

ing in a peculiar relation to himself. The redeemed in Heaven, to mark their sanctity, are called the church of the first-born. This solemn consecration of the first-born was calculated to produce a deep impression on their minds, and to promote family religion. God afterwards ordained a commutation by which the tribe of Levi was taken to minister in holy things in the room of the first-born. Num. iii. 12.

V. 3.—Remember, here means not only a mental act, but such public celebration of the event as should keep it in perpetual remembrance.

V. 4.—The month Abib, also called in Chaldee, Nisan, corresponded to part of our March and April.

Vv. 6-7.—The Israelites were not specially enjoined to observe the feast of unleavened bread while in the wilderness. Indeed, we find that they kept only one Passover during their wanderings, probably because circumcision, which was a pre-requisite, was during that period omitted. After they should reach the promised land, however, the regular observance of the ordinance was enjoined. The care with which leaven was to be excluded from their dwellings, was designed to teach them and us the necessity of sincere endeavours after personal holiness on the part of all those who would worship God acceptably. We must wash our hands in innocency if we would compass God's holy altars.

V. 8.—The Israelites were expressly enjoined to train their children in the knowledge of all the wonderful works of God. Indeed, the annual recurrence of the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread were admirably adapted to perpetuate this knowledge among the successive generations of God's chosen people.

V. 9.—The sign upon the head and the memorial between the eyes, were probably only figurative intimations that these great events should be held in constant remembrance. So in Proverbs iii. 3, "Bind them about thy neck, write them upon the tablets of thine heart." Among the Jews in later times, however, they led to the use of the "Phylacteries," or strips of parchment with portions of the law written on them, of which our Saviour speaks. Matt. xxii. 5.

Vv. 11-14.—The laws disposing of the firstlings of their domestic animals were not to be strictly enforced till they reached the promised land. After that time those of clean beasts, such as calves, lambs and kids, if males, were to be sacrificed. Ex. xxii. 30. The firstlings of unclean animals, if not redeemed with a lamb, were to be destroyed. The ass alone is specified, because it appears to have been the only unclean animal at this time domesticated by the Israelites. The phrase translated

"break his neck," might be more properly rendered cut off his neck.

Vv. 14-16.—The frequency with which reference is made to the systematic instruction of their children by the Israelites, is well calculated to impress on our minds the importance of that duty. We can tell our children of all the wonderful things which the chosen people had witnessed, and of many far more wonderful.

Vv. 17, 18.—The direct route from Egypt to Canaan would have occupied but five or six days; but the Israelites were dispirited by slavery, and therefore unfit, without previous discipline, to contend with the trained and warlike hosts of the Philistines. In such a contest God, indeed, could have given them the victory; but he works no unnecessary miracles, and it was therefore his will that they should be prepared, by the hardships and combats of the wilderness, to encounter the Canaanitish nations. It was necessary, also, that they should cross the Red Sea, in order that God might fulfil his promise of destroying the Egyptians, and might signally manifest his majesty, power, goodness, and hatred of sin, in the events which occurred in the wilderness.

V. 19.—The removal of Joseph's bones was a fulfilment of the oath sworn by their fathers to him previous to his death. From the language used by Stephen, Acts vii. 16, we may infer that the remains of the other sons of Jacob were also taken to Canaan.

V. 20.—There was probably an intermediate resting place between Succoth and Etham, which appear to have been about forty miles apart. Etham is supposed to have been about eleven miles to the northwest of Suez.

V. 21, 22.—From Ps. cv. 39, it appears that the cloudy pillar overshadowed the whole host of Israel by day, defending them from the fierce heat of the sun in the journey through the wilderness. Its base, therefore, must have been very large, while the summit probably mounted to a vast height. The whole mass, opaque by day, might become luminous by night, or an interior splendor, invisible by day, might shine through openings in the external covering during the hours of darkness. This pillar was the shekinah, which in the early times of the Jewish church, in both the tabernacle and the temple, manifested the presence of God; and afterwards on the Mount of Transfiguration revealed the divinity of the Saviour. From Ps. xcix. 6-7, and Exod. xxxiii. 9-11, we learn that God spake to the Israelites out of the cloud; and indeed, the latter of these passages, if the italics be omitted, declares that the cloud itself spake. From Isaiah iv. 5, 6, we may infer that this wonderful manifestation of the Divine glory symbolized the presence of the