Exodus - Commentaries by Walter Thomas Turpin

Salvation of Jehovah: Addresses on the Book of Exodus, Chapter 3: Exodus 5:1-2,22-23

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Exodus 5:1, 2, 22, 23; 6:1-9

We were looking last week at the way in which God was pleased to fit His instrument of deliverance, Moses, who was the savior of that people whom God had raised up to carry out His own purposes with respect to them, how God took him in hand and dealt with him in long-suffering goodness, bore in great patience with his slowness, and backwardness, and self- will, and want of faith and confidence in God. But now there is a further step. After God had passed 'His servant through the necessary qualification for the work that He had for him to do, He sends him directly into Pharaoh's presence, as we have read to-night. Moses and Aaron, Aaron being given to Moses as a kind of spokesman, to share the burden with him, go directly into the presence of the monarch with this claim of God on their lips, "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.

But before that, in the last verse of Ex. 4, there is one of the most striking and touching scriptures in the whole of this history. When Moses and Aaron go to the people, and tell them what God's thoughts about them were, announce to them the purpose of the deliverance of God, the whole heart of the nation is touched, as it were, bowed under the prospect of deliverance. Under the sense of the delivering grace of God, "they bowed their heads and worshiped."

And this was a direct contradiction to the want of faith in Moses, because what he had said was, "They will not hear me; they will not listen to me." But would they listen to God? would they hear what God said? These servants of God announce to the nation that God had visited them. And I called your attention last week to the way God; as it were, takes up the faith of His servant Joseph as he passed off this scene. For these were Joseph's dying words, "Behold, I die, but God will surely visit you." His faith went on and grasped in prospect the promise of God. And now God takes up this word and puts it into the mouth of Moses so long afterwards, and sends him with, as it were, this echo from the death-bed of Joseph, for God was visiting His people; and the moment the people heard it, they bowed their heads and worshiped. It was not a question of believing man, but they believed God, their ears were opened to God.

And this is a thing of the greatest moment for us. For a servant of God may be a little too prominent in his own eyes. They will not listen to me, says Moses. But will they listen to God? that is the point. What a blessed thing it is to forget oneself, and to be behind Christ, as it were, to be behind God. And it is this retirement we ought to seek, that God may be prominent.

I was greatly struck in reading in the Acts, lately, the account of the dealing of God with the Gentiles, when they were taken up and God's mercy reached them. Paul and Barnabas were specially the servants of God in that wonderful bringing in of the Gentiles into blessing; and when they are challenged by the Judaizers of that day with regard to it, they come and announce to the assembled council at Jerusalem what had taken place; and it is very striking that they do not say what they had done. Now, I say, affectionately, that there is a great deal too much of that. But they say what God had done; they do not talk about their preaching or ministry; that is not what is uppermost in their thoughts; but they do announce what God had done. If they bring themselves in, it is always what God had wrought through them, not what they had wrought by the power of God; because, I suppose, there is no servant of Christ but would say whatever he did, he did by the power of God—but still, if people talk like that, it is you that did it; but if God does it, what a different thing that is! And you will find that order carefully preserved in this book of the Acts of the Holy Ghost, as it really is, giving it a specific character—they declare what God had wrought. No doubt He was pleased to do it through them, but still, He was the doer of it. And what is prominent there, is the arm and the power that was effecting His own purpose, and not the instrument through which He did it. Now I have no doubt at all, that poor Moses here was prominent in His own mind. "They will not believe me," he says to God. But when he comes to them and announces the fact that God had thought of them, and had visited them, and had come down to deliver them, and that it was about to be effectuated, the people accept the testimony of God, and bowed their heads. And I think it is a most affecting thing to see a whole nation touched with the sense of the sovereign favor that thought of them in the bitterness of their bondage, and had come down in wondrous goodness to take them out of it.

Then, as soon as ever the servants have delivered the message to the Lord's people, they announce it to the one who was the means of keeping the people in the bondage of Egypt. And I believe Pharaoh, here, is really, in figure, Satan, that keeps in bondage and distance from God His chosen. Just as I believe, afterwards, Amalek is Satan to interrupt the progress of the people of God through the wilderness. But here it is the power of bondage, and you know what Satan's power is in that way. So Pharaoh held them fast in his grip. And Moses comes in now as the vessel of God's power with the announcement of the purpose and claim of God, "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness." Now, beloved friends, that is very blessed; because you get not only the fact of the announcement here, but also the scope of God's purpose. And that is a great point. The purpose of God with regard to His people is to take them absolutely and positively out from Egypt to Himself. Let them go, He says; they must be entirely and completely out from Egypt to hold a feast to me. As long as ever they were in the bondage of Egypt, they were bound to think of themselves. The very shackles that were upon them, the very pressure that was upon their spirits, the very taskmaster's lash that was over them, of necessity, kept the people occupied with themselves. They could not think of God in Egypt; nobody thinks of God in Egypt. You must 'be out of Egypt to think of God; and therefore He says, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." You could not hold a feast to God in Egypt. People think they can. But you never could make God an object in Egypt, because you are not free. Remember, I am not speaking of experience at all. It matters not what experience you have, however wonderful, or deep, or blessed, you must have objectively in your soul, by faith, the knowledge of redemption, before you can have anything of real true experience. And there is a danger of the whole thing being reversed, and instead of the freedom and power of redemption known in people's souls, which is the great spring and genius of everything, the attempt is to begin the other way, and it is ruinous to the soul. I say, you cannot be occupied with God, you cannot make an object of God, you cannot hold a feast to God, you cannot have Him simply before your soul until you are out from Egypt. Are you out from Egypt? I do not ask you what feelings you

have, but do you know redemption? People think that is a very curious question to ask. I do not ask, Do you know forgiveness? though forgiveness is part of redemption. Many a person knows forgiveness who does not know redemption. If you know redemption, you know this, not merely that you have got forgiveness of the sins that pressed upon your conscience, but that you are clean out from the whole power that held you, and brought to God. Now, that is not a question of experience at all, but a question of faith. You will pardon me now for going a little into what is called the fundamental, for I believe it is the fundamental that is wanting. It is faith in a fact, not in a theory, or in a sentiment or in an experience, but faith in a fact, and a fact too, that does not receive any addition by your believing it, and nothing is detracted from it by your not believing it. This redemption is a thing wrought between God and Christ, and we had no part nor share in it at all, except the miserable wretched selves and sins that were all disposed of then.

Now you have the scope of the purposes of God insisted upon here in the beginning of Ex. 5, “Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.” I want to have them out, and I must have the three days’ journey between My people and Egypt. Why? Because that is exactly death and resurrection. There must, as it were, be death and resurrection between My people and the house of bondage, before they can be free to hold a feast to me in the wilderness.

Now there are two things I would like to call your attention to in connection with this. You will find the greatest possible weakness on the part of God’s people, even in the presence of the manifestation of His grace; and weakness in the servant too; and you will find solemn wickedness in Pharaoh, typical, no doubt, of the wickedness of the power of Satan. Pharaoh says, “I know not Jehovah, neither will I let the people go.” And when you look at the people, the announcement of the purpose of God stirred up all the power of the enemy, and Pharaoh puts harder pressure upon them. Just as Satan does now. If he sees that there is the probability of a person being rescued from his power, then he increases the bondage, and makes it more difficult and more hard. If a person is entirely and willingly the dupe of Satan, he gives him an easy time, “When a strong man, armed, keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.” He does not torment the world, he makes it easy for them. But when it is a question of the delivering power of God going forth to a person, then you find all the power of the enemy put forth. Here Pharaoh says, “I will not let them go,” I do not know the Lord; why do you announce that word to me? I mean to keep them, and I will make it harder for them now, as you have caused this interruption; they are idle, and I will increase the task, and make the burdens heavier. And then you see the weakness of the people; they do not listen to Moses for cruel bondage. And Moses gets restive under it, and goes to God, and says, Why have you afflicted this people? and why have you sent me? Ever since I came in to speak to this people, evil has happened to them, and you have not delivered them at all.

Beloved friends, there is not one of us that would endure that for half-an-hour. But O the wonderful patience of our God! See how longsuffering He is with His servant in the opening of Ex. 6, how He bears with the weakness of His poor vessel; there is no chiding, not a word of rebuke. Such a speech as that from Moses to God might well call forth the bitterest rebuke from God; but there is not a word of that. He does not say, You have forgotten yourself; you have forgotten whose presence you are in, whom you have spoken to, and what is becoming the dignity of the mighty God. But what He says is this, “Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh, for with a strong hand I will bring them out.” And then there is again the most magnificent unfolding of His mighty name. I was not known, He says, to the patriarchs, by My name Jehovah, I was known to them as God Almighty. Their knowledge of God never went beyond that revelation, because the revelation of God’s name defines the position of the persons to whom the revelation was made, and the knowledge they have of Him for the time being. Thus Abraham, blessed man as he was, his knowledge of God never went beyond God Almighty. He was known by the name of El-Shaddai; now there is another name. By my name Jehovah, which is the name of covenant relationship, I reveal myself now to you and to Israel my people; I am Jehovah, and I have taken that people into relationship with myself; I have made a covenant with them, and that name implies the covenant. I am Jehovah, and I will take you out from the bondage of Pharaoh, and I will take you to me, and I will bring you into the land, and I will remember my covenant, He says. O, beloved friends! it is wonderful to see how God stills the risings of the storm in the heart of Moses by opening out all these wonderful things that are connected with Himself—I will bring you out, I will emancipate you, I will extricate you, and I will bring you to myself, I will bring you into the land I promised you. There is the wonderful way that He meets the unbelief of a Moses, and the unbecoming nature of his address to God in the end of chapter 5 by the most exquisite manifestation of sovereign goodness and divine grace.

Now there is another thing to which I will call your attention, which will finish this part of our subject, before we come to what is really the first part of redemption, viz., the passover in Ex. 12. Before Pharaoh felt the power of God dealing with him, he refused to let the people go. I do not go into the detail of it, but we have the dealings of God with Pharaoh, and with his land in the various plagues that were sent upon them. And directly Pharaoh began to feel the power of God touching him, the open opposition, and the avowed refusal to let the people go, is given up, and stratagem takes the place of opposition. Now, that is always the way with Satan. First it is refusal; then, when God’s power is felt, wiles. There are four distinct wiles of the devil, whom Pharaoh represents here, by which he seeks to frustrate the purposes of God, and accomplish his own purposes. The first is in Ex. 8. First of all it is, You shall not go. Now he says, You must hold a feast in Egypt, go and sacrifice to God in the land. It is very important to see how all these things work. I will put no restriction upon you, he says, with regard to your offering sacrifices or holding this feast; you may go and do that, but you must do it in my territory, you must do it in Egypt. And, beloved friends, that is what Christendom is doing at the present moment. The attempt of Christendom is to make an object of God in Egypt. The whole principle of Christendom is short of death and resurrection. And therefore they fall under this first wile of Pharaoh.

I think it is a terribly solemn thing to see how many people there are who profess the name of Christ, who take His name upon them, and who positively are citizens of this world on principle—I do not mean by failure now, but on principle. That is to say, their avowed principle is to remain in the world, connected with the world, to receive honor from the world, and take status in the world, in the hope of so doing good. That is the common principle of the day. And one of the favorite figures is, that just as the leaven was put into the meal and wrought until the whole was leavened, so people are to be in this world, which is Egypt in that sense, and to be the leaven in the world, to assimilate the world to themselves. That is in principle the first wile of Satan. He says, You may go and worship God, and have your religion, but you must have it in Egypt.

Now the answer of Moses to this is very distinct, and that servant of God rises, for the first time, to the thoughts and purposes of God, and meets it by a distinct and positive refusal. He says. I absolutely refuse to have anything to do with holding a feast to God as long as we are within the territory of Pharaoh’s power; we must be outside. And he adds very aptly and very properly, “we should sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians.”

The second wile is also in Ex. 8, and it is this. When Pharaoh was made to give up that opposition by the pressure of the hand of God upon him, then he says, “I will let you go . . . only ye shall not go very far away.” Now what a wonderful principle that is! The break must not be absolute. That suits a time-serving age, a half-and-half sort of thing, a little bit of God and a great piece of the world. You must not go very far away, he says. You must be sufficiently near to keep you in touch with Egypt. And yielding to that sort of compromise, giving in to that half-and-half sort of thing, has been the moral destruction of the saints of God. That is not a clean break; it is going, but still there is a sort of hold that keeps you; you are within sight of the territory, you are still within the region of the bondage, you are not far away, you are near. Still, the faith of Moses rises up to refuse that too. Moses insists on it that there must be a clean break. Then Pharaoh refuses again, and the hand of God touches him again.

Now we come to the third wile in Ex. 10. Compelled to yield again under the power of God, Pharaoh says, “Go now, ye that are men, but,” he says, as it were, “you must not have your little ones, you must leave your children behind.” That was a very deep, dark, designing plot of Pharaoh. He knew right well that if he could retain the children in Egypt, he would keep the people’s hearts there. You see the deep design of it, the children, the little ones, in Egypt. and the people in the desert. You may well say that was a terrible thing. God, in His infinite mercy, grant that we may not do that on principle, because that is very often done on principle. You say, “Oh! but you know I cannot alter the heart of my child, I can only leave my child there, I can only wait until God in His infinite mercy, comes in and acts for my child.” Well, that is simply playing into the hands of the devil. I do not deny or question for an instant, that you cannot alter or touch the heart of your child, I perfectly admit that; but you need not leave your child in Egypt, at any rate. Because I cannot touch the heart or move the affections of my child, am I to leave my child in Egypt? Never, through God’s grace; never for a moment.

And as that was the design of Pharaoh in those days, so you will find the same thing in after years in Num. 32, when it was a question of the land. There the two tribes and a half come to Moses, and say, “We have got cattle, and the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead is a land for cattle; the pasturage is rich, the locality is inviting, we are herdsmen with abundance of cattle, and there is the very place for us; do let us have our possession here, do not let us cross Jordan. do not let us get the other side of death and resurrection.” That was the awful sin of the two tribes and a half, that they wanted a resting-place short of the place that was the purpose of God. Well, says Moses to them, if you choose to take your place there, you cannot sever yourselves from the conflicts of your brethren, and you must at any rate cross the Jordan. If you want to have this place for your resting-place, leave your wives and your little ones. And they are all left in this region, which really was not the true side of Jordan for them, while the men had to go over and fight the battles and join in the conflicts of their brethren. But mark, they left their hearts behind them, in the region that was not God’s territory, and there was where the link was. They were linked with the region that was not the country in the purpose of God for Israel; they simply went over to take their part in conflict with their brethren; and when the conflict was over, they came back to possess the territory that was not in the purposes of God at all. It is the same thing exactly there. And oh! what a terrible thing, what a snare it is when one’s mind goes over it; and that is how God has spoken to us in scripture with regard to this kind of thing. You cannot read of a David’s lamentation over an Absalom, or of the stricken heart of an Aaron over the death of his two sons, stricken down before the Lord, nor the lamentation of a Jacob over Simeon and Levi, without feeling the solemnity of all this. And there is the thing that speaks to us, that the children are positively left, on principle, in Egypt, brought up for Egypt, educated for Egypt, every thing of Egyptian ways, manner, habit, custom, all cultivated about them, and the parents, forsooth, professedly taking the place of being pilgrims and strangers in the desert. And there is nothing I know, that has such a solemn effect at the present moment as this wile of Satan. I do not know any sadder sight than to see this wile accepted and taken up on principle by heads of households. I speak affectionately to fathers and mothers, who deliberately, on principle, dissociate the interests of their children from themselves. That is what I am speaking of now, not of failure and want of confidence in God. That is a trying thing enough, and we are all liable to it, even suppose our principles are the best, because we have to carry the principles out in faith in God and dependence on His Spirit; and I quite admit that right principles of themselves are not sufficient. But what I earnestly seek to press upon you is, that there should be true principles, and I say, No, through God’s grace, I will not content myself by saying, My children are there in Egypt, and I will leave them there, because I cannot move them or touch them—never!

I think it is a wonderful word that God said of Abraham, and a wonderful word that was said to Rahab, and you get the principle in both. God said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing that I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him.”

I know that Abraham will not dissever the interests of his children from himself in principle–-“he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him”— I trust that man, that on principle he will maintain for his children what he maintains for himself. Remember results are not yours and mine at all. I am, through God’s mercy and grace, a preacher of His gospel—do you think I am responsible for results? I am responsible to preach Christ, but not for what follows, not for the number of people that are converted or saved—that is God’s power. So I say to parents, You are responsible not to sever the interests of your children from your own, and you are responsible to maintain the headship of your family.

I have often thought of the wonderful words said to Rahab. You know she acted in faith towards the men that were spying out the land, and they say to her, We will be clear of this our oath; you take the scarlet thread and bind it in the window, and they said, “Thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father’s household, home unto thee”; that is to say, she is taken as an illustration of headship—you bring them there, you ally their interests with yours, and it is all well. Oh, may God, by His grace, give you to see the weighty principle that is in that. The very snare exposed here shows the importance of the subject; the very wile that Pharaoh uses in order to detain the people in bondage, to keep them in the land of Egypt, by having power over their little ones, shows you what it is.

Well, the last snare is in Ex. 10 too. Again feeling the pressure of God’s hand, Pharaoh says, I will let you go, and your children shall go too; but, he says, your flocks and herds must not go. Now what do you think is the meaning of that? There is a great deal in it. We say, God would not have them go resourceless, or empty-handed, or shorn of what they possessed. I am sure that is true, but I think there is more than that in it. There was a deep design of Satan, which Pharaoh really is, in saying the flocks and herds were to be left behind. And I have no doubt at all that what really lies at the root of it was, that they were to go out into the desert, without the means, when they were there, of sacrificing to God. When they were out there, in the enjoyment of the liberty that God had brought them into, they were to be shorn and destitute of the very means by which God was approached in those days; that is to say, it is a death-thrust at the great truth of sacrifice as the means of drawing near to God. I have no doubt that is one reason why he said, You must leave your cattle, your flocks, and your herds. It is exactly what we find to-day; and though I greatly dislike bringing a subject of this kind before Christians, still one has to remember that we are part

and parcel of the professing church of God, and it is well to know exactly what we have to meet, and it is all round about us. I often feel that, perhaps, we live too far away from all that goes on, and it is a great loss to us. You cannot dissociate yourself from the responsibility of the church as a whole; there is surely loss in your soul if you do. often think, when people speak of the failure and ruin, that they are not thinking of the ruin of the church of God, of that beautiful thing that was set up at the first here in this world; they are thinking of something less. NowI feel increasingly what a solemn thing is the failure and departure of the church as a whole from the truth of God. And the very thing that is creeping in rapidly at this present moment is just this, you may have Christ's life down here in this world, blessed, precious life as it was, and all His blessed beautiful example, and manipulate it into every kind of thing you please, but the devil will rob you of a Christ that underwent the judgment of God due to sin if he possibly can. That is what is pointed out by the flocks and the herds. In other words, they were to go out into the wilderness without Christ, because the flocks and the herds for sacrifice were the appointed means of drawing near to God in those days. We have been brought to God through sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and only on that ground could any be brought to God. God forbid one should say a word that would leave even a passing impression upon any mind that one did not adoringly value the blessed life of our Lord Jesus Christ upon earth. Never was there such a wonderful path, such wonderful grace, such wondrous love as was displayed by Him all those years, but that, blessed as it is, could never bring us to God. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone" {John 12:24}. He was alone, alone in His blessedness, alone in His perfection, alone in His beauty, alone in His path here; and He might have remained alone, for not one could be brought to God save by the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the judgment of a holy God met in that death, and the bearing of sin. And that is the very thing that is attempted to be set aside at the present moment. And in this is the blessedness of God's word, we see how the principles of God's word come out here, what a wonderful book the Bible is, how things in it all through, from the very commencement, bear upon the present moment. Here is a book that was written hundreds and hundreds of years ago, and yet the same design of the devil, the same contrivances by which he is working at the present moment to destroy the unity and integrity of the truth, are all presented in picture in the Old Testament, and the whole thing depicted for us in the NT.

Once more Moses meets this with a positive refusal. Our flocks and our herds, as well as our little ones, must go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; we will not leave one single thing that belongs to us in Egypt; so far from leaving our children there, we will not leave our cattle there—not a hoof.

And then there is one other principle of the deepest importance here. He says, We do not know what we shall have to sacrifice to God until we go there. Now that is a great point. We are not in a position to say what God will require from us until we have been brought to God, until we are standing on God's ground. We must have our foot, so to speak, on terra firma, on solid ground, before we can tell what God will require from us on that ground. Because all responsibility flows from relationship, from the position we are set in before God. And that is what makes it so important to maintain and press position. There is great danger in constantly pressing responsibility apart from this. I do not want to make little of it, but I always feel, when I am pressing position, that I am increasing responsibility, I am putting the very soul and marrow, as it were, into it. If I say, You are brought to God Himself in the full redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ, brought clean out of Egypt, and brought to Him, and here set down before Him in all the fullness and efficacy of that redemption, if your soul gets the sense of that in faith, you will say, oh! how responsible I am. And you do not begin to think of it in a legal way. Whereas, if responsibility of itself is pressed, people become legalists, and seek to fulfil their responsibility as in law, and they never get a proper sense of their responsibility on that ground; because it is the position, the place, I am brought into, and the relationship I am set in before God, that defines, and increases, and quickens, and energizes my responsibility.

Take an illustration of it. Suppose you were to take a poor, little, wretched, desolate Arab boy off the streets of London, and say to him, My boy, I want you to live like a prince. Prince, indeed! a poor, destitute, miserable beggar a prince! There would be no sense in it. You want him to live like what he is not. Your conceptions may be very grand; the idea in your thoughts may be very wonderful; you may have a marvelous scope before your mind; but you have got no leverage power to reach that poor little waif. But suppose you take him, and say, "The Queen of this realm has been pleased, in the exercise of her own gracious sovereignty, to put you into a position of the most wonderful nearness to herself, and to her throne"; you put the ground under his feet at once, you have given him the emolument, the dignity, the place, the power, and there at once you define the responsibility that belongs to him.

Now that is a very feeble illustration, but it is an illustration, of the manner in which God has acted towards us in His grace. And I am certain of it, and I am responsible to God for saying it to you, that the true way to increase responsibility is to press privilege. Nothing else will ever give us a sense of the importance of the claims of God upon us—claims, not in law, but in grace—(I hope you will understand how I use the word) save knowing in our very souls from the scripture the marvelous, blessed way that God has abounded toward us. He has brought us to Himself, done it by the sacrifice of His own Son, and by the complete overthrow of every hostile power, as you get in Ex. 6, "I will take you to me for a people." O beloved brethren, just get the sense of that, "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God." It is the very thing the apostle says in 2 Cor. 6, when he combines in that chapter all the names by which God was pleased to reveal Himself in former times, and says, "Wherefore, come out from among them," that is, the worldly, "and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Father, now is the name expressive of the revelation of God in Christianity, and you get in that chapter El-Shaddai, and Jehovah; "I will be to you a Father"—He puts that first "and ye shall be my sons and daughters. saith the Lord Almighty "; Father, El-Shaddai, Jehovah. Now, beloved friends, that is a wonderful reality, and you may depend upon it, it will not land you in spiritual bankruptcy, which must be the result of getting my mind full of doing this, or that, or the other, and of the claim of this or that upon me—that, I say, will land us in the bankrupt court spiritually—and that is where numbers of people have a tendency to drift. Whereas, if you think of the blessedness of the grace of God that has abounded towards us, and brought us to Himself, and set us down in the fulness of it—(the Lord, in His grace, give our hearts a better sense of it)—instead of lessening the practice, it will, through His grace, increase it, and give it power and force.

May God apply His word (for He alone can do it). and make our hearts sensible of the grace of God that makes these communications to us, for His blessed name' sake!

Salvation of Jehovah: Addresses on the Book of Exodus, Chapter 2: Exodus 3:9-22

I want, beloved friends, this evening, as the Lord may help one, to set before you the exercises, and the instructions along with those exercises, which God brings His servant into in connection with this mission. It was the most wonderful mission that could be conceived, for it was the mission of redemption. God was to be the Accomplisher of the redemption, but He was pleased to make use of Moses as the one who was to carry the tidings of it to the people, and to be His instrument for effectuating it. But whilst that is true, Jehovah always keeps Himself prominent and foremost in connection with it to the people. And that is a striking contrast to what you find in the present moment, for if anything characterizes the present day, it is, as some one has said, an idolatry of instrumentality, making everything of the instrument, and very little of God. Whereas, what you find here is that God has got not so much His instrument, but He has His vessel, and it is God Himself that is prominent. He says, I have seen it, and I have visited you, and I am come down to do it; and, therefore, afterwards, when it had been accomplished, He says, “You have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to myself.” It is all God. But then—and that is a very important thing for us—God works in His grace in the conscience, and affections, and soul of His servant Moses, so as to make him a fitting vessel for the accomplishment of all this wonderful thought and purpose of His heart.

I was calling attention last week to the fourfold revelation in this chapter—first, the revelation of God Himself, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”; secondly, the revelation of His grace, “I have seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt”; thirdly, the revelation of His purpose of deliverance, “I am come down to deliver them”; and fourthly, the revelation of the fact that Moses was to be the deliverer, “Come, now, I will send thee.” And where we begin this evening is, that as soon as ever these intimations fall on Moses’ ears, he says at once, “Who am I?”

Now, beloved friends, God never said a word to Moses about himself. He had heard the revelation of His great name, the revelation of His grace, the revelation of His purpose, and the marvelous revelation that He was about to send him, but not a syllable about Moses himself, directly or indirectly; and the instant this falls upon his ears, he says, “Who am I?”

That was very different from what had taken place before. In the earliest moments of his history, after his birth and marvelous deliverance, when, with all the affection and feeling that his heart had for his own people, the enthusiasm that swelled in his bosom toward his nation, he presents himself to them as their savior, their deliverer; then he asserts himself as the one who will do it by slaying the Egyptian and hiding him in the sand, and trying to reconcile those who were at variance, saying, “Why do ye wrong?” What makes this great difference now? The people, Moses himself, the circumstances, the difficulties were just the same then as now. Why was he so ready to go before, and so slow to go now? God had not said a word about his qualifications for his mission, or his appreciation, or understanding, or experience of it. What is it turns Moses’ eye in, and reads out his incompetency to him at once, and makes him reflect on himself as he does here, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” What was it made the difference? It is a very interesting study, and most practical for our souls. There is one word at the beginning of this chapter that lets a flood of light in on it. It was the position he was in, that made all the difference. I need not ask you where he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand, when he looked upon the burdens of his brethren, and his heart swelled with compassion for them, and he showed himself to them, and allied himself in affection and heart with them. But where was he now? Ah! there is thesecret. There is one word which typifies this position, “Horeb”; he was in the presence of God, he was at the mount of God, he was shut up with God. And that is what makes the difference with us. There is no greater truth than this—that the great interest for us, with regard to our looking at, or dealing with, or apprehension of any subject or our taking in the gravity of anything, depends altogether upon where we are standing as regards it. Two persons will take the most different view that could be conceived of the same thing, simply for this reason, that they are standing at totally different positions with regard to it. The moment Moses gets to Horeb, the mount of God, the greatness of everything comes before him. And it is in proportion as the greatness of God comes before our souls that the sense of the littleness of ourselves is there. It is not that there was any flaw, or imperfection, or poverty in the man; what makes him think of himself is, that he is in the presence of God; and when he thinks of himself, it is to depreciate himself, “Who am I” to do such a thing as this?

That is a very important matter. Here, of course, it was Moses as a servant, and being fitted for his mission; but I have no doubt it is the same in principle now with the way the Lord fits His servants, and sends them out, and the exercises He passes them through. We are not all called to such a mission as Moses was, but we are called to be servants of Christ in some way, and have all some service for Him to do. And you will find we are passed through things of this kind, and what brings us to book as they say, and makes us think little of ourselves, is not our failure, but the perfections of God. When I get into the divine presence, it is really getting into the light. Horeb answers to what we call the light. That is where every Christian is now. If I am not actually in the light, I am not a Christian at all. It is not a question of my comporting myself according to it; but that is where 1 am brought as a Christian, I am set down in this light before God. And when my soul enters into the fact that I really am there, and my soul bears testimony to it, that light makes everything manifest just as it was with Moses. That is the way God works in our souls at the present moment. It is not any deficiency that is in ourselves, it is His own holy presence that challenges everything. It is the light of that presence which detects, and exposes, and brings everything to the front; things that you would never think of or detect at all, come up the moment that light shines upon them.

Now, when Moses judges himself with regard to his incompetency for this wonderful mission—for it was a great thing to go out in the interests of such a wonderful redemption, to bring the people of God out of Egypt—then mark how God meets it. The moment he says, “Who am I?” God meets that with His “I”; “Certainly I will be with thee.” What a wonderful thing that is, and how gracious too! “I,” says God; and that puts out every other “I,” whether in self-judgment or self-complacency, whether in elation or despondency. That is what meets it, “Certainly I will be with thee.” And that is more than ministering strength, or grace, or help. He does not say, “I will support you with the needed assistance,” but He says, “You shall have my presence with you.” It is very like what happened on another occasion, when the people had failed after redemption, and it was a question of their being led through the desert as a failing people. You remember how God pledged to Moses His presence in exactly the same way when the whole failure was rampant and plain there before them. God says, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” “My presence; what a wonderful thing that is! “Certainly I will be with thee.”

You get two things there—“I will send you,” there is the mission; “I will be with you,” there is its endowment. When they send out missionaries now-a-days, they generally provide very considerable human endowment, but God provides the whole thing, “Come, I will send you,” “I will be with you.” And you may rest assured that if God has sent you to do anything, He will be with you. Of course this relates to a servant sent on a special work, but it applies in the moral of it. There is no such thing as God sending a person to do a thing, and not being with the person to do it—it is a falsity. You may find people sent on an errand or mission in this world without the necessary endowment and capabilities to carry it out, but never with God. If He sends me to do anything, or places me in any position, however menial or trifling, there is the pledge and

promise of His own presence, “Certainly I will be with thee”; and there is where our competency is.

But there is another thing which brings out God’s grace here. He does not only say, “I will be with you,” but He actually gives him a sign. Now I do think that is great grace, because it was in condescension to the weaknesses of His servant, He says, “Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee”—God gives him a sign whereby his faith might be strengthened in these wonderful communications—“When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt”—there is no contingency, no perhaps, no if, no peradventure; He speaks of it all as an accomplished thing. When you have performed the functions I have sent you to carry out, “you shall serve God in this mount.” I will give you not merely the pledge and promise of My presence, but a sign whereby you may know I have sent you—when you are free from the bondage of Egypt, you shall be My slaves, and shall serve Me on this mount.

Well, any of us would have thought, unless we know our own hearts, that that would have been enough for Moses; but if we know our own hearts, we know right well how slow we are to drop every thought about ourselves, and just simply go on the line with God. So it was with Moses. For now he tries to find another difficulty. It is not now a question of himself, “Who am I?” but now he says, I see a difficulty in the people, “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?” Now I want to call your attention to that. Moses says, I am not only conscious of feebleness in myself, God has graciously met that; but I am conscious of difficulties in the nation, and when I come and announce to them that the God of their fathers hath sent me, they will say, What is His name? There is an immensity in that. Have not our souls entered into the blessedness of the name? Everything is in the name. It was a very natural question for Israel to raise, What is the name of the One who is going to effect this? Because they knew right well what the shackles of Egypt were, and the power of Pharaoh, and the hard bondage of the country, and it could not be a small power that would ease their shoulder from the burden, and their hands from making the pots, which is the way the Psalm speaks of redemption, and set them free from all this slavery and tyranny in Egypt. And therefore Moses asks the question, “What is his name?” A simple question, and a very wonderful and blessed answer, “I am that I am”—a simple unfolding of what God is in His own nature, the great self-existent Jehovah, “I am that I am.” And I need not say that it is very blessed for us now, for Jesus is that very One, the blessedness of whose name I trust we have proved.

And it ought to be a watchword with us, and a familiar word to our souls, that His name is everything. We are gathered to His name {Matt. 18:20}; our sufficiency, our competency, our power is in His name, our resources are in His name, there is not a single thing that is not bound up and comprehended in that one little word, His name. And mark you, the Lord Himself says so, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I.” Would you not like to be where He is? He does not say, “There I will be”; no, He is stating a great fact, a great abstract reality for faith to lay hold of. The name there, implies everything connected with the person, all that surrounds the person in His own being, everything that comes from Him; you could not have a more comprehensive expression than “my name.”

You remember when the Holy Ghost came down after redemption was finished, as we have it in the Acts (the acts of the apostles so-called, but really the acts of the Holy Ghost), you have there the power of that name. Peter says, “Silver and gold have I none,” none of the world’s resources, neither wealth, nor greatness, nor power, nor ability, nor anything else; but he says, I have got this, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” He knew what was in that name would to God we knew it. Very often, alas! people fall back on what they think some great ability, or wonderful cleverness, but that is not our power at all, though, I am sorry to say, it is very often our weakness. In Christ is where the power is; it is the sufficiency, the competency, the blessedness, the preciousness of that name, so that everything we could conceive of fulness or blessing is centered around and bound up in that one name. You may say I am taking it out of the OT and bringing it into the New; but you see how the moral lines of truth run in that way, though this was in a very different order of things. They will want to know, says Moses, who has sent me; they will ask me, What is His name? what shall I say? And therefore God gives it, “I am that I am; thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you.”

Now let me refer you to the NT, to make it a little more distinct with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. You know well, that He is that. The Lord Himself alludes to it in John 8, and takes this name when He says to the Jews, “If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins.” “He” there, is in italics, and really destroys the force and meaning of it. And then these carping Jews say, “Who art thou?” just as Moses says Israel would want to know who God is. Do you take in the blessedness of His reply to that? One does not like to say one word about our beautiful translation, our dear blessed old Bible, but it really does spoil the meaning here, in saying, “Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.” That does not convey at all the force and strength of the Savior’s words. What He does answer is this, “absolutely what I say”; that is, there was not the smallest divergence, but there was the most full divine accord between His words and Himself. In His words and in His works too, the great “I am” stood before them. And this is the most complete manifestation of “I am.” You could not say, there is a little bit of excess there, and a little bit of defect here; no, there was the most complete accord, the fullest and most perfect divine harmony between what He said and what He was; they were identical. That is very blessed for us, because that is the One whose name, through grace, He has taught us to cherish in our souls as our competency in these last days.

In John 18 it comes out even more strongly. There, when the Lord Jesus Christ is willingly surrendering Himself, and they came out with lanterns and torches, and weapons, to take Him, “Jesus, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said, Whom seek ye?” They said, “Jesus of Nazareth”; and He simply utters this word, “I am” (it is not “he”); and the moment He uttered that word, “they went backward and fell to the ground.” There was a revelation, mark you, in that word, of whom He was as a divine Person; they felt the divine presence unwillingly, perhaps, but still they felt that they were in the presence of One who, although His Godhead glory was veiled in flesh, still was God, that God was there manifest in that lowly Man that was surrendering Himself into their hands, so that the divine presence drives them back and they all fall to the ground; otherwise they could have taken Him at once. But there you get the “I am” again. And so I connect these scriptures in Exodus with the NT, because Jesus is Jehovah.

But there is another thing that is very blessed as setting forth God’s grace. There is not merely the revelation of His own Person as the self-existent One, the great “I am,” the Jehovah, but He adds this: “And God said, moreover,” or besides, apart altogether from telling him the name, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

Now what is the meaning of that? Because God had spoken this before, but now He connects it with the revelation of His own person as the “I am”; this “I am” is the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and this is His name for ever.

I think there are two things in it. First of all, God's relationship with His own people Israel is an everlasting relationship. I will say a little about it when we look at it from the Christian standpoint. But I feel it is an immense thing to bring out of scripture what is in scripture. I believe there is where our blessing is, whether in reading it, or ministering it. And do not think for a moment that to get blessing from it, it must necessarily concern you. That is a great mistake; that is making yourself too prominent altogether. There is blessing in it whether it concerns you or not. Because "all scripture," mark, "is given by inspiration of God." It often seems as if people thought that was a mistake, and that it ought to be "certain parts of scripture," favorite bits of scripture, but the apostle says, "Every scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect," or full-grown, "throughly furnished unto every good work." And though it may not concern me at all, still it concerns Christ and God, and my blessing is there.

Here we are dealing with the manifestation and revelation that God was pleased to give of Himself in these times to Israel, His earthly people; and He says, My relationship with My people is an everlasting relationship, "This is my name for ever, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Now people might say, I can understand God calling Himself the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, but I cannot understand God calling Himself the God of Jacob, of that crooked, perverse, scheming, planning man. Abraham was the father of the faithful, the friend of God, to whom He made known His mind; and Isaac was the heir of promise, type of God's blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the true seed, Abraham's seed. But Jacob was a man, as his brother said, rightly called Jacob, "he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright, and behold now he hath taken away my blessing"; by nature he was what you call a nasty character. Beloved friends, the marvelous grace of God shines out there, that He could connect His blessed name with one like Jacob: Jacob, the fruit of His grace; Jacob, the one whom God dealt with in all the tenderness of His love, and made Himself known to him in solitude, and wretchedness, and loneliness, and never left him till He had fulfilled all His purposes about him. Jacob was the great instance of the sovereign grace of God on the one hand, and the most wonderful instance of the forbearing and kindness of that grace on the other. And therefore, God is not merely God of Abraham and of Isaac, but He is also the God of Jacob.

And in the prophecies of Isaiah, God says, "Fear not, Jacob"—the very name which was indicative of what was unlovely upon the natural side of the character, but brought out all the more upon God's side the sovereign grace of God.

Some one has said (I do not know whether it is true or not) as an explanation of "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," that it is a representation in figure of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; Abraham, in his dealings with Isaac, being a representation of God giving up His only-begotten Son, and Isaac being a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Jacob the great fruit of God's grace, which, of course, is carried out by the power of the Holy Ghost. Of course there was not that revelation then, God had only revealed Himself in unity then, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." The person of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not brought out at all till you come to Christianity.

But here He is connecting His name with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the everlasting memorial of the relationship which subsists between God and that people. And that is a comfort for our hearts. Look at Israel, the poor Jewish people scattered and peeled, no one able to tell what has become of the ten tribes, and the whole of the land that God had designed for that people in the possession of the Turk or the Mohammedan, everything all upside down. Yet God is still the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and God will make good to that people everything that was in His own heart and purpose for them, for He has got that people in His own mind for that land and He has got that land for that people. And the peoples of the earth may plot and plan all kinds of things with regard to that narrow little strip of land, which seems to be a great object of ambition to different nations; but God has that land in purpose for that people, and that people for that land, and God will have that land inhabited by that people, and that people in that land. Now that is very blessed. It does not concern us, but it does concern the character of God. And it shows another thing, that when God is pleased to put Himself in relationship with a certain people upon the earth, that relationship, though earthly, is an everlasting relationship of its kind.

And now let us look at Christianity for a moment. When you come to that, you do not find God revealing Himself under the name of the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. I suppose it required a great many men to bring out the revelation of God's character. Abraham brought out one part of it, Isaac another, and Jacob another. But when we come to Christianity, one person and one name is competent for the full revelation of God, and therefore He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—and there you get the word Father coming in, which you never got before. These contrasts between what is old and what is new are very blessed. Now it is all standing in one blessed Person, God, in all the fullness of His nature as God, and in all the blessedness of His relationship as Father, revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And I should like to ask you this question, because I think people need it—how is God your Father? Thank God, He is our Father, and we can say, "Abba, Father," we have got the Spirit of His Son, we have got the adoption of sons, and we can use the language of children; but how is God our Father? Because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is it. Not by creation—that is the horrid idea that people are trying to spread abroad, and they call it the fatherhood of God in that general way, but it is all false, because it is in reality denying redemption. But the Lord Jesus Christ has brought me to stand in that relationship before His God and Father—that is my status. People may say, "I do not experience it, or enjoy it"; but there is something for you to experience and enjoy.

You remember how the Lord gave the earliest intimations of it in John 20, when He was risen from the dead and the whole work was accomplished. See the contrast with the first garden; in the first garden there was a fallen man and a fallenwoman, and both of them turned out, and the cherubim, the administration of divine justice, and the flaming sword that turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. But in the second garden there is a risen Man, and a redeemed woman, and the unfolding of the most wonderful relationship. He says to her, I am no longer on Jewish terms, and you may not detain Me, "Touch me not, I am not yet ascended to my Father," but, He says, go to my brethren, and say unto them that I have put them now in My own place, before My Father and God. She gets the communication and the revelation of it. The whole work was done, redemption completely accomplished, the Lord Jesus Christ having gone through everything. We hear much now about a mission, or service. This was the most wonderful mission, or message that was ever communicated for human lips to carry to another, "Go to my brethren"—He never had said "brethren" till now—"and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." There you have the contrast to all this in Exodus, because you never get "Father" here, you get "Jehovah"; but "Father" is the specific and distinct name of God in relationship now with Christians as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The blessedness of the OT is, that it helps us to bring out the NT in contrast, to show the distinctness of the wonderful thing that has come out, now that we have Christianity as a revealed fact, and the great work of redemption finished, so that we can be brought into it. It was revealed before we were brought into it, but redemption now brings us into every single thing that has been revealed.

Now in the close of this third chapter, when God has revealed not only His own self-existent Person to Moses, but His name in connection with this everlasting relationship to His people, He goes into details as He sends Moses. And look what wonderful competency Moses had placed as it were around him to carry this out. Think of all the wonderful things God had heaped upon him. He did not send him empty, or with sparse, scarce means, but fully equipped to carry out the work, “Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt; and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.” Now there is a beautiful little touch here; for I believe the reason for God saying that, was not merely the reiteration of His own mind, but because it was the very word His beloved servant Joseph used on his death-bed. He said, “God will surely visit you”; and God takes up that word because He delights to treasure up in His memory as it were words of faith. And so He takes the words that dropped from the lips of Joseph on his dying bed, when his faith looked on to the deliverance that should be accomplished for that people. And you know what a man Joseph had been, what a shelter, and solace, and stay he had been to them; and now he was going to die, and they would feel losing such a one as Joseph. “Behold, I die,” he says, but God lives, and not only lives, but He will surely visit you; and, he says, do not you leave a bone of mine down here in Egypt; I would not have one single part even of my body left in this house of bondage; so convinced am I of this deliverance of God, that before it comes, my bones shall be a testimony to it, for you shall not leave them here. And so in Ex. 1, they brought up the bones of Joseph. And the wonderful power of faith is the same now as then. It reminds me of the father of a family, or the mother of a household; she can close her eyes in death, for her faith is resting in the living God, and she can say, “I am going, but it will be all well with you, you have got God still.” “Behold, I die; but God will visit you.” And so God takes up that word here, distinctly, and reiterates it to Moses—Go to them and say, I have done what the faith of My servant Joseph lived in long before it came out; now it is come out, “I have surely visited you, and seen what is done to you in Egypt, and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto a land flowing with milk and honey.” And then God says to Moses, in order to assure him and certify his heart, “And they shall hearken to thy voice.”

But there is one thing more. God does not keep anything back. He says, “They shall hearken to thy voice”; but He also says, You must know beforehand, distinctly what you will have to incur; you will have a hard time with Pharaoh. But then, says God, “I will stretch out my hand”; and I will accomplish everything. O how blessed all these things are for our souls! It reminds me of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 16. When He was going away, He says to His disciples, I will tell you everything; you will be excommunicated out of decent society, you will not be tolerated, “they shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service; and these things will they do unto you because they know not the Father, nor me.” He says, I will not keep it back from you, I will tell you the whole thing now; while I was with you I did not tell you, but now I am going away I will tell you. And God says in Ex. 3, “Pharaoh will not let you go; but I”—there that word comes in again. In John16, the Lord Jesus Christ depicts all the dangers in the way, tells the disciples how they might expect to be received and cast out, and then comes another little word which is the set-off against it all, “But the Comforter”—that is the way it comes in.

Now, very often, when we are thinking of difficulties, and dangers, and trials, we think simply of them, but we do not bring in anything to meet them; God never does that. He says, I will not leave you in doubt as to what you are to encounter, I will spread them all out before you, but “I will stretch out my hand.”

May the Lord, by His grace, fortify our hearts with these grand principles, because they are grand principles, and show, not only how God plans, and purposes, and works Himself for the accomplishment of His purposes, and bears with the slowness of a Moses and of ourselves, but also the wonderful way in which God sustains, and how the grace of His heart goes on until He makes good everything. Well might Balaam say, though it was a compelled prophecy from his lips, “Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath, as it were, the strength of a unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob”—Jacob again, look; even though he be Jacob, still he is the beloved of God—“neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time”—after all the wilderness trials and difficulties are over, and Israel proved to be a failing people in them—“according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!”

The Lord, in His grace, give our hearts to take in the wonders of such communications as these, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Salvation of Jehovah: Addresses on the Book of Exodus, Chapter 1: Exodus 3:7-10

Exodus 3:7-10

All the books of the OT that follow Genesis differ from it in a very distinct and marked way in this, that whereas it (Genesis) presents certain great principles of God, and ways of acting of Himself such as it was at the time, and dealings with individuals, that which marks the other books is the specific subject to which each is devoted. Genesis is almost general in what it presents, but each of the others, Exodus for instance, has specially and peculiarly one subject that appears, as it were, at the very beginning and end, and in Exodus that is the subject of redemption. The great theme of Exodus is redemption—the circumstances, the place, the surroundings, all shedding light on it; then God’s interest in that people and how He extricated them, and afterwards (which is a very solemn part of it) even when they were the subject of redemption, and in the freedom and blessedness of it, how they elected of their own free will to go back and place themselves under a position of legal restraint, rather than to enjoy freely the blessings God had given them. So that we not only have the results of redemption stated, but the consequences of the human mind, wishing to have the blessings secured to it on some legal basis of its own choice rather than to enjoy it under the free sovereign grace of God.

However, I am not now going into so wide a theme, but only desire to state what the subjects of the book are. This evening I want to bring before you the commencement of it, as we have it in this passage, and to apply it, if God enable us, to the circumstances in which grace has placed ourselves. Only this, of course, was but a temporal redemption, whereas the redemption the Lord Jesus Christ has effected for His people is an eternal redemption.

And first, what we find here is that everything that surrounded the nation at this time, all that connected itself with Israel, the people of Jehovah’s special election, was designedly to make what happened to them, types for us. As is said in 1 Cor. 10, the things that happened to them were written as types for us. It does not say the people were, but the things that happened to them. I suppose the nation could not be,

in a certain sense, types for us, because they were an earthly people, with earthly hopes, earthly promises, earthly blessings, in fact, everything they had was down here in this world, whereas we belong to entirely another order of things; our blessings, our prospects, our hopes are heavenly, our home is in the heavens, our commonwealth is there, from whence we expect the Savior. We are the contrast rather of Israel. Whether individually or as members of a corporation, we are contrasted with Israel. Our blessings, our prospect, our hopes, our future, everything is contrast. And that is one secret of the right understanding of the epistle to the Hebrews. If you read that epistle with the thought of comparison, you will surely get astray; whereas, if you read it with the thought of contrast, you will be steered by grace through it. Everything is in the sharpest contrast in Hebrews; the lines of contrast are drawn in the most precise way by the Holy Ghost all through the epistle.

Now we are going to look at the things that happened, and the circumstances that pertained to this people as types for us; and first, with regard to the place. It is not without reason that this chosen people are found in Egypt. I need not refer to the history of how they got there; there were a number of circumstances, like chains, in God's providential ways, that brought them there; but there they were. And this land, of all others in scripture, is the one that would depict, in consequence of its own condition, the moral Egypt, and the moral condition of darkness, out of which God, in His infinite grace, has given us, as recipients of redemption, to be emancipated. For remember, redemption always supposes change of place. The word "salvation," in scripture, always means a change of position, though, perhaps, we limit it in our minds to the thought of some favor or blessing that would extenuate our circumstances spiritually. I do not mean in what concerns us in this world, but spiritually. And so the Passover, by itself, was not redemption, no doubt it goes along with the Red Sea in the history of redemption, and, in a certain sense, the Passover had a deeper aspect in it than the Red Sea. But still, the Passover was the shelter which God provided for that people whilst they were in Egypt, and God was only known in the character of an appeased judge in the Passover. He "passed over" the people when He judged Egypt, but they were not removed out of the place of bondage, their position was not changed; they were sheltered by the blood, but they were in bondage still. The Red Sea took them clean out of everything they were in as to bondage, the Passover met the deeper claims of God when He passed through the land as a judge, I say this to make it clear to you that when scripture speaks of redemption, it means not merely that God's righteous, holy claims have been met, as they were by the blood of the Passover Lamb, but that the people themselves, who were sheltered by that blood, have been entirely extricated from the place where they were in bondage, and completely brought to God. That is redemption. They left Egypt behind for ever; they had done with it. And the place they were in, is typical of the position we are in, until we know redemption. Now it is a pertinent question to ask, Have you got in your souls the knowledge of redemption? I believe there are a great many people that have not. They know shelter, they are perfectly certain that they will never go to hell, or come into judgment, but that is not redemption. An Israelite was sheltered in Egypt, but he was in Egypt still. And shelter, wonderful and blessed as it is—do not think I want to make little of it—is short of what has been truly called "extrication"; redemption is extrication, by it we are clean out altogether by the mighty power of God, through blood and power. The blood has met His own righteous, holy claims; and the power has completely submerged every hostile foe that could raise up its head. Through blood and power we have been brought out of the house of bondage, and brought to God—that is redemption. Liberty, and freedom, and blessedness are all connected with it, but it is not a matter of experience. There is experience, but this is fact, and it is fact for faith to possess. Here is the wonderful thing that must underlie all experience, in order to have it upon its true and proper basis. I am speaking of a great reality that has been accomplished, whether I accept and enjoy it or not; and whether I possess it or not, at any rate it is there for me to take, possess, and know. And if I enjoyed it a thousand times more, it would not make it one single whit more true; and if I never enjoyed it at all, it would not take away from the truth of it. I am speaking of a thing that exists, and did in this day when God effected His own purpose—He did redeem the people. And that is what faith always delights to rest in. It cannot take pleasure in the use it has made of it, but it always goes back to what God did; and there is no failure, nor flaw, nor imperfection, nor drawback in what He has done. And that is the estimate on which God looks at His people. Take that wonderful verse in Numbers, which is the book of Israel's wilderness journeys, walking with through the desert as a redeemed people. You remember how God confronted the adversary when he would move heaven and earth to have that people, the subject of God's redemption, accursed. The adversary sought to profit by the practical breakdown of Israel, to call attention to them in their practical ways as a reason why they should not be blessed. And that is what the devil is always at. He knows, right well, that there is a point here that he can press. There is the failure, the feebleness, the darkness, the imperfection, the shortcoming, and all the use that is made even of the very greatest favor of God, and what does God say with regard to it? "According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?" That is what silences every sound and meets every question that is raised; and in that very chapter God goes back to what we are beginning with tonight, "The Lord brought him out of Egypt." He brought him out, and brought him in too; his place was changed, his position was changed; there was a complete extrication of the people out of the land of Egypt. And it was God who did it. They would have stayed there to this day if they had been left, but God brought them out. And that is what faith always goes back to, because it travels in company with God.

But let me return for a moment. Egypt is a wonderful place even now. The circumstances connected with it were eminently calculated to depict the condition in which all are who have not as yet tasted redemption. What marked it, beloved friends? If one thing more than another, this, it was the land of death. It is not that ancient Egypt is not celebrated, and indeed modern Egypt too, borrowing its greatness from ancient Egypt, but the mightiest and most eloquent record that Egypt presents, or ever presented, was the record of death, for the monuments are the great record of death. It was marked by bondage, death, darkness, barrenness in itself, sterility, except for the Nile, for no rain ever fell there. As some one has said, they looked down for everything, not looked up. The fertility of the country did not come from above; the river was everything to it, and they worshiped their river. And there was the constant conflict between life and death there too. Because Egypt is a little tract of territory, with the desert each side, blowing all the sterility and barrenness of its arid burning sands upon it on the one hand, and the Nile continually overflowing to fructify and fertilize it on other: life and death continually contending, and I might say death getting the upper hand. What a picture that is of the moral condition of things in which we were as sinners once. One would not dwell upon it, but still it is an immense thing in connection with God's salvation, and to see what God's salvation has saved us out of, that if we have, through grace, been participators of this salvation, we see death and barrenness behind, and we have left bondage and taskmasters for ever. Because these were their circumstances. Look at the first chapter of Exodus and see how they were oppressed and beaten by Pharaoh, and the severity with which they were handled; see how the taskmasters ground them down; nothing could exceed the cruelty to the and the devastating circumstances they were in, in the land of bondage, so that the place and the circumstances that surrounded them there were of the very bitterest conceivable kind. And that is what morally marked us. Have we left that behind? Do you remember how God Himself has described the contrast between Canaan and Egypt in Deut. 11:10, "The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out"—you see they had come out, there was a change of place. And, beloved friends, I dwell upon that, and would reiterate it, over and over again, they were out of it. Are you out of it, in your soul, in your spirit, in your conscience before God, have you left it behind? "The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it

with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven." You see the contrast is very striking between the two countries. What is meant is simply this, that in Egypt everything was from the river, the river was everything to them, but it was endless toil; when the Nile overflowed its banks, which was the one source of fertility to the country, the people had, by hard work, to make channels for the overflow to reach the fields and the crops; and that is the meaning of watering it with thy foot; all the produce was secured by labor. That was the character of Egypt and is the character of this world. For this world, in a certain sense, is a desert through which we go with God—that is {the book of} Numbers. But in another sense, it is an Egypt out of which, by God's infinite mercy, if we have tasted redemption, we have been delivered. This present world has two moral aspects to us. It is the place where we were dead in trespasses and sins, or alive in them, if you like, before God, both being true—in one sense, we were dead there, and in another, alive; as far as God is concerned, we were dead; as far as lusts, and vanities, and follies, and passions were concerned, we were alive. Now delivered out of it, having been extricated by God's redemption from it, it becomes a desert world, and we walk with God through it. It was once the scene of our lusts, and vanities, and folly, where we found everything to gratify us as natural men. Now we find there is not a single thing in it, not a drop of water, not a single shower of rain, not a bit of fertility, and we go through it as a desert with God. And that is the contrast in these verses. One received water from the rain of heaven, Canaan; Egypt had its resources in itself, it was a place of independence. Just as man is independent of God in his natural condition, so with everything about it, place, circumstances, country, surroundings, all that was connected with it was purposely designed of God to make it a picture of the moral condition of darkness, and alienation, and death, and distance, and bondage in which we were all by nature before God.

That is the first thing you get in the opening chapters of Exodus, the oppression of Pharaoh and the bondage of the people. I only refer to one more point in it, and that is in Ex. 2: 23,

And it came to pass, in process of time, that the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

Now if you notice, there is not a word about their crying to God. It was selfish moaning; they felt the smart of the bondage, but they never looked to God at all; they did not think of Him as their deliverer. They smarted under the taskmaster's lash, sighed under the awful oppression that was laid upon them, they cried in the very bitterness of their hearts because of it, but it does not say to God. But look at the blessed contrast in the next verse, "God heard." O how blessed! No cry from them to Him, no reference of their trials to Him, no looking to Him to interfere, no expectation from on high, smarting and groaning, and murmuring under the pressure of their circumstances; but there was a heart up there, there were ears and eyes up there that looked down, and saw, and felt, and heard—"God heard"—nothing is more blessed and beautiful to me than that, "God heard." Would to God we had more of the sense of it, the interest of God in His people, even when He is not before their thoughts, when they do not refer things to Him, and look to Him to interfere for them.

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them, consideration, pity, was in Him. What a beautiful contrast that is! And you will find increasingly, beloved friends, that we have to get back to that, the motions, and movements, and motives, and principles of God's grace towards His people always begin and end with Himself. The sovereignty of His grace, and the accomplishment of His own purposes, and the affections of His own heart, spring up, as it were, in His own blessed nature. That is the secret of God's blessed actions towards all His people. As has been beautifully said, "When you come to Christianity, God works by what He brings, not by what He finds," that is to say, He brings in that which effects the thoughts and purposes of His own heart. The legal principle is, that He is looking for something, and that I am the person to render it to Him. Whereas the very genius and principle of Christianity is, that God is a giver, and I am a receiver. The contrary principle is, that God is a claimer, and that I am ready to meet His claims. Instead of that, He gives everything that was in His own heart to me, effecting it by the thing He brings in. And that is the only principle that will produce a change in anybody, and that can set the wheels of practice in your soul going, and keep them going too. You must have a motive and object outside of yourself; if you have not, you will come to spiritual bankruptcy and ruin before long.

But mark well how blessed it is! God looked down, He heard, though there was no cry actively directed to Him. And I like that word "cry." "I cried unto God with my voice," says the Psalmist. Many a one cries that does not cry to God. They did not cry to God, but for all that He heard in the blessed goodness of His own heart, and had respect, had consideration for the circumstances in which the people were That is the first point in connection with redemption.

The second is that, corresponding with the purposes and mind of God to take this people out of Egypt, God finds a deliverer suitable to His hand, and raises him up. That is the word used afterwards, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you"—it does not mean resurrection from the dead—"from among your brethren, like unto me." The expression, "raise up," may be used in two senses. The Lord Jesus Christ was raised up from amongst the dead after He had undergone the sentence of death for God's glory; but He was the One that was raised up to be the Deliverer of His people; as the little hymn celebrates it in the gospel of Luke, "hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David," the Lord Jesus Christ. "God, having raised up his servant Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Christ was raised up in a double sense. He was God's provided Savior, and He was the One whom God raised from the dead when He had accomplished the great work of redemption. That is what you find in the second chapter. Moses was the type in certain ways, as far as he could be, of our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not go into the details of it, but only put the leading points before you. Moses is found in the circumstances in which the people are. They are under pressure and difficulty in the land of Egypt. Moses, who was, by his genealogy, one of them, is found suffering exactly the circumstances that his people are suffering. The attempt was to exterminate them. What happens in the second chapter of Exodus is very like what happens when the Lord Jesus Christ was born into this world. The king seeks to exterminate all that could increase the seed of God's people on the earth, and Moses is born at this time. And there is a very exquisite point in the NT with regard to it. Moses' parents, in faith, hid him. I do not know what the revelation was that reached them, but I feel assured of this, that some communication or intimation from God reached them upon which their faith acted; because I cannot conceive it should be so apart from some communication or manifestation of God to the person. Faith is like the ivy vine that lays hold of something, but there must be something to lay hold of. God must have given some intimation—though I do not know what—to the parents, because it says, "By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents." Faith triumphed over fear, and over all the natural feelings of their heart, and when they could not conceal him any longer, then they put him into an ark of bulrushes and let him float on the river. And mark what is said, "because they saw he was a proper child"—it was not nature flattering itself with the beauty of its child—"fair to God" is the word in Acts, and that is faith. God must have made some communication to them, just as He must have made some communication upon which Abel's faith

acted, when he put the blood and fat of a victim between himself and God. And that is always the principle faith acts upon—God's revelation, or intimation, or communication, call it by what name you please; but something from God is the initiative, for God always takes the initiative, God always begins. Faith does not lead, it follows; it is a subject, dependent, obedient principle. So Moses' parents acted in faith on God's intimation of His mind, saw this child beautiful to God, "and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."

And then notice all the providential circumstances connected with his birth. For speaking now of him as the deliverer, by birth he was endowed with every single thing that would make nature and the mind of man say, That is the very man to effect God's purpose in bringing His people out of Egypt. He was brought up as the reputed son of the daughter of the monarch, he was educated in all the learning of Egypt, he was mighty in words and deeds. There was not a single natural qualification that Moses did not possess—high in birth, and trained and educated in the very best that could be accorded to him in that day. But when the time came for him to be used as God's own weapon to effect this deliverance, he gave it all up; he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he renounced all the qualifications that nature surrounded him with, and that Providence had placed him in the midst of, in simple faith he turned his back on every one of them, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

That is the Holy Ghost's commentary in Heb. 11 upon Moses' action.

And then it is exceedingly interesting to see in the second chapter of Exodus how God acts in fitting an instrument for His hands; and to effect His purposes. We find that before God makes known His mind to Moses, he suffers rejection from his own people, just as Christ did; they refused him. Now in the third chapter, when we come more directly to God's making known His mind to the one who was to carry out the purposes of His heart for this people, and to accomplish His redemption, the first thing shown to Moses is a picture of the exact condition in which the people were before God. For that is the meaning of the burning bush—to present to Moses an exact picture of the state of the nation, suffering every conceivable kind of vicissitude and pressure, but sustained through it. The bush burned with fire—judgment, pressure, difficulty, devastation continually resting upon them, but not consumed, because supported and maintained by God. And God intended that to act upon Moses as the servant of God's deliverance. When Moses sees this wonderful sight, he says to himself, I will draw near and look at this sight, why it is the bush is not consumed, and he drew near to behold.

Now the first dealing of God directly with him—and a very important thing it is—is that God now reveals Himself by name, mark that, and says to him, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." It is the revelation of the name of God to His servant in connection with the mission Moses was about to carry out. And that is a very important thing to bear in mind, that the revelation of the name of God, whatever it may be at any given time, gives its definiteness and its character to what God is about to do at that time. I need not say that the way God revealed Himself to Moses or to Israel was very different from the way God has revealed Himself to us. And the way God revealed Himself to the patriarchs was different from the way He revealed Himself to Israel. Jehovah was the revelation of God's name to Israel. He says to them that He was known to the patriarchs as El-Shaddai, but by His name Jehovah He was not known. God Almighty is the revelation God was pleased to make of Himself to Abraham, and Abraham never went beyond that. "I am the Almighty God," He said, "walk before me, and be thou perfect"—a wonderful revelation and beautiful for its time, but that was the extent and fulness of it. But to Israel, a people who were brought into covenant relationship with God, He makes known His covenant name, which is Jehovah.

But here, in the first instance, He goes back to this, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Now that is very interesting, because these are heads of families, it is not yet a nation; and therefore He does not yet say, "I am Jehovah," but I am the God of these families. When Moses drew near to look upon the burning bush, God as it were says to him, You cannot come near me; I pity that people, and I may speak to you, I may use you as the instrument of my delivering grace, I may send you on a mission of redemption, but I cannot have you near me; "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Now, beloved friends, that is very important. God is making known His mind about redemption, but redemption has not been accomplished. They are not brought to God yet, and therefore Moses cannot come near to God. God keeps His distance, I may say with reverence; He keeps Moses at a distance; faithful servant though he is, and about to be the deliverer of that people, God cannot have him near Him, "Draw not nigh hither."

Then God says, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." O, the blessedness of it! I think, beloved friends, the very fact of the distance that was inevitable, because of His own holy, moral nature, and which God maintained between even Moses and Himself, because redemption had not as yet been accomplished, throws into the most beautiful relief, and emphasizes in the most wonderful way the unfoldings of His heart. Though I cannot have you near me, I will tell you what is in my heart. The ground for having you near me is not accomplished yet, and you must not come nigh, but I will tell you I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt.

The first revelation is the revelation of the name of God; the second is the revelation of the grace of God, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows"; and now you have the revelation of His purpose, "And I am come down to deliver them." O beloved friends, how blessed it is! God was about to work through Moses, yet He had come down Himself, "I am come down"; I am going to do it. I may use you as the spade or the pitchfork, the hammer or the axe, or whatever else it may be, but I am the One who is going to do it. So we have first, the revelation of His name; and secondly, the revelation of His grace; thirdly, the revelation of His purpose; and now fourthly, the revelation of the mission, "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh." How wonderful, how blessed it is! How it brings our minds around God as the One who is about to accomplish this wonderful extrication of His people, how it all arose in His own divine mind! Who made a claim on Him? Who besought Him? Who put a motive there that He should do it? And so when you come to what has been accomplished for you and me through grace, it is exactly the same as it was with Israel, the sovereignty of His grace; and not only that, but it is God that has accomplished it. And of our redemption we may say, God planned it, Christ accomplished it, and the Holy Ghost bears witness to it. For that is what is said in the epistle to the Hebrews, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness"—the will of God, the work of Christ, and the witness of the Holy Ghost. The whole thing is divine. It originated in the mind of God, was accomplished by the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, and is borne witness to by God the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Just as clearly, and distinctly, and positively as this redemption here was the work of God, so is the redemption effected for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. There is not anything that is more touching to the heart, or anything that brings God more before us in all the fulness and blessedness of His own nature than this,

that even prior to the accomplishment of these purposes, prior to the fact that God had His own holy, righteous claims met, He had purposed in His heart to bring that people out from the land of bondage. So that He says afterwards, “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to myself.”

You have seen what I did to the power that oppressed you, and kept you in bondage, how I bare you in the mighty strength of my own love, and brought you to Myself. For in Ex. 15 you find that in the very earliest moments of their victory, these were the notes of their song, “Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation,” that is to say, they were brought to God. That is the meaning of it. Though they had not trod an inch of desert land, had not as yet got into Canaan, yet that is celebrated too, “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance.” No sooner do the opened waters of the Red Sea roll between the people and the hosts of Pharaoh, no sooner does God strike the keynote of that song on the resurrection shores of the Red Sea, than they celebrate the whole thing, not part of it, but the whole.

“Oh! but,” people say, “was it not Jordan that brought them into Canaan?” It was not, let me tell you. That is a very important subject, which I will treat in its place. They crossed the Jordan, it is true; but what brought them into Canaan in the accomplishment of God’s purposes was redemption, and it was accomplished at the Red Sea. How could they sing otherwise, “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance,” if the consummation of the purpose of God had not taken place? It was because the whole thing was done that they could sing; there was no redemption in the Jordan. If you doubt it, I will make it very simple. Surely you do not mean to say you desire to mix up our experience with redemption? If you do, then it has not been done only and simply by God Himself. That is experience to say, “We have died with Christ,” and that is what Jordan means. I cherish it in my soul that I have died with Christ, and risen with Christ, but that is not redemption. Redemption is, that Christ has died for me, that the precious death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ have taken me out of Egypt, out of the land of bondage, and brought me into Canaan. And through God’s grace I can rejoice in it, and bear testimony to that, because I know it to be true. I perfectly admit the experience part of it, and that until what answers to the Jordan is known experimentally in our souls, the joys and the knowledge of the thing are not there. But then, that is experience, and we must not confound experience with redemption. It has its own important place in the ways of God, and we cannot be without it. If you take it away, you take away one most important thing, but I am jealous of keeping redemption in its place, of keeping to redemption only the glories that belong to it. There it was a question of God and Christ alone, and nothing connected with us except wretched, miserable self and sin, that gave the occasion for the display of that grace. Christ died and rose again, that is Ex. 14, 15, in figure; and the whole thing was there and then made good, the purpose of God was there and then accomplished, and it was on that basis and in virtue of it that they went into God’s own land.

The Lord, in His grace, give our hearts to appreciate the wonderful making known of His purposes here. Nothing more beautiful than this—He says, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” He is not the God of dead people, but of the living. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were poor failing men, but He is the God of them for all that. Is not that a great comfort? Moses trembled and was afraid to look upon God, and now God says, Here is the revelation of my grace, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters: for I know their sorrows”; my heart is touched with it, I am all eye, and all ear, and all heart, where the interests, and needs, and sorrows of my poor people are concerned. And next observe the revelation of His purposes, “I am come down to deliver them”; I am going to do it; do not think you are going to be the deliverer, the deliverance, the extrication to be mine; I will use you in this work but I am the active agent and power in the whole thing, not only to bring them out, but to bring them in. Now for the revelation of his mission. Now come, I will send you—what an honor to be made the bearer of the tidings of this!

May the Lord, in His grace, give our souls to lay hold of these points tonight, and give our hearts to enter into them, and get our minds concentrated through grace upon these unfoldings of God’s purposes in view of this wonderful redemption He was about to accomplish for this people.

Salvation of Jehovah: Addresses on the Book of Exodus, Chapter 4: Exodus 12:2

Exodus 12:2

There is a striking analogy, beloved friends, between the announcement that God has given in His word of coming judgment, and the message which Moses was directed to convey from God to the children of Israel with relation to the scene that is described in this chapter. I have only read one verse of it, because I have no doubt that we are familiar with the details of the history. In the previous chapter, there are three great solemn marks of the event that was coming. For God says to Moses, “one plague more, then another word defines the time of the stroke, “midnight”; and then you will find another expression (though I only just indicate it, so that you may be induced to read it for yourselves) which is the great foundation of the whole thing, “The Lord doth put a difference between you and the Egyptians.”

Now those three things in Ex. 11 give a very distinct character, and put a very plain and evident mark upon what was coming. God announced them to His servants, and when we come to chapter 12, where the detail is given with regard to the announcement of judgment and the provision of God’s grace to meet it, there is a dignity and a quietness in the whole thing which is very remarkable; there is no sensation or stir of any sort. No one can read Ex. 12 without being struck with the quiet, dignified manner in which the announcement of the most awful blow that ever fell upon a nation and a country is given by God. And, beloved friends, there is this about it too, that makes it so striking, that it is exactly what we are told with regard to this world—that the midnight of judgment is approaching, and that the evening before the midnight is the time to prepare for the blow, that is the time to avail ourselves of the provision which God has made, and which God has revealed in His grace too, with regard to the impending stroke. When the midnight comes, the time of preparation is over—it is the time before that is of all importance. And that is the word that receives such distinctness all through—“At midnight I will pass through the land of Egypt.”

And it is equally solemn whether you take the midnight to refer to judgment itself, or to that which, to all intents and purposes, will leave this world exposed to judgment. For the Lord Jesus Christ speaks in the NT of His coming as at the midnight hour, that is to say, that the time when men are least looking out for the approach of the dreaded invasion is the time it comes. And the Lord has threatened the responsible church in its failing history with the judgment of the world. You remember how He says to Sardis in the book of Revelation, “I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

Now all that is brought into this history here. God was about to strike a blow. God is a judge all through these chapters, and it is important to lay hold of that. Their knowledge of Him does not get beyond the fact that He is a judge—appeased, I admit, but a judge for all that; sheltered they were, I fully own, but sheltered from the judge. He is not yet a deliverer. The deliverance is connected with what we have here to make up one redemption; that is to say, there are two parts in redemption—what we have in Ex. 12, and what we have in Ex. 14, and both these go together to make up one redemption. There is the blood that sheltered the people in the land of Egypt, when God passed through the land as a judge. Then, connected with that afterwards, there is the outstretched hand of God as a deliverer, who now intervenes in power to emancipate His people out of the house of bondage, and from the thralldom of Egypt for ever. But both these must go together; and, therefore, when we come to speak about the Red Sea (though I must not anticipate it now) and what God effected there, and the manifestation and display of His mighty power in it, there is combined with that, in order to make up the picture of redemption, the blood of the Passover lamb upon the lintel and two side posts of the houses. And this, in a certain sense, has a deeper aspect and a more solemn side even than the open waters of the Red Sea. We shall see that presently.

It is a very large subject, and one desires to condense it as far as possible, so that you may carry away the great salient points with you. But there are three great things that come before us in connection with this history. First of all, the people enter upon a new phase altogether of their history. There is a totally new period entered upon here; and that is the reason why God says to them in chapter 12, that this month was to be to them the beginning of months, it was to be the first month of the year. I need not say that, historically and literally, there was nothing new about it; but there is a moral newness in it. They began their moral history with God now; it was a new start, as we call it. They date anew, not their old historical dates, not their old years, so to speak, but now they begin positively to date in God's reckoning. From this moment "this month shall be to you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you." Why was this? What was it, beloved friends, which really gave this new character to the people in their relationship with God? Why it is exactly what you find unfolded immediately afterwards. Almost in the very next sentence God begins to say, "You shall take a lamb." Now everything was round that lamb, as far as God's thoughts were concerned. The taking of this lamb was God's own appointed and revealed provision. So that you have not merely the revelation of judgment, that occupies Ex. 11, which is the revelation of the stroke that was about to fall, the revelation of the crash that was about to come, the revelation of the judge, the revelation that God was about to pass through the land, and that God would raise that question with regard to every soul, whether it was an Israelite or whether it was an Egyptian; for if the judge goes through the land, the question is raised with everyone as to the meeting with that judge. No doubt Israel were God's chosen, elect people, and God had looked upon them, and thought of them in His love; but still, if God goes through the land in judgment, the question is raised with regard to every soul. Now, beloved friends, that is a very important thing, because it gives your soul at once, through grace, if you lay hold of it, the character of this. He says, I do pass through the land of Egypt this night in judgment, in that character, and all that, you see, comes out plainly; God does not keep back anything, He reveals it all. He reveals, not removes, remember; that is where the mistake is in people's minds.

God does not remove the judgment from Israel, He does not put them, as far as they themselves were concerned, on any different platform from the Egyptians; He says, I am going through the land of Egypt this night—remember, they were in Egypt—and what He does is this, He reveals, in grace, the answer to the impending judgment.

Now you have two things that ought to be simple to every soul here. You may, perhaps, wonder why they are pressed; but one increasingly finds it is the things at the bottom that are unstable in people's souls, that people are a great deal better versed, somehow or other, in the things that come after the foundation, than they are in the things that are in the foundation; and the consequence is, that they break down in those things that are excellent, because there is not a proper basis on which they rest. There is the revelation of judgment—but mark, there is the revelation of the answer to it. And that is the reason why everything was now new; in Ex. 12, their history begins anew. As far as I am acquainted with it, there never had been a sacrifice like this ordered of God before. I am perfectly aware that Abel brought a lamb, but I am not aware of any place where God told him to bring a lamb; and he brought the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof, and offered it in faith too. But here it was an appointed lamb. God specifically directed that the lamb should be taken; and the kind of lamb, and everything about it, was new. In every sense of the word, it was a new sacrifice; the concomitants of it were all new, the place in which it was to be offered was new too; it was a new idea that there should be such a thing as a lamb taken in Egypt. They were in Egypt; God spoke in Egypt; this thing was to be done in Egypt, the lamb was to be selected in Egypt, slain in Egypt, the blood caught in Egypt, and sprinkled upon the lintel and two side posts in Egypt. And they were to eat it after a new fashion; and there were not only new concomitants about the eating of it, but the very attitude they were in was all new, the whole thing new. That is the first thing I press upon you to-night, the whole thing new. This is the new start in their national history, and that is the reason why this month gets the dignity of being the first month. And if you were to ask, What was it? in one word it was this, they are beginning with God now, and God is beginning with them; that is what gives it this character. He thought of them before, He pitied then before, He looked upon their burdens before, He sent His servants before, He announced the promise of redemption before, and told them what He was about to do before; now He is positively beginning Himself. It was the intimation of good things to come before, now the time had arrived.

Well, now, that is very blessed if we take it out of type for a moment, because it exactly sets before us what is true of ourselves now. That is where we begin our history—I do not say it is where we end it—but that is where we begin our history in connection with God's Lamb. That is where every soul begins its history. If there is a person in this room to-night, who has not begun with Christ, God's Lamb, you have not begun your history yet, you have not made a start yet. The lamb, of course, was the type of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hence everything about it was designed to set forth the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the first great point that comes before us in this chapter, in this aspect of redemption.

Now look at the second for a moment. Not only was there the revelation of the lamb as that which alone could meet the claims of God in holiness and truth, and meet Him in His character as Judge, but you find another thing, that this lamb was be slain. Now, I quite admit that people speak about Christ, and there is a kind of sentiment with regard to Christ, and they talk about "no one but Christ"; at the present moment there is an immensity of that kind of thing; but it is an entirely different thing when you have to do with a Christ who was sacrificed, whose death was an absolute necessity, a crucified and dying Christ on whom the judgment of God fell because of our sin. And one has to insist upon that in these days. It is a very humbling, solemn thing when you think of it, that this is the truth the devil is trying to destroy now in Christendom. I was saying to you last week, that this was really at the root of Satan's wile, to keep the cattle from going out with the people. When Pharaoh was beaten off every point, he says at the last, "You may go, but you must not take your cattle." And I do not believe that it was merely that they should go out resourceless—I have no doubt it was partly that—but they were to go out without the divinely appointed means of having to do with God by sacrifice. It was a thrust at sacrifice, it was an attempt to destroy the only righteous way by which a sinner could approach God. That is reason why he wanted to keep the cattle back. And to-day, people say, Oh! may approach God,

you may go to God. God is merciful, God is kind, God is good, and Christ was so tender, so gracious. And the life of Christ is spoken of—His blessed wonderful life down here in this world, how kind, and gentle, and patient, and gracious He was. I admit it, beloved friends, but I say, with all reverence to-night, and with the whole strength of my soul, not all the spotlessness of His life, not all the marvelous, wonderful thirty-three years that He passed in this world, and there was none—none like Him—not all of it, could meet the claims of God in holiness. Nothing but His blood, nothing but the sacrificial death and atonement of One who was God, but became man that He might do this, could satisfy the righteous and holy claims of God. And that is the reason why you have the blood brought in here, the death; it was not merely the lamb, but the death of the lamb. And that is the great central figure in the whole of God's revelation; it is as the little hymn says, the Center of two eternities, it is around that everything revolves; that is the pivot upon which everything turns, both as to God's glory, and as to the eternal blessing and eternal emancipation of every soul that has to do with God. And outside of that, there is nothing.

Hence, you see, the very same revelation that unfolds the provision, insists upon every condition with regard to that provision. You shall kill the lamb, and more than that, you shall take of the blood that is in the bason. Now, I never read of the blood being caught and put apart for a purpose like this before. The blood was always spilled upon the ground, because it was the emblem of the life reverting to God, but I never read of it being reserved and put to a certain purpose like this.

There is another thing that was new about it, "Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and two side posts." I do not want to be fanciful, but why "the 1intel and two side posts," why is it not the two side posts and then the lintel, why the lintel first? I believe it was because the judgment was coming from above, it was judgment from God. "Ye shall strike the lintel and two side posts with the blood that is in the bason, and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning, for the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians." There is the wonderful provision of God, and God's own pledge of security in connection with that provision.

Now it may appear very simple, but I am laboring to be simple. for I have a very intense pressure in my heart that it is the downright simple, earnest things people want. But I should like to bring one point before you to-night, in connection with this, because I know exactly what passes through people's minds concerning it.

I take two cases in this way. Here are two persons, Israelites, who have heard God's revealed way of shelter, who have heard the revelation of judgment and the announcement of what would meet it, and they have accepted it, and believed it, and have selected the lamb according to the divine arrangement; the lamb has been slain, and the blood has been taken and sprinkled on the lintel and the two side posts. And one of the Israelites, who has placed himself under the shelter of that blood, divinely, according to God's arrangement, goes into his house and sits down to feast upon the flesh of the lamb in quietness and at rest, so far as quietness and rest could be conceived in connection with the revelation of this truth, or as far as it can be so said. But here is another. He equally sprinkles the blood, he equally selects the lamb according to God's arrangement, strikes the lintel and two side posts, goes into his house, sits down in trepidation, dismay, terror, fear of every possible description. Which of these two is safer? I asked a person that question not very long ago, and a person who would be very angry if you did not give him the place of a Christian, and he said to me at once, without the smallest hesitation, of "course, the first." Beloved friends, do not you see what is involved in that? They were positively bringing into the shelter the feeling of the sheltered. I quite admit this is only shelter, I do not want to put into it more than God puts into it. It is not salvation, salvation is when they have changed the place altogether; but this is shelter, and shelter is a very essential part of salvation—not the whole, nor the most blessed part of it, but the beginning, the first part of it, and everyone of us must have this shelter. But if you say that the person who is at rest in the shelter, whose mind is, so far, removed from any disturbance in the shelter, who can sit down and feed and feast upon the flesh of the lamb, whose blood was sprinkled on the lintel and the two side posts, that that person is more safe than the person who is equally sheltered by the blood, and sits down to feed upon the flesh of the lamb in trepidation, do not you see that you are importing into the safety the sense of the security or shelter? And that is what a great many people are doing, and a great many more than we think. The real truth of the matter is, one is just as safe as the other; they are not both equally happy, I admit, but they are both equally safe, because what sheltered them both alike is what has met the claims of God, and that is the blood.

Now I will redeem my pledge which I made to you at the beginning. This is the reason why, in a certain sense, the Passover has a deeper aspect than even the Red Sea. The judgment of God was executed at the Red Sea, I perfectly admit, and a very fierce and solemn judgment of God too, and judgment overtook all the enemies of Israel and of God, no doubt of it. But in the Passover, it was a question of God's moral claims, and that is why it has a deeper aspect. May God, by His Spirit, give us to appreciate that side of it, because that is a wonderful side. In the Red Sea, God was acting in power for His people; and it was a blessed deliverance and wonderful overthrow of their enemies and extrication of Israel. But on the night of the Passover it was a deeper thing, it was a question of the moral claims of God, of what would meet God, of the vindication in righteousness of God's holy nature. He is a holy and righteous judge, and there must be complete and full satisfaction rendered; that is what is in the Passover. And what could do that? Nothing but the blood of Him who was a lamb without blemish and without spot, His own Son who became a Man, and who willingly gave Himself to exhaust the judgment of a holy God, so that that judgment is as much, through grace, removed from us who deserved it as it is removed from Him now who in His grace undertook to bear it.

I was reading not very long ago, that very beautiful passage of scripture in ch. 9 of the epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle says, "But now once, in the consummation of the ages," which is really, I believe, the meaning of it, that is, after all the ages had run their course, "hath He," that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, "appeared for the putting away of sin, by the sacrifice of himself; and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." And it is a very remarkable and interesting thing that in the Douay version of the scriptures, which is the Roman Catholic version, the word is translated "exhaust," "Christ was once offered to exhaust the sins of many." And the note which is given in the Douay version to explain this word "exhaust" is a very fine word, "that is," says the writer of the note, "to empty, or draw out to the very bottom, by a plentiful and perfect redemption." Now that is exactly what it is. The Lord Jesus Christ, by a full and plentiful satisfaction, exhausted the whole of God's judgment, and God is perfectly vindicated, and further, is perfectly glorified. Thank God, we can say that now, because, of course, the fulness of the thing is but feebly presented in the type—but that is what God has found in the cross—a complete satisfaction for all His holy, righteous claims, and He has been as well perfectly glorified. O the blessedness of it! There is nothing in heaven or earth like it. It would be impossible to exaggerate the magnificence of it. See what an important thing it is to look at this great transaction as between God and Christ in all its objective blessedness, without importing into it any subjective state of ourselves at all. It was God who appointed the lamb, and directed the lamb to be slain; it was God who told them to sprinkle the blood on the lintel and the two side posts, and God said, not, "When you see the blood," for they could not—they were to go in

and shut their doors, it would be positively contrary to the divine order to go out to see whether it was there or not—He says, as it were, Close your door, and do not go out till the morning; it is not for you at all, it is for me, “When I see the blood.”

Some one has said, and it is perfectly true, that the great subject of Ex. 12 is, that death was everywhere, that there was not a house where there was not one dead; but there was this mighty difference, in the houses of the Israelites it was the death of God’s lamb, in the houses of the Egypt it was the death of the first-born. Death everywhere, judgment in the one, freedom from it and shelter in the other, for the blood was there.

Now there is one other thing, and it is very interesting too, that the blood was to be sprinkled with hyssop. What does that mean? I have been wondering, because I think one ought to avoid everything like sensationalism or sentimentality with regard to it, or driving things beyond their legitimate exposition; but surely there must be a meaning in it. Why was hyssop the plant that was selected by God, and that they should dip this hyssop in the blood and sprinkle it? What is hyssop? Well, there is another instance of it, and a very remarkable one too, in Num. 19. Hyssop there, is to be dipped in the water of purification, which was made out of the burning of the heifer. That chapter is the ordinance of the red heifer, as it is commonly called, and out of that ordinance there was made a purification for defilement or sin. Running water was mingled with the ashes of the heifer that had been burnt, the hyssop was dipped in that, and the person was sprinkled to be cleansed from his defilement. Here the Israelite, taking the hyssop, sprinkled the lintel and the two side posts. What is the meaning of hyssop then? I think there is a clue to it in Psa. 51, when David says, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” How could hyssop cleanse him? Well, I think that the cleansing there is moral cleansing, and that hyssop really is the symbol of humiliation; because, in the case of David, it was the departure from God of one who was in a certain relationship to Him, and when he was really humbled and broken in his soul about the thing, he was, in that sense, purified. It was through humiliation, and brokenness, and humbling, that God brought him into that moral condition before Himself. I think that is the reason why hyssop is employed in the other two instances; that it sets forth the broken and humiliated state of soul that is in consonance with this marvelous revelation of God’s shelter for poor wretched creatures like us; because it was the smallest and most insignificant thing, “the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.” That is only in passing, but I think every word has its importance, and that one ought to seek to find out the meaning of each word as God conveys it to us.

That is the second point. The first was the new start with God, in the fact of their having to do with the lamb. The second thing we have been speaking of, is the judgment of God met by the lamb’s blood sprinkled.

And now we come to the third thing, and that is, that they have to feed and feast inside on the flesh of the lamb, whose blood had secured their shelter outside. The blood outside for God, the flesh of the lamb inside for Israel, that is to say, in figure, it conveyed the fact of communion with God. I do not mean to say that they had communion, but, in the interpretation of it, we have communion with God about Him whose blood has sheltered us from God’s judgment. The flesh of the victim was, as it were, partaken of by them, symbolical of common thoughts between the soul and God. As we have come into Christianity, we can understand what the meaning of things in the OT is which they did not understand; but we understand now what communion is.

But more important than that even, in connection with this third point, is what I want really to fix your mind upon, that is, the adjuncts, the accompaniments of this feast, and the manner of it, because that sets forth exactly what becomes us now. He says, You shall eat the flesh that night roast with fire. What is the meaning of that? Well, fire is always in scripture emblematical of the judgment of God; that is to say, the flesh of the lamb which they partook of inside the house, was the lamb on which judgment fell. Judgment had overtaken the lamb; it had met the judgment, the fire had done its work, and they were to feed upon the flesh of a victim on which fire had fully and completely played. You shall eat the flesh of the lamb roast with fire. Beloved friends, that is a very important thing for our souls: the One that we feed on is the One that has gone through death. You remember how the Lord Jesus Christ Himself sets before us the fact in John 6, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;” unless you appropriate to the need of your soul a Christ that has died, you have no life, because eating His flesh and drinking His blood is appropriating His death to the needs of your soul; it is the symbol of His death, it is not the Lord’s supper. Do not be deceived about it. People think, when they read John 6, it is the Lord’s supper. I will give you a very simple reason why it cannot be. If that were the Lord’s supper, every one that ate the Lord’s supper would have eternal life, because the Lord Jesus Christ says, “Every one that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” So it cannot be that. But it is appropriating to the needs of my soul a Savior that has passed through death, and I have life through His death: that is the meaning of it.

Then there is another thing of the deepest moment in connection with it. It is not only that my needs are thus met in that way, but there is the constant supply of my soul in feeding upon Him. And hence it goes on to say, “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him”—that is communion, this is the way that the life we have from and in Him is supported, and fed, and sustained. It is the constant feeding for the support of life, it is the constant eating. Further, whosoever has done it, has appropriated to the needs of his soul a Christ who has died, has eternal life once for all. But then the life needs support, and Christ, who is my life, and through whose death I have life, is the food of my soul. And unless I am feeding upon Christ, and taking Him in for the needs of the life I have in Him must be sickly and feeble. And there is the real secret of the state many a child of God is in, the life is not fed, there is no feeding upon Christ, there is no sustainment, no vigor, he is sickly. I cannot say life is not there, but the man is not in vigor. It is like a person who is alive, but who is feeble and sickly, and poor, and unable to perform his duty, because he is not sustained. It is this sustainment I press upon you, for it is a very important subject. We need this sustainment and support. There is no such thing as power without it; one cannot conceive it. The very principle of our life is to be fed and supported, and Christ is the sustainment of it. The feeding upon Him in that continuous way in which it is presented in this scripture, is the means by which we are invigorated, and strengthened, sustained, and supported, and enabled to perform the functions of life.

Now the lamb’s flesh, upon which they fed in Egypt, on the night of the shelter, was roast with fire. But mark, there is a distinct communication put to something else, “Eat not of it raw.” What is that? It simply means this—that it must have undergone the action of fire, that there must have been what fire signifies; death must have taken place, it must be Christ’s death, the death of the lamb, the fire must have done its work—in scripture, fire is always the judgment of God—the lamb’s flesh must have been subjected to the action of the judgment of God, and that was the only way in which they could it.”Eat not of it raw.” Now Popery answers to “raw,” the unbloody sacrifice of the mass, so called, that is a raw thing. “Eat not of it raw.” Eat not of it until it has been subjected to the action of fire.

But there is more than that, “Eat not of it raw nor sodden at all with water.” What is the thing that is sodden? I have no doubt it is that sort of sickly sentimentality that people have when they talk about Christ in a natural kind of way. People speak of Christ in a sort of humanizing way. “Roast with fire” is what God says, in contradistinction to what is raw and to what is sodden with water.

Then mark again. “his head with his legs and with the purtenance thereof.” I have no doubt the different parts set forth the intelligence and the walk: the head, which is the seat of intelligence, and the legs, which are that by which one is conveyed about. O the blessedness of it, that the One whose blood has secured us God’s divinely appointed shelter, His flesh becomes food inside the sheltered house, upon which the heart can feed in safety.

And then there were certain things that were to go along with it. There was unleavened bread, that is to say, there was to be the open avowed refusal in principle of sin for which the blood was necessary, the unleavened bread always sets that forth. The bread was to be compressed bread, bread that was not separated by the particles of leaven. The principle of leaven is, that it separates the particles of bread. Leaven is never used in scripture, except as the type of what is evil. And there is to be the absence of that. You must not talk about feeding upon Christ, if you allow sin. You cannot put sin and Christ together. Christ was made sin by God on the cross that you and I, through grace, not only might be delivered from the judgment due to our sins, but that we might have a holy, everlasting detestation of sin. And that is what unleavened bread is; it is the acknowledgment of our positive abnegation of the whole of that, on account of which the judgment of God fell upon God’s Lamb.

Then there are the bitter herbs, which express the sense that the soul would have, and must have, of what it cost that blessed One to undergo all this, “and they shall eat the flesh that night roast with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs, they shall eat it.”

And then there is one thing more, that is, that there was to be a certain attitude about themselves—“Thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand,” that is to say, you are to be ready to leave Egypt. You see, they had not left Egypt yet; they were sheltered in Egypt, they were secured against the judgment of God in Egypt, but they were still in Egypt, though in heart, in spirit, in affection, they were to have left it. They were to have all in preparedness and readiness, “Thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded,” nothing that will connect you, even as to your clothes, with Egypt. May God, by His Spirit, give to our souls to understand how that it is to be thus with us in this world—that we are to have left this world in principle and heart, and to be on the height of expectation that He who said He would come for us, might come at any moment, and that we are ready to go when He comes, that our loins are girt, the seat of our affections are not flowing about over the things of this wretched world! Your loins girt, your shoes upon your feet ready for the journey, ready to start when He gives the word, and your staff in your hand, pilgrims; “and ye shall eat it in haste,” he says, it is the Lord’s Passover.

O beloved friends, how blessed it is to think of it! how entirely in keeping the whole thing is! For you have shelter, you have the food they fed on in that shelter, you have the manner in which they were to partake of it, the demeanor that was to become them, the appearance they were to present, and they were to be there, ready to go, and waiting for the particular moment that God would intervene. Now I ask you, Does that describe you and me? I quite admit we have not got, so far as I have brought before you to-night, to anything like the fulness of redemption, but how does this suit us now? Thank God we are out of Egypt, that is to say, we have been delivered from it through grace, we have been made partakers of the victories won in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Red Sea. But, beloved friends, are we really in the moral picture that this presents to us here? That is the question for us. Are we sitting in this world with our loins girt, our shoes upon our feet, and our staff in our hand? Are we really ready to go, and are we expecting to go?—that is the question. Or is it only that wretched, miserable thing that you hear people sometimes say, that they are resigned to go? Resigned to go, is that it? Are you glad to go, are you waiting to go, expecting to go, looking out to go? Resigned to slay, if you like; but longing to go, to leave this world behind; to be removed entirely outside of it. O beloved friends, what a wonderful thing it is!

The Lord, by His grace, give our hearts to take in the wonders of that much at least of redemption—it is the blood, it is the lamb, it is the holy, righteous claims of God, a deeper aspect of it even, as I said, than the Red Sea, because it is the claims of God being met, and so perfectly and fully met by His own wonderful provision, that the shelter is an absolutely safe and certain one, so that when God passed over as He went through the land of Egypt that night, there was not a single house where there was that mysterious red mark of the blood sprinkled upon it. but they were as safe as God’s shelter and God’s provision could make them. It was not a question of what they were, but of what God provided and found in the blood of the lamb. May we by grace be helped to take it in a little more fully, and use His word to-night, to suggest to our souls something deeper in it than we have seen before, for His blessed Name’s sake.

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