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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE VII.

ESSAYS IN PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM.

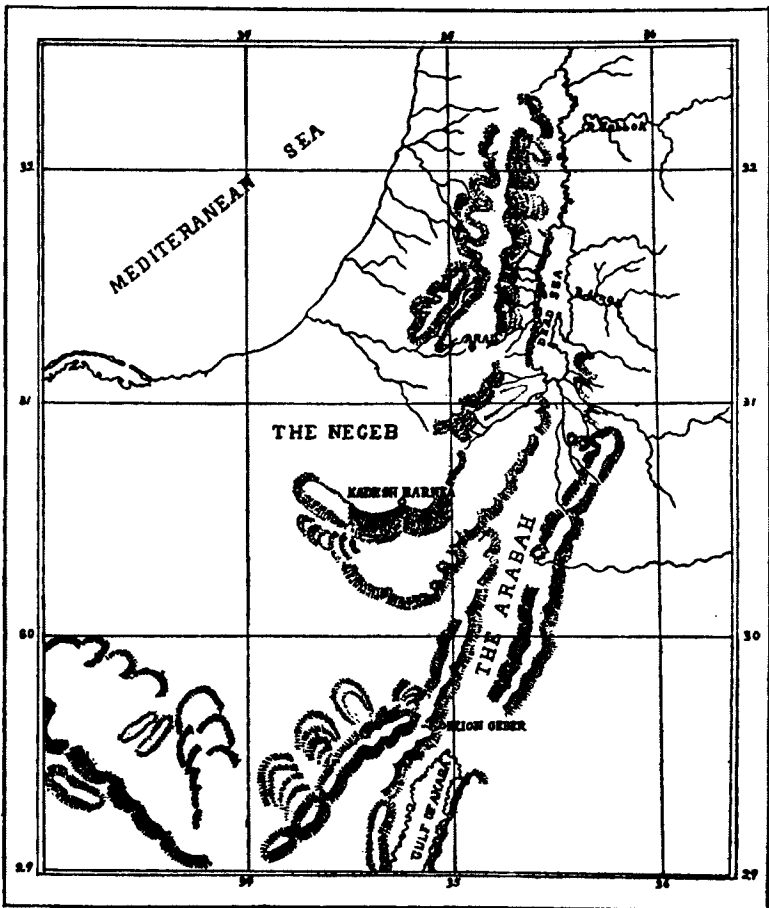
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IV.

THE CONCLUDING CHAPTERS OF NUMBERS.

BEFORE treating of the critical partition of individual chapters, we propose to clear the ground by grappling with the great catena of difficulties affecting the concluding chapters of Numbers. Here there is some justification for the critics. That is to say, the difficulties are not (like so many that we have considered) purely factitious. There really are problems which can be solved only by textual criticism. While we meet with the characteristics that are unhappily so familiar, it is at least pleasant to think that the sorry performances of the critics are due in part to genuine embarrassment, and not solely to the causes which must elsewhere be held responsible.

At the same time the position is not without its irony. We have found a difficulty in the narrative which has escaped the critics, and we have detected a gloss which has eluded their vigilance. Moreover, we are in a position of having to denounce Drs. Driver and Gray for their artificial harmonistic interpretations. In fact, a very curious thing has happened. In many instances the higher critics can at least claim the merit of having killed an impossible exegesis. In this case they have adopted it. All the supposititious sources are unanimous on one point — that Israel spent the bulk of the forty years in wan-



SKETCH MAP OF THE REGION OF THE FORTY YEARS' WANDERING
OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

For a powerful presentation of evidence that this whole region had a larger rainfall, and was much more productive, at the time of Exodus than it is now, see the article on "The Climate of Ancient Palestine" (Bulletin of the American Geographical Society, vol. xl., 1908), by Ellsworth Huntington, whose extensive travels in Central Asia, and whose thorough investigation with reference to recent climatic changes throughout the whole region, give exceptional weight to his conclusions.

dering, not at Kadesh. The critics are therefore unshakably convinced that the Israelites were at Kadesh the whole time. Indeed, this so delights Wellhausen's heart that he holds that they never went to Sinai at all, but spent that time also at Kadesh. All the sources agree in making the Israelites go to Sinai: and the theophany there is the dominant and central fact of their whole history. All the sources agree in making the Israelites sojourn only a short time at Kadesh, and wander for the bulk of the forty years. What further proof could any higher critic require that the Israelites were never at Sinai or that they spent the best part of the forty years at Kadesh?

As we are to deal with a chain of difficulties that at first sight might appear to be unrelated, we find it impossible to follow our usual procedure of setting out the critical case first and then demolishing it. In this instance we must first prove that the critical and traditional views are alike untenable, and then set up our own case. When we have established that, we can return to the critics and show how at all points it answers their criticism. But, as an introduction to the subject, we may quote from Dr. Gray an account of the critical view of the sojourn in the Wilderness. He is commenting on the words "in the first month" in Numbers xx. 1a:—

" . . . the number of the year has been omitted deliberately. In all probability it was the fortieth; for (1) the event to be related is given as the reason why Moses and Aaron, who had led the people all through their wanderings, are cut off just before the entrance into Canaan (ver. 22-29 xxvii 12-14, Dt. xxxii 48-52 (P), and Dt. xxxiv (so far as it is derived from P)); (2) In chap. xxxiii, which, though not derived from, is dominated by P_z, the wilderness of Zin¹ is the station next before Mount Hor, where

¹ In this and other instances, we have accommodated Dr. Gray's spelling of Hebrew names to ordinary English usage. The lack of common sense which is so characteristic of the critics is very conspicuous in this matter. Thus Dr. Gray writes in his preface: "The

Aaron died in the fifth month of the fortieth year. Thus, according to P_g, Kadesh was merely visited by the people for a short period at the *end* of the wanderings. In JE Kadesh is the scene of a prolonged stay. The people go thither straight from Sinai (cp. xiii 21), and are still there at the end of the period of wanderings (ver. 14). To this source, therefore, and perhaps in particular to J, we may refer *and the people abode in Kadesh*; cp. Jud. xi 17 and also for the vb. (אָבַד) Nu. xxi 25, 31 (JE). . . . In Dt. chap I f. we find a third view of the place of Kadesh in the wanderings, viz. that Israel 'abode' (אָבַד) there for an indefinite time (not exceeding a few months) at the *beginning* of the period." (Numbers, pp. 269 f.)

It will be well, before entering more fully into the matter, to consider, first, the nature of the problems that we have to solve; and, secondly, the requisites of a true solution. Apart from minor difficulties, we really have to face four different problems, which at present are inextricably entangled. We have to solve the historical problem, i.e. we must find out what really happened; then we have to deal with two literary problems, i.e. we must discover how the *narrative* in Numbers was shaped and how the *speech* in Deuteronomy was framed; and, lastly, we have to consider how the narrative in Numbers reached its present form. Of these the composition of Deuteronomy gives no serious trouble. The order is largely rhetorical. But it is impossible to be certain about the details of the other three problems when our information is so defective. Thus, if the itinerary in Numbers xxxiii. be considered, it will

‡ I have transliterated by S, since Z, when comparison has to be made with the Arabic, is misleading; this necessitates substituting Selophehad, Soan, etc., for the familiar Zelophehad, Zoan, etc." It is probable that not one Bible reader in one hundred thousand desires to make comparisons with the Arabic: it is certain that such comparisons when made by those who are too indolent or too stupid to master the Hebrew alphabet and ascertain the spellings from the original could possess no scientific value. On the other hand, *pace* Dr. Gray and the other apostles of philological pedantry, such transliterations render a book much more difficult to read, and are likely to conduce to its earning a well-merited obscurity.

be found that the sites of the great majority of places named are unknown. We cannot, therefore, be sure of the exact order in which they should come. Again, there are many points that we must leave open because they are not touched by our investigation in any positive and definite manner. For example, we cannot decide whether certain portions of the Pentateuch were originally transmitted orally or in writing. The statements of the book itself as to the writing of certain documents do not necessarily mean that the whole work was originally written, and we shall not find in our present investigation any conclusive reason favoring a theory of either written or oral tradition against the alternative. But, whatever uncertainty may continue to enshroud minor details or matters that in this connection are unimportant, the main outlines of our solution must of course be clear. And this leads us to consider what requirements a solution must fulfil.

All scientific investigation having for its object the ascertainment of truth rests on a single canon,—the coincidences of truth are infinite. In other words, the true hypothesis explains *all* difficulties. Hence our strength lies in the number of perplexities that beset us. A hypothesis that accounted for *one* set of phenomena would possess only a very moderate degree of probability; a hypothesis that accounts for *two* sets would be more than twice as probable, for each set tests and controls any theory that might account for the other set if it stood isolated. And with every additional set of phenomena explained the probability rises progressively. Now in this instance we cannot complain of any lack of tests; for the chapters treating of the period from the arrival at Kadesh-barnea onwards are rich in embarrassments, if in nothing else. The true solution must inevitably satisfy many conditions. In the first instance, it must provide an intelligible account of the

transactions during that period. It must harmonize all the sources. It must fit such geographical data as are reasonably well ascertained. It must remove all chronological impossibilities. It must account for any other difficulties presented by the narrative of the present text. It must solve the literary problem. It must provide an adequate motive for every voluntary human action postulated: it must suggest an adequate explanation of every human error supposed—and when we say adequate we mean such as accords with the ordinary sentiments and habits of mankind, and the known characteristics of the Hebrew race. A hypothesis which satisfied all these tests would have a very reasonable chance of being correct.

In the light of these observations, we turn to examine the narrative of JE as believed by the higher critics.

In Numbers xiv. 25 (JE) we find an express command to leave Kadesh: "To-morrow turn ye, and get you into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea." It is true that the execution of this command was delayed by the disobedience of the Israelites who went up and fought an unsuccessful battle (xiv. 44 f.). This may have consumed a certain amount of time, and may have caused a further delay for tending the wounded, etc.; but, if we are to believe the critics, no notice at all was taken of the command for thirty-eight years. Then the water-supply proved insufficient, and the Israelites—who appear to have borne the pangs of thirst for this period without a murmur—began to complain. Moses—somewhat unreasonably it may be thought—was very angry at the idea that after thirty-eight years the Israelites should wish to drink, and the episode of striking the rock occurred. Next, messengers were sent to the king of Edom requesting permission to pass through his land. The permission was refused, and Moses, in accordance with the command he had

received thirty-eight years previously, set out "by the way to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom." This is the story of the wanderings, according to JE. In the circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that D, who had JE before him, put the events in a different order, and that the higher critics should be able to detect striking discrepancies between Deuteronomy and Numbers.

It will be seen at once, that, quite apart from either the old and well-known difficulties as to the concluding chapters of Numbers or the testimony of Deuteronomy, there are two glaring impossibilities in the narrative we have outlined: First, the story about compassing the land of Edom breaks down utterly. It cannot be that Moses waited thirty-eight years, after receiving the Divine command to turn "to-morrow," without taking any action whatever. Nor is it possible that he should then have sent to the king of Edom for permission to take a route which did not coincide with that commanded by God. Indeed the Divine command to *compass* the land of Edom is obviously subsequent in time to the request for permission to *cross* it, and both the command and the narrative of its fulfilment in xxi. 4b must belong closely together. Nor is the other impossibility less flagrant. It is easily intelligible that the Israelites may have found sufficient water at Kadesh when they arrived and that as the season advanced the water failed; but it is in the highest degree improbable either that the water after sufficing for thirty-eight years suddenly failed or that the Israelites lived without it for that period and then grumbled.

We were so much impressed by this latter point, and by the statement in xx. 1, that "the children of Israel came into the wilderness of Zin," as contrasted with the location of Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran, that we formerly held that

Kadesh-barnea was not identical with the Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin that was called Meribah (Churchman, June, 1906). Further investigation of facts which at first sight appeared to have no obvious bearing on this problem has, however, suggested to us that another explanation may be correct.

We begin by considering the internal evidence of the order of events supplied by JE. We have already laid stress on the impossibility of the message to the king of Edom having originally preceded the command to compass his territory. There is, however, another passage which is clearly misplaced. In Numbers xxi. 1-3 we find narrated a victory over the king of Arad in the Negeb. On this, Dr. Gray writes as follows:—

“The Canaanites of the Negeb (under the king of Arad, a place some 50 or 60 miles almost due N. of Kadesh), hearing of Israel's advance in the direction of their territory take the offensive, fight against Israel, and take some of them captives. Israel vow to the LORD, if granted revenge, to place the Canaanite cities under the ban. Success is granted them, the ban is put into force, and the region or city (? Arad) is consequently called Hormah (Ban).

“It has long been recognised that the section is, in part at least, out of place, and does not refer, as from the position which the compiler has given it it should do, to the period spent at Mt. Hor (xx 22 xxi 4), nor, indeed, to any time immediately before the Israelites took their departure to the E. of Jordan. For why, as Reland pertinently asked, should they abandon the country in the S. of Canaan W. of the Arabah, in which they had just proved themselves victorious? . . . It is difficult to reach any certain conclusion as to the original position of the section . . . the story did not, even in JE, stand after xx 21 and before xxi 4; for that passage speaks of the Hebrews taking a *southern* course from Kadesh; the present incident implies that they were moving towards the Negeb, which lies N. of Kadesh.” (Numbers, pp. 271 f.)

This section cannot be assigned to any period after the departure from Kadesh to compass the land of Edom, for the Israelites would not have been in the neighborhood. But, if it *precedes* the departure, the reason for the evacuation of the country immediately becomes clear. After this victory the

Israelites sustained a defeat in which they were driven to the very place which they had dedicated, for in xiv. 45 the Hebrew has not Hormah, but *the* Hormah. This order is again confirmed by the fact that xxi. 3 explains the calling of a place by this name, while xiv. 45 assumes that it already has this name. Against this we have to place a sentence in the present form of the itinerary in Numbers xxxiii., which distinctly assigns the Arad campaign to a later period. But we think this verse an obvious gloss inserted by a late reader who had before him the present text of Numbers, and scribbled a note meaning that this was the proper date to which this incident must be assigned.

We print xxi. 1a and xxxiii. 40 side by side:—

NUMBERS XXI. 1a.

And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, which dwelt in the Negeb, heard tell that Israel came by the way of Atharim; and he fought against Israel, etc.

NUMBERS XXXIII. 40.

And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, which dwelt in the Negeb in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel.

It will be observed that xxxiii. 40 looks like a quotation from memory of the earlier verse. It adds nothing to our information,—it stands without any sequel; it leads to nothing, and expresses nothing intelligible. It can only be a note referring back to the narrative beginning with this verse. We therefore think that it is a late gloss, and should be expelled from the text. After forming this opinion, we were confirmed in it by the discovery that the verse is omitted in Lagarde's edition of the Lucianic recension of the Septuagint, being wanting in three out of the four MSS. on which he here relies.

The next step must be to compare Deuteronomy with Numbers; but, in doing so, certain cautions must be borne in mind. An orator does not necessarily adhere exactly to chronology. His aim being to move men's minds, not to produce an exact

record of events, he naturally adopts whatever means may seem to him most suited to his purpose. A historian also may deliberately prefer a topical order to a chronological. The actual order of events might easily differ from the original order of both Deuteronomy and Numbers.

DEUTERONOMY.		NUMBERS.
i	19a Leave Horeb	x 11 Departure (second year, second month, twentieth day)
	19b Arrival at Kadesh-barnea	xx 1a Arrival at Kadesh in the first month of an unspecified year
	22-25 Despatch of the spies to Eshcol and their report	xiii
	26 Rebelliousness of the people	xiii 30 ff
	35f Sentence on the Israelites except Caleb	xiv 23 ff
	37 Anger with Moses	xx 12
	40 "Turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea"	xiv 25
	41-44 Expedition by the Israelites: their defeat	xiv 40-43
	45 The Israelites return and weep before the Lord	
	46 "So ye abode in Kadesh many days"	xx 1b "And the people abode in Kadesh"
ii	1 "Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea, as the LORD spake unto me; and we compassed Mount Seir many days"	xx 22a Departure from Kadesh xxi 4b ff by the way to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom, &c
	3 Command to turn north	
	4-8a Passage through the border of the Edomites	xx 23 "In Mount Hor, by the border of the land of Edom"

DEUTERONOMY.	NUMBERS.
8b f Passage through the wilderness of Moab	xxi 11 The wilderness which is before Moab
13 f Crossing the brook Zered thirty-eight years after the departure from Kadesh-barnea	12 Brook Zered
18 ff Passing over Ar, the border of Moab	
24 Passing over the valley of Arnon	13 Passing over the Arnon

This table suggests several questions. The first concerns the date of the arrival at Kadesh. Thirty-eight years elapsed from the departure to the time of crossing the brook Zered. It may be supposed that these thirty-eight years were composed as follows: part of the third year, the fourth to the thirty-ninth inclusive, and part of the fortieth year. These may have amounted to thirty-seven years or less according to our modern reckoning, but, according to Hebrew usage, could be spoken of by Moses as thirty-eight years.

Passing from this, it is reasonably clear that originally Deuteronomy and Numbers both told the same story, and that the text of Numbers is deranged. In one instance at any rate—and that not the least puzzling—we get a clue to the reason for the present arrangement. Nobody knows where Mount Hor is, but we learn from Numbers xx. 23; xxxiii. 37 that it is by the border of the land of Edom. From Deuteronomy it appears that at the close of the wilderness period the Israelites did actually pass through the border of the Edomites, but on the *eastern* side. The present position of the narrative of Aaron's death appears to be due to the words "by the border of the land of Edom," which has led the person or persons responsible for the present arrangement of the Numbers narrative to suppose that it referred to the same epoch as the mission to the king of Edom. Thus Deuteronomy

supplies the clue to the true order of events. It also confirms the inference we drew from the Numbers narrative that the journey to compass the Red Sea was the fulfilment of the command in Numbers xiv. 25, and that it is separated from that command by a short interval of time, due to the rebelliousness of the people, not by thirty-eight years, and it shows that at one time Numbers xx. 22a ("And they journeyed from Kadesh") and xxi. 4b ("by the way to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom") formed a continuous sentence which has been accidentally separated by the interposition of other matters. This will be clearly seen from the following table:—

NUM. XIV. 25b	NUM. XX. 22a; XXI. 4b	DEUT. I. 40; II. 1, 14.
To-morrow turn ye, and get you into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.	And they journeyed from Kadesh by the way to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom.	But as for you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea. . . . Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and we compassed Mount Seir many days. . . . And the days in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, were thirty and eight years.

It cannot be doubted that in the form of the Numbers narrative known to the Deuteronomist the two half verses in column two formed a continuous sentence, narrating the execution of the command in column one after the disobedience of the Israelites and their subsequent defeat. We see clearly that the command was obeyed in the third year, not in the fortieth, and that the present chronological discrepancy be-

tween Deuteronomy and Numbers on this point is merely due to derangement in the Numbers text. The march round Edom, in both "sources," originally began in the third year; and this is confirmed by Numbers xiv. 33 (P), where נָעִים "wanderers" should in all apparent likelihood be read for רֹעִים "shepherds." But this is the view of yet another "source." Numbers xxxii. is a bone of contention among the critics. It combines characteristics of JE, D, and P. Mr. Carpenter assigns the bulk of it to P^s, "who may be supposed to have freely worked up earlier materials of J and P" (*ad loc.*). Others regard it as belonging to JE, which of course would be fatal to the theory that in that narrative the Israelites sojourned thirty-eight years at Kadesh. Its statement is unambiguous: "Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land . . . and the LORD's anger was kindled against Israel, and *he made them wander to and fro in the wilderness forty years*" (ver. 8, 13). It is patent that this writer had never heard of the alleged thirty-eight years' sojourn at Kadesh. And even this does not exhaust the Pentateuchal evidence. For reasons which will presently appear, not much reliance can be placed on the present *order* of the places in Numbers xxxiii. (the itinerary), but the names themselves tell a curious tale. The itinerary knows of the compassing by the way of the Red Sea, for Ezion-geber (ver. 35 f.) figures in the list. It also makes the visit to Mount Hor *subsequent* to Ezion-geber. It is true that at present Kadesh separates the two names. But, in a list every item of which is in the form "And they journeyed from x and pitched in y," there are endless opportunities for error through what is called homœoteleuton. A scribe writes the first "and they journeyed" or "pitched," and then looks back to his MS. His eye lights on the second or third or

fourth occurrence of the phrase, and he proceeds to copy what follows, not observing that he has omitted one or more lines. Then, when the MS. is examined, the error is discovered, and noted in the margin,¹ often with the result that, when a fresh transcription is made, the marginal passage is inserted in the wrong place. In this instance the visit to Kadesh after Eziongeber is contradicted by Deuteronomy, Judges xi. 16 ff., the indications of the JE narrative, and Numbers xxxii. A glance at the map will also show that, geographically, the order is absurd. It is, therefore, obvious that verse 36, "and pitched in the wilderness," etc., to "Kadesh" in verse 37 is misplaced. This may be accidental, or it may be that it was erroneously removed to its present place by somebody who had before him the narrative of Numbers xx. f. in its present order, and introduced his conjectural emendation into the text. These clauses should come either immediately or soon after Hazeroth (ver. 18); but, in our entire ignorance of the whereabouts of most of the places mentioned, their exact position cannot be determined with precision.

The above arguments deal entirely with the substance of the narrative. There is a small point on the form which tends to confirm them. On Deuteronomy i. 46, "And ye abode in Kadesh," Dr. Driver writes: "The phrase refers here to the period immediately following the defeat at Hormah; but in Nu. xx 1 (JE) it is used of the period just before the message sent by Israel to the Edomites, 38 years subsequently." This is very artificial. It will be observed that, by our change, the phrase in question refers to the whole stay of a few months' duration at Kadesh in both Numbers and Deuter-

¹This appears to have actually happened in verses 30-31 (the visit to Moseroth in the original text of codex F (the Ambrosian codex) of the Septuagint.

onomy as well as in Judges xi. 17, and is no longer transferred to a different period. A similar discrepancy between "compassed Mount Seir" in Deuteronomy ii. 1 and the use of the expression in Numbers xxi. 4 also disappears.

Before returning to the events preceding the departure from Kadesh, we must examine xx. 22b-xxi. 4a. This passage falls into two sections: (1) the Arad campaign (xxi. 1-3); (2) Mount Hor (xx. 22b-29; xxi. 4a). Now we know from xxxiii. 38 f. that Aaron's death took place in the fortieth year. Both in xx. 23 and xxxiii. 37 we are informed that Mount Hor was by the border of the land of Edom, and we learn from Deuteronomy ii. 4 that the Israelites passed through this border shortly before the close of the thirty-eight years. Accordingly, as already suggested, it must be inferred that Mount Hor was in or near the *southeastern* or *eastern* frontier of Edom, where the Israelites passed near the end of the period of wandering after leaving Ezion-geber, not by Kadesh, which was on the *western* border. It then becomes clear that the original narrative of Numbers probably related how, in compassing the land of Edom, the children of Israel came to Elath and Ezion-geber, and turned thence northwards, passing through the border of Edom. The narrative then continued with Numbers xx. 22b-29; xxi. 4a, and from Mount Hor it brought the Israelites to the station before Oboth (xxi. 10). The MS., having sustained damage involving the loss of a few verses, was arranged on what appeared to be the true clue afforded by "the border of the land of Edom" in xx. 23, which seemed to point to this as referring to the period when the Israelites were near Kadesh on the Edomite frontier. Unfortunately the various events occurred at different times, and on different sides of Edom; so that this arrangement of the narrative was ruinous to the sense.

Nothing similar can be suggested of xxi. 1-3, dealing with the Arad campaign. This passage appears to owe its present position to pure accident. As already stated, Arad lay north of Kadesh, not south, and there is obvious displacement. The arrangement is here fortuitous, as when a leaf drops out of a book and is inserted in a wrong place. We have no means of judging at what period these verses were inserted between xx. 29 and xxi. 4a. As already pointed out, they must originally have stood somewhere before the use of the name Hormah in xiv. 45. The defeat there narrated explains the evacuation of the country in which the Israelites had been victorious.

But then how did xiii. f. come to occupy their present position? We have already seen reason to believe that "the border of the land of Edom" in xx. 23 led to an erroneous location of the narrative of Aaron's death: we believe that a similar clue is responsible for the order of the earlier chapters. Numbers xii. 16 brings the people to the wilderness of Paran. Numbers xiii. 3 tells of the departure of the spies from that wilderness. What more natural than that some editor, searching for the correct order of the narratives, concluded that this should immediately follow the arrival in Paran? As already stated, there are fatal objections to the existing order in the Hormah narrative and the message to Edom. Moreover, there are chronological indications. From xiii. 20 we learn that the mission of the spies took place at the time of the first ripe grapes, i.e. apparently about July. But the arrival at Kadesh occurred in the first month, i. e. about the early spring. The Arad campaign and the negotiations with Edom would fit into this interval very suitably. The other narratives in the chapters affected seem to be for the most part in their right order. The words of Dathan and

Abiram in Numbers xvi. 14 are extremely forcible if they follow a defeat which once for all put an end to all hopes of invasion through the Negeb, and Numbers xx. 3 appears to refer to the ending of that rebellion. Moreover the position of the rod in xx. 8 f. points back to xvii. as being earlier in order of time. On the other hand, there are no clues as to the relative order of the negotiations with Edom and the Arad campaign. Subject to this caution, we suggest the following arrangement: Numbers xii.; xx. 1, 14-21; xxi. 1-3; xiii.; xiv.; xvi.-xviii.; xx. 2-13, 22a; xxi. 4b-9, then some missing verses, bringing the Israelites to the head of the gulf of Akabah and narrating the turn northwards from Elath and Eziongeber, then xx. 22b-29; xxi. 4a, and some lost words telling of the arrival at the station before Oboth. We have omitted xv. and xix. from this scheme, because there are no *indicia* of their position, and they do not affect the course of the narrative. Numbers xv. 32 might refer to any one of several years. In Numbers xxxiii. we have seen reason to suppose that verse 40 is a late gloss, and that 36b-37a should come several verses earlier. It may be added that we shall hereafter find cause to adopt an ancient variant that has been preserved by the Syriac in verse 38, — "first" for "fifth" in the number of the month.

And now how far do these suggestions comply with the tests that we laid down when entering on our inquiry into these chapters? Do they give us a probable, consistent, and intelligible narrative? Do they harmonize all the available information? Do they remove all the geographical and chronological difficulties? Do they postulate any unaccountable human acts or omissions?

The narrative that emerges from the rearranged text is in harmony with all the Hebrew sources. There are now no

discrepancies on the various points of the narrative between Deuteronomy and Numbers or between different chapters of Numbers. But is the story itself probable, self-consistent, and clear? That question is best answered by summarizing it.

After leaving Sinai, the Israelites proceeded by leisurely stages to Kadesh-barnea. We have no information as to the reason for their consuming many months on the journey, but it may have been partly for purposes of discipline and organization. In the early spring of the third year they reached Kadesh-barnea, south of the Negeb. The place has been identified by Rowlands and Trumbull with Ayn Qadees, and this identification is now generally accepted. From this base of operations they could pursue either of two lines of invasion. They could traverse the land of Edom laterally, and operate from the east, or they could invade the Negeb by marching due north from their base. The first alternative required the consent of the Edomites. This was sought and refused. The second alternative was then attempted. Either before or during or after the negotiations with Edom, a campaign was actually waged in the Negeb, resulting in the defeat of the king of Arad, and spies were sent out to explore the country. But, on hearing their report, the people lost heart, and it became clear that success could not be expected until a new generation had grown up. The order was therefore given to evacuate Kadesh and compass the land of Edom. But the people suddenly veered round and refused to obey. In defiance of the Divine command they embarked on a campaign of conquest. The result was disastrous. They were utterly routed and chased to Hormah, the scene of their former triumph.

It is perhaps to this that the famous Israel stele erected by Merenptah, who is usually thought to have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus, relates. The material portions run as follows

in the translation given by Dr. Driver on page 63 of D. G. Hogarth's "Authority and Archæology":—

"Vanquished are the Tehennu (Libyans); the Khita (Hittites) are pacified; Pa-Kan'ana (Canaan) is prisoner in every evil; Askalni (Ashkelon) is carried away; Gezer is taken; Yenoam is annihilated; Yisraal is desolated, its seed (or fruit) is not; Charu has become as widows for Egypt."

Of these, Charu means a people in the south or southeast of Palestine, but the identifications of Yenoam vary. Gezer lies between Joppa and Jerusalem, and Ashkelon is of course also in the south. Hence the "seed" might well refer to crops in the Arad district, or (less probably) to the Kadesh district, of which Trumbull writes as follows:—

"It has a mountain-encircled plain of sufficient extent for the encampment of such an army as Kedor-la'omer's or such a host as Israel's. That plain is arable, capable of an extensive grain or grazing supply, and with adjoining wells of the best water." (H. Clay Trumbull, *Kadesh-barnea*, pp. 311 f.; see also pp. 269 f., 272 f.)

It should be added that the inscription may be based on reports from Palestine, and does not necessarily describe a conflict between Israel and an army from Egypt. It may merely refer to a victory won by natives who were vassals or subject allies of Pharaoh.

Whether or not this be correct, the defeat at Hormah must have put an end once for all to the hopes of invading Canaan successfully from the south, and may have entailed casualties that involved delaying the departure from Kadesh. It appears to have had immediate results within the Israelitish camp, for dissatisfaction at the failure to conquer Canaan seems to have been partly responsible for the conduct of Dathan and Abiram: "Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards." Then came the failure of the water and the incident of striking the rock. We have seen that the

arrival at Kadesh took place in the first month, i. e. in the early spring. Trumbull visited Kadesh at the end of March (Kadesh-barnea, p. 263). He gives a very enthusiastic description of the place. Mr. Holland, who was there on May 16, 1878, also speaks well of the water-supply (Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly, Jan. 1884, p. 9). The date of Mr. Rowlands's visit is unfortunately not given.¹ It is, however, quite easy to understand that, as the season advanced, the water-supply became inadequate for the unusually extensive demands of the Israelitish tribes, and that this led to the incident recorded in chapter xx.

At the end of a stay that lasted some months in all, the Israelites left Kadesh by the way to the Red Sea, and never returned to it during the period of the wanderings. Then followed the long weary circling of the land of Edom, and at the end of this period, on the journey northwards from Ezion-geber, Aaron died at some point near the eastern or southeastern frontier of Edom in the fortieth year.

Such in outline is the narrative that emerges from our rearrangement of the text. It is intelligible and self-consistent. How enormous are the difficulties it removes has already been made clear in part, and will appear more fully when we quote some of the other critical objections to the existing text. It remains only to deal with the chronological difficulty.

Aaron died in the fortieth year, according to the accepted text, on the first day of the fifth month (Num. xxxiii. 38). The Syriac has, however, preserved an ancient variant, according to which the event took place on the first day of the first month. The better to examine this we set out Colenso's attack on the chronology.

¹Dr. Gray has also a reference to an account of the place in the *Biblical World* for May, 1901, pp. 328-338. It describes a visit on April 13, 1900, and speaks of the water-supply as perennial.

"(i) We are told that Aaron died on 'the *first day of the fifth month*' of the fortieth year of the wanderings, N. xxxiii. 38 and they mourned for him a *month*, N. xx. 29.

"(ii) After this, 'king Arad the Canaanite fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners;' whereupon the Israelites attacked these Canaanites, and 'utterly destroyed them and their cities,' N. xxi. 1-3,—for which two transactions we may allow another *month*.

"(iii) Then they 'journeyed from Mount Hor, by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom,' N. xxi. 4, and the people murmured, and were plagued with fiery serpents, and Moses set up the serpent of brass, N. xxi. 5-9,—for all which we must allow, at least, a *fortnight*.

"(iv) They now marched, and made *nine* encampments, N. xxi. 10-20, for which we cannot well allow less than a *month*.

"'We believe that, at every station, at least three days' rest must have been required.' Kurtz, iii. p. 251.

"(v) Then they sent messengers to Sihon, who 'gathered all his people together, and fought against Israel,' and 'Israel smote him with the edge of the sword,' and 'possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok,' and 'took all these cities, and dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all the daughters thereof,' N. xxi. 21-25,—for which we may allow another *month*.

"(vi) After that 'Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there,' N. xxi. 32,—say, in another *fortnight*.

"(vii) Then they 'turned up by the way of Bashan, and Og, the king of Bashan went out against them, and they smote him, and his sons, and *all his people, until there was none left him alive*, and they possessed his land,' N. xxi. 33-35. For all this work of capturing "three-score cities, fenced with high walls, gates, and bars, besides unwall'd towns, a great many,' D. iii. 4, 5, we must allow, at the very least, a *month*.

"Thus, then, from the '*first day of the fifth month*,' on which Aaron died, to the completion of the conquest of Og, king of Bashan, we cannot reckon less altogether than *six months*, (and, indeed, even then the events will have been crowded one upon another in a most astonishing, and really impossible, manner,) and are thus brought down to the '*first day of the eleventh month*,' the very day on which Moses is stated to have addressed the people in the plains of Moab, D. i. 3.

"And now what room is there for the other events which are recorded in the book of Numbers, as having occurred between the conquest of Bashan and the address of Moses? The chief of these were:—

- "(1) The march forward to the plains of Moab, N. xxii. 1;
 "(2) Balak's sending twice to Balaam, his journey, and prophecies, xxii. 2-xxiv.;
 "(3) Israel's 'abiding' in Shittim, and committing whoredom with the daughters of Moab, xxv. 1-3;
 "(4) The death of 24,000 by the plague, xxv. 9;
 "(5) The second numbering of the people, xxvi.;
 "(6) The war upon Midian, above considered, during which they 'burnt all their cities, and all their goodly castles,' &c., and surely must have required a month, or six weeks for such a transaction." (The Pentateuch, etc., Part I. 2d ed., pp. 144-146.)

It will be seen that our rearrangement of the text has eliminated (ii) and (iii), thus saving six weeks on Colenso's timetable. Moreover, certain other criticisms must be made. According to Deuteronomy ii. 26, Moses sent messengers to Sihon from the wilderness of Kedemoth. This appears to be identical with the wilderness of Numbers xxi. 11 ff., so that Colenso has treated, as consecutive, events that were really contemporaneous. (See Gray, Numbers, p. 295.) The month for the nine encampments is perhaps excessive; but as, on our view of the true order, there were probably more than nine encampments, no substantial reduction could be effected there. But it is to be noted that the campaigns against Sihon and Og were both decided by single battles, and may perhaps have occupied less time than Colenso allows, and some of the other events may have been synchronous. It is therefore perhaps not quite impossible that the established reading is correct, but the Syriac certainly seems preferable. Dr. Gray (Numbers, p. xlv) attacks the chronology; and, as he imports a new difficulty into the text, perhaps his remarks should be transcribed.

"... Between the *departure* from Mt. Hor and the delivery of Moses' final address to the people there elapsed *not more* than five months (cp. xxi 4 xxxiii 38 xx 29, Dt. 1 3). Into these few months there is now compressed the journey south to the Gulf of Akabah, thence north to the Arnon, the despatch of messengers to the Amorites, war with the Amorites and occupation of the country between

Arnon and Jabbok, the attempt of Balak to get Balaam to curse Israel (this alone, if Balaam came from Pethor, extending over at the least three months), the intercourse of the Israelites with the Moabite women, the taking of the second census, the appointment of Joshua, the war with Midian, and the subsequent seven days of purification for the warriors; and in addition to the foregoing, the communication of many laws."

Pethor, it must be explained, is identified by Dr. Gray, with the Assyrian Pitru; but, as he himself admits, this identification is philologically unsound (p. 325). We have elsewhere shown (Churchman,¹ February, 1908, pp. 90-92) that Aram-naharaim is identified by the Bible with the Damascus region. The true criterion of the distance is afforded by Genesis xxxi. 23, from which it appears that it was seven days' journey: though of course it does not follow that Balak's messengers consumed seven days on the journey. We therefore are not prepared to go the length of saying that on our present knowledge the Hebrew date is impossible: but we think the Syriac overwhelmingly more probable.

We now set out the remaining difficulties that disappear on our view:—

"It is probable that P related neither the petition to Edom, nor its rejection; and that, on the other hand, in entire disagreement from the foregoing story, he represented the Israelites as actually crossing the *northern* end of Edom in their passage from Kadesh on the W. to the E. of the Arabah." (Gray, Numbers, p. 264.)

". . . . But however this may be, the main point is certain: Iyye-Abarim lay E. of the Jordan valley (including the Arabah); and thus the narrative of Ps, in so far as it is extant, mentions between Mt. Hor (xx 22 xxi 4a) on the W., and Iyye-Abarim on the E., of the Arabah only one place, Oboth (the site of which is unknown), and gives no indication whatever that the passage from W. to E. was made by a long detour southwards from Kadesh by the head of the Red Sea. The fuller itinerary of chap. xxxiii, which, though the work of Ps, is in the main governed by Ps's point of view, mentions, indeed, a larger number of intervening stations; but it also gives no indication of a detour south. It is therefore

¹The London paper of that time.

highly probable that P_g represented the people marching, unmolested and with ease, straight across the northern end of Edom. Just as forty years before the spies passed through the whole length of Canaan at will, so now the Israelites approach Canaan by the direct and chosen route with entire disregard of the people then in possession of the country." (*Op. cit.*, p. 282.)

" . . . Thus, like P_g, the Itinerary recognizes no *southern* movement from Kadesh." (*Op. cit.*, p. 443.)

"A second and more significant instance occurs in Num. xx. The Israelites arrive at Kadesh in the first month (ver. 1), apparently of the third year, reckoning from the Exodus, the last previous date marking the departure from Sinai, in the second month of the second year (x 11). In xx 22 the march is resumed, and in consequence of the refusal of Edom to allow a passage through its territory, a long circuit is necessary. The first stage brings them to Mount Hor, where Aaron dies upon the summit. In the list of the encampments in xxxiii 37 this incident is fixed in the fortieth year of the wanderings. Between xx 1 and 22 ff there is thus an interval of at least thirty-seven years (cp Dt ii 14, from Kadesh to the brook Zered thirty-eight years). Is it credible that the 'journals' of Moses found nothing worthy of record in this long period beyond a solitary instance of popular discontent, and a fruitless embassy to the king of Edom? Did an entire generation pass away, without any further trace than the bones of its 'fighting men' upon the wilderness? Only at a later day could imaginative tradition have rounded off the whole into a fixed form of forty years, and been content to leave the greater part a blank." (*Oxford Hexateuch* vol. i. p. 28.)

"[Dt.] i 37-38. In Nu. xx 12 (cf. xxvii 13 f. Dt. xxxii 50 f.) Moses is prohibited to enter Canaan on account of his presumption in striking the rock at Kadesh in the 39th year of the Exodus: here the ground of the prohibition is the Lord's anger with him *on account of the people*¹ (so iii 26 iv 21), upon an occasion which is plainly fixed by the context for the 2nd year of the Exodus, 37 years previously. The supposition that Moses, *speaking in the 40th year*, should have passed, in verse 37, from the 2nd to the 39th year, returning in verse 39 to the 2nd year, is highly improbable." (*Driver, Deuteronomy*, pp. xxxv f.)

"[Dt.] i 46 ii 1. 14. As shown in the notes on pp. 31-33 it seems impossible to harmonize the representation contained in these passages with that of Numbers; according to Nu. xiv, &c., the 38 years in the wilderness were spent at Kadesh: according to Dt. they were spent *away* from Kadesh (ii 14), in wandering about Edom (ii 1)." (*Op. cit.*, p. xxxvi.)

¹A very little knowledge of human nature would explain the language of Moses in these passages.

When to these difficulties are added the incredibility of the view that the water at Kadesh failed in the thirty-eighth year of the sojourn, the impossibility that the message to Edom could have followed the command to compass the land, the further impossibility that the command itself was ignored for thirty-eight years, the geographical veto of the theory that a southward march from Kadesh brought the Israelites to Arad in the North, the difficulty of understanding the evacuation of the conquered territory by the victorious host, the improbability that the explanation of Hormah should have followed the first use of the name with the definite article, the chronological monstrosities and the awkwardness of supposing that such phrases as "abode" are used differently in Deuteronomy and Numbers, some idea will be formed of the nature of the problem. And if it be asked what changes we effect in the Hebrew text in order to provide the solution, the answer is that in one instance we have expelled a gloss and in another we have altered a single word — in each case with the support of an ancient Version. Apart from this, we have only effected transpositions that were necessitated not merely by internal evidence, but also by the convergent testimony of Deuteronomy. Last, but not least, we have postulated no improbable human act or omission, but have merely suggested that ancient documents have been subjected to the ordinary vicissitudes of MS. tradition.

THE MISSION OF THE SPIES.

Dr. Gray's summary of the difficulties will in this instance be given because, while containing everything material, it is much shorter than Mr. Carpenter's:—

"Nothing but the baldest analysis of the story as it now lies before us is possible without recognising the numerous incongruities in detail by which it is marked; some of these might be harmonised.

others are hopelessly irreconcilable. The point of departure of the spies is now the wilderness of Paran, ver. 8. 26a, now Kadesh, ver. 26b; the country reconnoitered is now the whole land of Canaan, ver. 2. 17a, from the extreme south to the extreme north, ver. 21, now only the southern district round Hebron, ver. 22-24; the majority of the spies now report that the land is unfertile, ver. 32, now that it is very fertile, but invincible, ver. 27-31. 33; now Caleb alone dissents from the majority, ver. 30, and is alone exempted from punishment, xiv 24; now both Joshua and Caleb dissent, xiv 6 f, and are exempted, xiv 38. Even when the details of the narrative are not incongruous, they are frequently duplicated, or the style is markedly redundant (*e.g.* xiii 17-20, and note the extent to which xiv 11-24 and ver. 26-35 are parallel in substance.") (Numbers, p. 129.)

The first of these discrepancies is purely factitious. The statement in the text is, "And they went, and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh" (Num. xiii. 26), and the discrepancy can be manufactured only by tearing this verse asunder, and giving "to Kadesh" (with what follows) to JE, while assigning the earlier portion of the verse to P. That Kadesh was the only point of departure recognized by any "source" is proved by the fact that in Numbers xxxii., where a late priestly writer refers to the incident, he speaks of Kadesh-barnea as the starting-place (ver. 8). The real question is as to the precise relations of Zin and Paran. Two theories have, however, been put forward, either of which would meet the exigencies of this passage: (1) that Zin was a part of Paran, and (2) that Paran is used in a wider and a narrower sense, sometimes including Zin and sometimes being applied more exactly to the desert south of Zin. The data at our disposal are insufficient for any final decision between these two views. It should, however, be noted that the gravamen of the higher critical argument lies in the present position of Numbers xx. 1, which we have already found reason to regard as misplaced. Thus Dr. Gray writes, "In the fortieth

year the people apparently march out of the wilderness of Paran to Kadesh." (Numbers, p. 91.)

The second difficulty is more serious. It is, in fact, the case that Numbers xiii. 21 in the present text represents the spies as going unto Rehob to the entering in of Hamath. Nothing is known of this Rehob: an attempt has been made to identify it with the Rehob of 2 Samuel x. 8; but (1) this was a Syrian town, and (2) its proper name seems to have been Beth-Rehob, the abbreviated form being in a passage where the full name has already been given. On the other hand, it is quite certain that "the entering in of Hamath" is in the north. According to the present text, therefore, verses 21 ff. represent the spies as passing through the extreme north of the land on their way to Hebron. From his own peculiar point of view Dr. Cheyne argues for corruption (Enc. Bib. 402b); and, so far as we can see, there is no logical escape from some such hypothesis on any view. According to the documentary theory, P sends the spies up to the extreme north; but this loses sight of the fact that in Numbers xxxii. a late priestly writer knows nothing of this extensive exploration and fixes on Eshcol as the limit of the expedition (ver. 9). This is the more remarkable as, from other features of that chapter, it is obvious that this writer was acquainted with our present narrative, in what Dr. Gray calls "its present composite form (JE P)." (Numbers, p. 426.) It is reasonably clear, therefore, that this writer knew of nothing in the present narrative that was inconsistent with the Eshcol story. Further, it may be urged that any editor who desired to combine a statement that the spies went to Eshcol with one that they went further north would presumably have placed our present verse 21 *after*, and not before, the visit to Eshcol, i.e. after 24; for he must have been perfectly familiar with the position of Hebron and the

entering in of Hamath. Hence we may reasonably suppose that the difficulty is due to some error in the MS. tradition. Unfortunately, in the present state of textual criticism, it is impossible to suggest the remedy.

There is extant evidence of variations in the text which point to textual criticism as the means of finding the solution of the next difficulty, viz. the discrepancy in the reports of the spies. In xiii. 30 the Septuagint text of Caleb's speech begins with οὐχί, ἀλλὰ — "nay, but," — though there is nothing corresponding to these words in the Hebrew. This beginning is comprehensible only on the supposition that something is missing before verse 30 in its present position, and we have long felt that the words "and Caleb stilled the people" point in the same direction. Whether or not verse 29 is a later note which has crept into the narrative, it seems tolerably clear that the text is not in order. Either something has been lost narrating the lamentations of the people on hearing the first report of the spies, or else some transposition has taken place. In the latter case the difficulty might be met by removing either xiii. 30–32 or more probably xiii. 30–xiv. 1b ("voice") to a position after xiv. 4. Curiously enough Dr. Gray suggests that xiii. 30 should perhaps come here, and Mr. Carpenter has a very similar theory. Had they not been under the influence of the divisive hypothesis, they would probably have reflected that there was here a case for textual criticism which must make it impossible to dogmatize about the contents of the original narrative. Transpositions of this kind appear to point to the piecing together of a MS. that had been considerably torn. With regard to the double report as to the land, it must be noticed that the critical analysis altogether fails to eliminate this feature. The only difference is that the text which presents two conflicting accounts is now assigned

to P instead of to Moses. For Numbers xiii. 32 gives an evil report, and Numbers xiv. 7 makes Canaan "an exceeding good land." If we turn from the condition of the text to the consideration of what actually happened, the outlines appear to be reasonably clear. There was first a favorable report, tempered by remarks on the strength of the inhabitants. That resulted in a panic, under the influence of which the majority of the spies shifted round and abused the land, while Caleb, supported by Joshua, stood to the original facts and urged the people to have courage.

The last supposed discrepancy — that Caleb in one account alone dissents from the majority, and is alone exempted from punishment — is one of those extraordinary arguments which it is difficult to take seriously. Hebrew tradition is absolutely consistent in representing Joshua as having been the leader under whom the Israelites entered Canaan. That being so, it must have conceived him as being alive at the time. But, according to the critical theory in the JE story, Caleb alone of the men of that generation was to live — and that though E is supposed to have a special interest in Joshua. This is but one more instance of the fatal lack of sympathy with the narrator's methods of expression. For the rest it is sufficiently clear that at first Caleb took the lead and overshadowed Joshua.

It may be worth while in this connection to deal with another little higher critical argument. On xiii. 6, "of the tribe of Judah, Caleb," Dr. Gray writes (Numbers, p. 136): "According to another and earlier tradition, Caleb was a Kenizite, xxxii 12 Jos. xiv 6, 14." Now xxxii. is alleged to be the work of a late priestly writer, so that the reference to this as embodying an earlier tradition calls for inquiry. On the verse in question Dr. Gray says (p. 430), "In P Caleb is a Judah-

ite." Apparently therefore P^a does not agree with "P." But if we turn to the two passages in Joshua we get an explanation of the phenomenon: "Then the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal; and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him," etc. That is to say, even the "earlier tradition" treats Caleb the Kenizzite as having been so incorporated with the children of Judah as to be for all practical purposes a constituent member of the tribe; and there is no passage in P that in any way conflicts with this. We have no means of telling how or when this incorporation had been effected: but the fact itself is not open to doubt, and its recognition makes it impossible to manufacture any discrepancy between the relevant passages.

With regard to the redundant style and the duplications of detail, this may be due in part to the condition of the text, but in part it is merely another way of saying that, had Dr. Gray been the narrator, he would have told the story differently. This opinion we are not concerned to discuss.

KORAH, DATHAN, AND ABIRAM.

The next chapter that gives trouble is Numbers xvi. But here variants have been preserved by the Septuagint which show very clearly that we have to deal with nothing more serious than some slight textual corruptions which have been made the foundation for one of those extraordinary theories which only higher critics can be expected to believe. We have dealt with these matters at some length elsewhere,¹ and no answer has been put forward to our arguments. We therefore do not propose to treat of this chapter in much detail here. Dr. Gray (p. 187) appears impressed by the fact that Deuteronomy xi. 6 only mentions Dathan and Abiram; but this is

¹ See *Studies in Biblical Law*, pp. 35-39.

due partly to the purpose of the book, which, being intended for public reading, deals only with that section of the episode which is germane to its purpose, and partly to a fact that will presently emerge. To say, as Dr. Gray does, that Numbers xxvii. 3 refers only to Korah is to misread the fact that the context recognizes non-Levites as having been associated with him. It is true that Dr. Gray arbitrarily cuts out "ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi," in xvi., in order to obtain a revolt of a non-Levitical Korah; but his vivisection of this chapter is due to incompetence to appreciate marks of artistic unity. No true literary critic could possibly overlook or miss the force of the repeated "ye take too much upon you" in verses 3 and 7, and the repeated "Is it a small thing" in verses 9 and 13.

The truth is that verses 24 and 27, and possibly one or two other verses, have suffered in transmission. The Hebrew "Dwelling" is elsewhere in the Pentateuch applied to the Tabernacle or a portion of it, but not (in the singular) to a human habitation, and the phrase "Dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram" is impossible for other reasons. (See Gray, p. 204.) This has been recognized by the higher critics, who therefore do not keep the Hebrew text. Unhappily they quite characteristically ignore the evidence of the Septuagint which does not help them. But those who are capable of weighing evidence will prefer (when once they admit that the Hebrew text is wrong) to seek a reading that has some MS. authority, rather than to embark on biased speculations. In verse 24 the Septuagint has "the company" for "the Dwelling," and two of the best codices omit "Dathan and Abiram." This gives us "speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the company of Korah. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram." In verse 27 the same

two MSS. again omit "Dathan and Abiram," and the Ambrosian has "Korah's company." This half verse should follow 24 immediately. Then we have: "So they gat them up from the company of Korah on every side" as the sequel of our amended 24, and the rest of the chapter is really quite smooth so far as the higher critical difficulties are concerned. But if the text of Numbers xxvi. 10 is sound, one difficulty remains. Korah is there said to have been swallowed up with Dathan and Abiram. This time, however, the Samaritan comes to the rescue with the following text: "And the earth opened her mouth and the earth swallowed them up when the company died, what time the fire consumed Korah and two hundred and fifty men." Whether the phrase "the earth" is original in the second place where it occurs may be doubted; but the statement that the fire devoured not merely the two hundred and fifty, but also Korah, removes all the difficulties. Dathan and Abiram with their families and tents, and Korah's human and other chattels were swallowed by the earthquake which destroyed portions of the camp, but Korah himself was near the Tabernacle with the two hundred and fifty and was consumed by fire from heaven. It will be noticed that the difference between the Hebrew and the Samaritan, if once the second "the earth" be expelled from the latter, is very slight. The latter has in its favor the fact that it might more easily have given rise to the corruption than the former. In a text presenting אֶתְקֹרַח the copyist's eye could easily slip from the first תֹּא to the second. The omitted phrase being inserted in the margin perhaps in the form וְאֶתְקֹרַח would be likely to lose its proper position. This gives an additional reason for the non-mention of Korah in Deuteronomy and the non-mention of Dathan and Abiram in Numbers xxvii., since they were not involved in a common fate. It will therefore be

seen that the correction of the text in the light of the ancient evidence removes all difficulties, and involves none of the absurdities that are inevitable in a scheme which postulates a fatuous redactor who composed an aimless and unintelligible mosaic out of two unrelated stories.

THE BALAAM NARRATIVE.

The attitude of the critics to the Balaam narrative is somewhat strange, for Dr. Gray first enumerates four points that in his opinion evidence compilation, and then practically shows that he does not take the first three at all seriously (Numbers, p. 309). Two of the three are certainly trifling. The third is made by insisting that Balaam's home in Numbers xxii. 5 is by the Euphrates, and then altering "the land of the children of his people" to "the land of the children of Ammon," with some MSS., the Samaritan and some of the Versions. This gives an inconsistency between the land of Ammon and Pitru on the Euphrates: but as Balaam really came from Pethor (not Pitru) in Aram-naharaim (not Mesopotamia), on a river which was not the Euphrates, from the land of "the children of his people" (not "of Ammon"), it will be admitted that there is some ground for Dr. Gray's distrust of the point. It is of course quite possible that "the children of his people" is really a corrupt phrase under which the true reading lies concealed; but "Ammon" is a little too easy and obvious to be probable.

The real difficulty in Dr. Gray's words

"consists mainly in the fact that *in ver. 20f. Balaam, having received God's permission to go, is on his way accompanied by the princes of Balak, whereas in ver. 22 Balaam is on his way accompanied by two servants and without having received the LORD's permission: for that is the obvious meaning of the LORD's anger*" (Numbers, p. 309).

We admit that there is a difficulty, but in the absence of any clue from the Versions we could only hazard guesses as to the true solution; and this we are unwilling to do for fear of obscuring the really strong points of our case.

THE OTHER ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES IN NARRATIVE BETWEEN
DEUTERONOMY AND EXODUS—NUMBERS.

On pages xxxv to xxxvii of his "Deuteronomy," Dr. Driver deals with these, which he sets out in nine numbered sections. Two of the discrepancies depend on the genuineness of Deuteronomy x. 6 f. Dr. Driver himself does not believe these verses to be an integral part of the book, nor do we. The order of the stations does not agree with the itinerary in Numbers xxxiii., the death of Aaron is here said to have taken place at Moserah, and they make the chronology of the separation of Levi (x. 8 f.) extremely difficult. It is true that the phrase "at that time" is not to be pressed too far: yet in this context it would have to be stretched out of recognition to harmonize with Numbers. It is of course possible that Moserah was at or near Mount Hor: and the stations in Numbers xxxiii. may have experienced considerable derangement in transmission. Nevertheless our present knowledge is not such as to justify us in preferring the data of a fragmentary note of this description which is admittedly out of place to even the present order of the stations in Numbers xxxiii. As a pure question of textual criticism, the reasons stated by Dr. Driver (p. 118) are in our judgment conclusive against the present position of the fragment, and, that being so, he is undoubtedly right in refusing to use the difficulties it presents as an argument for the documentary theory.

The other difficulties are arranged by Dr. Driver in three groups. The first consists of two points which he himself

does not take seriously. These we need not stay to discuss. The second comprises two inconsistencies, which "awaken graver doubts." The remaining three perplexities "cannot be fairly explained upon the hypothesis of Mosaic authorship." But of these three, two—the date of the smiting of the rock at Meriboth-Kadesh and the discrepancy as to the alleged thirty-eight years' sojourn at Kadesh—have already been solved by our rearrangement of the text of Numbers. Hence we have only three cases left to consider, of which one only is, in Dr. Driver's opinion, incompatible with Mosaic authorship. We take these three difficulties in the order adopted by Dr. Driver (following the text of Deuteronomy). This leaves the most serious to the last.

The first is stated as follows:—

"[Dt.] ix 9. According to Ex. xxxii-xxxiv Moses was three times in the mount (xxxii 1ff.; xxxii 31; xxxiv 4); but it is only on the third occasion that he is recorded to have fasted (xxxiv 28): Dt., in the very words of Ex., describes him as doing so on the *first* occasion. Obviously, Dt. may relate what is passed by in silence in Ex.; but the variation is remarkable." (Deuteronomy, p. xxxvi.)

Clearly the first thing is to consider whether or not we are to believe that Moses fasted on the occasion of his first visit to the Mount. We do not suppose it will be seriously suggested that any canonical writer or source believed that he partook of food during the time that he was communing with God. If that be so, we are face to face with a simple argument from silence—never a very formidable weapon—and not with any difference of tradition. But if we further look at Exodus to see how the narrative is constructed, we find that the visit to the Mount came to an abrupt end owing to the episode of the golden calf. At the point where, but for that episode, we might have had a calm statement of the conclusion of the visit, the relation of the sin of the people is followed by a command

to leave the Mount. The insertion of a statement that Moses fasted would have been utterly out of place in that narrative. Points like this are not perhaps very easy to demonstrate, but we would ask anybody who feels doubts on the subject to read the narrative of Exodus xxxii. and consider what would be the effect of interposing a statement that Moses fasted, at any point he may choose for the experiment. He will find that course more convincing than pages of argument.

The next argument is as follows:—

“ [Dt.] ix 25–29. This, it is plain, must refer either to Ex. xxxii 31f. (Moses' *second* visit to the mountain), or (more probably) to Ex. xxxiv 9. 28 (his *third* visit to it). It is singular, now, that the terms of *Moses' own intercession*, as here reproduced, are borrowed, not from either of these passages, but from xxxii 11–13, at the close of his *first* forty days upon the mountain.” (Deuteronomy, p. xxxvi.)

We are here rather embarrassed by the number of available replies. First, we have seen so many instances of displacement that it would put no great strain on our credulity to suppose that verses 26–29 ought to stand after verse 14. It is true that in the Revised Version verse 15 reads “*so* I turned,” but the Hebrew is “*and* I turned,” and does not necessarily convey the same idea as the English. It is possible that this transposition is correct: but we are bound to say that we do not think it at all necessary. Two reasons weigh with us. First, we can see no improbability in supposing that an old man speaking of events that had taken place nearly forty years before might inadvertently misplace them even if he desired to adhere to chronology. We do not picture Moses as a sort of modern professor carefully looking up his references and endeavoring to copy his sources with scrupulous accuracy. And the second is, that the context proves beyond a peradventure that chronology in the present passage is deliberately

sacrificed to rhetorical effect. We cannot illustrate this better, than by setting out in tabular form the arrangement of the narrative, on the view that Dr. Driver regards as more probable.

Deut. ix 15-16	Moses descends from the mountain after his first visit and sees that a calf has been made.
17	He breaks the tables.
18-20	<i>Third</i> visit to the mountain.
21	Destruction of the golden calf.
22	Reference to Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth-hattavah.
23	The rebellion at Kadesh-barnea.
24	"Ye have been rebellious from the day that I knew you."
25	Resumption of the narrative of the third visit.
26-29	Terms of the prayer uttered during the first visit.
x 1	Command to hew the new table and come up to the mount for the third visit.
3	Ascent for the third visit.

It must be admitted that on any view of the authorship of these chapters the chronological theory cannot be sustained. The prayer in ix. 26-29 is not the prayer uttered during the third visit, nor can its position in so thoroughly non-chronological an arrangement of facts be regarded as evidence that in the writer's view it was offered up on this occasion. Is it then possible to assign any reason for the order? We think so. On verse 25 Dr. Driver notes that:—

"The Writer reverts here to the occasion mentioned verse 18, for the purpose of emphasizing (in accordance with the general design of the retrospect) the indebtedness of Israel to Moses' intercession." (*Op. cit.*, p. 116.)

Now in connection with the episode of the golden calf, this intercession took two forms, fasting and prayer. The former is mentioned first,—probably because it would be likely to impress the people more. But if the full extent of that intercession was to be made clear it was necessary also to insert a

prayer. For reasons which will be readily understood, it was impossible to repeat Exodus xxxii. 31. No man who could utter the words, "and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written," could be expected to repeat them for rhetorical purposes in a speech to the people. The single sentence which contains the only reported prayer uttered by Moses on the third visit is equally unsuited for the speaker's purpose, though for different reasons. It begins with the words, "If now I have found grace in thy sight"—hardly the best way of bringing home to the people the extent of their iniquity—and is directed to the petition that God would go up with them himself instead of sending an angel. It does not even contemplate the danger which had once been imminent, and which the Deuteronomist here desires to emphasize, viz. that God might utterly destroy them. The point of the whole passage, in so far as it turns on the intercession of Moses, is that, but for his action, God would have destroyed the people: "Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven" (ver. 14). Hence the first prayer was the only one which it was possible to quote: and the difficulty results, not from the quotation, but from the failure to realize that the arrangement is not meant to be chronological. This failure is the more curious because of Dr. Driver's treatment of verses 18–20.

On the occasion of Moses' first visit to the mount the Israelites made a golden calf. Moses in Exodus destroyed the calf (Ex. xxxii. 20), and subsequently revisited the mount. But in Deuteronomy we are told (ix. 18–20): "I fell down before the LORD as at the first, forty days and forty nights," and it is only afterwards that Moses narrates (ver. 21) how he destroyed the calf. And Dr. Driver, instead of saying that, as this is in conflict with chronology, it disagrees with Exodus,

writes approvingly: "No doubt this intercession is mentioned here, in anticipation of its true chronological position, on account of its significance in the argument." (Deuteronomy, p. 115.)

No doubt it is; but, if chronology may be set aside when it suits the orator in verses 18-20, why must it override all other considerations in verses 26-29?

The last point — which it must be remembered is one of the three that Dr. Driver regards as fatal — is also chronological:—

"[Dt.] x 1-4. This passage agrees — to a large extent verbally — with Ex. xxxiv 1-4, 28, with the difference that in Dt. Moses is directed to make, and actually does make, an ark of acacia-wood *before* ascending the mount the third time, to receive the Ten Commandments. That Moses should describe as made by himself what was in fact made by Bezal'el, acting on his behalf, is, no doubt, natural enough; but in the narrative of Ex. (as it now stands) the command is both given to Bezal'el, and executed by him, *after* Moses' return from the mountain (xxxvi 2 f. xxxvii 1). The discrepancy in two narratives, *so circumstantial as each of these is*, is difficult to explain, if both are the work of one and the same writer, describing incidents in which he was personally concerned." (Deuteronomy, p. xxxvi.)

If such a discrepancy occurred in the work of a modern statesman, nobody who knew anything about the fallibility of human testimony would feel surprised: but the astonishing accuracy of the statements in Deuteronomy lends weight to the objection. It is true that the order is partly rhetorical, not chronological: but it seems clear that the recollection of Moses pointed to the making of the ark as having been put in hand before the ascent. But it happens that there are other grounds for supposing that there is something wrong with the text of Exodus xxxv.-xl. By way of putting forward the most extreme critical view, the following is quoted from the late Dr. William Robertson Smith:—

"A remarkable case of variations between the Hebrew and the Greek is found, where we should least expect it, within the Pentateuch itself. The translation of the Law is the oldest part of the Septuagint, and in the eyes of the Jews was much the most important. And as a rule the variations are here confined within narrow limits, the text being already better fixed than in the historical books. But there is one considerable section, Exod. xxxv.-xl., where extraordinary variations appear in the Greek, some verses being omitted altogether, while others are transposed and knocked about with a freedom very unlike the usual manner of the translators of the Pentateuch. The details of the variations need not be recounted here; they are fully exhibited in tabular form in Kuenen's *Onderzoek*, 2d ed., vol. i. p. 77, and in Driver's *Introduction*, p. 37 sq. The variations prove either that the text of this section of the Pentateuch was not yet fixed in the third century before Christ, or that the translator did not feel himself bound to treat it with the same reverence as the rest of the Law. But indeed there are strong reasons for suspecting that the Greek version of these chapters is not by the same hand as the rest of the Book of Exodus, various Hebrew words being represented by other Greek equivalents than those used in the earlier chapters. And thus it seems possible that this whole section was lacking in the copy that lay before the first translator of the Law. It is true that the chapters are not very essential, since they simply describe, almost in the same words, the execution of the directions about the tabernacle and its furniture already given in chaps. xxv.-xxxi. Most modern critics hold chaps. xxxv.-xl. for a late addition to the text, and see in the variations between the Hebrew and the Greek proof that the form of the addition underwent changes, and was not finally fixed in all copies when the Septuagint version was made. In favour of this view several considerations may be adduced which it would carry us too far to consider here. But in any case those who hold that the whole Pentateuch dates from the time of Moses, and that the Septuagint translators had to deal with a text that had been fixed and sacred for a thousand years, have a hard nut to crack in the wholly exceptional freedom with which the Greek version treats this part of the sacrosanct Torah." (Old Testament in the Jewish Church, 2d ed., pp. 124 f.)

Dr. Smith quite characteristically¹ forgets that the Samari-

¹ Similarly he writes (p. 375): "It is disputed whether, in Exod. xxx. 16, 'the service of the tabernacle,' defrayed by the fixed tribute of half a shekel, refers to the continual sacrifices. If it does so, this law was still unknown to Nehemiah, and must be a late addition to the Pentateuch." The "late addition" is found in the Samaritan, which therefore proves that the law is not subsequent to Nehemiah.

tan Pentateuch which, according to his view on page 61 of this same work, dates from about 430 B. C., here supports the Hebrew, and proves that the chapters in question are at least considerably older than the Septuagint: but the variations undoubtedly call for some explanation. Unfortunately the available data are quite inadequate for the purpose. They certainly point to editorial arrangements of these chapters, perhaps to expansions. We shall have to glance at some further evidence of the state of the text, when we deal with the numbers.

For the present we can only say that in our judgment no variation they may exhibit from the statements of Deuteronomy can be held to tell against the latter book until more is known of the method in which the existing text was formed. Rather we should hold that the Deuteronomic account supplies additional evidence of editorial activity in the chapters in question.