

visitors were received (see Gen. 18:1). *Anger of the Lord*; His righteous indignation against Israel's ingratitude and rebellion. *Kindled greatly*; into a flaming fire of wrath. *Moses . . . displeased*; sorely vexed, of course, at the behavior of the people, and troubled with a sense of his responsibility for them. *Afflicted*; "caused trouble to." *Burden . . . upon me*; Moses' first mistake: he was not responsible for the people's childish complaints; and, besides, he was not alone in caring for them, for God's care was beneath and over all. *Nursing father*; a foster father, who brings up a child instead of its own parent.

Vs. 13-15. *Whence . . . flesh*; for which the people were clamoring (see v. 4). *I am not able*, etc.; and because the case was beyond his power, he was not responsible for it. *Kill me*; Moses' second mistake. Even if he had failed as a leader, he might have served under another or turned shepherd again. *Out of hand*; at once and be done with it. *Not see my wretchedness*; no longer have to face my trouble. (Compare 1 Kgs. 19:4.)

II. Helpers Appointed, 16-18.

Vs. 16, 17. *The Lord said*; graciously answering His erring servant. *Seventy*; the number, in later times, of the Sanhedrin or Great Council of the Jews. *Elders*. See *Light from the East*. *Officers*; appointed for various purposes amongst the Israelites. *Tent of meeting* (Rev. Ver.); which, according to Ex. 33:7-11, was pitched outside the camp of Israel. *Come down . . . talk with thee*; as afterwards with Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:9-18) to give comfort and strength. *Spirit . . . upon thee . . . upon them*. The thought is, that some of Moses' wisdom and ability could be taken from him and given to others.

V. 18. *Sanctify yourselves*; make yourselves clean according to the law, by washing the body and the garments, etc. *Eat flesh*; and so their desire (v. 4) would be met. *Wept in the ears of the Lord*. Their complaint had really been against Him, and with Him they must reckon.

III. Helpers Qualified, 24, 25.

Vs. 24, 25. *Gathered seventy . . . elders . . . round about the Tent* (Rev. Ver.); the tent or tabernacle which had been constructed and set up

at Sinai according to God's directions for His worship. *The Lord came down in the cloud* (Rev. Ver.); the cloud which came down upon the tabernacle when it was set up. When this cloud rose the Israelites marched and when it stood still they camped. (See Ex. 40:34-38). *Spake unto him*; to assure Moses that he had God's power with him. Then the elders were given a share of Moses' spirit (see on v. 17). *Prophesied*; declared, in loud and ecstatic speech their faith in God and praised Him. *Did so no more* (Rev. Ver.); but turned to their work as Moses' helpers.

Two of the seventy, Eldad and Medad, not having heard the summons, as we may suppose, had not come out to the tabernacle. Upon them, however, came the same influence as upon the other sixty-eight, and they "prophesied" like the rest. When complaint of this was made to Moses, in spite of Joshua's counsel, he refused to interfere and declared his wish that all the Lord's people were prophets. The promise of flesh was speedily fulfilled in an extraordinary flight of quails. But as the people ate of them a great plague fell upon them, so that the fulfilment of their ignorant desire brought them punishment instead of pleasure. Vs. 26-33.

Light from the East

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ELDERS—In most Eastern nations age commanded respect and carried with it a certain degree of authority, and so prominent old men naturally became an official class. They were the heads of the village communities among the Egyptians and Midianites, and later among the Greeks and Romans. They had a certain representative character in Israel during the oppression, and later they became in Palestine something like a bench of magistrates. It is not certain that they were elected by the people, although they represented them in public affairs, and are spoken of as if they were the people. They were defenders of the rights of their communities and were all powerful in local and municipal affairs. It was at the request of the elders that Samuel consented to a monarchical form of government.