

Requests and Replies.

What do the latest discoveries show as to the place where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea?—E. Y.

No single definite clue for the solution of this problem could be said to exist until the memorable discovery of the store-city, Pithom, was made by Edward Naville, in 1883, when working under the auspices of the Egyptian Exploration Fund. Naville showed that Pithom was situated by the modern Tell el Maschuta in the well-known Wadi Tumulât. On these important results, and their bearing upon the question of the route of the Exodus, I wrote two articles in *The Expositor*, June and December 1883, with an accompanying map.

Naville also showed that Pithom was the same as Succoth (the Hebraic mode of representing the Egyptian *Thuku* or *Thuket*). Thuku meant first a district, and lastly became the name of the chief city of the district. So far, we have strong definite probability, if not absolute certainty. Brugsch's theory of a route starting from Tanis towards the Serbonian bog, along the shores of the Mediterranean, was thereby finally extinguished, and the identification by Lepsius, Ebers, and others of Ra'mses with Tell el Maschuta, and of Pithom with Abu Suleman (still maintained in the German Bädeler, 1885), were also shown to be untenable.

These results, positive and negative, were most important; but every step onwards in the identification of the chain of outposts in Israel's march is a step from clearness into obscurity, and must be punctuated with notes of interrogation.

1. The biblical account speaks in unmistakable language of an advance to Etham, and subsequent retreat (or "return," Heb. *shûbh*) from the same. Where is Etham? Naville, in his work *Store-city of Pithom* (Trübner, 1885), p. 24, identifies it with the land of Atuma, referred to in Papyrus Anastasi vi.: "We have allowed the tribes of the Shasu of the land of Atuma to pass the stronghold of King Menepthah of the land of Succoth towards the lakes of Pithom of King Menepthah of the land of Succoth, in order to feed themselves and feed their cattle in the great estate of Pharaoh."

But the Egyptian sign for τ in *Atuma* corresponds, in most cases, with a Hebrew ד. Rougé, Chabas, and Brugsch are, therefore, probably right in identifying *Atuma* with *Edom*. I, accordingly, still adhere to the identification proposed by Brugsch, and supported by abundant illustration in his celebrated *Dict. Géographique*, and adopted by Ebers in his *Durch Gosen zum Sinai*. This explains Etham as the later Hebrew representation of the Egyptian *Chetam*, meaning "stronghold." Egypt possessed several such strongholds; but

"it was Lower Egypt, exposed on the side of the East to so many attacks of Semitic peoples, that possessed the most formidable fortresses of the name *Chetam*" (Brugsch). It is from these frontier fortresses that the name wilderness of Shûr (or wall-rampart) was derived—a designation which means the same thing geographically as wilderness of Etham. Comp. Numb. xxxiii. 8, with Exod. xv. 22; also comp. Exod. xiii. 20; Numb. xxxiii. 6.

Towards this barrier, over the modern *El Gisir*, taking the nearest route to Canaan, Israel moved from Succoth, and from thence were compelled, by God's warning voice, to retreat. The entire passage recording these events, Exod. xiii. 17, xiv. 4, is a complex of various documents. On this point, I must refer the reader to my article in *The Expositor*, Dec. 1883, p. 450 foll.

2. *Migdol* we may conjecturally identify (following Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, pp. 523, 526) with the Serapeum. "Here the Pharaohs were obliged to have a fort, so as to guard that part of the sea and prevent the Asiatics of the desert from using this temporary gate to enter Egypt, to steal cattle and plunder the fertile land around Pithom" (Naville).

3. *Baal-zephon* is identified by Naville with a hill on the Asiatic side, *Shekh Ennedek* or *Hanaidik* South of Lake Timsah. The relation of these places he defines thus: "On the North-west Pihahirôth (Pi-keheret), not very far from Pithom; on the South-east Migdol, near the present Serapeum; in front of them the sea, and opposite, on the Asiatic side, Baal-zephon" (Shekh Ennedek). Others, however, identify Baal-zephon with the heights of Jebel 'Ataka, on the western side of the Red Sea, at its northern end. But it is by no means certain that the sea-level remained 3000 years ago where it does now, and it is quite possible that the spot where the Israelites crossed should be sought somewhat further north, in the neighbourhood of the Bitter Lakes.—OWEN C. WHITEHOUSE.

1. What is the meaning of "These little ones . . . in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. xviii. 10.
2. Why are serpents and scorpions said to be amongst the powers of the enemy in Luke x. 19? Can a distinction be drawn between the power of the enemy over one part of creation and another?—D.

1. The passage has been variously interpreted, but the analogy of Scripture favours the meaning that the guardian-angels of little children are in constant communication with God, *i.e.* that His providence over little children is in some sense special as well

as unremitting. The context is full of figure, and it is possible that the allusions to angels and to "standing before the face of God" (cf. Esther i. 14, and the margin of 2 Kings xxv. 19) should be taken figuratively. "Always" is the emphatic word in the verse, the subject being the greatness and constancy of the Father's love of the children. And Dr. David Brown is said to have thus expounded the passage in a conversation with Irving: "None are allowed to enter without leave into the presence of our sovereign; but the nurses of the royal children have free access whenever they have anything to say about the children."

2. Probably for one or more of the following reasons. The passage appears to contain allusions to Ps. xci. 13, and possibly to Deut. viii. 15. Serpents and scorpions in the animal world, like thorns and thistles in the vegetable, are striking representatives of whatever is hurtful in religion or

the active service of God; and they are used in this sense in Old Testament and other early literature, from the story of the First Temptation downwards. This, together with the twofold treatment of serpents in the various systems of animal worship, may perhaps be traced back ultimately to the physical appearance of serpents and scorpions, arousing disgust and terror, and to experience of the deadliness or pain of their venom or sting. There does not seem to be any such distinction in the verse as the further query implies, "serpents and scorpions" being included in and illustrations of the various hurtful agencies that together constitute "all the power of the enemy." If the passage is taken literally, as Acts xxviii. 3 might warrant, prominence must yet be given to its applied meaning, as leading up to the emphatic "Nothing shall by any means hurt you."—R. WADDY MOSS.

At the Literary Table.

A special article on **The Theological Monthly**, under the heading, "The Modern Religious Press," has been twice crushed out, and now we must rest content with this brief note instead. On the principle that one takes kindly to the son of an old friend, we welcomed the offspring of the ancient and highly respected *British and Foreign Review* as soon as he presented himself. He is still young in years, but his youth is vigorous, and there is not one of the monthlies we have more pleasure in receiving. Strictly theological as the name denotes, the difficult middle way is found and maintained with great skill between prolix dulness and flippancy. The editor is an accomplished clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. Charles Neil, M.A., of Poplar. Here is the attractive bill of contents for September, which may be taken as an average number:—

Wellhausen on the Pentateuch—J. J. Lias.

The Greek Aorist and Perfect—R. F. Weymouth, D. Lit.

The Questions of the Bible—G. Beesley Austin.

The Footprints of Christ—J. W. Burn.

Lead us not into Temptation—F. G. Cholmondeley.

Professor Elmslie's Life (*Professor W. G. Elmslie, D.D.*, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll, M.A., LL.D., and A. N. Macnicoll. London: Hodder & Stoughton) has lain upon the table for some months. A feeling of disappointment has prevented us saying anything about it. There is abundant evidence of skill in the writing of it, but the evidence of haste is as abundant. Our impression has been that the Life should have waited till the Letters could have gone along with it,—especially those which the Rev. A. Harper of Melbourne was known to possess,—and that the

Sermons should have been published separately. Mr. Harper's contribution to the *Expositor* for September makes that impression stronger than ever. One thing is certain now that all who have read the Life should see that they read this article also.

Whoever is in trouble about lectures for the coming winter should write to the Rev. George Duncan, D.D., Hornsey Rise Baptist Chapel, Sunnyside Road, N. The marvellous story of his lectureship is before us, and may be had for 2d. from Alexander & Shephard, Funnival Street.

One of the best features of **The Worker's Monthly** is an article on the Bible and Modern Discovery, which appears every month. That in the September number happens to be on the same subject as Professor Whitehouse's "Reply" in this issue, and it is made more interesting and intelligible by an excellent little map which accompanies it.

"Over the Tea-cups," in the September **Atlantic**, is as lively as ever. The dictator turns preacher this month, and a very queer sermon he preaches. His topic—he does not announce a text—is future punishment. (We have a suspicion that the sea-serpent is going to lose its rights to the dull season.) We shall not argue with Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. But it will scarcely do for him to say that the doctrine of eternal punishment "got in among the legends of the Church" in the same way as "the interpolation of the three witnesses' text, or the false insertion, or false omission, whichever it may be, of the last fourteen verses of the Gospel of St. Mark."

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