

the "Head or Summit of the Willow."

II. God's Message, 3-6.

Vs. 3, 4. *Moses went up unto God*; to the top of Mount Sufsafeh, some 2,000 feet above the plain. *House (family) of Jacob . . . children of Israel*; a title which would recall the now long past of God's dealings with His people. *Ye have seen*. From their own experience they knew God's power and love. *Bare you on eagles' wings*; a fine picture (see also Deut. 32 : 11, 12) of the swiftness, security and affectionate care with which the deliverance from Egypt had been effected. The "eagle" is "a large and majestic bird very abundant in Palestine, and constantly seen there circling in the air." *Brought you unto myself*; to Sinai, the holy mount, where God would make a special revelation of Himself.

Vs. 5, 6. *Obey . . . indeed*; literally, "obeying . . . ye obey," that is, obey thoroughly with true and loyal hearts. *Keep my covenant*; God's gracious promise that, if only Israel will obey Him, He will bless them above all other nations. *A peculiar treasure*; one word in Hebrew used of the gold and silver belonging to kings (1 Chron. 29 : 3,—"mine own proper good"). *All the earth is mine*; and therefore I can choose which I will of its nations. *A kingdom of priests*. See *Light from the East*. *An holy nation*; separated from other nations and belonging especially to God,—Israel's great privilege carrying with it the duty of keeping itself free from everything heathen and living like a people chosen of God.

Moses brings God's message to Israel, and the people promise to obey Him. Preparations were then made for a meeting of the people with God. Vs. 7-15.

III. God's Presence, 16-18.

Vs. 16-18. *The third day*; two days having been given to the preparation of the people, vs. 10, 11. *Thunders and lightnings*; revealing the mighty power of God. *Thick cloud*; an emblem of God's presence, power and protection, suggesting our partial knowledge of Him and His hidden glory. *Voice of a trumpet* (Rev. Ver.); a supernatural sound from the presence of God, likened to the sound of a "trumpet" or horn used as a war signal or to announce

some great public event, 2 Sam. 6 : 15; 1 Kgs. 1 : 34. *People . . . trembled*; overwhelmed with awe. *Nether part*; the foot. *Smoke and fire* and the mountain's trembling as though rocked by an earthquake united to impress the people with God's glorious majesty.

Vs. 19-21. *Trumpet . . . louder and louder*; with its declaration of the divine presence. *Moses spake*; "kept speaking,"—from amongst the people. *God answered*; "kept answering." *By a voice*; that is, by thunder (see Ps. 29 : 3). *Top of the mount*; perhaps the peak Sufsafeh (see on v. 2), included in the Sinai ridge. *Moses went up*; to meet with God. *Go down*; to the people. *Let them break through*; the barriers of v. 12. *To gaze*; with irreverent boldness. *Perish*; literally, "fall," that is, be struck down by lightning. The meaning is, that God is too holy to endure the presence of sin.

Even the priests, as well as the people, were to be held back from the mountain on which God had appeared, and only Moses and Aaron were to go up into His presence. Moses delivered God's message to the multitude on the plain. Vs. 22-25.

Light from the East

PRIESTS—At first all religious acts were performed by the head of the family, but when tribes became nations, a class of men was appointed to perform ritual acts on behalf of the community, particularly sacrifice and prayer. The office was generally hereditary, and implied that the priest should live near the god and be always ready for intercession. In some places the gods declared their will by signs and tokens which could be read only by divination, and this connected the priests with the practice of magic. In Egypt there was a close connection between the king and the priests. He was educated among them in all their secret knowledge. All his duties, civil and religious, were laid down in the priestly code and he and the priests were the only mediators between God and the people. Israel was intended to occupy this position among the nations and to do for them Godwards what they were not able to do for themselves. But because Israel was not prepared to