

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 13

This chapter begins with an order to sanctify or set apart the firstborn of man and beast to the Lord, (^{<0131>}Exodus 13:1,2) and the people of Israel are charged to keep the feast of unleavened bread in its season, from year to year, when they came into the land of Canaan, the reason of which they were to acquaint their children with, (^{<0133>}Exodus 13:3-10) and they are also directed, when come into the land of Canaan, to set apart every firstling of a beast unto the Lord, and particularly the firstling of an ass was to be redeemed with a lamb, or its neck to be broke, and all the firstborn of men were to be redeemed also, (^{<0131>}Exodus 13:11-13), and when their children inquired the reason of it, they were to be told it was on account of the Lord's slaying the firstborn of men and beast among the Egyptians, when Pharaoh would not let Israel go, and of saving the firstborn of his people, (^{<0134>}Exodus 13:14-16), and it is observed, that when the children of Israel went out of Egypt, they were not led by the nearest way, the way of the land of the Philistines, but a round about way, the way of the wilderness of the Red sea, when they took the bones of Joseph with them, as he had adjured them to do, (^{<0137>}Exodus 13:17-19), and the chapter is concluded with an account of their journeying from Succoth to Etham, the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, (^{<0133>}Exodus 13:20-22).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] When he and the Israelites were at Succoth:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 2. *Sanctify unto me all the firstborn*, etc.] That is, of males, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, for those, and not females, were only either sacrificed or redeemed, (see ^{<0132>}Exodus 13:12), and this sanctification of them to the Lord signifies the separation or devoting of them to the service of God; if the firstborn of clean creatures they were to be sacrificed, if unclean to be redeemed with a price, and so the firstborn of men, because it was not lawful to sacrifice them; and the money for the redemption of

them was given to the priests, the ministers of the Lord, and so to him; who these first, born were is further explained:

whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast; that is, if a male; for, if a female, though it openeth the womb, was not reckoned a firstborn, because not to be offered; nor even a male after the birth of a female, because that openeth not the womb; and so if a man married a widow, and she had had children by her former husband, though she should bring him a son, which was his firstborn, yet not being her's, and not opening the womb, was not subject to this law; but if a man married several wives one after another, or together, who had never been married before, or had had no children; if each of them brought him a son at first birth, they were all of them firstborn, and to be sanctified to the Lord; but the Jews say ^{f385}, if a woman at her first birth brought forth a male and a female, the father was free from this law of the redemption of the firstborn, because the female might come forth first: this phrase, “among the children of Israel”, shows that this law only belonged to them, and not to the Gentiles; wherefore the Jewish doctors say ^{f386}, if a man buys cattle of an Heathen, and sells to him, or is in partnership with him, and gives and takes of him, he is free from the law of the firstborn; for it is said “among the Israelites”, and not among others:

it is mine: all creatures, man and beast, are the Lord's by creation; but these firstborn were his in a peculiar manner, and which he reserved to himself, to his own use and service; and the people of Israel were under great obligation to devote them to him, since he had spared all their firstborn, when all the firstborn of the Egyptians, both man and beast, were destroyed: this may denote the special and peculiar interest the Lord has in the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, through the special, particular, and eternal choice of them in Christ, and the redemption of them to him by the price of his blood; and who, on account both of their election of God, and redemption by Christ, are laid under obligation to give up themselves to God, a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice, which is but their reasonable service.

Ver. 3. *And Moses said unto the people*, etc.] After the Lord had spoken to him, and said the above things:

remember this day in which ye came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; or “of servants” ^{f387} where they had been servants to the Egyptians, by whom they had been made to serve with rigour, and their

lives made bitter with hard bondage; that country had been like a prison house unto them, where they had been detained captives, and treated in a very cruel manner; but now they were come out of this place and state of servitude, even that very day, the fifteenth of Nisan; and which therefore it became them to remember, they and theirs, in all succeeding generations, as the Lord had directed, and which is afterwards repeated to impress it the more upon their, minds and memories:

for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place; it was not by their own might and strength that they were redeemed from their state of bondage, but by the mighty hand of the Lord who wrought such signs and wonders before Pharaoh and his servants, and inflicted such plagues upon them, which none but an omnipotent hand could do, which obliged them at last to let them go: and if the Israelites were under obligation, on account of this redemption, to remember the day when it was in this wonderful manner wrought out, much, more reason have we to remember the redemption by Christ the mighty Redeemer, whose own arm wrought salvation for us, and delivered us out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, that were stronger than we, by frequently attending the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which is instituted to bring this amazing affair to our remembrance, and which is to be continued for that purpose unto the second coming of Christ:

there shall no leavened bread be eaten; as they then on this very day had no other but unleavened bread to eat, so they should eat no other on this day and the six days following, in successive ages unto the coming of the Messiah.

Ver. 4. *This day came ye out*, etc.] Out of Egypt, on the fifteenth of Nisan, as the Targum of Jonathan:

in the month Abib; which signifies an ear of corn, because in this month barley was in the ear, (see ^{}Exodus 9:31), the Syriac version renders it, "in the month of flowers"; when the flowers were rising up out of the earth, being spring time, and a very fit time to travel in; and this is observed, not only because they might not know what month it was, in such a state of ignorance, as well as servitude, were they kept in Egypt; but as Jarchi also intimates, to point out to them the mercy and goodness of God to them, in bringing them out at such a seasonable time to travel in, when there were neither heat, nor cold, nor rain. This month answers to part of our March, and part of April.

Ver. 5. *And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites*, etc.] Though the whole land was called the land of Canaan, yet there was one tribe or nation of them particularly so called as here, distinct from those that follow:

and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; there were seven nations in all, but two are here omitted, the Girgashites and Perizzites, but they are added in the Septuagint version, (see ^{<B00>}Deuteronomy 7:1)

which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee; to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so that they might be assured they would be brought into it, since they had both the word and oath of God for it; and which is the rather mentioned now for their encouragement, since they were at this time set forward in their journey thitherwards:

a land flowing with milk and honey; ((see Gill on "^{<B00B>}Exodus 3:8")),

that thou shalt keep this service in this month; the month of Abib; that is, the following service concerning unleavened bread; it is concluded from hence by some, that those laws concerning the passover, and eating unleavened bread, and sanctifying the firstborn, did not oblige the Israelites, while in the wilderness, only when they came into the land of Canaan; and it seems pretty clear that this was the case with respect to the two latter, but not the former, since it is certain they did keep the passover in the wilderness, and were obliged to it, (^{<B00C>}Numbers 9:1-5) but then it may be observed, that there is no mention there of their keeping the feast of unleavened bread, only of the passover, as here no mention is made of the feast of the passover, which, though they followed one another, were, two distinct feasts.

Ver. 6. *Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread*, etc.] The Jews ^{f388} gather from this place, and from (^{<B00B>}Deuteronomy 16:8), that the obligation to eat unleavened bread lasted no longer than the first night of the seven days, but on the rest it was enough if they abstained from leavened bread, and it was lawful for them to eat of other food as they pleased, ((see Gill on "^{<B00D>}Exodus 12:15")), but the words are very express in both places, and so in the following verse, for eating unleavened bread, as well as abstaining from leavened; and, indeed, otherwise it would not be so clear and plain a commemoration of their case and circumstances, in which they were when they came out of Egypt; this bread of affliction, as it

is called, (⁽¹⁶⁴⁸⁾Deuteronomy 16:3) being what would put them in mind thereof:

and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord; an holy convocation, in which no work was to be done, except what was necessary for preparing food to eat, (see ⁽¹²¹⁶⁾Exodus 12:16).

Ver. 7. *Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days*, etc.] From the evening of the fourteenth day, to the evening of the twenty first, (⁽¹²¹⁸⁾Exodus 12:18), this is very express as before, that not only they were to abstain from leaven, but that they were obliged to eat unleavened bread; and as for the cakes of eggs and sugar the Jews now use, these, as Leo Modeua says ^{f389}, are for those that are dainty and of tender stomachs and such as are sick, who eat unleavened bread also;

and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters: ((see Gill on "⁽¹²¹⁵⁾Exodus 12:15")) and the above mentioned writer says ^{f390},

“they begin before the passover, with all the diligence and care they can, to put away all leaven, or anything that hath had leaven in it, out of their houses, and out of their power; searching all their cupboards and bins, and cleansing the whole house and whiting it all over; and they provide themselves also of new utensils for their kitchen and table; or else they new make the old again, and scour them well; or else they have a select number of vessels set apart for the use of the passover only, that so they may be certainly assured that they use not anything during those eight days, that hath had leaven in it.”

and Aben Ezra upon the place says, that the sense of it is, that the Israelites ought not to suffer any to sojourn in any place subject to them, but on this condition, that they abstain from leavened bread at the time of the passover, and this he takes to be the meaning of the phrase, “in all thy quarters or borders”.

Ver. 8. *And thou shall show thy son in that day*, etc.] On the first of the days of the feast of unleavened bread, the reason of eating it; and this is to be shown not to a son or single child only, but by parents to all their children, sons and daughters, and even unasked, as Maimonides ^{f391} interprets it; and so Jarchi’s note is, to a son that knows not how to ask or

what to ask about, ((see Gill on “⁴¹²²⁶Exodus 12:26”)) ((see Gill on “⁴¹²²⁷Exodus 12:27”)):

saying, this is done because of that which the Lord did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt: that is, this unleavened bread is eaten because of the quick and speedy deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, so that they had not time to leaven their dough.

Ver. 9. *And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes,* etc.] These are not the words of God or of Moses to the children of Israel, but of an Israelitish parent to his son, telling him that this feast of unleavened bread would serve the same purpose to refresh his memory with what God did for his people of old, as the tying of a thing on the hand, or placing it before the eye, is to a person to bring anything to his remembrance, to which the allusion is; the like figurative phrases may be observed in (³¹⁰⁰Proverbs 1:9 3:3), the Jews understand this literally, and hence the use of phylacteries among them, which they bind upon their left hand, and place upon their foreheads between their eyes, of which ((see Gill on “⁴¹²³⁵Matthew 23:5”)), but such a practice could be of no use to answer the end next mentioned:

that the Lord’s law may be in thy mouth; for surely this cannot be taken literally, but the sense is, that being instructed by the observance of the above feast, and being taught the meaning of it, they might be able to speak of it to their children, and so transmit it from age to age to their latest posterity:

for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt; ((see Gill on “⁴¹²³⁸Exodus 13:3”)).

Ver. 10. *Thou shalt therefore keep the ordinance in his season,* etc.] Not the ordinance of the phylacteries, as the Targum of Jonathan, but the ordinance of unleavened bread:

from year to year; every year successively, so long as in force, even unto the coming of the Messiah. It is in the Hebrew text, “from days to days”^{f392}; that is, either year after year, as we understand it; or else the sense is, that the feast of unleavened bread, when the season was come for keeping it, was to be observed every day for seven days running.

Ver. 11. *And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites,* etc.] Put for all the rest of the nations:

as he sware unto thee, and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee; to them as they were in their loins, and from thence might certainly conclude it would be given them.

Ver. 12. *That thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix*, etc.] Or “the womb”, as in (^{<ORIS>}Exodus 13:2), and this phrase, “set apart”, explains the word “sanctify” there, and shows that it signifies the separating of such to the use and service of God, causing it to “pass”, as the word ^{f393} here used signifies, from a man’s own power and use, to be the Lord’s only:

and every firstling that cometh from a beast which thou hast; or “even every firstling” ^{f394}, explaining what is meant by what opens the matrix or womb, even every firstborn of a beast; though Jarchi interprets it of an abortion, what comes before its time, that this also should be set apart to the Lord; this must be understood of the firstlings of clean creatures, fit for food and sacrifice, such as the firstlings of cows, sheep, and goats, (^{<ORIS>}Numbers 18:17) as distinguished from unclean ones in the following verse:

the males [shall be] the Lord’s; which explains what sort of firstborn of man and beast were to be set apart for his use, not females, though the first that opened the womb; but males.

Ver. 13. *And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb*, etc.] Which was given to the priest for it; and according to the Jewish canon ^{f395}, it might be redeemed with that only;

“not with a calf, nor with an animal (a goat or a ram, as Bartenora interprets it), nor with a lamb slain, or torn to pieces.”

Jarchi thinks the ass only was to be redeemed, and not the firstling of any other unclean creature, but his reasons are insufficient; all unclean creatures, as horses, camels, dogs, swine, etc. are included in it, as should seem from (^{<ORIS>}Numbers 18:15) and this is the rather particularly mentioned, because there was a greater plenty of them than of horses and camels, and because they were very useful creatures; and if these were to be redeemed, then much more those of less value, and less useful. Hence might arise the story and calumny, as some have thought, of the Jews worshipping an ass’s head:

and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shall break its neck; cut off its head on the back of the neck with a knife or cleaver, such as butchers use, as the Misnah ^{f396}, and its commentators, interpret it, so that the owner should have no profit by it:

and all the firstborn of man amongst thy children shall thou redeem; with the price of five shekels of the sanctuary, and within thirty days of the birth of it, (⁴⁸⁸⁶Numbers 18:16) and these being to be redeemed as the unclean beasts were, shows that men are by nature unclean, and even the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, the elect of God, and need redemption by the blood of the Lamb.

Ver. 14. *And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come*, etc.] Or “on the morrow” ^{f397}, the day following such a separation of the firstborn of clean creatures, or such a redemption of the firstborn of unclean ones, and of man, or in any later time:

saying, what is this? what is the meaning of this? for what reason are such things done?

that thou shall say unto him, by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt from the house of bondage: by laying his mighty hand upon the firstborn of Egypt, and destroying them, which made the king of Egypt, and his people, willing to let Israel go; ((see Gill on “⁴²³⁸Exodus 13:3”)).

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go*, etc.] Showed great reluctance to it, and with difficulty was prevailed upon to dismiss them:

that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of men, and the firstborn of beast: which he did in one night, making use of a destroying angel or angels for that purpose:

therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth thee matrix, being males; that is, the firstborn of all clean creatures, as oxen, sheep, and goats:

but all the firstborn of my children I redeem; by paying five shekels apiece to the priest for them, as before observed; and this law continues to be observed with the Jews; the manner of which, as related by Leo Modena ^{f398}, is as follows,

“Thirty days being expired after the birth of the child, they call a priest to them; that is to say, one that is descended of the stock of

Aaron, whom the father of the child pleaseth; and so, many people being gathered together at the time appointed, the father of the child bringeth before the priest, in a bowl or basin, a good quantity of gold and silver, and then they give him the child into his arms; the priest then calling the mother of it before him, saith unto her, mistress, is this your son? she answereth, yes; then, replies he, have you never had any child before, either male or female, or have miscarried anyone? she saith unto him, no; then doth the priest say, this child is mine, as being the firstborn; then turning himself toward the father, he asketh him, whether he will redeem it or not? who answereth him, saying, see, here is gold and silver, take your own price; then saith the priest unto him, you will redeem it then? the father answereth, I will redeem it; it shall be so then, saith the priest, this child is mine as being the firstborn, as it is written, (~~40816~~ Numbers 18:16). I therefore take this in exchange, etc. and so he takes the sum of two French crowns, or thereabout, as he thinks good, and then delivers the child to his father and mother, and this day they make a feasting day.”

This custom was used in Christ’s time, and was observed with respect to him, (~~4077~~ Luke 2:27).

Ver. 16. *And it shall be for a token upon thine head, and for frontlets between thine eyes,* etc.] These laws observed concerning the setting apart the firstlings of their beasts, the redemption of the firstborn of unclean ones, and of the firstborn of men, will bring the reason of it, the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt, and the preservation of the firstborn of Israel, as fresh to remembrance as any token upon the hand, put there to bring things to mind; and it will be as easily and as clearly discerned as anything upon a man’s forehead may be seen by another:

for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt: which is often mentioned, that it might be observed; it being the signs and wonders which the omnipotent hand of God wrought, especially the last, which worked upon Pharaoh, to let the people of Israel go; and their posterity, in all succeeding ages, would speak of this affair as if personally concerned in it, they being then in the loins of their ancestors, and represented by them, as well as they reaped and enjoyed all the benefits of that wonderful deliverance, the possession of the land of Canaan, and the blessings of it, as

well as many other privileges both of a civil and religious kind. And so Maimonides^{f399} says,

“in every age a man is obliged to consider himself as if he in himself now went out of the bondage of Egypt, as it is said, “and he brought us forth from thence”, etc.”

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go,* etc.] Gave them leave to depart out of Egypt, and even urged them to be gone in haste upon the death of his firstborn:

that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; the land of the Philistines was the Pentapolis, or five cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, which lay between Egypt and Canaan; and their way through it to Canaan, out of Egypt, was the nearest they could go; and was, as Aben Ezra says, about ten days' journey; but Philo the Jew says^{f400} it was but three days' journey; and it seems, by the sons of Jacob going to and fro for corn, that it was no very long journey:

for God said: within himself, or he declared the following reason of so doing to Moses:

lest peradventure the people repent: which is said not as ignorant or doubtful, but, as Aben Ezra says, after the manner of men:

when they see war: the Philistines coming out against them to hinder their passage through their country; they being a warlike people, bold and courageous, and the Israelites, through their long servitude, of a mean, timorous, and cowardly disposition; and indeed as yet unarmed, and so very unfit to engage in war, and therefore would at once be intimidated:

and they return to Egypt; judging it more eligible to continue in their former bondage, than to fall a prey into the hands of such fierce and cruel enemies. This is the only reason mentioned for not leading them this way; but there were other secret reasons for it, which afterwards opened in Providence, as the doing that wonderful work for them, leading them through the Red sea as on dry land, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in it; and by being brought into a wilderness, a solitude, they would be in the fittest place to receive and attend to the body of laws given them, and where they were formed into a commonwealth and church state, previous to their entrance into, and possession of, the land of Canaan; and

here also they were humbled, tried and proved, and had such instances of the power and goodness of God to them, as were sufficient to attach them to his service, and lay them under the greatest obligation to him, as well as would be of use to strengthen their faith and hope in him in future times of difficulty and distress.

Ver. 18. *But God led the people about,* etc.] Instead of their going to the west, or northwest, towards Gaza, etc. and the Mediterranean sea, the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, as after related, directed them to turn off to the right, between the east and south, to the southeast:

through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: the wilderness of Etham, by the Red sea:

and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt or “girt”^{f401} about the loins under the fifth rib; not with armour, as some^{f402} understand it, for it is not likely that they could, or that Pharaoh would suffer them to be furnished with armour, but their garments were girt about them, and so fit for travelling; or they went up “by fives”^{f403}, as it may be rendered, either by five in a rank, or rather in five bodies or squadrons, and so marched out, not in a disorderly and confused way, but in great order and regularity. The latter is much more reasonable to suppose, for five in a rank is too small a number for an army of 600,000 men to march in; since allowing the ranks to be but three feet asunder, and a mile to consist of about two thousand yards, the front and rear of the army would be sixty miles distant from each other^{f404}.

Ver. 19. *And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him,* etc.] And his remains might well be called bones, since at such a distance from his death the flesh must be gone, and nothing but bones left; of the place where Joseph’s coffin was laid, ((see Gill on “~~405~~Genesis 50:26”)). The Jews pretend, that Moses was informed where Joseph was buried by Sarah, the daughter of Asher, who they say was living at this time^{f405}; and many other fables they relate concerning the manner of finding him, which are not worthy of any notice. Jarchi thinks, that the bones of all the tribes, or of the sons of Jacob, were carried with them, but that does not appear from the text; though it seems, according to Stephen’s account, that they were carried over to Canaan; but then, whether immediately after their death, or at this time, and also by whom, is not certain, (see ~~405~~Acts 7:15,16):

for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel; his brethren; or “in swearing had caused them to swear”^{f406}, had given them a very strict oath, and which they had related to their children, and so from one generation to another, and thus it became known, and Moses looked upon himself and the people of Israel as bound to observe it:

saying, God will surely visit you; in a way of mercy and goodness, and bring you out of Egypt, and put you it possession of the land of Canaan:

and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you; ((see Gill on “^{<0525>}Genesis 50:25”)).

Ver. 20. *And they took their journey from Succoth*, etc.] On the second day, as Jarchi observes, from their coming out of Egypt, which was the sixteenth of Nisan:

and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness which had its name from it, and was called the wilderness of Etham, (^{<0638>}Numbers 33:8). Etham is said to be eight miles from Succoth^{f407}. Josephus^{f408} calls Succoth Latopolis, which had its name from the fish Latus, formerly worshipped them, where, he says, Babylon was built when Cambyses destroyed Egypt, and is thought by many^{f409} to be the same with Troglodytis, by the Red sea; and Etham is supposed to be the Buto of Herodotus^{f410}, where were the temple of Apollo and Diana, and the oracle of Latona.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord went before them*, etc.] Who is called the Angel of the Lord, (^{<0249>}Exodus 14:19 23:20), not a created but the uncreated Angel, the Angel of Jehovah’s presence, in whom his name, nature, and perfections were, even the Word and Son of God, the Lord Christ, (see ^{<0109>}1 Corinthians 10:9) who went before the armies of Israel, as their King, Leader, and Commander:

by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; through the Red sea, and the wilderness, at the edge of which they now were, which was untrodden, and trackless, and the way through it very difficult to find; and being a sandy desert, as soon as a path was made, it was immediately covered with sand, and to be seen no more: this cloud was not an ordinary one, but extraordinary, supernatural, and miraculous; in the superior part of it, it was in the form of a pillar, rising upwards towards heaven; in the lower part of it, it was more spread, and covered the camp of Israel; for, besides the use of it to show the way through a trackless wilderness, it was

a shelter and protection from the scorching heat of the sun in a sandy desert, where there was scarce anything to screen them from it, to which the allusion is in (^{<23015>}Isaiah 4:5,6 ^{<04034>}Numbers 10:34 14:14 ^{<04559>}Psalms 105:39) this cloud was an emblem of Christ, who has sometimes appeared clothed with a cloud, (^{<6601>}Revelation 10:1) of the obscurity of his human nature, of the fulness of grace in him, and being in the form of a pillar, of his uprightness, firmness, stability, and visibility in it; and of the use and benefit he is to his people, partly to show them the way in which they should go, by his Spirit and word, and lead them in it by his own example, whom it becomes them to follow, he being a wise, safe, and constant guide; and partly to shelter and protect them from the heat of a fiery law, from the flaming sword of justice, from the wrath of God, from the fiery darts of Satan, and from the furious persecution of wicked men, sometimes compared to the violent heat of the sun, (^{<2006>}Song of Solomon 1:6,7)

and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; whenever they travelled by night, as they sometimes did, and in those hot countries it was very agreeable; and this pillar of fire gave them light when the moon shone not, and was a direction to them which way to go: sometimes it is night with the people of God, a night of darkness and desertion, of drowsiness, sleepiness, and carnal security, or of affliction and distress: Christ is the light and comfort of his people, and by his Spirit and word illuminates, guides, and directs them what to do, and where and how to walk:

to go by day or night; to direct them in their journey, whether by night or day: this was but one pillar, though Aben Ezra thinks they were two; but it may be observed they are mentioned as one, and that the pillar of cloud in the night was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians, and gave light to the Israelites, (^{<0149>}Exodus 14:19,20,24), see also (^{<0421>}Numbers 9:21) and it is easy to observe that what appears as a cloud or smoke in the daytime, looks like fire in the night: so when Alexander's army was on the march, as a signal,

“fire was observed in the night, and smoke by day,”

as says the historian ^{f411}: nor can, this account of Moses seem incredible to the Heathens themselves, as Clemens of Alexandria observes ^{f412}, since they relate a story somewhat similar to this, which they profess to believe; as, that when Thrasybulus brought the exile Grecians from Phyle, and willing to do it secretly, a pillar was his guide, and as he passed in the night through untrodden paths, when the moon shone not, and it was a dark

winter night, a light was seen going before him, which brought them safe to Mynichia, and then left them: indeed this was not so extraordinary and miraculous, if true, as this pillar, as Bishop Patrick observes, because it was but for a night, whereas this continued all the forty years in the wilderness, until the Israelites came to Canaan's land, as follows: the Arabic geographer^{f413} speaks of exhalations arising out of caves at the sides of mountains, which in the daytime looked like smoke, and in the night time like fire.

Ver. 22. *He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day*, etc.] It always appeared in the daytime, and was a guide and shelter:

nor the pillar of fire by night, [from] before the people; this continued till they came through the wilderness to the borders of the land of Canaan, when they needed it no longer, and then it left them; for when they passed over Jordan the ark went before them, (^{ORR6}Joshua 3:6).