215).

them with courage. The other ten spies are punished with instant death. The people are condemned to wander for forty years in the wilderness; and it is foretold that none, save the two faithful spies, shall reach the promised land.

They are now ordered to retreat, but first make a desperate effort to force their way across the frontier. They are utterly routed by the Amalekites and Canaanites, and driven to a place called Hormah, or ‘destruction.’

XXVI. THE REBELLION OF KORAH.

NUMBERS xvi. 8-35.

XVI. 8. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi:

9. *Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?*

10. And he hath brought thee near *to him*, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

11. For which cause *both* thou and all thy company *are* gathered together against the LORD: and what *is* Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

12. And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up:

13. *Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?*

14. Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us

Our Lord healed lepers, the most remarkable case being the cleansing of the ten lepers recorded in Luke xvii. 11-19.

⁵ Paran was the name of the whole of this desert. This particular portion was sometimes called the wilderness of Zin (Num. xiii. 21), or the wilderness of Kadesh or Cades (Ps. xxix. 7).

XXVI. THE REBELLION OF KORAH.

NUMBERS xvi. 8-35.

XVI. 8, &c. The formidable rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram probably broke out soon after the retreat had commenced. The time and place, however, are very doubtful.

Two objects were combined in it. Korah, a Levite, wished to take the priesthood from Aaron^a. Dathan and Abiram^b, as descendants of Reuben, the firstborn son of Jacob, claimed the leadership instead of Moses. The encampments of the Reubenites and of the Kohathites (the family of Levites to which Korah belonged) adjoined, which made it easy for these conspirators to confer as to their grievances and plans. Two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly joined them.

14. ‘To put out the eyes’ may mean to deceive them, to blind them to the failure of his promises; ‘to throw dust in their eyes,’ as we say (*Speaker’s Commentary*).

^a This was presumption and impiety. We read in Heb. v. 4: ‘And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.’

^b A third conspirator called On is named in ver. 1, but not mentioned afterwards. Josephus says that he withdrew (*Ant. iv. 2, § 2*).

inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

15. And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

16. And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow:

17. And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each *of you* his censer.

18. And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron.

19. And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

20. And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

21. Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.

22. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

23. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

24. Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

17, 18. These men were thus to undertake that which only priests might perform, and to see whether the Lord would support their pretensions.

19. It would seem, from Korah gathering 'all the congregation' on his side, that the people were disposed to support the conspirators.

22. Moses and Aaron again intercede for the people ; and, by Divine command, persuade them to come away from the tents of these wicked men. Dathan and Abiram stand defiantly at the door of their tent.

29, 30. This was to be the test. If these men were left to die an ordinary death, then their claims were not presumptuous, and Moses himself would be proved to be an impostor. But if an earthquake came, and they were swallowed up alive, then they had 'provoked the Lord.'

The word 'quick' here means 'alive' (see ver. 33), as it does in the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, where Christ is described as coming again to judge 'the quick and the dead.' (This same expression is used in three passages of the New Testament : Acts x. 42 ; 2 Tim. iv. 1 ; 1 Pet. iv. 5.)

25. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram ; and the elders of Israel followed him.

26. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

27. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side : and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.

28. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the **LORD** hath sent me to do all these works ; for *I have not done them* of mine own mind.

29. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men ; *then the **LORD** hath not sent me.*

30. But if the **LORD** make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that *appertain* unto them, and they go down quick into the pit ; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the **LORD**.

31. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that *was* under them :

32. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that *appertained* unto Korah, and all *their* goods.

33. They, and all that *appertained* to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them : and they perished from among the congregation.

34. And all Israel that *were* round about them fled

The word ‘quick’ has the same^c meaning in Ps. lv. 16: ‘Let them go down quick into hell’; and in Ps. cxxiv. 2: ‘They had swallowed us up quick^c.’

‘Into the pit’ means ‘into the grave’ (Sheol).

32. It might seem from this, and from xxvi. 10, as if Korah and all his family perished by the earthquake. But in Deut. xi. 6 only the Reubenite conspirators are spoken of as thus destroyed. In Num. xxvi. 11 we are told that ‘the children of Korah died not^d.’

35. Fire came out of the sanctuary and consumed them.

^c So to ‘quicken’ is frequently used for to give or restore life. It is so used of natural life in 1 Cor. xv. 36: ‘that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die’; and of spiritual life in Eph. ii. 1: ‘And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.’ Our Lord says, ‘It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing’ (John vi. 63). The two meanings are combined in the words: ‘For, as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will’ (John v. 21). To quicken is often used in the Book of Psalms. St. Peter describes Christ as ‘put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit’ (1 Pet. iii. 18).

^d So in Ps. cxi. 17, 18, two different punishments are spoken of: ‘So the earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the congregation of Abiram. And the fire was kindled in their company; the flame burnt up the ungodly.’

at the cry of them : for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up *also*.

35. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

26. HISTORY TO THE RETURN TO KADESH.

NUMBERS XVI—XX, &c.

The destruction of the conspirators is followed by another murmuring against Moses and Aaron. A plague is sent as a punishment, which rages until Aaron, standing with the high priest's censer between the living and the dead, makes an 'atonement' or intercession for the people. It destroys 14,700.

Aaron's authority is soon after confirmed in the following way. The prince of each tribe gives Moses a rod, with his name written on it. The rod for the tribe of Levi, with Aaron's name on it, 'buds,' and is covered with blossoms and almonds¹ (Num. xvii. 8).

From this time we hear hardly anything about the Israelites, till they reappear at Kadesh, some thirty-eight years afterwards. In Num. xxxiii several 'stations' are mentioned, from which we gather that they moved about from place to place.

There are a few scattered references to this period. In Deut. viii. 2-6 we are told that God led them forty years, feeding them with manna, that they might learn that 'man doth not live by bread alone' (cp. Matt. iv. 4); and that other necessaries of life were provided, so that 'their clothes waxed not old,' nor did their 'foot swell' from want of sandals².

We read in Joshua (v. 4-6) that the people were disobedient, and that circumcision was neglected, and that all

St. Jude (ver. 11) refers to Korah, coupling him with Cain and Balaam. He speaks of those who perished in the ‘gainsaying of Core’; that is, in the opposition or disputing of Korah. He there compares to Korah those that ‘despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.’

26. HISTORY TO THE RETURN TO KADESH.

NUMBERS XVI—XX, &c.

¹ This rod Moses was ordered to lay up before the ‘testimony’ or ark. In Heb. ix. 4 it is said to have been kept in the ark. The Jewish tradition was that Josiah put it and the pot of manna there.

² Nehemiah (ix. 21) says that, at the solemn fast after the return from Babylon, the Levites referred to God thus sustaining the wanderers.

³ So Ezekiel (xx. 13) speaks of them as ‘rebelling’ and ‘despising God’s judgements,’ and ‘polluting His sabbaths.’ Yet, he says (ver. 17), God did not ‘make an end of them in the wilderness.’

He says again (xx. 26) that they ‘caused their children to pass through the fire’; that is, they offered them in sacrifice, as some of the tribes who surrounded them used to do.

Amos (v. 25, 26) describes them as falling again into idolatry, offering no sacrifices to God, but bearing ‘the tabernacle of Moloch and Chiun, their images, the star of their god.’ Moloch or Milcom was the god of the Ammonites. The meaning of

their males, or men of war, died in the wilderness. So in Heb. iii. 17 it is said that their ‘carcasses fell in the wilderness’ (cp. 1 Cor. x. 5). The period is often referred to as a time when they ‘provoked God.’ The most familiar of these passages is Ps. xcv (the ‘Venite’), where it is said (ver 9, 10): ‘They tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation,’ &c. This is quoted in Heb. iii. 9, 10³.

XXVII. MERIBAH AND THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

NUMBERS XX. 1-13 and XXI. 4-9.

XX. 1. Then came the children of Israel, *even* the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

2. And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

3. And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

4. And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

5. And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it *is* no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither *is* there any water to drink.

6. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of

Chiun is very doubtful. St. Stephen, quoting this passage, gives instead ‘the star of your god Remphan,’ and describes them as worshipping ‘the host of heaven’ (Acts vii. 42, 43).

St. Paul, in his speech at Antioch in Pisidia, speaks of God having ‘suffered their manners for forty years in the wilderness,’ or, according to another reading, having ‘tended them as a nurse’ (Acts xiii. 18): (The Greek words are ἐτροποφύρησεν and ἐτροφοφύρησεν.)

XXVII. MERIBAH AND THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

NUMBERS XX. 1-13 and XXI. 4-9.

XX. 1. During the thirty-eight years of wandering, the Israelites were probably scattered about in various parts of the desert in search of pasturage; the head-quarters being with the tabernacle. The words ‘even the whole congregation’ imply that they were now reunited^a. Some suppose the head-quarters to have been all the time at Kadesh.

3. Those who ‘died before the Lord’ may mean those who were punished at the ‘graves of lust,’ or those who were slain at the time of Korah’s rebellion; or possibly all who had died during the wanderings.

The people had before murmured in the same way when water failed at Rephidim; and that place, like this, was called Meribah or ‘strife,’ and Massah or ‘temptation’ (Exod. xvii. 1-7).

8, 9. This was probably the rod used for the miracles in Egypt (Exod. vii. 9), and again at Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 5, 9);

^a The time of this reassembling was probably the ‘first month’ of the fortieth year after the Exodus. Others, however, suppose it to mean the ‘first month’ of the third year; that is, before the long wanderings.

the congregation, and they fell upon their faces : and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

7. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

8. Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes ; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock : so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

9. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

10. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels ; must we fetch you water out of this rock ?

11. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice : and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*.

12. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

13. This *is* the water of Meribah ; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

XXI. 4. And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom : and the soul of the people was much disengaged because of the way.

not the rod that budded (Num. xvii. 8, 9). It is called in Exod. xvii. 9 ‘the rod of God.’ Moses now takes it ‘from before the Lord’ ; that is, from the tabernacle, where it was kept.

10. The exact nature of the sin, for which Moses and Aaron, who was somehow involved in it, were forbidden to enter the promised land, is doubtful. Different explanations have been given of Moses’ words : .

(a) That they mean, ‘*Can we fetch you water ?*’ and so imply doubt of what God had promised.

(b) That he spoke presumptuously, as if the miracle could be wrought by his and Aaron’s own power.

(c) That the sin was impatience, shown in addressing the people as ‘ye rebels,’ and in smiting the rock twice, instead of speaking to it.

The last seems to be supported by Ps. cvi. 33, where it is said that the people ‘provoked Moses’ spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.’

In Ps. lxxxi. 8 God is spoken of as ‘proving’ His people ‘at the waters of strife.’

13. This is called in Deut. xxxii. 51 Meribah-Kadesh, to distinguish it from the other Meribah (Num. xxvii. 14).

In 1 Cor. x. 3, 4 St. Paul makes the feeding with manna and the supply of water from the rock types of the spiritual food of Christians. He says, ‘They did all eat the same spiritual meat ; and did all drink the same spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them : and that Rock was Christ.’

Our Lord said of Himself, ‘He that cometh to Me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst’ (John vi. 35). So, in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, our souls are ‘strengthened and refreshed’ by the Body and Blood of Christ.

XXI. 4-6. The king of Edom having refused the Israelites a passage through his country, they are obliged to seek another way of entrance into Canaan. They had journeyed

5. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness ? for *there is* no bread, neither *is there any* water ; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

6. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people ; and much people of Israel died.

7. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee ; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

8. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole : and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

9. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

27. HISTORY TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE EASTERN TRIBES.

NUMBERS xxi, &c.

The Israelites are now very different from those who were defeated by the Amalekites and others thirty-eight years before. Then they had been weakened by living for a long time in the relaxing climate of Egypt, and were dispirited through their slavery there. Now they are the hardy children of the desert.

to Mount Hor, where Aaron died, and Eleazar his son was made priest in his stead. They are now dismayed to find themselves again near the Red Sea, and once more murmur. Fiery serpents^b are sent among them as a punishment. St. Paul refers to this in 1 Cor. x. 9: ‘Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.’

9. Our Lord, in His conversation with Nicodemus, speaks of this serpent of brass as a type of His own crucifixion: ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up’ (John iii. 14)^c.

We learn from 2 Kings xviii. 4 that this serpent was afterwards made an object of worship, and was broken in pieces by Hezekiah, who called it in contempt ‘Nehushtan,’ or ‘piece of brass.’

^b Probably so called from the inflammation caused by their bite, or perhaps from their red appearance.

^c Moses made that which was to deliver them in the same form as that which had destroyed. So Christ, who knew no sin, ‘was made sin’ or ‘a curse’ for us (2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13); and that which was the means of death was again made the sign of deliverance and life.

27. HISTORY TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE EASTERN TRIBES.

NUMBERS xxi, &c.

¹ These exploits are referred to in Ps. cxxxvi. 19, 20, where God, ‘whose mercy endureth for ever,’ is said to have slain these mighty kings.

² The story of Balak, king of Moab, is given in the next selection.

Several stations on their march are mentioned, the most important being that called Beer-elim, or the ‘well of heroes’ (*Isa. xv. 8*). Sihon, king of the Amorites, having refused them a peaceable passage through his territory, they defeat him, and take possession of his land. They next encounter Og, the gigantic king of Bashan, and he and all his people are destroyed¹.

The Israelites now pitch in the plains of Moab², where they fall into terrible sin, taking part in the impure and licentious worship of the neighbouring Midianites³. For this they are visited with a pestilence, which destroys 24,000⁴. The leader in suppressing this wickedness is Phinehas, the son of Eleazar⁵. An order is given to ‘vex the Midianites,’ on whom a terrible vengeance is taken.

The territory conquered on the east of Jordan is now assigned, at their own request, to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of Manasseh.

1. Reuben receives the southern part. Cut off from his brethren, he is afterwards little more than an Arabian tribe⁶.

2. Gad has the central portion. His descendants are more warlike, defending the frontier against neighbouring marauders. From this tribe come Jephthah the Gileadite (*Judges xi. 1*), David’s heroes (*1 Chron. xii. 8*), and Elijah the Tishbite (*1 Kings xvii. 1*)⁷.

3. Manasseh occupies the rugged tract of country in the north, taken from Og. It is celebrated for its cattle, the ‘bulls of Bashan’ (*Ps. xxii. 12*); and for its forests, the ‘oaks of Bashan’ (*Isa. ii. 13*).

Much of the district east of Jordan was remarkable for its beauty and fertility. But these tribes lived in seclusion, and took little part in the national history. They are often spoken of as the ‘Trans-Jordanic tribes’⁸.

³ We read in Ps. cxi. 28, ‘They joined themselves unto Baal-peor, and ate the offerings of the dead.’ The Midianites were descendants of Abraham and his last wife, Keturah.

⁴ St. Paul, in 1 Cor. x. 8, gives the number who fell as 23,000.

⁵ In Ps. cxi. 30, in the Prayer Book Version, we read, ‘Then stood up Phinees and prayed: and so the plague ceased.’ But the Bible Version and R.V. give for ‘prayed,’ ‘executed judgement.’

⁶ “‘Unstable as water,’ he vanishes away into a mere Arabian tribe; ‘his men are few’” (*Stanley, Jewish Church*, i. 216).

⁷ Mahanaim, which Ish-bosheth made his capital (2 Sam. ii. 8), and to which David fled from Absalom (2 Sam. xvii. 24), was in this tribe, on the border of Gad and Manasseh.

⁸ In the time of the New Testament this region east of Jordan was called by the Romans Peraea, or ‘the land beyond the river.’ Our Lord probably retired there after His baptism, and again in the time of danger just before the end of His ministry (Matt. iv. 1; John x. 39, 40).

XXVIII. BALAAM'S PARABLE.

NUMBERS XXIV.

XXIV. 1. And when Balaam saw that it pleased the **LORD** to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

2. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding *in his tents* according to their tribes ; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

3. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said :

4. He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open :

5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, *and* thy tabernacles, O Israel !

6. As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the **LORD** hath planted, *and* as cedar trees beside the waters.

7. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

8. God brought him forth out of Egypt ; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn : he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce *them* through with his arrows.

9. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as

XXVIII. BALAAM'S PARABLE.

NUMBERS XXIV.

XXIV. 1-3. Balak ^a, king of Moab, alarmed at the approach of the Israelites, has made an alliance against them with the neighbouring Midianites. He has also sent for Balaam the son of Beor, a famous prophet, living at Pethor ^b on the Euphrates, to come and curse these formidable enemies.

Balaam, warned by God, refuses the first invitation ; but a second and more honourable deputation persuades him to set out. A warning is given him on his journey, when ‘the angel of the Lord stood in the way,’ and ‘the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbade the madness of the prophet’ (2 Pet. ii. 16) ; but he goes on to the camp of Balak. There he tells the king that he can only speak ‘what God putteth in his mouth.’

Taken to two heights, from which he may see the Israelite encampment—first ‘to the high places of Baal,’ and then to Zophim on the top of Pisgah, he utters words which seem more like a blessing than a curse. Balak, disappointed and indignant, tries one more place, the top of Peor. Here for a third time Balaam ‘takes up his parable,’ or form of blessing.

5-7. These words describe the future prosperity of the Israelites. Their land will be like luxuriant valleys and beautiful gardens, or like the noblest and the most fragrant of trees, and they will have abundance of water ^c.

^a Balak means ‘the spoiler.’

^b Pethor is probably the same as Pitru, a place on the west bank of the Euphrates, near Carchemish.

^c It is described in Deut. viii. 7 as ‘a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.’

Agag seems to have been the hereditary title of the kings of Amalek (cp. 1 Sam. xv. 8).

a great lion : who shall stir him up ? Blessed *is* he that blesseth thee, and cursed *is* he that curseth thee.

10. And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together : and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed *them* these three times.

11. Therefore now flee thou to thy place : I thought to promote thee unto great honour ; but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour.

12. And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying,

13. If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do *either* good or bad of mine own mind ; *but* what the LORD saith, that will I speak ?

14. And now, behold, I go unto my people : come *therefore*, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

15. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said :

16. He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, *which* saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open :

17. I shall see him, but not now : I shall behold him, but not nigh : there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

14. To ‘advertise’ means to advise or inform. By some the words which follow are reversed, so as to mean ‘what thy people shall do to this people.’ These suppose them to refer to the advice by which Balaam caused the Israelites ‘to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor’ (Num. xxxi. 16).

In Rev. ii. 14 we are told that Balaam ‘taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel.’

17. This is commonly regarded as the fourth great prophecy of the Messiah^d.

A star was the symbol of power and splendour, and was supposed to precede the birth of a great prince. So the wise men saw the ‘star in the east’ (Matt. ii. 2). With the sceptre, as the figure of sovereignty, we may compare Gen. xlix. 10.

18. Seir was the old name of the country which the Edomites inhabited. This race was conquered by David (2 Sam. viii. 14).

20. The Amalekites were defeated by Saul (1 Sam. xiv. 48), and by David (2 Sam. viii. 12). They were again smitten by the sons of Simeon in the time of Hezekiah (1 Chron. iv. 43).

22. The Kenites were friends of the Israelites. They were a branch of the Midianites, and are described as settling in the portion of Judah. Jethro was a Kenite; and so was

^d The previous ones being Gen. iii. 15, xii. 3 and xxii. 18, xlix. 10.

This prophecy seems to refer in the first instance to King David, the type of ‘David’s greater son,’ who subdued the Moabites (2 Sam. viii. 2).

‘The children of Sheth’ means rather ‘the sons of tumult’ (R. V.).

18. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

20. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations ; but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever.

21. And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

22. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

23. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this !

24. And ships *shall come* from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.

25. And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place : and Balak also went his way.

XXIX. THE DEATH OF MOSES.

DEUT. xxxii. 44-52 and xxxiv.

XXXII. 44. And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun.

Heber, husband of the Jael who slew Sisera (*Judges i. 16, iv. 11*)^e.

24. Chittim is Cyprus, the only island of the Mediterranean visible from Palestine. It seems to be put for the western nations, the Greeks and Romans, who should supplant the Assyrians, and conquer all the descendants of Eber or Shem, and then themselves perish in their turn.

25. Balaam is mentioned in *Jude* (ver. 11) with Cain and Korah. False teachers are there described as ‘running greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.’ So St. Peter (2 Pet. ii. 15) describes him as ‘loving the wages of unrighteousness.’

We learn from *Num. xxxi. 8* that Balaam was slain, together with the princes of Midian, in the war which followed. The same is stated in *Joshua xiii. 22*^f.

^e There is much doubt as to the meaning of this prophecy. Some explain it, ‘the Kenite shall not be wasted till the Assyrian captivity.’

In R. V. it is, ‘Kain (which was the city of the Kenites) shall be wasted’; and for ‘until’ we have there in the margin, ‘How long?’

^f The character of Balaam has been variously interpreted:

(a) As an instance of that self-deception, by which men persuade themselves that their sins may be reconciled with the dictates of conscience.

(b) As a warning against a worldly ambition, which is never satisfied.

(c) As showing how a pure form of religious belief may be combined with a low standard of conduct (*Stanley, Jewish Church*, i. 183).

XXIX. THE DEATH OF MOSES.

DEUT. xxxii. 44–52 and xxxiv

XXXII. 44. The Book of Deuteronomy consists almost entirely of a republication of the law, before the actual entry into the promised land.

45. And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel :

46. And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.

47. For it *is* not a vain thing for you ; because it *is* your life : and through this thing ye shall prolong *your* days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

48. And the LORD spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying,

49. Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, *unto* mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, that *is* over against Jericho ; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession :

50. And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people ; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people :

51. Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin ; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.

52. Yet thou shalt see the land before *thee* ; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.

XXXIV. 1. And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of

The account of the death of Moses was probably added by his successor Joshua. He is called here Hoshea, which means 'salvation'; but his name had been changed by Moses to Joshua, or 'the Lord's salvation' (Num. xiii. 16). Joshua is the same name as Jesus (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8).

45. Moses had given three addresses to the people on the law. He then appointed his successor and uttered his 'song.' After this comes his final blessing (Deut. xxxi—xxxiii).

47. Moses describes the faithful service of God, which is the true knowledge of Him, as 'life.' So our Lord says, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent' (John xvii. 3)^a.

49. Abarim was the name of the whole range of mountains. The northern part of the range was called Pisgah (Deut. xxxiv. 1). Nebo was one peak of this ridge, probably so called from a town near it.

50. This had been already foretold. (Num. xx. 12, and Num. xxvii. 12–14, pp. 188, 189.)

XXXIV. 1–3. Moses now ascends the mountain, to take a last look at the land he has been forbidden to enter^b.

The view from these heights was a varied and beautiful

^a So, in the second Collect for Peace, in Morning Prayer, we say, 'In knowledge of whom standeth (or consisteth) our eternal life.'

^b Josephus says that he took with him Eleazar, Joshua, and the elders, dismissing the last on reaching the summit; that he ascended amid the tears and wailings of the people; and that a cloud suddenly stood over him, and he disappeared in a deep valley.

To labour, and not to see the end of those labours; to sow, and not to reap, is the lot of many a leader and reformer. So Moses

'Did on the very border stand
Of the blessed promised land,'

but was never allowed to enter it (Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. 200).

Pisgah, that *is* over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

2. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea,

3. And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

4. And the LORD said unto him, This *is* the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed : I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

5. So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

6. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor : but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

7. And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died : his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

8. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days : so the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses were ended.

9. And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom ; for Moses had laid his hands upon him : and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

10. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

one^c. The Dan here mentioned seems to have been in Gilead. The ‘utmost sea’ is the Mediterranean (Deut. xi. 24).

6. It has been said that no man was allowed to know of his sepulchre, lest his countrymen, regarding him as divine, should assemble to worship him there. But others suppose that he was ‘translated,’ like Enoch (Gen. v. 24; Heb. xi. 5), and like Elijah (2 Kings ii. 11). The latter afterwards appeared with him on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 3, &c.).

St. Jude (ver. 9) speaks of Michael the archangel ‘contending with the devil, disputing about the body of Moses.’

8. ‘Thirty days’ was also the period of mourning for Aaron (Num. xx. 29).

9. We are also told in Num. xxvii. 23 that Moses ‘laid his hands upon’ Joshua^d, before Eleazar the priest, ‘and gave him a charge.’

10. Moses is here called a prophet, though elsewhere he and his works are distinguished from the prophets and their teaching. Thus our Lord says, ‘Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets’ (Matt. v. 17); and ‘If they hear not Moses and the prophets’ (Luke xvi. 31); and again, ‘All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me’ (Luke xxiv. 44).

The prophetic order commenced with Samuel, who is specially called ‘the prophet’ (Acts xiii. 20; cp. Heb. xi. 32). But the name prophet is often used in a wider sense. It

^c It is the traditional scene of our Lord’s temptation—the ‘exceeding high mountain,’ from which He was shown ‘all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them’ (Matt. iv. 8).

^d This is the form of conveying spiritual gifts, which was used in the early Church (Acts viii. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 14; Heb. vi. 2, &c.). It is still retained in our ceremonies of Confirmation and Ordination.

11. In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,

12. And in all that mighty land, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.

means one who 'forth-tells,' or declares (not necessarily who 'fore-tells') the will of God.

There was to be no such prophet, till He should come, of whom Moses was a type, and of whom Moses spoke in Deut. xviii. 15 : 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken' (cp. Acts vii. 37).

28. SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON MOSES AND THE PENTATEUCH.

Most of the important references to Moses in the New Testament have been given in the notes.

He was always regarded with the greatest veneration, as the first great leader of the nation, and the giver of the law. ‘The law,’ says St. John (i. 17), ‘was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.’ Any attempt to alter its regulations was regarded as blasphemy. St. Stephen was accused of speaking ‘blasphemous words against Moses and against God,’ and it was made one of the chief charges against St. Paul that he taught the Jews ‘to forsake Moses’ (Acts xxi. 21).

Moses appears on the Mount of Transfiguration as the representative of the law, with Elias, the representative of the prophets (Matt. xvii. 3; Mark ix. 4; Luke ix. 30).

He is described in Num. xii. 3 as ‘very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.’ When first called indeed to his great work, he distrusted his own powers. But his character is hardly that of a man remarkable for his meekness. Early in life he slew the Egyptian (Exod. ii. 12), and the sin, for which he was not allowed to enter the promised land, was probably presumption. Some explain the description of him to mean that he was self-sacrificing. And this was certainly one great feature in his character. He magnanimously declined the offer of God to take his own family as the chosen race, instead of the whole nation of rebellious Israelites, and he was willing even to die for the people (Exod. xxxii. 10-14 and 32).

Moses was leader, lawgiver, and historian. He was also a poet. Besides ‘the song of Moses and Miriam,’ sung after the passage of the Red Sea, we have a beautiful poem of his in Deut. xxxii, commonly called ‘the Rock,’ from the repeated description of God by this name. The blessing, too, in Deut.

xxxiii is in the style of Hebrew poetry. And, in the Book of Psalms, there is one (Ps. xc) which is headed, ‘A prayer of Moses the man of God.’ It is one of the Psalms selected for the Burial Service. The figures in this Psalm, like those of ‘the Rock,’ seem to be taken from the wanderings in the wilderness.

In Rev. xv. 3 the saints in heaven are described as singing ‘the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.’ This is commonly supposed to refer to the song of Moses and Miriam (see Exod. xv). It may however refer to ‘the Rock.’

The authorship of the Pentateuch, or ‘five-fold book,’ which includes the first five books of the Bible, is ascribed to Moses. They are called collectively the ‘law of Moses’ (Neh. viii. 1) or the ‘book of Moses’ (2 Chron. xxxv. 12; Ezra vi. 18). They are called by the Jews Torah, or the Law.

The names of the several books are taken from the LXX, and refer to the subject or part of the subject of which they severally treat.

1. Genesis is so called because it commences with an account of the Creation or origin of all things.

2. Exodus, as the central idea is the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.

3. Leviticus, as treating of the sacrifices and services performed by the Levites.

4. Numbers, because it contains the census or numbering of the Israelites soon after the Exodus, and again at the end of the wanderings in the wilderness.

5. Deuteronomy, because it records the second law or repetition of the law.

Deut. xxxi. 24 speaks of Moses making ‘an end of writing the words of this law in a book.’ The last chapter, recounting the farewell address and end of Moses, was probably added by his successor, Joshua.

The name Hexateuch, ‘or six-fold book,’ is sometimes given to the first six books, including the Book of Joshua.

29. THE SUCCESSION OF JOSHUA.

JOSHUA i—v.

Moses, as we have seen, was ordered to appoint as his successor Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim¹. Joshua is now assured of Divine protection, and bidden to ‘be strong and of a good courage.’ He is not, like Moses, a statesman and lawgiver, but a brave soldier, well fitted for the work of conquest before him².

The first fortified city which the Israelites must encounter, after crossing the Jordan, is Jericho. To this two spies are sent, who are concealed and provided with means of escape by ‘Rahab the harlot³.’ For this, when the city is taken, her life and the lives of her family are spared.

Joshua now prepares to cross the Jordan. The priests advance, bearing the ark of the covenant, and the vanguard of the army follow at a distance of more than half a mile. As soon as the priests enter the river, which is now in a state of flood⁴, the channel becomes dry. The priests stand with the ark on the dry ground in the centre of the channel while all the people pass over⁵.

They now encamp at Gilgal, and a monument of twelve stones is erected to commemorate the crossing of the river. The rite of circumcision, which has been neglected during the wanderings, is here renewed, and the Passover is celebrated for the first time since leaving Sinai. The name Gilgal means ‘rolling,’ because here ‘the reproach of Egypt’ is rolled away, as they thus renew their covenant with God, and now really enter on their life as a nation. The supply of manna, no longer needed, ceases here.

‘The captain of the host of the LORD’ now appears to Joshua, and instructs him how Jericho is to be taken⁶.

29. THE SUCCESSION OF JOSHUA.

JOSHUA i--v.

¹ Joshua is first mentioned as the leader of the Israelite forces against the Amalekites (Exod. xvii. 9). He then became Moses' minister, and ascended Mount Sinai with him (Exod. xxiv. 13). He and Caleb were the only two of the twelve spies sent into Canaan who did not seek to discourage the Israelites (Num. xiii, xiv).

² The work before him was a very formidable one. The native chieftains had strong fortresses, and horses, and war-chariots. They knew the country thoroughly, and would fight desperately for their homes.

³ They were let down over the wall by a cord. We may compare with this the account of St. Paul's escape from Damascus (Acts ix. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33).

⁴ The Jordan, we are told, 'overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest' (Joshua iii 15). This is due to the melting of the snows on Mount Hermon. Jeremiah speaks of 'the swelling of Jordan' (Jer. xii. 5, xlix. 19, l. 44). We read of such a flood in 1 Chron. xii. 15, when the mighty men of Gad crossed the river to join David in Ziklag.

⁵ The waters are 'driven back' (Ps. cxiv. 3), and 'rise up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam' (Joshua iii. 16, R. V.). This was probably some thirty miles distant, near the mouth of the Jabbok.

⁶ This Divine appearance, 'with his sword drawn in his hand,' signified the special mission of Joshua, who was to smite the enemies of the Lord's people.

XXX. THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO.

JOSHUA vi. 1-21.

VI. 1. Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

2. And the **LORD** said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, *and* the mighty men of valour.

3. And ye shall compass the city, all *ye* men of war, *and* go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

5. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

6. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the **LORD**.

7. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the **LORD**.

8. And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the

XXX. THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO.

JOSHUA vi. 1-21.

VI. 1. Jericho was ‘the key of Western Palestine^a.’ It stood at the entrance of the two passes from the Jordan valley, one leading to Jebus or Jerusalem, the other running towards Beth-el. The first step towards the projected conquest was to capture this town, and Joshua, having received the report of the two spies, ‘straitly’ or closely blockades it.

2-5. These instructions had been given by the captain of the LORD’S host, when he appeared unto Joshua^b.

6, 7. The ark, preceded by the priests with trumpets, was this time to be in the centre of the procession. They that were ‘armed,’ meaning probably the army generally, were to ‘pass on before the ark.’ But in ver. 9 we read of the rereward coming after the ark. Some suppose that only the warriors of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, who had before formed the vanguard (Joshua iv. 12), went in front. Others think that the whole host did so, except a small detachment.

15. They rose early, as they had a long day’s work before

^a Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 305.

^b The ‘trumpets of rams’ horns’ mentioned should probably be ‘jubilee trumpets’; that is, loud and joyful instruments, thus distinguished from the priests’ silver trumpets (Num. x. 2).

The mystical number ‘seven,’ which occurs so often in this account, denotes completeness.

seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets : and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

9. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

10. And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall *any* word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

11. So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about *it* once : and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

12. And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

13. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets : and the armed men went before them ; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

14. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp : so they did six days.

15. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when

them, to compass the large city seven times. According to Jewish tradition, the day of the capture was a sabbath.

16. The raising of the ‘shout’ or war-cry was the sign that God’s judgement was at hand.

So, in the account of the last judgement, we are told that ‘the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God’ (1 Thess. iv. 16).

17-21. ‘Accursed’ means rather ‘devoted.’ The city, as the firstfruits of the conquest of the land, was to be given over to the Lord. The people and all their property were to be destroyed, except ‘the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron,’ which were to be ‘consecrated,’ that is, taken for the sacred treasury^c.

In Heb. xi. 30 we are told, ‘By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.’

Rahab alone of the inhabitants was to be saved, because she had hidden the spies and helped them to escape. Her

^c These ‘exterminating wars,’ as they are called, may seem to us cruel and horrible. But ideas were very different then. And they were Divine punishments for gross and continual sin, in which Joshua and others were employed as agents or executioners. The destruction of these sinful nations was necessary, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, for carrying out God’s counsels. ‘The Israelites’ sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all countries of the earth to the end of the world’ (Arnold, *Sermons*, vi. 37). But a repetition of such wholesale massacres now would lay men open to the rebuke which our Lord gave to the two sons of Zebedee, when they wished to call down fire on the Samaritan village: ‘Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of’ (Mozley, *Lectures on Old Testament*, p. 86; Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. 250, 254).

the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout ; for the LORD hath given you the city.

17. And the city shall be accursed, *even it*, and all that *are* therein, to the LORD : only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18. And ye, in any wise keep *yourselves* from the accursed thing, lest ye make *yourselves* accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, *are* consecrated unto the LORD : they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

20. So the people shouted when *the priests* blew with the trumpets : and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

21. And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

30. HISTORY TO THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON.

JOSHUA vi. 22—ix.

The fall of Jericho has opened a passage into the hills beyond. The Israelites now march up one of the ravines, and attack the hill-fortress of Ai, not far from Beth-el.

house was to be marked by a ‘line of scarlet thread’ hung from her window (Joshua ii. 18)^d.

In Heb. xi. 31 it is said, ‘By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.’

St. James, maintaining that true faith is always shown in good works, says, ‘Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way’ (Jas. ii. 25).

A curse was pronounced on any one who should rebuild Jericho (ver. 26), which was fulfilled some 500 years after in the time of Ahab, when Hiel the Beth-elite lost his eldest son Abiram at the commencement of this work, and his youngest son Segub at its completion^e.

^d This, like the blood sprinkled on the lintels or side-posts of the door, when the destroying angel slew the firstborn of the Egyptians, has been regarded as a type of the saving blood of Christ.

Rahab and her descendants were adopted as Israelites. She is mentioned (as ‘Rachab’) in the genealogy of our Lord (Matt. i. 5).

^e Jericho appears to have been inhabited again not long afterwards. It belonged to the Benjamites (Joshua xviii. 21). If it is the same as ‘the city of palm-trees’ (Judges iii. 13¹), this was probably the place where Eglon, king of Moab, was assassinated by Ehud, one of the judges. What Hiel apparently did was to try to make it a fortified town.

Jericho is mentioned in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30), which some old writers have regarded as an allegory of the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ. They see in the journey from Jerusalem, the city of peace, to Jericho, the accursed city, a figure of the fall of man.

30. HISTORY TO THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON.

JOSHUA vi. 22—ix.

¹ ‘The hearts of the people melted, and became as water.’ They felt they had for some reason forfeited the Divine protection.

² This is commonly supposed to have been by casting lots.

The first force of about 3,000 men is repulsed with loss. The people are in despair at this reverse¹, but Joshua is told that it is a punishment for sin. The offender therefore must be discovered and executed. It is found that he belongs to the tribe of Judah; then his family and household are shown; and at last Achan is revealed as the guilty man who has taken part of the consecrated spoil of Jericho². He confesses, and he and his family are stoned to death. The scene of this execution is called the valley of Achor, or 'trouble'³.

Another attack is made on Ai with a force of 30,000 men. Of these, 5,000 are placed in ambush. The main force pretend to be routed, and the people of Ai rush out to pursue them. The men in ambush seize and burn the deserted city, and then attack the pursuing army in the rear. It is defeated with great slaughter, and Ai and all its people are destroyed.

The next event recorded is the public reciting of the law. Half the tribes are placed on Mount Ebal, and half on Mount Gerizim. The Levites read the law aloud in the valley between the two mountains, and the people on Gerizim answer 'Amen' to the blessings, those on Ebal to the cursings⁴.

The Israelites now return to Gilgal. There ambassadors arrive, with old clothes and shoes and mouldy provisions, pretending to have come from a great distance, and asking for a 'league' or treaty. The Israelites are deceived by this trick and consent, and then find that the men have only come from the neighbouring city of Gibeon⁵. Their lives are spared, but they are made 'bondsmen,' 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for the house of God⁶. This treaty never seems to have been broken till the time of Saul, who 'slew the Gibeonites'; and, as a punishment for this outrage, there was a three years' famine in the time of David (2 Sam. xxi. 1-5).

Others think the Divine voice thus gradually revealed where the 'offence' was.

³ In 1 Chron. ii. 7 Achan is described as 'Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed.'

This valley of Achor is described in Isa. lxxv. 10 as a rich pasture-ground, 'a place for the herds to lie down in.' In Hos. ii. 15 it is said to be given to the Israelites as a 'door of hope.' This refers to their restoration, after the 'trouble' of the Captivity, to their goodly land. It is a figure of the way in which, in the mercy of a God who 'chasteneth whom He loveth' (Heb. xii. 6), we may pass through tribulation to hope and happiness.

⁴ These 'cursings' are found in Deut. xxvii. They are read in the commencement of the 'Commination Service' on Ash-Wednesday. The blessings are given in Deut. xxviii.

The Israelites thus renewed, on their admission to the promised land, the covenant made at Sinai. Moses had ordered that an abstract of the law should be written on 'great stones' to be erected on Mount Ebal and an altar built there (Deut. xxvii. 2, 3). These orders are now carried out.

⁵ These Gibeonites were a colony of the Hivites, who had migrated southwards. The Hivites lived in the north of Palestine (Judges iii. 3).

⁶ The name 'Nethinim,' meaning those 'set apart' or dedicated, was afterwards given to all who performed the more laborious offices of the Temple worship, including the Gibeonites (1 Chron. ix. 2; Ezra ii. 43; Neh. xi. 21).

XXXI. THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON.

JOSHUA x. 6-27.

X. 6. And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants ; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us : for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

7. So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

8. And the **LORD** said unto Joshua, Fear them not : for I have delivered them into thine hand ; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

9. Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, *and* went up from Gilgal all night.

10. And the **LORD** discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

11. And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, *and* were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the **LORD** cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died : *they were* more which died with hailstones than *they* whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

12. Then spake Joshua to the **LORD** in the day when the **LORD** delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

XXXI. THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON.

JOSHUA x. 6-27.

X. 6-8. The news of the Gibeonites' conduct has aroused the anger of the neighbouring princes, and a formidable confederacy has been made to attack them. Adoni-zedec^a, king of Jerusalem, has persuaded the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon to join him. The Gibeonites in alarm send to Joshua at Gilgal, begging him to come with all speed to their help. He hurries to Gibeon 'with all the people of war,' making in one night the journey which before had taken three days (Joshua ix. 17).

10, 11. Beth-horon means 'house of caves'; and the name describes the rocky character of the district. There were two Beth-horons, distinguished as 'Upper' and 'Lower.'

Joshua surprised the forces of the Amorites on the heights of Gibeon, and first drove them across the ravine and up the ascent ('the way that goeth up') to Upper Beth-horon. Then he pursued them further along 'the going down to' Lower Beth-horon, to Azekah and Makkedah. The exact site of these last towns is doubtful.

We may compare with the account of the hailstorm here the story of the discomfiture of the host of Sisera, when 'the stars in their courses fought against' him in a violent storm of sleet and hail (Judges v. 20; cp. Josephus, *Ant.* v. 5, § 4). Also the thunderstorm which burst over the Philistines at Eben-ezer (1 Sam. vii. 10).

^a Adoni-zedec means 'lord of righteousness.' Cp. Melchizedek, 'king of righteousness' (Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. vii. 2).

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

13. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. *Is not this written in the book of Jasher?* So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

14. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the **LORD** hearkened unto the voice of a man : for the **LORD** fought for Israel.

15. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

16. But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

17. And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah.

18. And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them :

19. And stay ye not, *but* pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them ; suffer them not to enter into their cities : for the **LORD** your God hath delivered them into your hand.

20. And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest *which* remained of them entered into fenced cities.

21. And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

22. Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the

12-14. These verses are a quotation from 'the book of Jasher' or of 'the upright.' This book is mentioned again in David's lament over Saul and Jonathan in 2 Sam. i. 18. It was probably a book of poems in honour of national heroes. It may have been the same as 'the book of the wars of the Lord' mentioned in Num. xxi. 14.

Joshua seems to have attacked the Amorites in the early morning. He now prays that the day may be lengthened, so as to give time for their utter destruction ^b.

There is apparently a reference to this in Hab. iii. 11: 'The sun and moon stood still in their habitation.' The only other allusion to it is in the Apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus (xlvi. 4): 'Did not the sun go back by his means, and was not one day as long as two ^c?'

15. This must refer to Joshua's return to Gilgal, after he had completed the slaughter of the Amorites.

^b Or, as some suppose, that the storm-clouds, driving up from the sea, may not bring on night prematurely.

It must be remembered that this passage is a quotation from a book of poetry.

^c This same district was the scene of two other Jewish victories long afterwards. There Judas Maccabaeus defeated the Syrian forces under Seron in B.C. 166 (1 Macc. iii. 13-24). In these same defiles, in A.D. 65, Cestius Gallus, the Roman governor of Syria, was attacked and routed by the Jews (Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 212, 213).

According to Jewish tradition, this was also the scene of the destruction of the host of Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 35).

cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave.

23. And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

24. And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

25. And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

26. And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.

27. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

XXXII. THE BATTLE OF MEROM.

JOSHUA xi.

XI. 1. And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard *those things*, that he sent to Jobab

21. ‘None moved his tongue’ means that none dared to offer any further opposition (cp. Exod. xi. 7).

24. Putting the feet on the neck of captives was a common way among Eastern nations of showing their complete subjection. So we read in Ps. cx. 1 of the Lord’s enemies being made His ‘footstool.’ We may also compare the expression in Mal. iv. 3 : ‘Ye shall tread down the wicked’; and that in 1 Cor. xv. 25 : ‘For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.’

The victory of Beth-horon was followed by the utter destruction of Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, Debir, and other cities; the inhabitants being all massacred.

The conquest of Southern Palestine was thus completed ^a.

^a The Egyptian tablets speak of the Abiri (or Hebrews) taking Gaza from the Egyptian governor, and capturing other cities.

There is a curious Phoenician inscription near Tangiers, which tells how the exiles there had been ‘driven away by the plunderer, Joshua, the son of Nun.’

XXXII. THE BATTLE OF MEROM.

JOSHUA xi.

XI. 1. The northern princes are alarmed by the news of Joshua’s successes in Southern Palestine. The chief of these,

king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

2. And to the kings that *were* on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west,

3. *And to* the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and *to* the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and *to* the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

4. And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that *is* upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

5. And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

6. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them : for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel : thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

7. So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly ; and they fell upon them.

8. And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward ; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

9. And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him : he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

Jabin ^a, king of Hazor ^b, which was ‘the head of all those kingdoms’ (ver. 10), forms a confederacy of the northern chieftains, as Adoni-zedec had of the southern.

Hazor was a strongly fortified town, overlooking the Lake of Merom.

2. Chinneroth is the same as Gennesaret. The town gave its name to the lake, which is also called in the New Testament ‘the Sea of Galilee,’ or (by St. John) ‘the Sea of Tiberias.’

Dor was a Phoenician town, not far from Mount Carmel. It belonged to Manasseh.

3. The land of Mizpeh was on the east side of the valley of Lebanon (Judges iii. 3).

5. The name Merom is only used here and in ver. 7. It was a marshy lake, about fifteen miles long, and four wide, north of the Sea of Galilee.

6. This is the first occasion on which the Israelites encountered the formidable cavalry and war-chariots of the Canaanites. These, which would be of little use in the more hilly country of Southern Palestine, formed the chief strength of the northern tribes, as the plains of this district and of the central region were suited to this kind of warfare. In

^a Jabin, which means ‘the wise,’ was probably a title, rather than a name; like Pharaoh with the Egyptians. We read of another Jabin, described as the king of Canaan, who reigned at Hazor, in Judges iv. 2.

^b Some suppose the site of Hazor to have been the same as that of Caesarea Philippi (Matt. xvi. 13). Others think that Baal-gad (ver. 17) was on this site, and Hazor further south.

10. And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword : for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms.

11. And they smote all the souls that *were* therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them* : there was not any left to breathe : and he burnt Hazor with fire.

12. And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, *and* he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded.

13. But *as for* the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only ; *that* did Joshua burn.

14. And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves ; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

15. As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua ; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

16. So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same ;

17. *Even* from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of the Lebanon under mount Hermon : and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

Judges iv. 3 the Jabin, king of Hazor, of whose host Sisera is captain, is described as having 900 chariots of iron.

'To hough' was probably to lame them by cutting the sinews of their hind legs ^c.

7. Joshua once more surprises the enemy, as he had done at Gibeon. He shuts them in between the hills and the lake, so that their chariots and horses are useless.

8. 'Great Zidon' was the old capital of Phoenicia. It was afterwards supplanted by Tyre; so that we find 'Tyre and Sidon' coupled in this order both in the Old and New Testaments.

Misrephoth-maim is supposed to be the same as Zarephath or Sarepta, 'a city of Sidon,' where Elijah restored the widow's son to life (1 Kings xvii. 9; Luke iv. 26).

While some of the fugitives retreated westward to the places above mentioned, others fled eastward to the valley of Mizpeh, named in ver. 3, between Mount Hermon and Mount Lebanon ^d.

13. 'In their strength' means rather 'on their mounds.' These cities, which probably took no active part in the war, Joshua left unharmed.

16. This Goshen, mentioned also in x. 41, was in the south

^c Cp. Gen. xl ix. 6 in R.V., and 2 Sam. viii. 4.

^d Mizpeh, which means a watch-tower, was a name given to several places in Palestine. This must not be confounded with the better known Mizpeh in the south, or with that in Gilead, named in Gen. xxxi. 49.

18. Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon : all *other* they took in battle.

20. For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, *and* that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

21. And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel : Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

22. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel : only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

23. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses ; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

31. HISTORY TO THE DIVISION OF WESTERN PALESTINE.

JOSHUA xii—xiv.

We have no detailed account of the rest of Joshua's conquests ; but a list is given of thirty-one native princes, whom he 'smote,' and whose cities he captured. The war appears

of Judah. It must not be confounded with ‘the land of Goshen,’ where the Israelites dwelt in Egypt.

17. Mount Halak, or ‘the smooth’ or ‘bald mountain,’ is mentioned as the southernmost limit of Joshua’s conquests. It is doubtful which is the exact mountain range referred to. Baal-gad is the northern limit.

As the battle of Beth-horon had been followed by the subjection of Southern Palestine, so the victory at Merom now secures possession of the north.

21. The Anakims were those gigantic inhabitants of Southern Palestine, whose appearance had struck terror into the spies. The cities here named were their chief fortresses.

22. These cities were three of the ‘five lordships’ of the Philistines, the other two being Ekron and Eshkalon or Ascalon (xiii. 3)^e.

^e Here also was a race of giants, such as Goliath of Gath (1 Sam. xvii. 4), and those mentioned in 2 Sam. xxi. 16–22.

31. HISTORY TO THE DIVISION OF WESTERN PALESTINE.

JOSHUA xii—xiv.

¹ Hebron was a strong fortress, nineteen miles south of Jerusalem. The land around it was very fertile. It was from the neighbouring valley of Eshcol that the spies brought back the large clusters of grapes. It was a possession which would also

to have lasted from five to seven years. We are told in xi. 18 that ‘Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.’ At the end of this period he is described as ‘old and stricken in years.’

The conquest however is not complete. Many of the old inhabitants are left unsubdued; to be, as had been foretold, ‘pricks in the eyes’ of the Israelites, and ‘thorns in their sides,’ to ‘vex’ them in the land (Num. xxxiii. 55; cp. Joshua xxiii. 13; Judges ii. 3).

One more duty remains for Joshua; that of dividing the conquered territory. Besides this formal allotment among the tribes, Joshua rewards with special and valuable gifts two of his leading followers:

1. Caleb, the other ‘faithful spy,’ asks for and receives as his own possession Kirjath-arba, or Hebron¹, having driven out from it the three sons of Anak.

2. Othniel, the brother or nephew of Caleb, receives Debir, or Kirjath-sepher. The last name means ‘Book-town.’ In xv. 49 it is called Kirjath-sannah, or ‘the city of palms.’ This town was a little to the south-west of Hebron. Caleb had promised his daughter Achsah in marriage to whosoever should capture it; and when she complains of its being a ‘south,’ that is, a dry or barren land, he adds the valley below it with its two springs (xv. 19; Judges i. 15)².

32. THE DIVISION OF WESTERN PALESTINE AMONG THE TRIBES.

JOSHUA XV—XXII.

(The map of Palestine, as divided among the tribes, should be carefully studied with this abstract. The blessings of

be much prized, as the place where Abraham and his family were buried in the cave of Machpelah.

Caleb appears to have changed the name to Hebron (xiv. 15; Judges i. 10), or perhaps restored this as its old name. It was afterwards a place of considerable importance. It was David's capital for the first seven years of his reign.

Kirjath-arba means 'city of Arba,' who was 'a great man among the Anakims.'

² Other instances of such special conquests are :

(a) The towns on the east of Jordan taken by Machir and Jair and Nobah (Num. xxxii. 39-42).

(b) The capture of Beth-el by the Ephraimites (Judges i. 22-26).

(c) The capture of Laish by the Danites (Judges xviii. 27).

(d) Judah and Simeon partially took the cities of the Canaanites and Philistines, and became masters for a time of Jebus or Jerusalem (Judges i.).

'Two principles have been adopted in the division of land by the conquerors of a new territory : one specially characteristic of the modern world, and exemplified by the Norman occupation of England, by which the several chiefs appropriated portions of the newly conquered country, according to their own power and will; the other specially characteristic of the ancient world, and exemplified in Greece and Rome, when an equal assignment to the different portions of the conquering race took effect by the deliberate act of the State. Both of these modes were adopted in the allotment of land in Palestine ; though, as might be expected, the latter principle prevailed' (Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. 259).

32. THE DIVISION OF WESTERN PALESTINE AMONG THE TRIBES.

JOSHUA XV—XXII.

¹ Jerusalem appears to have belonged at first to Benjamin (xviii. 28). There is some uncertainty as to its early history, as is shown by the following references to it :

Jacob in Gen. xlix, and the notes on these, should also be referred to.)

Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have already received their settlements on the east of Jordan.

The division of the rest of the land among the other nine and a half tribes is now made. Judah, Ephraim, and the remaining half of Manasseh are the first to receive their portions. How this order was decided we are not distinctly told.

1. Judah receives the largest portion. It is in the south ; and it comprises the pasture lands bordering on the desert, the lowlands between the mountains and the coast, the 'hill country' or high table-land, and the wilderness near the Dead Sea. It is described as a 'land of vineyards.' It has many fenced cities on the hills. The most important places in its borders are Hebron, Bethlehem, and (afterwards) Jerusalem¹.

2. Ephraim. The portion of this powerful tribe is in the centre of the country. It contains Shechem, at first regarded as the political capital of the nation ; and Shiloh, for a time the religious capital².

3. Western Manasseh. This province is to the north of Ephraim, and is bounded on the west by the Mediterranean. It contains no important towns³.

The congregation now assemble at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle there ; after which the remaining portions are formally allotted.

4. Benjamin, a small but warlike tribe, is placed between the two powerful tribes of Judah and Ephraim⁴. Jerusalem was for a time in their territory.

5. Simeon has a portion in the extreme south, taken out of the inheritance of Judah, which is too large for that tribe⁵.

6. Zebulon is settled in the north, between Issachar and Asher. This district has no place of historical importance.

7. Issachar's portion is between Manasseh and Zebulon.

(a) Joshua xii. 10. The king of Jerusalem is named among those who have been conquered by Joshua.

(b) Joshua xv. 63. Jerusalem is spoken of as inhabited jointly by the Jebusites and the children of Judah.

(c) Judges i. 21. Jebusites and Benjamites are said to inhabit it.

(d) Judges xix. 11. It is referred to as if entirely in the hands of Jebusites.

(e) 2 Sam. v. 6-9. Joab is described as capturing it from these for David.

Traces of these old inhabitants were still found, after it was made by David the capital of the kingdom, as we see from the story of Araunah or Ornan, the Jebusite (2 Sam. xxiv; 1 Chron. xxi).

² The town of Samaria, made by Omri the capital of the kingdom of Israel, was also in this district.

³ The position however was important, as commanding the passes to the great battle-field of Esdraelon (Jezreel).

⁴ They thus commanded the passes on the east, of which Jericho was the key, and the passes of Beth-horon on the west.

⁵ They were gradually absorbed among the tribes of the desert. Judith, who slew Holofernes, the Assyrian general, is said in the Apocryphal book that bears her name to have belonged to this tribe.

⁶ The mountains of Tabor, Gilboa, and Carmel were also in the portion of Issachar.

⁷ The territories of these four tribes, 6, 7, 8, 9, were afterwards

It contains Jezreel, and the famous plain adjacent, which was the chief battle-field of Palestine⁶.

8. Asher is in the extreme north-west.

9. Naphtali is between Asher and northern Dan. Both these tribes are historically unimportant⁷.

10. Dan has originally a narrow strip on the confines of the Philistines; but soon migrates north and occupies Laish.

The tribe of Levi receives no regular portion. Four cities from each tribe are assigned to them⁸.

33. HISTORY TO THE DEATH OF JOSHUA.

JOSHUA xxii, xxiii, xxiv. 26-33.

There is only one more event of importance before the death of Joshua.

The tribes, whose portions were first assigned on the east of Jordan, have taken part in the conquest of Western Palestine. Now that this is completed, Joshua, having commended and exhorted them, dismisses them to their homes.

News is presently brought that on their way they have erected an altar in the Jordan valley¹. This is supposed to mean that they are going to give up the worship of Jehovah, and serve other gods. The western tribes assemble at Shiloh, and resolve to stop their apostasy. Phinehas and ten princes are sent to expostulate with the offenders. In their address they refer to the iniquity of Baal-peor, and to the sin of Achan; and they pray their brethren not to forsake the Lord, inviting them, if they will, to join them on the west of Jordan.

The three tribes explain that the altar has been erected not for sacrifice, but simply as a memorial, to show that they have a part in the national worship. A civil war is thus averted, and the altar is called 'Ed,' or 'a witness²'.

'A long time after³', Joshua, feeling that his end is drawing

included in the Galilee of the New Testament. The district is called in Isa. ix. 1 'Galilee of the nations' (or, as in Matt. iv. 15, 'Galilee of the Gentiles').

⁸ Among these are the six 'cities of refuge,' for those who had involuntarily committed murder. Three are on the east of Jordan—Bezer in Reuben, Ramoth-gilead in Gad, and Golan in Manasseh; three on the west—Hebron in Judah, Shechem in Ephraim, and Kedesh in Naphtali.

33. HISTORY TO THE DEATH OF JOSHUA.

JOSHUA xxii, xxiii, xxiv. 26–33.

¹ It is doubtful whether this altar was erected on the east, or on the west of Jordan. If, as seems probable, the latter was the site, the object would be to show that these tribes had something in common with the rest of the nation. If the former, this altar might be intended as a proof that the east side also was part of the land promised by Jehovah for a possession.

² Though the eastern tribes kept much to themselves, there never was any formal disruption between them and their brethren. The only disruption was that, on the death of Solomon, between north and south. Between these there was no such natural barrier, as the Jordan valley was for the eastern and western tribes.

³ Probably sixteen or seventeen years.

⁴ The first address commences with a reminder of God's benefits and promises, and concludes with warnings of judgement against disobedience. It differs from the second address (given as the next selection), in being more suited to those who were

near, gives two farewell addresses; the first to the rulers, the second to the people generally⁴. After this he makes a solemn renewal of the covenant. He dies at the age of 110, and is buried in his inheritance of Timnath-serah, in Mount Ephraim.

Two other incidents are recorded :

1. The burial of the bones of Joseph, which had been brought up out of Egypt, at Shechem⁵.
2. The death of Eleazar, who is buried in Mount Ephraim.

XXXIII. JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

JOSHUA xxiv. 1-25.

XXIV. 1. And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

2. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor : and they served other gods.

3. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.

4. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau : and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

5. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued

educated, and who had authority; also in being more of a political address than the other, which appeals rather to the religious feelings of the people.

⁵ This is referred to in Acts vii. 15, 16, from which passage it might appear as if Jacob himself were buried there. But we are told in Gen. l. 13 that he was buried in 'the field of Machpelah, before Mamre,' or Hebron.

St. Jerome speaks of the twelve patriarchs being buried at Sycem.

XXXIII. JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

JOSHUA xxiv. 1-25.

XXIV. 1. Joshua, like Moses, concludes his life and work with a solemn renewal of the covenant with the Lord. He has already addressed the elders and rulers, and now summons the whole nation to Shechem^a to receive his last instructions.

2. 'The flood' is the river Euphrates (see page 29).

4. 'Mount Seir' is put for Edom (see page 59). The permanent settlement of Esau there is contrasted with the unsettlement of Jacob, and his migration into Egypt.

^a Shechem had been consecrated by Abraham, and was connected with many events in the lives of the patriarchs, with whom Joshua commences his short review of the history of the chosen people. It was also the place where the law was publicly recited, soon after the entrance into Palestine.

Egypt, according to that which I did among them : and afterward I brought you out.

6. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt : and ye came unto the sea ; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea.

7. And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them ; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt : and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.

8. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan ; and they fought with you : and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land ; and I destroyed them from before you.

9. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you :

10. But I would not hearken unto Balaam ; therefore he blessed you still : so I delivered you out of his hand.

11. And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho : and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites ; and I delivered them into your hand.

12. And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites ; *but* not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.

13. And I have given you a land for which ye did

5, 6. Joshua now passes from the first proofs of God's goodness in calling Abraham and 'leading him throughout the land,' and 'multiplying his seed,' and 'giving him Isaac,' to the next and still more signal proofs of His power and mercy in delivering the Israelites out of Egypt.

8. This describes the conquest of the land on the east of Jordan, belonging to Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan (Num. xxi; Ps. cxxxv. 10, 11, cxxxvi. 17-20).

9. We read of no actual war with the Moabites. Balak was afraid to attack the Israelites, after Balaam would not curse them. But the Moabites probably joined the Midianites in the attack described in Num. xxxi, in which Balaam was slain.

11-13. Joshua now passes to the conquest of Western Palestine. The expression, 'I will send the hornet,' is probably not to be taken literally, but describes the weakening of these nations by some plague, or by the attack of other enemies^b. The same expression is used in Exod. xxiii. 28 and Deut. vii. 20.

With the last words of ver. 12 compare Ps. xliv. 3: 'For

^b Zoreah or Zorah, mentioned in Joshua xv. 33, means 'the place of hornets.' In the Apocryphal Book of Wisdom we read of God sending 'wasps, forerunners of His host.'

Some suppose this to refer to an Egyptian invasion of Palestine, while the Israelites were in the wilderness; the wasp, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, being the symbol of a king (Ellicott on Exod. xxiii. 28).

not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them ; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.

14. Now therefore fear the **LORD**, and serve him in sincerity and in truth : and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt ; and serve ye the **LORD**.

15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the **LORD**, choose you this day whom ye will serve ; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell : but as for me and my house, we will serve the **LORD**.

16. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the **LORD**, to serve other gods ;

17. For the **LORD** our God, he *it is* that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed :

18. And the **LORD** drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land : *therefore* will we also serve the **LORD** ; for he *is* our God.

19. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the **LORD** : for he *is* an holy God ; he *is* a jealous God ; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

20. If ye forsake the **LORD**, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

they gat not the land in possession through their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them.'

15. Joshua calls upon the people to make the great choice between Jehovah and false gods. So, long afterwards, Elijah appealed to the Israelites on Mount Carmel, 'If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him' (1 Kings xviii. 21). So too our Lord says, 'No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and mammon' (Matt. vi. 24).

16-18. The people now declare their loyalty to Jehovah, who has 'done so great things for them.' Yet soon, as we read, they 'were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works' and 'worshipped their idols' (Ps. cvi. 35, 36).

19, 20. Joshua plainly tells the people that there can be no compromise; that is, no trying to reconcile the worship of Jehovah with that of other gods. But the Israelites forgot this warning; and sought, while retaining the worship of Jehovah, as the national religion, to introduce also the licentious rites of the heathen around them.

Joshua here repeats the prohibition and warning of the Decalogue, 'Thou shalt have none other gods but Me,' and 'the Lord thy God is a jealous God.'

23. These words imply that the people had already commenced such idolatry.

21. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

22. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye *are* witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, *We are* witnesses.

23. Now therefore put away, *said he*, the strange gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

24. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

25. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

25. This was thus a solemn renewal of the covenant made at Sinai. The people were bound by 'a statute' to the strict observance of this covenant, and 'an ordinance' was given them, assuring them of the continuance of God's mercies if they observed this condition^c.

^c That this renewal should have been needed shows how quickly the people had grown faithless and unreliable, as soon as the work of conquest was over, and Joshua had retired to Timnath-serah. It is the beginning of that disintegration, or forgetfulness of national unity, which follows in the time of the judges. When, 'twenty-five years after crossing the Jordan, Joshua died at his own inheritance, full of years and glory, at the age of 110, the light of Israel for the time faded away' (Geikie, *Bible by Modern Light*, ii. 501).

34. SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON THE SETTLEMENT IN PALESTINE.

(The map of Palestine should be carefully studied again with this note.)

The Israelites are now at last settled in the promised land. They have conquered, but not altogether destroyed, the old inhabitants. Some of these still remain in the plains, where their chariots and horses give them an advantage; others in the hill fortresses, 'the cities great and fenced up to heaven.'

The most important of the positions thus retained are:

1. The five Philistine cities in the south-west: Gath, Gaza, Ekron, Ascalon, and Ashdod.

2. The Phoenician cities on the coast in the north: Tyre, Sidon, Accho, Dor, and Arvad.

3. The Canaanitish fortresses in the plain of Jezreel: Taanach, Megiddo, En-dor, Ibleam, and Beth-shean.

4. Laish and Maacah in the extreme north. Laish, however, was soon taken by the Danites.

5. The Hivites in Mount Lebanon.

The case of Jebus has been already noticed.

Some of the old inhabitants remain in friendly relations with the conquerors, and others are retained as tributaries. With these the Israelites intermarry, and adopt their idolatries.

The following peculiarities of Palestine should be noticed:

1. This country, so important in the history of the world, was very small. Its length, 'from the entering in of Hamath to the river of Egypt' (1 Kings viii. 65), has been estimated at about 240 miles; its extreme breadth at 120 miles.

In this respect it may be compared to Greece among ancient, and England among modern nations.

2. It was very fertile; a great contrast to the surrounding

deserts. It is described as ‘a land flowing with milk and honey,’ and as a land of ‘brooks and waters.’ No part was waste, even the rocky hills being covered with vineyards. There was much variety of climate, scenery, and productions. It has been said that ‘it bore within itself everything that could be necessary for the subsistence and comfort of a simple agricultural people’ (*Milman, History of the Jews*, i. 226).

3. It was very secluded, and so was a fitting home for God’s ‘peculiar people.’ It was protected on the south by the wilderness of Shur; on the north by the mountain ranges of Lebanon and Hermon; on the west by the sea, which was little used as yet, except by the Phoenicians; and on the east by the great desert. The western tribes were further secured by the deep Jordan valley.

Hence the Israelites for long maintained their independence against the great Eastern empires. In one respect however their position was dangerous, Palestine being the highway of communication between the two rival powers of Assyria and Egypt.

4. Its central position was at the same time well adapted for spreading both eastward and westward the great truths, which, in ‘the fullness of the time,’ were to be preached to all the world.

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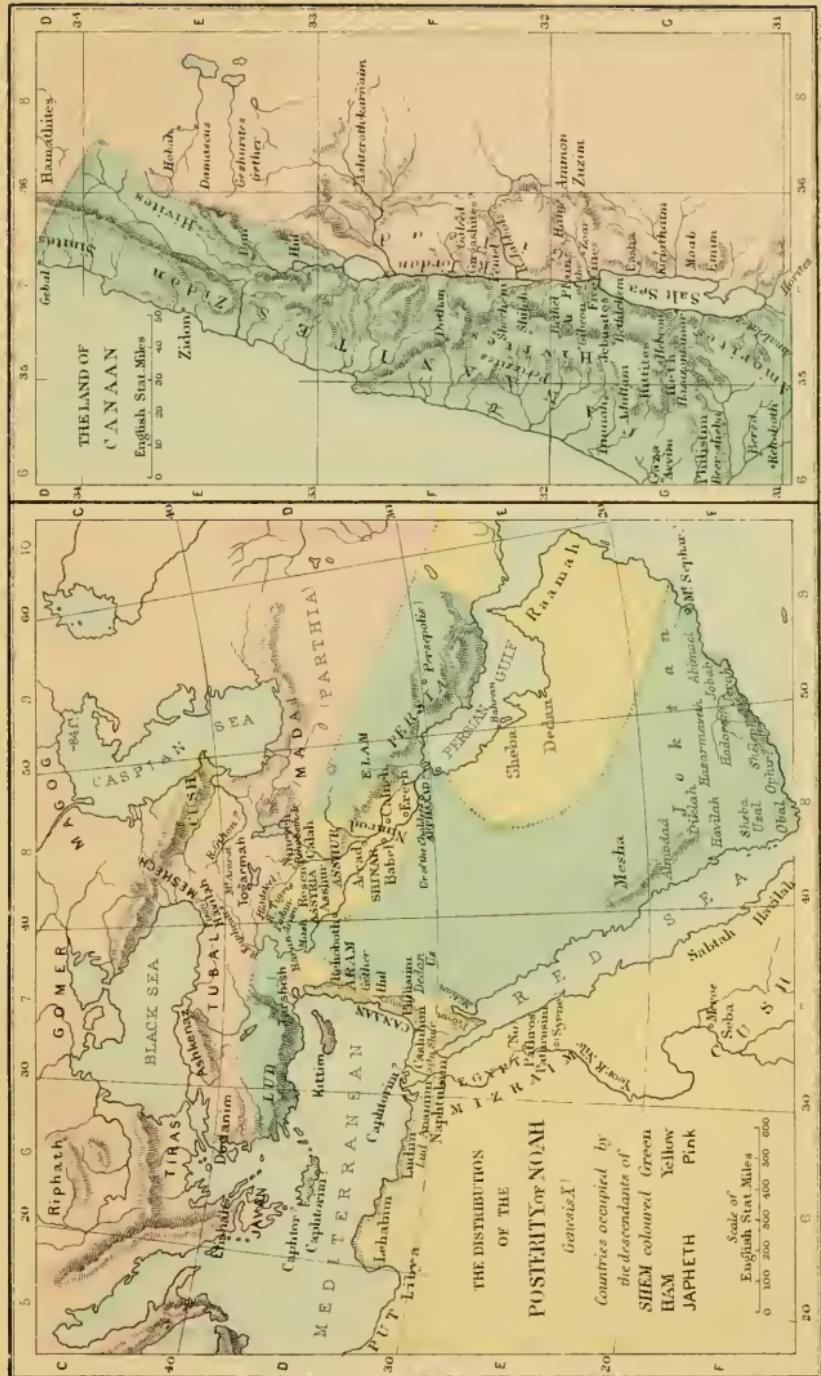
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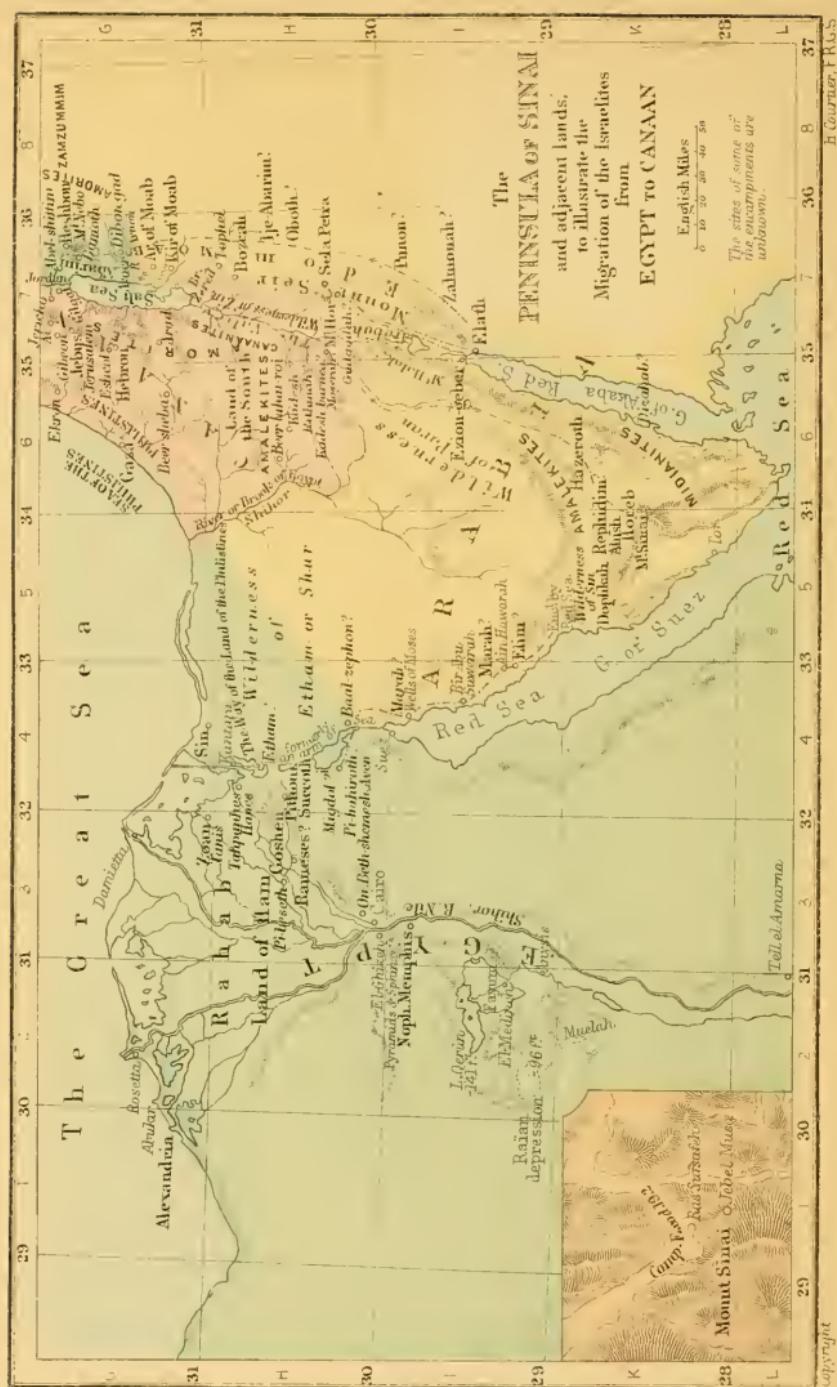
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