

Spurgeon's Exposition: Exodus

Related Resources

Exodus Commentaries, Sermons
Exodus Devotionals- Links to multiple resources
Exodus Illustrations 1 - Our Daily Bread
Exodus Illustrations 2 - C H Spurgeon, F B Meyer, J H Jowett
Spurgeon Sermons on Exodus Part 1
Spurgeon Sermons on Exodus Part 2
Spurgeon Sermons on Exodus Part 3
Maclaren on Exodus Part 1 - Excellent sermons Exodus 1-18
Maclaren on Exodus Part 2 - Excellent sermons Exodus 20-40

Spurgeon's Exposition Exodus

Exodus 3

This chapter tells of the appearance of God to Moses in the Wilderness. Has he removed from us brethren? He used to be seen by godly souls by mount and stream and sea; and even bushes were alive and blazing with the indwelt Godhead. Oh, that he would reveal himself to us tonight! I am going to read this chapter with this longing in my heart. I pray that the same longing may be in the heart of every child of God: "Show me thy face: show me thy face, my God, tonight."

Exo 3:1. Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

It must have been a great change for Moses, after forty years in the court of Pharaoh, to be spending another forty years in the wilderness. But it was not waste time; it required the first two periods to make Moses fit for the grand life of the last forty. He must be a prince, and he must be a shepherd, that he might be both a ruler and a shepherd to God's people, Israel. He must be much alone; he must have many solitary communings with his own heart; he must be led to feel his own weakness. And this will be no loss of time to him; he will do more in the last forty years because of the two forties thus spent in preparation. And it is not lost time that a man takes in putting on his harness before he goes to the battle, or that the reaper spends in sharpening his scythe before he cuts down the corn.

There is nothing dishonourable about common trade, and matters of business at all. Here is a shepherd, who keeps his flock, and God keeps him and reveals himself to him. When God wants a man to lead his people he seeks for him not among idlers, but busy, active men, and God was pleased to show himself more to Moses as a shepherd, than he had ever shown himself to him as a prince in Egypt. I find no glowing Deity in the halls of Pharaoh, but I find the consuming fire manifested in the lone wastes of the desert of Sinai.

Exo 3:2. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

How near God seemed in those ages when he could be beheld in a bush or sitting under an oak! And is he not equally near to us if we are but prepared for his presence? Surely pure eyes are scarce, or sights of God would be more frequent, for "the pure in heart shall see God."

Well might it say, "Behold." I have seen a bush set alight by a match. It blazed in a moment, but it was gone in another moment. It burned up so fiercely and hastily. But God was pleased to make a poor consumable bush to be the unharmed place of his abiding. He dwells today in the human person of the Saviour. The Godhead is in Christ. He dwells today in the church, which might well enough be consumed by his presence; but it is not consumed. He can come and dwell in my heart and in yours tonight, and yet we shall bear the presence of Deity to the hour of our death. He has a way of so throwing himself into our feebleness that it becomes strong, and that which might otherwise have been destroyed, is even preserved by his presence. The bush burned with fire, and was not consumed.

Exo 3:3-4

Oh, that personal call, that voice from God to the heart! How much we need it. Do you not remember when first the Lord called some of you? Then he says to you tonight, "I have called thee by my name. Thou art mine." Own that sweet impeachment, confess that you are his, and say to him, "For suffering or for service, here am I ready, aye ready, even as Moses was. Here am I."

Exo 3:3-5. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said. Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

God is not to be viewed by curiosity; he is not to be approached by presumption. A holy trembling well becomes the man who would commune with the most holy God. We are not fit for intercourse with God without some measure of preparation, There is something to be put off ere we can behold the Lord.

Exo 3:5

Stand as a servant stands in the presence of his master in the East. He is not expected to wear in the court of his master the shoes which have trodden in the mire of the world. Now, put off thy cares, put off thy carnal thoughts, put off thyself, put off thy sin. When God is near, solemnity and deep reverence become us. "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Exo 3:6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

Partly because of the universal superstition that if God appeared to any man, he would surely die; but in Moses' case, perhaps more because of an appreciation of the holiness of God and of his own unworthiness. There is not a man among us but what must do as Moses did if we are in a right state of mind. They that think they are perfect might presume to look, but they that are truly so, as Moses was, would, as he did, hide his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

Thou needest not hide thy face if God shall appear to thee, though I am sure thou wilt do it. Thou mayest come boldly. It is thy Father's face: it is the face of one who is reconciled to thee in Christ. Therefore open thine eyes and look; and may the Lord show himself to thee!

Exo 3:7. And the LORD said, 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;

Beautiful verse. God had seen and God had heard, as if their griefs had had two avenues to his heart. God seeth not with eyes, and heareth not with ears, as we do, but he speaketh after the manner of men, and he saith by two ways they had reached his very soul: "I have surely seen the affliction; I have heard their cries"; and then he adds, as if to show the perfection of his sympathy with them: "I know their sorrows." Now it is quite true today concerning us and concerning our God, he has seen, he has heard, and he knows — "I know their sorrows." When the sorrow is known, then God begins to work. He is no passive spectator of the misery of his chosen, but his hand goes with his heart.

Now, you troubled ones, are not these verses real music to you? God has seen your afflictions, there are God's eyes; God has heard your cry, there are God's ears. "I know their sorrows": there is God's mighty understanding. He is thinking about you. He knows all that which tries you tonight.

Exo 3:8. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

"Now, therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me," and when the cry of God's children goes unto him, depend upon it there will be something moving before long. When a father hears the cries of his children, when a mother hears the cry of her babe, it is not long before there will be a movement of the heart and of the hand. I am sure, brethren and sisters, there have been crises in English history which have been entirely due to the prayers of God's people. There have been singular occurrences which the mere reader of history cannot understand, but there is a number still alive who wait upon God in prayer, and they make history. There is more history made in the closet than in the cabinet of the ministry. There is a greater power at the back of the throne than the carnal eye can see, and that power is the cry of God's children.

Exo 3:9-10. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

I do not wonder that Moses opened his eyes when he knew what a poor creature he was for God to say, "Come now, therefore, and

I will send thee unto Pharaoh” — the very man whose life was sought by Pharaoh — “I will send thee unto Pharaoh” — the man that had been rejected by his own people when he took their part — “Thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” Oh! let us be ready for any commission. If God were to say that he would build up heaven by the poorest and meanest among us, it would not be for us to draw back. Let him do what he wills with us! Oh! for a faith to believe that in the midst of our weakness God’s strength would appear.

understanding. He is thinking about you. He knows all that which tries you tonight.

Exo 3:8-10. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

“Come now therefore,” This was a very extraordinary thing to follow after all that. God has seen the affliction of his people. What then? He says, “I am come down to deliver them.” What then? Why, the next thing is that he is going to use this trembling man who stands awe-struck with his shoes from off his feet in the presence of the still burning bush. “Come now, therefore.”

Exo 3:10. And I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

You have been praying for a blessing. God is going to give it through you. You have been looking east and west and north and south for some deliverer that shall win souls and stir up the church. God calls you to do it. He invites you to undertake this gigantic service, and I think that I see the colour come into your face, and then fly away again. You are ready to faint at the thought of such a charge laid upon you.

Exo 3:11. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Now, catch this: —

Exo 3:12. And he said, Certainly I will be with thee;

What more does Moses want? He said, “Who am I?” This showed his weakness. God said, “Never mind who you are. Certainly I will be with thee.” Here was strength enough for him.

Exo 3:12. And this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

And he did. You know how Sinai trembled while God made it his throne, and how Moses must have been strengthened when he did exceeding fear and quake before God when he recollected that this same God had appeared to him when he was alone in the desert, and had promised that they should worship him there.

Exo 3:14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM:

That is his name: the Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable God.

Exo 3:14. And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Oh, what a glorious commission — to receive it direct from the self-existent God, who is the same for ever and ever, and only hath immortality. Speak to us tonight, thou great I am, Jah, Jehovah, God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Speak to this company in this house of prayer tonight, because of Jesus, Joshua, Jehoshua, Jehovah, Jesus. I have tried to show you how that name of Jesus has the name “Jehovah” hidden away in it. Because of him, draw near to us, O Lord.

Exodus 10

Exo 10:1-2. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son’s son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD.

God would stamp the early history of Israel with the deep impression of his Godhead. His overthrow of the proud Egyptian king should let Israel know in the very beginning how great a God had chosen her to be his own peculiar portion.

Exo 10:3. And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me.

Can you imagine these humble individuals, Moses and Aaron, thus bearding the great king whose word could make their heads to roll upon the sword? They were not afraid, for God was with them; and they who speak in God's stead are traitors if they be not brave. The ambassadors of so great a King must not demean themselves by fear, therefore right boldly said they to Pharaoh, "Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me."

Exo 10:4-6. Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast: and they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field: and they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

Moses had delivered his message, he had uttered his solemn warning, so he waited no longer in the tyrant's presence.

Exo 10:7. And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God; knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

The seven former heavy judgments had so effectually bruised Egypt that the people began to cry against their king for his obstinacy in still further resisting God.

Exo 10:8-9. And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD.

Pharaoh was inclined to make terms with Moses, but God will have no conditions with men who are rebelling against him. An unconditional surrender is all that God will accept.

Exo 10:10-11. And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

See how proud, how stout-hearted towards evil is this wicked and foolish king. When his people appeal to him to yield, he only does so for a moment, and then he drives out the messengers of God in anger.

Exo 10:12-17. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

See how he is obliged to come to his knees at length. He will be up again soon, for his heart is not humbled, though he is eating his own words. An unhumbled heart is not subdued by judgments; it is so apparently, but really it is still a heart of stone.

Exo 10:18-20. And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

God kept his grace back from him, so that he relapsed into his natural state of obduracy. Pharaoh is the great mirror of pride and obstinacy; I wonder whether we have a Pharaoh here. Now let us turn to the 105th Psalm, and see further what God did against this proud Pharaoh.

Exodus 12

Exo 12:1-2. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

And for this reason that, now, as a nation, they were to begin their separate history, separate in existence from all the rest of mankind.

God thinks a great deal of the redemption of his people. When he redeemed them out of their Egyptian bondage, he took care that the mighty deed should be worthily commemorated. Thenceforth, the Jewish year was to begin with the celebration of the national deliverance; and now, when any of us are converted to God, and so are set free from the slavery of sin, we should reckon that then we really begin to live. All the previous part of our life has been wasted; but when we are brought truly to know God, through faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, then have we realized, indeed, what life is. The month of our conversion should be to us the beginning of months, the first month of the year to us.

Exo 12:3-4. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

The separation of the lamb was to take place some four days before the time of its slaughter. Probably it was kept in the house, according to the Jewish tradition it was so, and they would hear it bleating, and be reminded of the purpose for which it was to be slain.

The worship of God must be rendered in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and preparation. This paschal supper was not to be celebrated in any fashion that the people might choose; but they were to take time to have the lamb properly examined, that it might be found perfect in every respect, and that everything might be set in order so that the feast should be observed with due reverence and solemnity. Let us take care that we act thus in all our devotions; let us never rush to prayer or hasten to praise; but let us pause awhile, and think what we are about to do, lest we offer the sacrifice of fools, and so cause the Lord to bid us take back that which we have brought to put upon his altar without due thoughtfulness.

Exo 12:5. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

It was to be a type of Christ, and, therefore, it must be the best that they had. It must be in the prime of its strength, otherwise it would not be a fit emblem of the "strong Son of God" whose mighty love moved him to give himself to death for us.

You know what a type this is of Christ, "without blemish," offered up for us in the very fullness of his strength, in the prime and glory of his manhood, giving himself up to be our Paschal Lamb, "The Lamb of God."

Exo 12:6

Just as the sun went down, or just before it set for the evening. There is also the marginal reading "between the two evenings." The even before the sun set, was the first, and then the daylight after the sun set was the second evening.

Exo 12:6-10. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with .fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

Everything was to be done exactly according to God's order; the alteration of the slightest detail would have spoiled it all. I wish that all Christians would remember this rule with regard to the ordinances of God's house. They are not for us to make, or for us to alter, but for us to keep.

Exo 12:8-9. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

We are to have a whole Christ, with his head of wisdom and his heart of love, the walk and conversation of Christ, and all the inward secret life and grace of Christ all to be ours.

Exo 12:10. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

Not a bone was to be left for the Egyptians to treat with dishonour, but all was to be consumed.

Exo 12:11. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover.

They were thus to exercise an act of faith. Why were they to eat in haste, but that they expected soon to be gone? They were to stand like travelers who are starting upon a journey, believing that God was about to set them free. Oh, that we would always

exercise faith in all our devotions, for without faith it must ever be impossible to please God.

All those false gods had been smitten in the different plagues; and now, inasmuch as the Egyptians regarded the firstborn in the family with veneration, the last stroke was about to be struck, and Pharaoh and all his subjects would stagger under the tremendous blow.

Exo 12:12-13. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, —

What a grand gospel statement that is! When the sinner sees the blood, it is for his comfort; but it is God's sight of the blood that is, after all, the grand thing; and when is it that he does not see it?

Exo 12:13

Oh that we would all look upon the blood of Jesus as a token, — a token of divine love in giving the Well-beloved to die for us, — a token that justice has had its due, — a token that we are perfectly secure for ever!

Exo 12:13. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you,

It is God's view of the blood of Christ, which is the all-important matter; when he looks at Christ upon the cross, and is satisfied with the atonement that he there offered, the Lord passes over all those for whom Christ died as a Substitute.

Exo 12:13-15

Therefore he was no partaker in the redemption purchased by blood. He who is not purged from hypocrisy may say what he likes, but the blood will not save him unless he repents. There must be the putting away of this leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, or else even the blood of atonement will not avail.

Exo 12:13-20. And the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

Thus we see God instituting a commemoration of the deliverance of his people out of Egypt. How much more ought you and I, with joyful gladness, to remember the deliverance of our soul from the slavery of sin and Satan! Let us never forget it. I should like to refresh the memories of bygone times with you who know the Lord; the Lord help you now, with deepest gratitude, to recollect the day when first you saw your Saviour, and the yoke was taken from your neck, and the burden from your shoulder, glory be to the delivering Lord!

Exo 12:16. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.

What rest this brought into the houses of the Israelites! There was not only deliverance from the plagues, but there was also rest from all manner of work. Herein is the blessedness of the blood of the Lamb; when it comes to the home and the heart of the believer, it gives him rest of soul while others are toiling in vain to get relief by their own works.

Exo 12:17-25. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread, for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generation, by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the 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 and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

What! were they never to forget the slaying of the lamb and the sprinkling of the blood? No, never. Not when they came to Canaan, to the land that flowed with milk and honey, and when God had wrought other great marvels for them? No, never; and the highest honour that we shall ever have will be this, to be able truthfully to sing, —

“A monument of grace,

A sinner saved by blood.”

Exo 12:26-27. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

Exodus 13

We are going to read once more the familiar story of how the Lord relieved his people from the power of Egypt after he had brought them out of the house of bondage.

Exo 13:21-22. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way: and by night in pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Exodus 14

Exo 14:1-2 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth between Migdol and sea, over against Baalzephon: before it ye shall encamp by the sea

It might have been sufficient for the pillar of cloud to move that way; but it was really such an extraordinary thing for the Lord to lead the people right down to the sea that he gave a special command as well as the movement of the cloud. That Moses himself might not be staggered by what would seem to him to be such strange guidance the Lord tells him what to say to the people and then gives him this explanation:

Exo 14:3-4. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

Those four words, “And they did so,” though they are very short and very simple words, express a great deal. Oh, that it might always be said of all of us whenever God commands us to do anything, “And they did so.”

Exo 14:5. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?

Nothing but the grace of God will truly humble men. These Egyptians had been crushed by terrible plagues into a false kind of humility, but they were soon as proud as ever. Nothing but the omnipotent grace of God can really subdue a proud and stubborn heart.

Exo 14:6-8. And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

They were resolute and brave as long as they realized that God was with them; and the Egyptians behind them were bold and proud although God was not with them. There were two high hands that day, the high hand of the proud, puny Pharaoh and the high hand of the ever-blessed omnipotent Jehovah.

Exo 14:9-10. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid:

Forgetting what God had done for them, and promised to them, they became timid at the sight of their old master. They knew the cruelty of the Egyptians in time of war, and their hearts failed them.

Exo 14:10. And the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

Ah, dear friends, if they had cried to the Lord in true believing prayer, they would have been worthy of commendation; but they did not do so. They cried out unto the Lord in an unbelieving complaint, as the next verse plainly shows: —

Exo 14:11-12. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

What cowards they were, and how faint-hearted! Were these the people that were to conquer Canaan? Were these God's chosen people? Ah, judge them not, for you and I have often been quite as faint-hearted and quite as fickle as they were. May God forgive us as he again and again forgave them!

Exo 14:13-15. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians, whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

Moses was no doubt praying in his heart though it is not recorded the he uttered any words in prayer; but it was not the time for prayer, it was the time for action. When people sometimes say when they know their duty, "We will make it a matter of prayer," they generally mean that they will try to find some excuse for not doing it. You need not pray about any matter when you know what you ought to do; go and do it.

Exo 14:16-20. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them: and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that the one came not near the other all the night.

God was like a wall of fire between them and their enemies, so that they had no cause for fear even though the Egyptians were so near.

Exo 14:21-25. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians. And took of their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

They were now in the midst of the sea between the two high walls of water, and before they could flee see what happened to them: —

Exo 14:26-31. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the water returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the hosts of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

And well they might! Yet how soon they murmured both against the Lord and against Moses!

Exodus 15

Exo 15:1

They were all noise, and bluster, and boast; but observe the sublime attitude of God, how readily he eased himself of his adversaries: "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters."

Note, that they were singing, singing a very loud and triumphant song; and you would have thought that they would have kept on singing for the next forty years. It was such a triumph, such a deliverance, God's arm was made so bare before their eyes, that you would have thought that their jubilation would have lasted throughout a lifetime, at the least. On the contrary, it lasted a very little while. Yet what a song it was that they sang! "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." What a song of triumph that is which is sung by souls saved from sin, and death, and hell, by the great atoning sacrifice of Christ! Oh, when we first realize that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we do, indeed, "feel like singing all the time", for our sins are washed away, and we have a notion that we shall always keep on singing till we join in the song of the glorified in heaven. So it ought to be; but, alas, from sad experience we know that it is not so! However, the song of Moses and the children of Israel goes on:

Exo 15:2

The heart is prompted by gratitude to think of doing something for God. It thinks of preparing him a habitation; but what habitation shall we prepare for him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain? All that we can possibly do is too little for the greatness of his grace and his glory. "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart," said the Lord to David, though he might not prepare God a habitation. It is well that it is in our heart today to do some little thing for the glory of God. As an old Puritan says, we give for love-tokens a cracked sixpence, or a flower that soon fades. It is accepted as a love-token, not for its intrinsic value, but as an emblem of what our heart feels, and would do if it could. Even so it is with the Lord and the service his people seek to render to him. He takes our trifles, and makes much of them.

Exo 15:3-5. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

And this is what has happened to all the powers that were against us. Our sins, where are they? Has not the Lord cast them into the depths of the sea? Yes, blessed be his name for ever! We, like Israel on the other side of the Red Sea, praise the Lord that we have escaped out of the hand of the oppressor, and that Pharaoh holds us as servants no longer. To the Lord alone is due the glory of our deliverance.

Exo 15:6-8. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

What cannot God do? The liquid becomes solid; nature itself changes when the God of nature puts forth his power. Trust thou in God, and he will do wonders for thee also, as he did for his ancient people Israel.

Exo 15:9. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

How the powers of darkness rage and rave! What a flurry they are in! What big words they speak! What cruel designs they harbour against God's people! See how still and calm is the Lord amid all their raging.

Exo 15:10. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

God has only to use his breath to blow upon them, and away they go, and all their boastings, too. One word from the mouth of God can destroy all our doubts and fears. The breath of his Spirit can sink all our enemies, and make us sing for joy of heart at our great deliverance.

Exo 15:11-14. Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.

That is, the heathen nations who, at that time, inhabited the land of Palestine: "Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina."

The song becomes prophetic. All joy gets to be prophetic; at least, the joy of earth when once it is touched with the live coal from off the heavenly altar. We begin to praise God "for all the grace we have not tasted yet," as Israel here does. They praise the Lord for leading his people through the wilderness, and bringing them unto his holy habitation, even while they are only at the beginning

of their journey.

Exo 15:14-15. Shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

When they hear of the great things that Jehovah has done for his people, they shall feel that the day of their doom is come. Who can stand against so mighty a God? Yet there are some, in our day, whose hearts are stouter and harder than the hearts of the dukes of Edom and the mighty men of Moab. They hear of God's judgments upon the wicked, and of the terrible doom of the ungodly, and yet they dare to defy the Lord, and to continue in their evil ways.

Exo 15:15. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

This great deed of God would be told, and told again, all over Palestine; and the inhabitants would feel that their end was come, for who could stand against Israel's mighty God?

Exo 15:19-22

At first, they were afraid of too much water, from the waves of the sea; now they are afraid of too little. Will their songs be over in three days? Ah, yea! At the end of the third day they came to some springs of water, but they were brackish or bitter.

Exo 15:16. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

And how still they were! All the forty years that the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were scarcely ever attacked; and even then, it was not by the inhabitants of Canaan, but by the wandering Bedouin tribe of the Amalekites, who slew the hindmost of them. It was wonderful that no troops ever came out of Egypt to molest God's people after the destruction at the Red Sea; neither out of Canaan did any come to block their way. When God strikes, he makes his adversaries dread all future conflicts.

Exo 15:16-18. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

How grandly that last note must have pealed forth from the hundreds of thousands of male voices! The women must also have sung it with the utmost conceivable joy as they struck their timbrels, and danced before the Lord.

Exo 15:17-21. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them, but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously! the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

They sang as in an oratorio, Miriam singing the solo, and all the women joining in the jubilant chorus; and well might they rejoice after the great deliverance which the Lord had wrought for them.

Exo 15:23-24. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured —

Ah, these singers had sadly changed their notes! Where are the timbrels now? "The people murmured"

Exo 15:24-27. Against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee. And they came to Elim,

They did not stop long at Marah, probably only a few hours.

Exo 15:27. Where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees and they encamped there by the waters.

That Elim must have been prepared on purpose for Israel. Twelve springs of water — that was the number of the tribes. Threescore and ten palm trees that was the number of the elders. I do not wonder that Moses noted these numbers. It must have

seemed remarkable that, long before they came there, there were the wells and there were the palm trees all ready for their encampment. It was most significant that these things should have been prepared according to the number of the children of Israel; but everything else is arranged by the same rule. When the Lord divided the people, he set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel. It is by this line that he builds his Church still. It is according to his thoughts of his own people that he rules everything in his providence. There are a few verses in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, at the seventh chapter, which we will read concerning this subject.

Exodus 16

Exo 16:1-2. And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

They have been only about six weeks in the wilderness, and already they are up in arms against their leaders. Remember that we have the same kind of people to deal with as Moses and Aaron had. The children of Israel were no better than any other nation; and I do not think they were any worse. We may take them as a fair average of human nature, which is a discontented, rebellious thing in the best of circumstances.

Exo 16:3. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

They forgot all about the brick-making, and the whips, and the iron bondage, and they recollected nothing but the fleshpots of Egypt. Ah, me! how soon, when we escape from a great trial, we forget it! The present much smaller one seems far heavier than that which is past.

Exo 16:4. Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

See God's answer to man's murmuring. They send up their complaint, and he promises to rain bread down from above. It is a blessed story on God's part all along; a rain of mercy for a smoke of complaining.

Exo 16:5. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

Now let us read at the eleventh verse.

Exo 16:11-12. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel:

"I have heard them." God always does hear. Oh, his wonderful patience! If he took no notice of the murmurers, or punished them for their wickedness, we should have no cause for wonder; but he is longsuffering, even to those who do not deserve his pity.

Exo 16:12. Speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.

"There shall be no mistake about who I am. I will work this miracle in such a Godlike style, and on such a divine scale, that ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God."

Exo 16:13-16. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man,

About two pints and a half, I think; according to some calculations, two quarts, or thereabouts. There would be more sustenance in it than in a half-quarter loaf of bread per diem: "An omer for every man."

Exo 16:16-18. According to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

God meant it to be so; not every man according to his avarice, that he might save any of it; but "every man according to his eating." God took care that neither should feebleness be stinted, nor should greed have any excess.

Exo 16:19-22. And Moses said, Let no man leave, of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

He had told them that it would be so, but they evidently did not accept the message that he had delivered to them as the very Word of Jehovah their God; so that, when it was fulfilled, it struck them with wonder, and they "came and told Moses."

Exo 16:23. And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said. How often could that answer be made to us!

God hears our prayer, and we run and say, "What a wonderful thing! God has heard my prayer." "This is that which the Lord hath said." Is it a strange thing that what Jehovah has said is proved to be true, and is it a subject for surprise that he should keep his promise? You dishonour God when you talk after this fashion.

Exo 16:23. To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD:

And yet the Sabbath had not been instituted according to law, which proves that its foundation lay deeper and earlier than the promulgation of the Ten Commandments; it is bound up with the essential arrangement of time since the creation: "This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord."

Exo 16:23-27. Bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

They might have expected it to be so; but they would not believe, and as they would not believe, they must needs put the Word of God to the test. But it endures the trial; it is always true. Oh, that men would, in a believing spirit, test the Word of God, instead of doing it after this skeptical fashion!

Exo 16:28-31. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna:

Or, "What is it?" It was something too wonderful to be understood and they kept the expression of their wonderment as the name of their bread from heaven. When they first saw it, they exclaimed, "Man-hu?" "Man-hu?" "What is it?" "What is it?" Thus it received its Hebrew name, Manna; but God called it, "Bread from heaven."

Exo 16:31-33. And it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread where with I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

This production, which would not keep a single day under ordinary circumstances, would keep for two days to supply the needs of the Sabbath, and it would keep for generations as a memorial of God's goodness to his chosen people during their forty years' wanderings through the wilderness. We may be quite sure that Aaron would not have kept a stinking thing laid up before the Lord.

Exo 16:34-36. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

Now I want you to read in the Book of Numbers. Further on in the history of the children of Israel, when the people had been long in the wilderness, the same kind of thing happened again.

Exodus 20

Exo 20:1-3. And God spake all these words saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

God is the only God, and no other object of worship is to be tolerated for a moment.

Exo 20:4-6. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the

earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Here we are forbidden to worship God under any similitude whatever. The first command forbids the worship of another God: the second strictly forbids us to worship anything which our eyes can see, under the pretense that we are worshipping God thereby. This is another offense, and much more common than the first; and it is often pleaded — “Oh, we do not worship these things: we worship God whom these represent.” But here it is strictly forbidden to represent God under any form or substance whatsoever and to make that an object of worship.

Exo 20:7. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD shall not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

A reverence for the very name of God is demanded and all things that are connected with his worship are to be kept sacred.

Exo 20:8-11. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within the gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

It is good for us that we make the Sabbath a day of rest — a day of holy worship — a day of drawing near unto God. Thus far, we have the first table, containing the duties towards God. The rest inscribed on the second table are our duties towards man.

Exo 20:12-14. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

These commandments take a far wider sweep than the mere words. “Thou shalt not kill” includes the doing of anything by which life may be shortened as well as taken away. It includes anger — every evil wish and every malicious passion. And “Thou shalt not commit adultery” includes every form of unchastity and impurity.

Exo 20:15-17. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

It was the tenth commandment that convicted the apostle Paul, for he says, “I had not known sin except the law had said “Thou shalt not covet.” When men break the other commandments they often break this one first.

Exodus 24

Exo 24:1-2. And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

Nearer to God than the people were allowed to come, but still at a distance from him. It was a covenant of distance, — bounds were set about the mount lest the people should come too near. Yet they were near unto God as compared with the heathen, but far off as compared with those who now, by the teaching of the Spirit of God, have been brought near to God through the precious blood of Jesus. Moses alone could come near to Jehovah on mount Sinai, the people could not go up with him, — nor even with the man who was their mediator with God, for such Moses was; but you and I, beloved, can go up with him who is far greater than Moses, — with him who is the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ at Jesus, for God “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

Exo 24:3-8. And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

There is a double power about the blood; — towards God an atonement, that is the blood sprinkled on the altar, — and towards ourselves a sense of reconciliation, thus must the blood be sprinkled upon us that we may prove its cleansing power.

Exo 24:9-10. Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

Exodus 25

Exo 25:10-11. And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.

The ark of the covenant was the most sacred object in the tabernacle in the wilderness. It stood at the extreme end of the holy of holies. It was the place over which the bright shining light, called the Shekinah, which was the token of the presence of God, shone forth. The ark was, doubtless, typical of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a sacred chest made to contain the law. Blessed are they who know the law in Christ. Out of Christ, the law condemns. In Christ, it becomes a blessed guide to us. This ark was made of wood, perhaps to typify the human nature of our blessed Lord; but it was of unrotting wood, acacia, which resists the worm; and, truly, in him there was no corruption in life by way of sin, and no corruption sullied him in death when he slept for a while in the grave. Wood is a thing that grows out of the earth, even as Jesus sprang up like a root out of a dry ground.

But the ark must be made of the best kind of wood, — unrotting and untainted. Yet the ark, though made of wood, did not appear to be so, for it was completely overlaid with pure gold, so, everywhere, the Deity, or, if you will, the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ could be seen. The ark was of shittim wood, yet it was an ark of gold; and he, who was truly man was just as truly God, blessed be his holy name. Round about the top of this ark there was a crown of gold. How glorious is Christ, in his mediation, as covering the law, and preserving it within himself! He is King, glorious in holiness, and honoured in the midst of his people.

Exo 25:12-14. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it, and thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the ring by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them.

The rings were, of course, for the staves to pass through, and the staves were for the priests to carry the ark as it moved from place to place. It went with the children of Israel in all their journeys; and our Lord Jesus is always with us. He goes with us wherever we go, and tarries with us wherever we abide. Though his glorified person is in heaven, yet his presence is not restricted to any one place, as he said to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you away, even unto the end of the world."

Exo 25:15. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it.

So that it was always ready to be moved.

Exo 25:16. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

That is to say, the two tables of stone were to be put into the ark of the covenant.

Exo 25:17. And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

It exactly fitted upon the top of the ark, and so completely covered whatever was put within. It was of pure gold. This, perhaps, was the most important part of this very important article of the tabernacle furniture. It was the mercy-seat, the cover that hid the law, the place where God promised to meet with his people.

Exo 25:18-20. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof, and the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.

They were part and parcel of the mercy-seat; they were made of the same precious metal, and all formed one piece. They may represent the angels, who stand desiring to look into the mysteries of God, and they may also represent the Church, which is all of a piece with Christ, for ever one with him.

Exo 25:21-22. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

It was the meeting place of God and men, where the law was covered with a solid plate of gold, so is Jesus the meeting place between God and sinners, where the law is covered with his perfect righteousness.

Exodus 29

Exo 29:38. Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually.

Remember, as long as there was a Jewish state, the morning and the evening were to open and to close with the sacrifice of a lamb.

Exo 29:39-42. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour an offering made by fire unto the LORD. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.

See, the lamb is the place of meeting; God comes to his people as his people come to him, with the morning and with the evening lamb.

Exo 29:43. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory.

God's glory is in the lamb: it is there he is pleased to manifest himself in the glory of his infinite grace to his people.

Exo 29:44-45. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

Not without the lamb, you see; that morning and evening sacrifice must be the token and the way of God's dealing with his people.

Exo 29:46. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

Now concerning this same lamb, we will read in: —

Exodus 32

Exo 32:1. And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

They wanted something to look at, — something visible that they could adore. It was not that they meant to cease to worship Jehovah, but they intended to worship him under some tangible symbol. That is the great fault of Ritualists and Romanists, they aim at worshipping God, but they must do so through some sign, some symbol, some cross, some crucifix, or something or other that they can see.

What a terrible speech to be made by the people whom God had chosen to be his own! "Make us gods. Make our Creator." How could that be?

Exo 32:2-3. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

Poor Aaron! He never had the backbone of his brother Moses. He was a better speaker; but oh, the poverty of his heart! He yields to the will of these idolatrous people, and bows to their wicked behests at once.

Exo 3:3. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

Idolaters spare no expense; there is many a worshipper of a god of wood or mud who gives more to that idol than professing Christians give to the cause of the one living and true God. It is sad that it should be so.

People are often very generous in their support of a false religion; and, to make idol gods, they will sacrifice their most precious treasures, as these idolaters willingly gave their golden earrings.

Exo 32:4. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

No doubt they copied the Egyptian God, which was in the form of a bull, which the Holy Spirit, by the pen of Moses, here calls a

calf. The psalmist probably also alludes to it when he speaks of “an ox or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.” It seems strange that these people should have thought of worshipping the living God under such a symbol as that.

This was an Egyptian idolatry, the worship of God under the fashion of an ox, the emblem of strength; but God is not to be worshipped under emblems at all. What a poor representation of God any emblem must be!

Exo 32:5. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.

“To Jehovah.” They intended to worship Jehovah under the form of a bull — the image of strength. Other idolaters go further, and worship Baal and various false gods, but, between the worship of a golden calf and the worship of false gods, there is very little choice; and, between the idolatry of the heathen and Popery, there is about as much difference as there is between six and half a dozen.

They were going to worship Jehovah under the emblem of an ox. This is what you will hear idolaters say; they do not worship the image, they say, but the true God under that image. Yet that is expressly forbidden under the second commandment.

Exo 32:6. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

It was usual to worship false gods with music and dancing and with orgies of drunkenness and obscene rites, and the Israelites fell into the same evils as they had seen among their neighbours.

Lascivious games were sure to accompany idolatrous worship, for idolatry always leads to filthiness in some form or other, as if it were inevitable.

Exo 32:7. And the LORD said unto Moses,

How startled Moses must have been when Jehovah said this to him!

See how Jehovah will not own these idolaters as his people. He says to Moses, “Thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”

Just in the midst of his hallowed communion, the Lord said to him: —

Exo 32:7. Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

God would not own them as his people. He called them Moses' people: “thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”

See how Jehovah will not own these idolaters as his people. He says to Moses, “Thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”

Exo 32:8-10. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, these are thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

For Moses began at once to pray for the people, — to interpose between God and the execution of his righteous wrath; and, therefore, the Lord said to him, “Let me alone,... that I may consume them.”

What a great future was thus opened up before Moses! He might become another Abraham, and in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed. But Moses loves the people, even the people who have vexed and provoked him so many years. He still loves them so much that, even before he begins to pray for them, God says, “Let me alone,” as if he felt the force of Moses' coming prayer, and would not have him offer it. O wondrous power of intercession, that by it even God's right hand is held back when it is lifted up to smite!

Exo 32:10

“I will keep my promise to Abraham by destroying these rebels, and taking thee, his true descendant, and fulfilling the covenant in thee.”

Exo 32:11. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, —

See how he dares even to say to God, “They are thy people, though they have acted so wickedly. ‘Why doth thy wrath wax hot

against thy people,” —

Moses will not have it that they are his people, nor that he brought them out of the land of Egypt; but he declares that they are God's people, and that He brought them forth “with great power, and with a mighty hand.”

Exo 32:11-13. Which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

Moses pleaded the covenant which the Lord had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and there is no plea like that. Although it might have been to his own personal interest that the people should be destroyed, Moses would not have it so; and he pleaded with God, for the sake of his own honour, his faithfulness, and his truth, not to run back from the word which he had spoken.

What a brave prayer this was! Here is a wrestling Moses, true son of wrestling Israel; and he brings his arguments to bear upon Jehovah when he is angry, and he succeeds in turning aside the Lord's wrath.

Exo 32:12-14

So a second time the mighty power of prayer was proven, and the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man. In the seventh chapter of the Gospel according to Mark, beginning at the twenty-fourth verse, is another story which you know well, which tells how the Lord Jesus was overcome by a woman's mighty faith.

Exo 32:14-15. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount,

An unhappy, broken-hearted man, going from the closest communion with God, down into the midst of a wicked people.

Does it not seem sad for Moses to have to go down from the immediate presence of God, and to stand among the idolatrous and rebellious people in the camp? Yet that is often the lot of those whom God employs as his servants. They have, as it were, to come down from heaven to fight with hell upon earth.

Exo 32:15-17. And the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides, on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.

For Joshua was a younger man than Moses, and also a soldier, so his ear was quicker to hear what he took to be “a noise of war in the camp.”

Joshua had probably waited lower down, and he met Moses in his descent. He heard with the quick ears of a soldier, and his thoughts went that way.

Exo 32:18-19. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

This is he who had been praying to God, and saying, “Why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people?” Now he is in deep sympathy with God, and he is himself angry with the idolaters. He cannot help it when he begins to see their sin. Before, he had only thought of the people; but now he looks at their sin. When you see sin, if you are a man of God, your wrath waxes hot, and you get into sympathy with that holy God who cannot be otherwise than indignant at iniquity wherever it may be.

Exo 32:18. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.

Moses knew that it was not a battle cry either of the victors or the vanquished; but the song of idolatrous worshippers.

Exo 32:19. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

In righteous indignation, preserving those sacred tablets from the profane touch of the polluted people, by dashing them to fragments in his holy anger

Exo 32:20. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the

water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

Think of the courage of this one man, to go single handed right into the middle of the idolaters' camp, and deal thus with their precious god!

See the power of this one man who has God at his back, and God in him. While the people are dancing around their idol, he tears it down, grinds it to powder, and says, "You shall drink it every one of you." Why, there are millions to one; but what cares he about their millions? God is with him, and he is God's servant; and, therefore, they all tremble before him.

Exo 32:21-24. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

Which was a lie. Aaron was a poor weak-minded creature, easily persuaded to do wrong; and when his stronger-minded and more gracious brother was absent, he became the willing tool of the idolatrous people; and yet Aaron is called, by the psalmist, "the saint of the Lord," and so he was, taking him as a whole. One black spot, on the face of a fair man, does not prove him to be a negro; and so, one sin, in the life of a man who is usually holy, does not put him among the ungodly.

That was a lie, for he had made the calf, and shaped it himself. Aaron had not any backbone, nor any principle, he could not be stout-hearted for God. What a poor little man he seems by the side of his great brother! How he shrivels up under the rebuke of Moses!

Exo 32:25-28. And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies) then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses:

The rebellious, the idolatrous, the men who had defied the authority of God, were to be summarily executed on the spot.

Exo 32:26

Moses does not spare Aaron, he lays at his door the guilt of the great sin he had committed: "Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies.

Exo 32:28-29. And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

Such a colossal crime as that must be expiated before the Lord could again bless the chosen race.

Exo 32:20. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

See the power of this one man who has God at his back, and God in him. While the people are dancing around their idol, he tears it down, grinds it to powder, and says, "You shall drink it every one of you." Why, there are millions to one; but what cares he about their millions? God is with him, and he is God's servant; and, therefore, they all tremble before him.

Exo 32:21-24. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off so they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

That was a lie, for he had made the calf, and shaped it himself. Aaron had not any backbone, nor any principle, he could not be stout-hearted for God. What a poor little man he seems by the side of his great brother! How he shrivels up under the rebuke of Moses!

Exo 32:25. And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)

Moses does not spare Aaron, he lays at his door the guilt of the great sin he had committed: "Aaron had made them naked unto

their shame among their enemies.

Exo 32:26-27. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

This is the man who pleaded for them on the top of the mount. See how he acts in the sight of their sin; by divine authority, he smites them right and left. Possibly, those who were slain were the men who refused to drink the water on which the powder had been sprinkled, or those who continued in rebellion against the Lord.

Exo 32:28-30. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

I will be bound to say that this was said after a sleepless night. The people's sin is now so vividly before him that he begins to feel that God will be just if he punishes them, and does not grant them any forgiveness, so he goes once more up that steep climb to the top of Sinai with a trembling heart, and with only a "peradventure" on his lip.

Exo 32:31-32. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin-,

There he broke down, he could not finish that sentence.

Exo 32:32. And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

"Let me die in their stead!" But God could not accept one man in the stead of another; there is a great Substitute, ordained of old, but he is more than man, and therefore he can stand in the sinner's stead.

Exo 32:33-35. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

Moses had only half success in pleading for the people; they were not to die as yet, but God declared that he would visit their sin upon them.