

people, and so linking his destiny with theirs.

V. 30. *I will not go.* Hobab has his answer ready, short and sharp. It is the answer of a patriot, who is content with his own country and people, and sees no reason for risking a safe present for an uncertain future, attractive as that might be.

Vs. 31, 32. *Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.* Moses, however, is insistent. He is anxious to secure the service of his father-in-law: because the wilderness, which is strange to them, is familiar to him. He could be to them as good as eyes, that is, leader and guide. This earnest and persistent request of Moses is very interesting, as showing his deep consciousness of the need of human agency. He trusted God: His words prove that; yet he knew that God often works through men, and he is eager to secure the service of one who knows the wilderness. *What goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.* He urgently presses his case by renewing his promise to let Hobab share in whatever blessings God had in store for Israel when they reached the promised land. Hobab finally joined the Israelites, Judges 1:16; 4:11.

V. 33. *The ark of the covenant of the Lord.* The ark, which indicated the presence of Jehovah, went in advance of the main body of people. *In the three days' journey.* The meaning probably is that the ark went in front, and that, in three days, ark and people alike reached their first station. So great a multitude would be unable to march more than thirty miles in the three days' time.

APPLICATION

The children of Israel took their journey, v. 12. The journey through the wilderness is often regarded as a type of life, and the word "journey" has become almost universally used as suggestive of the earthly course of man. Life is a journey, because it means effort. The road will have its ups and downs, its sunshine and rain; and while many things will make it easy, there are difficulties awaiting us all. Life is a journey, because we are all moving in some direction or another.

"Our lives are rivers, flowing free
To that unending, boundless sea,
The silent grave."

III. Wilderness Songs, 34-36.

Vs. 35, 36. These two verses are very important, and throw a great deal of light on the nature and purpose of the ark. In the Hebrew, the words which Moses said are in poetry, and the verses refer not to that particular occasion only, but to all similar occasions. The meaning is, "When the ark set forward or rested, then Moses would say." Notice, first, how closely Jehovah is identified with His ark. It is for the people the symbol of His presence. When they see it, they take courage, for they know that He is there. Notice again, how Jehovah is felt to be a God who can stand by His people both in war and in peace. In the early days of Israel's history, especially during the time of the Judges and David, Israel had very many enemies and much fighting to do. If the people were to be able to trust their God, He must be a God who could give them the victory. So we find them taking the ark with them into battle, in the confidence that that would guarantee them the victory; though in this connection God had to teach them some stern lessons, 1 Sam. 4. Again, as He is a God who fights for Israel, so is He also a God, who, when the battle is over, comes back and dwells among them, and gives them peace. Lastly, we should notice here the powerful faith of Moses. He does not know how numerous or fierce the unseen enemies on the way may be; but he believes that his God is stronger than they; that He has but to arise and all they that hate Him or His people will be put to flight.

Life is a journey, because only Heaven can be our home, where we can rest for ever. How important to see that we are going in the right path. Christ said, "I am the way."

The place of which the Lord said, I will give it you, v. 29. Moses wishes to give Hobab a proof that the promised land is assured to them. They have the Lord's guarantee. What proof have we that we shall enter into our promised land after our journey? (1) We have all the promises of the Bible that heaven awaits the faithful. God's messengers from the days of Abraham onwards have received such promises. (2) Christ has also