

Exodus Commentary - James Smith

EXODUS
Handfuls on Purpose
James Smith, 1943

LIFE IN EGYPT. **Exodus 1 and Exodus 2.**

Egypt, after the death of Joseph, is the type of a world lying in wickedness. Pharaoh, who knew not Joseph, represents the God of this world. The experiences of the children of Israel in Egypt give us a plain, though painful, picture of the experiences of backsliding Christians in the world. It becomes to them the "house of bondage." What a difference from the land of Canaan! "A land which the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:12). Notice their—

I. Sorrowful Position. They were—

1. Friendless. "Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation" (chapter 1:6). Those Christians who abide in the Egypt of this present evil world must sooner or later part with the fellowship of Jesus and the company of His brethren. The arm of flesh failed them when Moses fled (chapter 3:15).
2. Faithless. The tidings of deliverance had been sent, but they believed not (chapter 5:21). It is with great difficulty that backsliders are awakened to a sense of God's forgiving and restoring love. They are slow of heart to believe.
3. Hopeless. "They hearkened not for anguish of spirit" (chapter 6:9). How true all this is of those in the world without Christ (Ephesians 2:12). Without faith they are without the Friend; without Him they are without hope; so taken up with the miseries of their condition that they will not hearken to the voice of God's mercy in the Gospel.

II. Bitter Service. They—

1. Served an Enemy. "They built for Pharaoh" (chapter 1:11). They served one who sought their destruction. All their work went to strengthen the hands of their great oppressor, helping the ungodly. That is all we can do as long as we are outside the kingdom of God's dear Son (Matthew 12:30).
2. Served with Severity. "The taskmasters hated them" (chapter 5:13). Theirs was a joyless, thankless work. What a cruel master is the God of this world! What a task to please those who are under his authority! Child of the world, you have a hard taskmaster! All work and no pay.
3. Served in Misery. "The taskmasters afflicted them" (chapter 1:11). Constrained to labor, not by love, but by fear of the oppressor's lash. Poor sinners, struggling to supply your tale of good works, to earn a little peace of mind, you are under a law that cannot reward you with mercy (Romans 7:13-24).

III. Despairing Cry. It was—

1. Earnest. "Their cry came up unto God" (chapter 2:23). Their very misery helped to work out for them a great deliverance. Grace has gained a victory when the devil's bondslave have realized that there is no help for them but in God (Psalm 32:3-5).
2. Heard. "God heard their groanings" (chapter 2:24). The eye and the ear of God are quick to see and to hear the movings of the hearts of the oppressed. He is faithful to His promise, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you" (Psalm 50:15). The father saw the returning prodigal while yet a great way off (Romans 10:9-13).
3. Answered. "God looked upon them and knew them" (chapter 2:25, margin). His tender look of love implies His full knowledge of our need. God looked down from Heaven and knew man's real need, so in love He sent His Son. The cry of perishing Israel was fully met with, "I am come down to deliver them" (chapter 3:8). "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

MOSES' BIRTH AND FAILURE.

Exodus 2:1-15.

Bible characters, like old manuscripts, need close and patient study if the deep and precious teaching of their lives would be understood. Every Old and New Testament saint is the embodiment of some special feature of character which is to be an example or pattern for us (1 Timothy 1:16).

I. His Birth. He was born a "goodly child." He was "exceeding fair" (Acts 7:20). Miriam and Aaron, his sister and brother, were doubtless very lovely in the eyes of their parents; but Moses, the man drawn out for God, was the fairest of all. All God's fair ones are drawn-out ones—out from the hiding-place of darkness and fear, out from the river of death and doom. He was hid by faith and saved by God (Hebrews 11:23).

II. His Upbringing. "Pharaoh's daughter said, Take this child and nurse it for me." In the providence of God his mother was chosen for his nurse. The goodly children of God are always well looked after. "All things work together for their good" (Romans 8:28). By and by he is taken up to the palace; is learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and likely engages in military pursuits. Moses is like the clay in the hands of the potter, a vessel on the wheel of God's unerring providence being prepared and made meet for the Master's use. May we be willing to take on any shape or fashion His love and wisdom may care to impress. Your will be done on the earth of this poor vessel.

III. His Sympathy. "When Moses was grown he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens." What a sorrowful sight would meet his eyes! They were digging, kneading, molding, carrying, building, while they sighed, and groaned, and wept. A man will not be much use for God as long as he refuses to go out and look upon the sufferings of the sin-burdened. Nehemiah viewed the walls before the work was begun. If the power of the Gospel is to be valued, the awfulness of sin and the helplessness of the sinner must be seen.

IV. His Choice. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God" (Hebrews 11:24-26). Having seen his own relationship, and the miseries of his brethren, he takes this bold and decided step for God and His people. It may have cost him many a sleepless night. There was much to be given up, but faith gained the victory. Our sympathy for the oppressed and the perishing is not very deep if it has not led us to a more definite consecration of ourselves to God and His work.

V. His Failure. "He looked this way and that way, and slew the Egyptian. Who made you a prince and a judge over us?" (vv. 12 and 14). When a man has to look this way and that way before he acts it is clear that he is not yet fit to be used of God. The fear of man still ensnares him. Moses knew that he was called of God to deliver his brethren. "For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not" (Acts 7:25). The time was not yet come, the vessel was not yet prepared. He had given himself to God, but this effort was only the energy of the flesh, the impatience of self-will. We have not only to yield to God, but also to wait on Him. God's clock has two hands—His promise and providence. Both are moved by the same will—they always act in harmony.

VI. His Flight. "Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh." How deep and bitter must have been his disappointment after all his agony of soul and decision of purpose Only God is left. All the wisdom of the Egyptians is not enough; he must be taught of God. The withering up of our own self-sufficiency is needful if we would be strong in His might. "Looking this way and that way" is sure to end in fleeing from the face of man. "If any man would serve Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me."

THE CALL OF MOSES.

Exodus 3:1-10.

In the first chapter we see a picture of helpless bondage, in the second, failure and despair; in the third, the Almighty Deliverer appears. The king had died, and the darkness of sorrow and oppression was fast thickening over Israel; but God knew where to find a man suited for His gracious purpose of deliverance. Moses is now eighty years old, but he is not too old for God; he is more fit for His work now that he has been bleached in the wilderness for forty years. It takes a good deal to dry up the old, sinful sap of self that is within us. Moses had attempted to save his brethren, but failed. Now he receives the call of God for the work. He went unsent; now God sends him. In this portion we have—

I. A Startling Manifestation. "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." "This great light."

The flame of fire was the symbol of God's presence.

1. It Signified Purity. "Our God is, a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). "Who shall dwell with devouring fire? Who shall abide with everlasting burnings?" (Isaiah 33:14). Only the pure in heart. The presence of God in the soul devours the unclean desire of the heart." Be you holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

2. It Signified Power "The bush burned with fire." When the Holy Spirit came down to empower the disciples He came in the likeness of tongues of fire. If we are made partakers of the divine nature we are made partakers of an Almighty power.

3. It Signified Mystery. "And the bush was not consumed." The holy, consuming presence was there, yet the bush was preserved. What a symbol of God in Christ! Great is the mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh. What a picture of the believer! We have this treasure in earthen vessels. God dwells in you.

II. A Timely Resolution. "Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight."

1. This Turning Aside was Needed. Think of what he would have missed if he had heedlessly passed on. To meet with God, and be taught of Him, man has often to turn aside, even from his lawful occupation, but especially from the pleasures of sin and the reasonings of a carnal mind. When you see a new light burning in the bush of God's providence, or in a text of His Word, turn aside and seek to know the full meaning of it.

2. He Turned Aside with a Purpose. "I will now turn aside and see why the bush is not burned." Perhaps he stood for a time wondering if he would turn aside, but now his mind is made up, "I will seek it out." "You shall find Me when you shall search for Me with all your heart." "My people does not consider."

3. In Turning Aside He Heard God's Voice. "When the Lord saw that he turned aside, He called unto him." A man soon finds God when he leaves all to seek Him. The voice of God is soon heard in the soul when we have yielded to His invitation. God saw that he turned, and immediately He manifested His presence. God sees every turn we take, whether it is to Him or from Him, and He acts accordingly.

III. A Gracious Revelation. In turning aside Moses was turning to God; in turning to God he received—

1. A Revelation of His Character. "I am the God of your fathers." This was a declaration of the eternity of His Name. When a sinner turns aside to see that great sight on Calvary's Cross what a revelation of God is made known to him!

2. A Revelation of His Sympathetic Interest. "I have surely seen the affliction, and have heard their cry, for I know their sorrows." God knew the sorrows, and heard the cry of a groaning world. In answer, out of His own bosom He sent His Son. Herein is love. Christ is the revelation of the love of God.

3. A Revelation of His Saving Purpose. "I am come down to deliver." God came down into the bush to save His people through His servant Moses God has come down in Christ to save through the Gospel. This was a twofold deliverance: 1, To bring them out; 2, To bring them in Out of Egypt into Canaan; out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. To accomplish this great salvation our gracious God had to humble Himself; He had to come down. "Obedient unto death" (Philippians 2:8).

IV. A Definite Commission. "Come now, and I will send you." The revelation of God always precedes a commission by God. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost meant not only power to the disciples, but also a fuller revelation of the glory of Jesus. Then they went forth.

1. The Time. "Come now." Now that you have failed in your own strength; now that you have been brought very low during these forty years, waiting in the wilderness; now that you have had a new and fuller vision of Myself, now that you know the desire of My heart concerning the people.

2. The Purpose. "Bring forth My people." "They are in bondage and misery, but they are Mine. Bring them forth by declaring My will and Word to them." "Preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). He wills not the death of any. He is today, through His sent ones, calling out a people for His Name.

3. The Authority. "I will send you." In chapter 2:12 we see him going in his own name; now he has the authority and the power of God. Moses got his Pentecost at the burning bush—his power for service. Have you received this authority? There must be a yielding to His call before He sends forth in His Name. "Come, and I will send you."

THE EXCUSES OF MOSES.
Exodus 3:11-14; 4:1-16.

At the burning bush the call of God came to Moses clear and distinct, but often all is not done, even when the will of God is known and the way of action plainly indicated. We are so apt to look to ourselves for the proper feelings and fitness for the accomplishing of the good-will of God. Our Lord's greatest difficulty with His servants is to get them to believe that He is able to work in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Moses offered several excuses for not obeying.

I. His Own Personal Unworthiness. "Moses said unto God, Who am I that I should go?" (chapter 3:11). This language reveals a very great change in the character of Moses since he left Egypt (chapter 2:12). It is good to know our own unworthiness, as we must know it when, like Moses, we are brought face to face with God and His great work, but it is bad to make that an excuse for receiving the grace and honor He is offering us. If we as Christian workers valued the full importance of the work given us to do we would be more sensible of our own unfitness for it and more ready to confess it. But notice how God in His great grace meets this objection. "Certainly I will be with you." Just as if God was saying to him, "You say, 'who am I, ' but it is not 'who you are, ' but 'Who I am. ' I am with you, let that suffice." "All power is given unto Me. Go you" (Matthew 28:18, 19). When Moses opened his mouth wide, saying, "What shall I say unto them?" God filled it with, "I am that I am." Herein lies the secret of successful testimony for God: (1) He has sent me; (2) His Word is in me; (3) His presence is with me;(4) He is Almighty.

II. The Incredulity of the People. "Moses answered, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice" (chapter 4:1). He seems to have forgotten what we so often forget, that God had taken into account all the natural reluctance and hardness of the human heart. They will not hearken unto you; but if you are filled with the Holy Spirit they will be compelled to hearken to the God who is in you. It is not you this dark, ungodly age needs; it is the light that is in you. "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt lose its savor (power of the Spirit), it is good for nothing" (Matthew 5:13).

How did the Lord meet this second excuse of Moses? As He met the first, with a further manifestation of His own fullness. He gave him a threefold assurance in the rod, the hand, and the water (chapter 4:2-9). The—

1. Rod Turned into a Serpent. The sign of His overcoming power, by bringing terrible judgments upon those who oppose His will.
2. Leprous Hand Healed. The sign of His restoring power. He was able to heal withered and leprous Israel, and to restore them to liberty and rest.
3. Water Turned into Blood. The sign of His transforming power, able to change the hearts and characters of those to whom He was sent. What voice has all this to us? Does it not remind us of the power that still belongs to the Gospel of the blessed God—power to overcome by conviction, power to heal diseases, power to transform lives. The Gospel is the power of God to every one that believes.

III. The Infirmities of His Body. "O my Lord, I am not eloquent. I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exod. 4:10). Rapid and eloquent speech may have much influence with natural men, but the still, small voice was not heard in the storm or the earthquake. The power of God is something different from mere fluency of speech (1 Corinthians 4:19). Note how the Lord answered this objection, "Who made man's mouth? Have not I, the Lord?" God knew all about his physical infirmity, and was willing and able to make His strength perfect in weakness. It is not our infirmities but our unbelief that hinder us in the service of God. God has chosen the weak things. He suggests further—

IV. The Unwillingness of His Mind. "He said, O my Lord, send, I pray You, by the hand; You will send" (v. 13). As much as to say, "Send any one else, only don't ask me to do the speaking." This reads like a timid refusal to do everything God was asking him to do. The divine reply to this last denial was sharp and final. His anger was kindled, and He said, "Here is Aaron, your brother. I know that he can speak well; he shall be your spokesman." The unwillingness of Moses does not turn God aside from His purpose. If one instrument proves unfit He selects another; but Moses has lost the honor that would have been his if he had not been so slow of heart to believe. Is there any sphere of service in which you or I have become a castaway for the same reason? Would we rather have a spokesman than be a mouthpiece? Let us walk worthy of God.

THE SURRENDER OF MOSES.

Exodus 4:16-31.

Moses, as a servant of God, was slow to believe all that God was willing to do for him and to be to him. His reluctance to obey caused him to lose a great honor (Ex 4:14). For the same reason many Christians cease to grow in grace, they fail, through unbelief, to take advantage of all the fullness offered them in Christ Jesus. This honor have all the saints.

I. His Decision Manifested. "He said to Jethro, Let me go, I pray you" (Ex 4:18). His mind is now fully made up to go back to Egypt,

not as before, but as one sent of God. Have we not been taken out of the Egypt of this world, and are we not sent back into the world (John 17:6-18)? To obey this command Moses had to separate himself from the wilderness connection. Has our decision to sanctify ourselves been as clearly declared?

II. His Purpose Strengthened. "The Lord said unto him, Go, for all are dead which sought your life" (v. 19). When the will is yielded up to God how graciously does He smooth the beginning of our way that our faith may be encouraged. Christian worker, God can easily remove every obstacle out of your way of accomplishing the work to which He has called you. Only believe, and they will be as dead men.

III. His Journey Pursued. "Moses took his wife and his sons, and he returned into the land of Egypt" (v. 20). His great commission he carried in his heart still as a secret. Who would believe that he was going to deliver all the children of Israel out of the mighty hand of the despotic Pharaoh. Where is the man who is doing a great work for God who has not gone through experiences of soul of which he dare not speak? All his possessions were on an donkey, but the rod of God was in his hand. Poor in this world, but rich in faith. Hold fast the rod of His promise.

IV. His Work Explained. "The Lord said unto Moses, See that you do all these wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in your hand, and say, Israel is my son, let my son go that he may serve Me" (vv. 22, 23). The thought here is this: As we go in by faith on the Word of God His mind will be more fully revealed to us. By simple obedience we grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. Let us see that we use the gifts and opportunities the Master has put within our reach.

V. His Progress Arrested. "The Lord met him, and sought to kill him.... So He let him go" (vv. 24-26). This is very singular language, and indicates some severe dealing that God had with Moses. Had he been refusing to circumcise his son merely to please his wife? Was the hand of sickness laid on him, so that he was near unto death? And did he then remember his sin and folly? In any case, the man who would be mightily used of God must not fail in the little secret things of his own house. When all was put right "He let him go."

VI. His Heart Cheered. "The Lord said to Aaron, Go to the wilderness and meet Moses; and he went and kissed him" (v. 27). It was surely a happy meeting after forty long years of separation. The good Lord plans many a sweet surprise for His weary and tired servants while in the wilderness. God knows where our Aaron brother is, and when to send us the kiss of Christian help and fellowship. The killing of God and the kissing of our true brethren in the Lord are not usually far apart.

VII. His Mission Declared. "Moses and Aaron went, and Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses" (vv. 29-31). What a story they had for the poor oppressed people of Israel! It was to them the Gospel of God. How was the good news received?

1. They Believed. "God has commanded men everywhere to repent" and believe the Gospel (Acts 17:31). Every true servant of God has such a message for the downtrodden slaves of sin. Alas, that so few believe it!

2. They Bowed. The bowing of the head may indicate the yielding up of the will. This should always accompany faith in the Gospel of Christ.

3. They Worshiped. Adoration and thanksgiving well becomes those who have been favored with such a great salvation. Bless the Lord, O my soul! "By grace are you saved through faith, though not of yourself, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

TEMPTED AND TRIED.

Exodus 5:1-23.

Like Nehemiah, Moses meets with many unexpected difficulties in seeking to fulfill the task given him of God. Who has ever achieved great things for Him without having overcome bitter and desperate opposition? This chapter is full of deep and practical teaching. Let us try and gather up the facts under the following points.

I. A Great Demand. "Let My people go" (v. 1). This peremptory claim declares to us that God would have His people (1) Saved, (2) Separated, (3) Serving. It was not enough that they should be taught, they must be emancipated. Jesus Christ came not only to teach, but to "give His life a ransom" (Matthew 20:28).

II. An Unyielding Enemy. "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (v. 2). Instead of letting them go their bondage and their burdens are increased. Pharaoh, like the God of this world, never yields anything except when it is going to profit himself. Satan always adds to the burden of those who have an eye to deliverance. The devil will always resist the claims of the people of God,

until, like Pharaoh, he is overwhelmed in the deep, "the lake of fire" (Rev. 19:20).

III. A Vain Effort. "The officers of the children of Israel cried unto Pharaoh" (v. 15). His answer was, "You are idle, you are idle." This was a well-meant but foolish and presumptuous attempt to take the matter of their deliverance in their own hands, ignoring Moses and Aaron, the God-appointed intercessors. Perhaps they hoped to compromise with the heartless tyrant; they may have thought that Moses and Aaron were just asking too much. Ah, man is so ready in the pride of his heart to dictate or to modify the claims of God. Leave your deliverance in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ the divinely appointed deliverer. He is "mighty to save" (Isaiah 63:1).

IV. A Heart-piercing Charge. The officers met Moses and Aaron after their feeble attempt to help themselves, and charged them as being the cause of this greater misery coming upon them (v. 21). Do you know experimentally what this means? Then you have indeed been made a partaker of the suffering of Christ. Faithfulness to God often brings blame from the poor sin-convicted but mind-blinded worldling.

V. A Noble Example. How did Moses act under this most unjust imputation? "Moses returned unto the Lord" (v. 22). Having been stung to the quick, he un-burdens his heavy heart to the Lord his God. His words reveal a state of intense perplexity. "Why is it that You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name he has done evil to this people. Neither have You delivered Your people at all" (vv. 22, 23). We do not look for too much when we expect God to do all that He has promised. Moses had been preaching that God was about to deliver them, but instead of liberty the furnace of their affliction was made the hotter. What a trial to faith! Oh, how often appearances seem to contradict the promise! Be not faithless, but believing; the darkest hour is the hour before daybreak. So it was here. Now we have—

VI. A Soul-inspiring Answer. Chapter 6:1 tells us that, "Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shall you see what I will do." God's now had come, just at the heels of man's why? All the resources of Omnipotence are now called into action for the fulfillment of the divine word. Perplexed soul, tarry in God's almighty now; wait on the Lord. With regard to salvation, God's now has already come. "Behold, now is the accepted time" (2 Corinthians 6:2). All the resources of grace and truth are presently in action through His Son Jesus Christ. "Now shall you see what I will do." Write these wonderful words across the life and death of God's redeeming Son. Have you seen all that the love and power of God has done for you in and through Him?

PHARAOH: A TYPE OF THE DEVIL.

Exodus 5:1-10:29.

The King of Egypt, like the God of this world, finds his greatest difficulties in connection with the people of God. He looks upon them as a source of great danger to his kingdom. His chief object is to blind the minds, burden the hearts, and destroy the lives of those who oppose him. Like the devil—

I. His Enmity is Inveterate. It is of long standing (Genesis 3:15). Such fire and water can never unite. He—

1. Denies the Lord. "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him" (v. 2). The great adversary of souls knows nothing of obedience, he may be compelled, but there is no willing submission. What is true of Satan is true also of all those under his power. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

2. Despises the Message. He called it "vain words" (v. 9). Yet they were the words of the living God, a message of mercy and deliverance to his crushed and downtrodden subjects. But it is always so, "the preaching of the Cross (redemption) is to them that perish, foolishness." "Yes, has God said," is still a favorite dodge of the devil. If he can only get men to depreciate the Gospel of Christ he knows that they will remain under his slavish rule.

3. Oppresses with Burdens. The straw is denied, yet the full tale of bricks is demanded (vv. 17, 18). This is truly devilish. Paul was once caught in the meshes of this net, for he said, "I thought that I should do many things." He tried to kill the spirit of liberty by multiplying the works of the law.

4. Remains Unchanged. In Pharaoh's case the professions of repentance were frequent, but the tears of repentance were never seen; his heart, like Satan's, remained unchanged and unchangeable. The devil cannot improve; like Pharaoh he will perish in the flood while in the act of persecuting the redeemed of the Lord (Rev. 20:10).

II. His Devices are Cunning. We are not ignorant of his devices. If he cannot succeed with open scorn and oppression he will try the secret snare of compromise. Observe his manner—

1. Go and sacrifice IN THE LAND (chapter 8:25). He offers them liberty to sacrifice to God if they kept within the land under his rule.

This means: Be Christians if you will, but don't cast off the yoke of darkness; don't break the link of your connection with sin. The devil will allow us to sacrifice to God if we only remain his slaves. "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). His next device is—

2. Go, only NOT VERY FAR AWAY (v. 28). As much as: If you must go beyond the boundary of my kingdom I will let you go if you don't go so far away as to be out of sight. Alas, that so many seem to have accepted this condition, and try to live the Christian life with their eyes on Egypt. "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). The dividing line should be as emphatic as death and resurrection (Romans 6:8). Are you an out of sight Christian, having escaped the corruption that is in the world. There is no getting within sight of Canaan until we get beyond the sight of Egypt. He went a step further, and said—

3. Go, you that are MEN (chapter 10:11). Save yourselves, but leave your wives and children behind. Entire separation is what Pharaoh and the devil dreads. He knew that they would not go too far, or remain away, who had left their families in Egypt. Such half-hearted service never does the kingdom of Satan much damage. Household salvation is a most alarming doctrine to the prince of darkness. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house" (Acts 16:31). "The promise is to you, and to your children" (Acts 2:39).

4. Go, but LEAVE YOUR FLOCKS (chapter 10:24). To leave their flocks meant to serve their God without a sacrifice. When the devil cannot possibly hinder you from going out of his kingdom, how he does seek to mar and murder your influence for good. The Israelites could not serve their God acceptably without personal sacrifice. No more can we. If the adversary can get between us and the sacrifice separation and God-pleasing service will be impossible. How many today, in this matter, have gone the way of Cain in offering to God a service that has not been consecrated by blood. Let our answer to these wiles of the devil be the answer of Moses, the servant of God, "Not a hoof shall be left behind" (Exod. 10:26).

THE GOSPEL OF MOSES.

Exodus 6:1-8.

The Lord said unto Moses, "Now shall you see what I will do." The time of Israel's deliverance was at hand. Moses is sent to his brethren with a sevenfold message from the Lord. He had a glorious Gospel to preach, a full-orbed sun of hope for the wretched, helpless, bond-slaves. A magnificent picture of the Gospel of Christ made infallibly sure by the seven "I wills" of Jehovah. In these glad tidings of salvation proclaimed by Moses there was—

I. Rest from their Burdens. "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (v. 6). Rest was much needed. Making bricks without straw was a hard and constant task. In the service of sin there is no rest. The Gospel of God, which comes to us through Jesus Christ, offers relief from the burden of sin and guilt, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Rest in His forgiving love, rest in the calm of His gracious heart.

II. Deliverance from the Power of the Enemy. "I will rid you out of their bondage" (v. 6). There is no other escape from the thralldom of sin and Satan but through the intervention of almighty power and grace. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). Delivered out of the hand of our enemies. The grace of God is not to give us patience and contentment in the house of bondage, the grace of God brings salvation.

III. Redemption with Great Judgments. "I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments" (v. 6). Judgment and redemption are closely linked together in the saving work of God. Before Israel could go out of Egypt the judgments of God had to be poured out upon Egypt. Before the offering could be effectual death had to take place. Before Christ could save from the curse of the law He had to become "a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

IV. God's Claim on His Own. "I will take you to Me for a people" (v. 7). Possession is the end of redemption, "You are not your own, you are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20). We are "redeemed from the curse of the law that we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Galatians 3:13, 14). He has through Christ taken us to Himself, that we might be kept by His power and used for His glory; taken to Him that we might abide with Him and in Him.

V. God's Assurance to His Own. "I will be to you a God" (v. 7). The sweet thought here is that of mutual surrender. We yield ourselves up entirely to His claim to be all His own. He yields Himself, as God, into the lives of His believing people. The life-giving and life-sustaining sap of the vine is yielded up to the abiding and receptive branch. The willing and obedient members of the body will have the wisdom and controlling power of the head. Be wholly for God, and God will be wholly for you.

VI. The Promise of Continued Guidance. "I will bring you in unto the land" (v. 8). He not only saves, but is willing to guide the saved ones on to the end. He knows the way best suited for our education and growth in grace. "Commit your way to the Lord" (Psalm

37:5). He will direct your steps. In the "Pilgrim's Progress" the soft, easy path led into darkness, and into the castle of Giant Despair.

VII. The Promise of a Great Possession. "I will give it you for a heritage" (v. 8). All God's pilgrims have a grand inheritance before them. "In my Father's house are many abiding places, I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2, 3). I will give it you.

"O weary pilgrim, lift your head,
For God in His own words has said
That joy comes in the morning!"

WARNED OF COMING JUDGMENT. Exodus 9:17-26.

Plague after plague had been threatened, and plague after plague had come, but the plague of sin in the human heart still hardens it into resistance against the loud-knocking judgments of God. The evidence of God's existence and power is not enough to convince men of sin and righteousness. We have here—

I. A Threatened Judgment. "Tomorrow I will cause it to rain a grievous hail" (v. 18).

1. It was Sure. "I will." His I wills of judgment are as sure as His I wills of mercy. There is wrath to come, we must flee from it. "Because there is wrath, beware" (Job 36:18).

2. It was Coming Soon. "Tomorrow." There was no time for trifling or questioning, only time to escape for their life. The time is short. Life is but a brief day, the tomorrow of eternity is at hand. "The Judge stands at the door" (James 5:9).

II. An Earnest Entreaty. "Send therefore now, and gather all that you have in the field" (v. 19). The judgment of God must come, but here the mercy of God is revealed in offering them a way of escape. They were urged—

1. To Seek Refuge. The cattle and servants were to be "brought home." The messengers fled over the fields crying, "Come home, or you will perish." What a picture of the Gospel invitation! Come home to God, and be at peace with Him before judgment overtake you. "I flee to You to hide me" (Psalm 143:9). Oh, prodigal child, come home, come home.

2. To Seek Refuge at Once. "Send therefore now." Go out and compel them to come in. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Let God's now be yours.

III. The Obedience of Faith. "He who feared the word of the Lord made his servants flee into the houses" (v. 20). It was a great mercy to them that God did give them a day of grace. All that believed the message accepted the opportunity and fled for refuge to the hope set before them. So they were saved by grace through faith. There was nothing wonderful about their faith. It came by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. God has spoken; accept His Word as truth and act accordingly. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it, and are safe" (Proverbs 18:10).

IV. The Disregard of Unbelief. "He who regarded not the word of the Lord left all in the field. And the hail smote all that was in the field" (v. 25). Their unbelief led to indifference, and their indifference secured their destruction. They could not enter into the house of refuge because of their unbelief. Unbelief bars God out of the reckoning, and the sinner into the place of ruin. Abraham believed God, and went out. Noah believed God, and went in. Joshua believed God, and went on. Enoch believed God, and went home. It is worthy of note that in the Greek the same word is used for unbelief and disobedience. All deliberate unbelief is rebellion against the will and word of the Lord. "He that believes not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).

THE SHELTERING BLOOD. Exodus 12:1-33.

The story of the first Passover is just an early edition of the Gospel of Christ. The order of teaching in this chapter is very much the same as we have in the first ten verses of Romans 5. There is a well-trodden path of thought running through this portion of the King's garden, but the flowers and spices are as beautiful and fragrant as ever. Let us praise God for the perennial freshness of His Holy Word. The first thought is a solemn one. All God's foundations go deep down.

I. Condemnation. "I will smite all the firstborn in the land" (v. 12). The sentence of death was passed upon all the firstborn. All were condemned already. There was no difference here between Jew or Egyptian. This is the condition of all men under the law, they are

under the curse, the sentence of death is already passed upon all, for that "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23).

II. Substitution. "You shall take every man a lamb, a lamb for an house" (v. 3). Every condemned one needed a lamb to redeem him from death. Either the firstborn or an innocent substitute must die. This was God's method, there was no escape from it. The Lord Jesus Christ is the divinely appointed Lamb (John 1:29). If you believe not you shall die in your sins. "Christ our Passover sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

III. Appropriation. "You shall take the blood,... and it shall be a token upon the houses where you are" (vv. 7-12). The death of the lamb availed them nothing until the blood was applied. The individual soul is not saved by the death of Christ upon the Cross, but by the personal acceptance and appropriation of that death as the alone ground of our justification before God. Only when the blood was on the door posts was it between the firstborn and the avenger. By faith we lift up the sacrifice of Christ between our guilty souls and a sin-avenging God.

IV. Confirmation. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (v. 13). When Jehovah passed down through Egypt that night He was not looking for Israelites or Egyptians, but for the blood of the lamb. The precious blood of Christ is ever before His eye, although we, like the Israelite, may see it not. The blood made them safe, the promise made them sure.

V. Purification. "Even the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses" (v. 15). Leaven as typical of secret and hidden sin must be put away (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8), and put away on the first day. The blood without not only justifies, but also leads to cleansing within. "Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (2 Corinthians 7:1). "He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people" (Titus 2:14). "Now are you clean through the Word" (John 15:3).

VI. Resignation. "None of you shall go out until the morning" (v. 22). Until the Lord passed by in judgment they must abide, calmly resting behind the sheltering blood. In so doing they had quietness, confidence, and strength (Isaiah 30:15). Where else can we hide until the calamities be overpast? There is no safety for us outside the blood-sprinkled house of refuge. In patience possess your souls with regard to the judgments that are quickly coming upon the earth. "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exod. 12:13). Dear as the apple of His eye His blood-bought people are.

VII. Separation. "Pharaoh said, Rise up, go, take your flocks, and be gone" (vv. 31, 32). After the blood had been shed and applied the Israelites had no difficulty in getting out from among them. All God's redeemed ones are to be separated unto Him. "Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). If the atmosphere is to receive the eagle and bare it up it must cast itself entirely on it. Entire renunciation of the world and self prepares us for the entire and perfect salvation of God. Leave all and you shall possess all. "He who loses his life shall save it" (Matthew 10:39).

LED BY THE LORD.

Exodus 13:16-22; 14.

The invisible God led the children of Israel as His own people by the visible, moving, guiding, cloudy pillar. So the Holy Spirit does as really lead us now through the pillar of the Word. As God made the pillar a sheltering cloud and a shining fire, so the Holy Spirit makes the Word to every believer a place of refuge and a guiding lamp. Those led by the Lord—

I. Have been Delivered by the Lord. "The Lord brought us forth out of Egypt" (v. 16). Not rebels but sons are led by the Spirit. While under the dominion of sin we are in "the house of bondage." We must be freed by His blood before we can become "a kingdom of priests unto God" (Rev. 1:5, 6). "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

II. Should Unwaveringly Follow. "God led them not through the land of the Philistines, although that was near, but through the way of the wilderness" (vv. 17, 18). It is comparatively easy for us to follow the Lord when we are led the near way, the way we expected to go, but faith is more severely tested when the way leads us round about, and that through a wilderness. When He leads us let us be assured it is the right way. It may be through the wilderness of adverse circumstances, bodily affliction, or bereavement (Psalm 107:7).

III. Shall Follow in an Orderly Manner. The children of Israel went up by five in a rank out of Egypt" (v. 18, margin). They went out following the Lord as an orderly, armed host. Can there be anything else than, harmonious regularity when the Lord leads, and when all are alike willing to follow Him. From whence comes divisions (1 Corinthians 1). Out of the depths of our proud, carnal, self-seeking minds. "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 1:12, 13). Holy Spirit, lead You me on.

IV. Will Walk in the Light. "The Lord went before them to lead the way by a pillar of fire to give them light by night" (v. 21). God in the

pillar led them, sheltered them, satisfied them with bread, and in the wilderness darkness shone upon them. Jesus said, "He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). The light of God's presence still shines out upon His people in the darkness of this wilderness world through the holy pillar of His Word. "Walk in His light." "Follow on to know."

V. Will be Pursued by the Enemy. "And Pharaoh pursued after the children of Israel" (chapter 14:8, 9). He said, "They are entangled in the land" (chapter 14:3). They are crazy, and don't know where they are going. Such weak-minded people will be an easy prey. Yes, when we are led by the Lord we appear fools in the eyes of the worldly-wise. As soon as Christ was led by the Spirit He was tempted of the devil. If any man will live godly he must suffer persecution. It is only after we have escaped out of the kingdom of darkness that we are pursued by the devices and rulers of the darkness of this world. "Woe unto you when all speak well of you" (Luke 6:26).

VI. Shall see the Salvation of the Lord. "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (chapter 14:13, 14). The victory is to be one of faith. This is the weapon of our warfare, fight the good fight of faith. "Your strength is to sit still" (Isaiah 30:7). "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand, and having done all, stand, stand therefore" (Ephesians 6:11-14).

The great wrestling struggle of faith is that we should be able, in the face of all opposing forces, just to keep our standing in Christ Jesus, where we are complete. Stand still, trust on, and you shall see the salvation of God. The Lord shall fight for you, He shall make a way through the deep, and you shall glorify Him.

VII. Shall Sing the Song of Triumph. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song" (chapter 15:1). A Red Sea often rolls between our sorrows and our songs. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15). The song of praise will surely follow the restful trust of faith. Think of David's words, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord" (Psalm 132:4, 5). Have we found out a place for the Lord in all the plans, purposes, and affairs of our lives? Make room for Him, and your songs of victory will never cease.

THE NEW WAY.

Exodus 14:1-31

In following the Lord the Israelites were led into the wilderness. The first strivings of the Holy Spirit is to lead the soul into a true sense of its utter emptiness and barrenness that it may become capable of enjoying the riches of divine grace. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty" (Isaiah 44:3). Notice their—

I. Helpless Condition. "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in" (v. 3). They have been led between Pi-hahiroth and Baal-zephon like a convicted sinner without hope, shut up between the impassable crags of a broken law and the sinking swamps of human inability. Has God made a mistake in leading them into such a trap? No wonder the enemy says, seeing their plight, "God has forsaken him; persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver" (Psalm 71:11).

II. Despairing Cry. "Pharaoh drew near, and they were sore afraid, and cried unto the Lord" (v. 10). Those entangled by the guiding Spirit of conviction are shut up to faith (2 Chronicles 20:12). All earthly help and hope must be cut off to make room for the deliverance of the Lord. It was when the disciples were utterly helpless in the storm the Lord rebuked the winds. Salvation is near when the despairing cry is raised.

III. Precious Privilege. "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord" (v. 13). He is a present help in time of trouble. He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. This salvation was not of works—"The Lord shall fight for you." It was not of words—"You shall hold your peace" (v. 14). The busybodies mentioned in Romans 10:4 did not succeed in lifting one foot out of the miry clay. Jesus paid it all. Your strength is to sit still.

IV. Miraculous Deliverance. "The Lord made the sea dry land" (v. 21). This new way of salvation was all of God's making. It required Almighty power to roll the difficulties back and leave a free and open way of escape for the weary, tangled feet of men. What a picture of the great saving work of our Redeemer King! Through the veil of His flesh He has consecrated for us a new and living way (Hebrews 10:20). Let us draw near. This way was not only made by the Lord, but you will note that it had to be maintained until every redeemed one was saved. Jesus is the Way. Not only the Waymaker. Himself we need every step. "I am the Way" (John 14:6).

V. Saving Faith. "Go forward" (v. 15). "They went into the midst of the sea" (v. 22). It is not enough to know there is a way, to see to it, or even to praise and magnify the wisdom and power of Him who made it; it must be entered or the enemy of souls will overtake and destroy. Go forward, only believe these watery walls of judgment, so dark and ominous, cannot overflow you. "There is therefore

no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Alas, that there are so many of whom it may be said, "They cannot enter in because of unbelief."

VI. Almighty Protection. "The angel of God,... the pillar of cloud, came between" (vv. 19, 20). Those who walk in God's ways will be kept by God's power (Psalm 37:24). The pillar of His presence between us and our foes is a strong guarantee of safety. The light of the pillar was hid from the Egyptians. Solemn thought, "If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost" (2 Corinthians 4:3). There is a darkness that thickens into "the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13).

VII. Triumphant Song. "I will sing unto the Lord" (chapter 15:1). It is surely suggestive that in this song there are three "Thine's," ten "Thou's," and eleven "Thy's," but no "Me's." "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your Name give glory" (Psalm 115:1). "Thanks be unto God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). The way of life, through the open sea of our Redeemer's sufferings, leads to the song of victory. "I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven, saying, Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments" (Rev. 19:1, 2).

THE SONG OF MOSES.

Exodus 15:1, 2.

This is the first song on record, and blessed be God, it is a Song of salvation. Henceforth and forever singing shall have a chief place in the service of God. The sentimental songs of the world are deceitful nymphs which steal away the adoration and praise that should rise only to God. Salvation and song, like the Siamese twins, go together With the work of Luther, Wesley, and Moody came streams of new songs of praise. "Then sang Moses this song" (v. 1). The causes lie behind. Let us look back and consider this song as—

I. A Song of Redemption. They had been redeemed by blood out of Egypt, as a house of bondage. Delivered by the great power of God. All true praise has its source in the redeeming power of Christ's Cross. Out of the depths of His infinite love and mercy comes this keynote of our first song unto God, and we shall sing in the same key in Heaven. "Unto Him who has loved us, and washed us, and redeemed us to God by His own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

II. A Song of Victory. In looking back they saw their enemies buried in the depths of the sea, where all our sins are cast. Our sins, like blood-thirsty Egyptians, were hotly pursuing us, and when there was no hand to help us He made bare His arm and wrought for us a great deliverance. Ours is a victory over sin, over the world, over death and the grave. He "gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). They saw them again no more.

III. A Song of Praise. "Moses sung this song unto the Lord." This was no mere exhibition of musical skill, but a pouring forth of the heart's gratitude and thankfulness unto God. He had led them out, He had brought them through, He had overwhelmed their united foe. He deserves the praise, and He shall have it, and no stranger shall intermeddle with it. Trust Him at all times, and pour out your heart before Him.

IV. A Song of Testimony. Notice the "my's" in verse 2. There is a clear and decided, ring about this. "The Lord is my Shepherd." When a certain young lady said, "I wish I could trust my mother's God," she was bearing a good testimony both to her mother and her mother's God, although she herself had no personal acquaintance with Him. The sweetest music of earth is like the croaking of frogs compared with the deep, sweet melody of a heart at peace in God. "My God, I will praise You" (Psalm 118:28).

V. A Song of Dedication. "I will prepare Him an habitation" (v. 2). Moses decided to build Him a house, a resting-place among the people. This is natural, if God has taken us in, surely we should take Him in. If He has given us a habitation in Himself we ought to provide Him a habitation in our hearts. Are we not the "habitation of God through the Spirit?" (Ephesians 2:22). Is it not His intense desire to "dwell in us and walk in us?" (2 Corinthians 6:16). Did not Jesus say, "If a man love Me we will come and make our abode with him?" (John 14:23). He has gone to prepare a place for us, let us now prepare a place for Him, and let that place be the throne of your heart.

VI. A United Song. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel. "They differed in many things, but they agreed in ascribing salvation to the Lord." "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Psalm 107:2) and do so. There may be as many different shades of Christians as there were colors in Joseph's coat, but the sleeve need not say to the collar, "I have no need of you." All one in Christ, saved by the same blood, justified by the same God, and sanctified by the same Spirit, singing the same song. Let us praise God.

VII. A Song on the Other Side of the Sea. After the Egyptians had been overwhelmed in the deep. The destruction of the wicked will not hinder the song of the saved. The rushing together of the waves of judgment seem to send up a deep and solemn Hallelujah. In the Revelation (chapter 15:3) we hear the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb blending in one. On the other side we, too, shall

sing the new song with a fresh and fuller meaning. A song that shall ring through the highest Heaven and down through the eternal ages with gathering power and sweetness. "Praise you the Lord!"

THE HEALING TREE.

Exodus 15:22-25.

There is sometimes not much between our songs and our sorrows. In verse 1 they sing a new song unto the Lord; in verse 24 they murmur against Him. Immediately after Christ had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit He was assailed by the tempting devil. The Marahs and the Elims are not far apart (v. 27). After the joyful song of victory comes the bitter experience of Marah. Faith will be tried, faith must be tried. God forbid that the bitter things of life should only stir up within us the murmuring heart of unbelief. As long as the pillar cloud of His presence is with us every unpalatable cup can be sweetened. There is a power in the "Tree of Life," the Cross of Christ, sufficient to transform and transfigure all the Marahs in our everyday life.

But we have here a very great and real need. "They could not drink of the waters, for they were bitter" (v. 23). The people murmured, saying, "What shall we drink? Where shall we find satisfaction? Who shall show us the good?" Here is the language of needy, disappointed souls. Their name is legion. Moses does not join the murmurers, but "cries unto the Lord." Happy, victorious soul, who has learned to pray instead of to grumble. Now see how the remedy is provided, how God in wisdom and mercy and power meets all their need. Have we not here in type the Gospel of the Cross? It was—

I. A Tree. "The Lord showed him a tree" (v. 25). There was a tree in the garden of Eden, but defended by a sword of flame. The fruit of this tree of life man could not pluck. There is another tree that was first laid on Christ, then Christ was nailed to it. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). The fruit of this tree of life is now within the reach of all.

II. A Tree Pointed Out by the Lord. "The Lord showed him a tree" (v. 25). No man could have found this tree had not the Lord revealed it. Jesus Christ is the gift and revelation of God. "The only begotten of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18). "Jesus Christ set forth to be a atoning sacrifice for our sins" (Romans 3:25). The Father pointed Him out at Jordan, when He said, "This is My beloved Son." "No man knows the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father will reveal Him" (Matthew 11:27).

III. A Tree Revealed in Answer to Prayer. "Moses cried unto the Lord, and He showed him a tree" (v. 25). The Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed by God in answer to the deep cry of human need. For the outcast and desolate Hagar the well was pointed out (Genesis 21:19). It was when Abraham had the knife uplifted over the beloved Isaac that God showed him a ram in the thicket (Genesis 22:13). It is to sin smitten, soul-convicted sinners Christ the Savior is revealed. "What must I do to be saved?" He showed me Jesus.

IV. A Tree Near at Hand. From the construction of the words we infer that it was growing or lying near by. God's remedies are always at hand. The tree of life is not afar off, "the Word is near you, even in your mouth" (Romans 10:8). But, alas, it is so often true that there is one standing among you whom you know not. We think of Mary saying, "Tell me where you have laid Him," knowing not that this was He. And of the man who was born blind to whom Jesus said, "It is He who talks with you".

V. A Tree Accepted and Applied. Moses took the tree and "cast it into the waters" (v. 25). The divinely appointed remedy must be brought into contact with the polluted and bitter waters of life. Man does not need to provide the cure, he has but to take it and apply it. The poor, withered woman touched Him and was healed. The healing power is not in our faith, but in the Christ whom we trust. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God" (John 1:12).

VI. A Tree that Made Bitter Sweet. "The waters were made sweet" (v. 25). The unwholesome mass was changed. The waters that could do no good were immediately made useful. Let Christ in and the bitter pool of the heart will be sweetened and its waters made to gladden the souls of others. The power of Christ's Cross transforms all trials into blessings. This is a tree that will not rot. When the shepherds came and saw the Babe in the manger "they returned, glorifying and praising God" (Luke 2:20). They went back to their work with lives sweetened with the power of the glorious Gospel.

MANNA—THE GIFT OF GOD.

Exodus 16:1-36

"This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat" (v. 15). In the sixth chapter of John's Gospel Jesus taught that "He was the Bread of Life." There is no difficulty in seeing Jesus in this type. The Lord give us hungry hearts for this heavenly bread.

I. The Place and Time of the Gift. The place was the "wilderness of sin" (v. 1). The time was while they were murmuring against the servants of God (v. 2). What a true picture of man's position and character when Jesus Christ came! In the wilderness of sin and exhibiting the nature of a sinner, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Sin always leads into a wilderness, the wilderness brings a wretchedness and misery out of which God alone can deliver.

II. The Nature of the Gift. "Manna" (meaning "What is it?") "for they knew not what it was" (v. 15). It was their life in a mystery. Type of the Incarnation. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). My flesh, He said, is meat indeed! They could not perhaps explain or understand the formation of the manna, but this was not necessary to be saved from death by it. We don't read, "O criticize and see," but "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

III. The Bestower of the Gift. "This is the bread which the Lord has given you" (v. 15). They could not purchase this gift, they were not asked to pay for it. It was the gift of God. "God so loved the world that He gave His Son." Like the manna, Christ was given to show forth the glory of the Lord (v. 7). The glory of His grace and mercy and saving power is seen in the coming and mission of His Son. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

IV. The Purpose of the Gift. "You shall be filled with bread and you shall know that I am the Lord your God" (v. 12). They were in danger of dying through starvation. The manna came to save them from death and to satisfy them to the full. It brought to them a "full salvation." The Jews have a saying that "the manna tasted to every man as he pleased." Every man who tastes of Christ will find that He is exactly what he needs. The precious Savior is always palatable to a hungry sinner. See here also the oneness of believers, "They did all eat the same spiritual meat" (1 Corinthians 10:3). We are to know God, because He fills us with bread from Heaven.

V. This Gift was Continuous. "A certain rate every day" (v. 4). They gathered it every morning. The manna saved them, and the same mysterious manna kept them alive day by day. It was indeed a Heaven-provided daily salvation. All this we have in Jesus our Lord. He is "able to save to the uttermost," to the end, all that come unto God by Him. We live by faith in the Son of God. In Jesus Christ there is for every believer a "certain rate every day." Has He not taught us to expect this by putting this petition in our mouths, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

VI. How the Gift was Revealed. "When the dew that lay was gone up, behold, a small round thing" (v. 14). It appears that the manna came with the dew, and that the two were inseparably connected, but not more so than Christ and the Holy Spirit, of which the dew is a most fitting emblem. As the dew went up it, as it were, unveiled the manna before the eyes of Israel. So by the moving of the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ revealed to needy souls as the Bread of Life. "He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you" (John 16:15).

VII. The Memorial of this Gift. "Take a pot, put Manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord" (v. 33). The manna in the golden pot before the Lord speaks to us of Him who came down from Heaven to give life, but who now glorified in the presence of His Father, a memorial, as it were, of grace and salvation. This memorial in the pot was also for the instruction of their children, "that they may see the bread with which I fed you." This holy memorial is beautifully and perfectly perpetuated in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The bread and wine are the memorials of His life yielded up for our salvation. Here we, as the children's children of the early disciples of our Lord, see in figure the bread by which they were fed from Heaven. "Evermore give us this bread" (John 6:34).

BREAD FROM HEAVEN

Exodus 16:1-36

There is unsearchable riches in this chapter, because it is so full of Jesus Christ. Like Him, the manna was: (1) Divine in its origin; (2) Indispensable; (3) Undeserved; (4) Suitable; (5) Sufficient; (6) Satisfying; (7) Free. Taking a look at the whole chapter, we observe the—

I. Depravity of Man. "They murmured against Moses" (v. 2), "Against the Lord" (v. 7). Consider what He had done for them. Like the prodigal they loved the gifts more than the giver. "The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint, there is no soundness" (Isaiah 1:5, 6).

II. Mercy of God. "I will rain bread from Heaven for you" (v. 4). Amazing grace, "rain" bread upon murmurers! Why not rain fire and brimstone? Grace delights to pour blessing upon the undeserving (Romans 5:8). "He delights in Mercy." His own arm has brought us salvation. "God is love," and out from the depths of His own infinite goodness comes the stream of saving power. From Heaven the bread of life must come. This thing is not manufactured on earth.

III. Abundance of Supply. "An omer for every man" (v. 16). The manna which fell from Heaven was sufficient for every man in the

wilderness. In Christ Jesus, as the gift of God, there is enough for every man. "He tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). His atoning blood is sufficient for "the whole world" (1 John 2:2). Yes, "an omer for every man." What are we doing to carry to every sick and heathen man his omer of Heaven's blessing? As in the miracle of loaves, so with the bread of life. After multitudes have been filled it will be found in the resurrection that there was much more to spare. The atonement of Christ, like the "fragments that remain," will have a tale to tell.

IV. Need of Appropriation. "They gathered it" (v. 21). The Manna was rained from Heaven, but it was not poured down their throats. (1) It had to be gathered. God has freely given His Son up to the death for us all, but that gift must be definitely received (John 1:12). (2) They gathered it every morning. It was daily bread, Christ must be daily trusted. (3) They gathered according to their eating. Some were able to receive more of it than others. "According to your faith so shall it be unto you" (Matthew 9:29). Remember the blessedness of the hunger in Matthew 5:6.

V. Disappointment of Unbelief. "Some went on the seventh day to gather, and found none" (v. 27). It is the height of madness to expect to find the gift of God when God says it shall not be found (v. 25). The children of these infidel Israelites are still among us, who hope for salvation after the day of grace is gone". There is a time that is too late (Matthew 25:12; Luke 16:25). "Behold, now is the accepted time. "

VI. Life of Faith. "They did eat manna until they came to Canaan" (v. 35). The bread that saved them was the bread that kept them alive during all their wilderness journey. "I am the Living Bread (life-giving): he who believes on (or receives) Me shall never die" (John 6:35). They believed that to-morrow's bread would come with to-morrow's need. "God is faithful that has promised." "My grace is sufficient for you." "Because He lives we shall live." "Only believe."

THE SMITTEN ROCK.

Exodus 17:1-7.

Paul says, "That Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). So the type is clear. This was a rock in a wilderness, Christ is a rock in a weary land (Isaiah 32:2). A rock speaks of shelter, safety, durability, strength. A careful examination of this portion reveals—

I. A Condition of Desperate Need.

1. They Dwelt in a Barren Place. "There was no water" (v. 1). This world of itself can never supply the wants of a human soul. All its cisterns are broken. Separated from the Cross of Christ, our abode is in "waste places." The rebellious dwell in a dry land (Psalm 68:6).

2. Their Souls were Thirsty. "The people thirsted" (v. 3). When the thirst came the barrenness of the land was felt. When the Spirit of conviction and dearth takes possession of the soul, then the emptiness of the world's pleasure wells is realized. This water of satisfaction cannot be got by digging) such work is worthless. Blessed are they that thirst after righteousness.

II. An Unexpected Source of Supply. "There shall come out water" (v. 6).

1. It Came from a Rock. Worldly wisdom could not by searching find out this method. Men can more easily expect fire from a rock. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth" (John 1:46). My ways are not as your ways, says the Lord (Isaiah 55:8).

2. It Came from a God-possessed Rock. "I will stand upon the rock" (v. 6). Pause and think of this. How very suggestive of the great Incarnation. God was in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19). The rock in Horeb of itself could do nothing, but God in the rock could do anything. The rock represents the human nature of the Lord Jesus, God on the rock, His divine power and Godhead. The source of our salvation is in God, the channel of communication is Jesus. He is "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

III. An Unlikely Means Used.

1. The Rock was to be Smitten. "You shall smite the rock" (v. 6). This thought never originated in the heart of man, that salvation could be brought forth by smiting the anointed of God. "But He was wounded for our transgressions, with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). The sword must awake against the man that was God's fellow. Oh, worship the Lord!

2. The Rock was to be Smitten with a Rod. "Your rod, with which you smote the river, take in your hand" (v. 5). This was the rod of judgment that turned the river into blood, and the sign of God's authority and power. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief" (Isaiah 53:10). Concerning the sufferings of Christ we may truly say, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:23).

IV. A Merciful Provision Made.

1. The Supply was Abundant. "The waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed" (Psalm 78:18-20). "They did all drink the same spiritual drink." When Christ, our Rock, was smitten, "forthwith came there out blood and water," emblems of a full salvation, atonement, and cleansing. "We have redemption through His blood," and cleansing through the washing of the Word. "Whoever will may come and take of the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

2. The Supply was Free. "He, every one that thirsts, come you" (Isaiah 55:1). It was "without money and without price." Thirst is the only condition, but it is indispensable to the enjoyment of the God-given waters of salvation. The apostle declares that the spiritual rock "followed them." The Salvation of God in Christ is not only perfect in its character, but continuous in its application. The power of His atoning blood still follows the generations of men. Let us thank God that this saving rock has followed us. It is following you—drink and live!

THE HOLY WAR. Exodus 17:8-16.

If, like the children of Israel, we have been delivered from bondage and separated unto God, we may also expect to be attacked by the enemy (John 15:20). The hindmost and weak and feeble ones are sure to suffer first (Deuteronomy 25:18). Borderland Christians get much buffeting; beware of the lusts that lie in ambush (1 Samuel 15:2), the Diabolonians, as Bunyan calls the lusts that lodge in wall (flesh) of Man-soul. They are the sworn enemies of the Spirit of Christ. As an illustration of the Christian's spiritual conflict, let us notice—

I. Amalek, or, the Pilgrim's Foe. Well may we ask—

1. Who was He? Amalek has not a very honorable pedigree. He is the offspring of Esau, the brother of Jacob (closely connected), who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, "being carnal," and so is a type of the flesh. Amalek, like that which is carnal, was the first of the nations, but, like the flesh, he is doomed to perish (Numbers 24:20). "That which is bone of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6).

2. When Came He? He did not annoy them until they got to Rephidim (resting places), and had drank of the smitten rock. "That Rock was Christ." The Christless know nothing about the conflict between flesh and spirit, the world loves its own. The onslaught took place while Israel was resting. The unguarded moments of inactivity are fit opportunities for the Amalek lusts of the flesh.

II. Joshua, or the Fight of Faith. The lusts which war against the soul are overcome through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 7:25).

1. The Means of Faith. "Joshua chose out men" (v. 9). Faith must have something to work by—faith which works by love. The believers' chosen ones are the Blood, the Spirit, and the Word. These are the Christian's "three mighties." Put on the whole armor of God, take the shield of faith.

2. The Work of Faith. "Joshua went out and fought" (v. 10). Hope waits, love submits, faith actively presses on, it is the aggressive grace that attacks and wins the fight. "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). "I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

III. Moses, or the Spirit of Prayer. Every "over-comer" constantly maintains a twofold attitude, the upward and the outward.

1. Towards God. There is the steady, uplifted hands of unwavering faith (1 John 5:4). It is the upward look of the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. This holy privilege and power is within the reach of all, who, like Moses, stands on the hill-top of communion with God.

2. Toward the Enemy. There must be fearless and unyielding determination. While the hands were uplifted Joshua prevailed. The source of overcoming power is in God. It is communicated to and through those who are in living sympathetic touch with Him. "If you abide in Me, and My word abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done" (John 15:7). "When I cry unto You, then shall mine enemies turn back" (Psalm 56:9).

IV. Aaron and Hur, or the Promises of God. How often the precious promises of God have acted the part of Aaron and Hur to our feeble intercessions.

1. The Promises are Strong. "They stayed up his hands" (v. 12). The supplicating hands of Moses soon grow weary. The time of definite prayer is a testing time. It is here we feel most intensely our utter weakness and the need of supporting promises. "Take with

you words," the supporting, unfailing words of Him who cannot lie. Lean your arm of feeble prayer upon His sure Word of promise.

2. The Promises are Steady. "And his hands were steady" (v. 12). Unsteady hands will not receive much from the Lord (James 1:6, 7). The promises of God never tremble. We may have weary and shaky hands, but we have an unshaking God who faints not, neither is weary (Isaiah 40:28, 29). "He gives power to the faint." "Uphold me with Your free Spirit." Steady and sure wins the day. God's promise to Abraham wrought in him unstaggering faith. Keep steadily trusting and your God will keep steadily conquering. "I will trust and not be afraid" (Isaiah 12:2).

THE WORK OF GOD.

Exodus 19:4-8.

"The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad." While Moses was on the mount with God he was instructed to remind the Israelites of the great deliverance He had wrought for them, and of their obligation to Him. We frequently need this reminder. Let us look again then at what the Lord has done, and think of our privileges and responsibilities.

I. The Power of the Enemy is Broken. "You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians" (Exod. 19:4). They were overthrown in the depths of the sea. "You shall see them no more." The power of the world, the flesh, and the devil, are all overthrown for us in Christ Jesus. He has made us more than conquerors—stand still and see.

II. The Way of Deliverance. The Lord says, "I bear you on eagle's wings" (Exod. 19:4). Thus they escaped by—

1. An Highway. The path of the eagle is beyond the reach of man. God's way of salvation is above and beyond the thoughts of men. It is as high as Heaven. What can we do but trust.

2. A Quick Way. The flight of the eagle is swift, like an arrow. There are a great many immediates and straight-ways connected with the life-work of the Savior.

3. An Easy Way. "I bare you" (v. 4). Saved by resting on the Lord, as the sheep rested on the shoulder of the shepherd (Luke 15:5).

4. A Divine Way. "I bare you" (v. 4). It was by the power of God they were borne out of Egypt. Salvation is of the Lord. The passage from death unto life is so difficult and dangerous that none but Christ can carry us through. This He does by lifting us up "far above all," the fear of man, or the power of sin.

III. The End of this Way. "I brought you unto Myself" (v. 4). When the prodigal came to himself, then he came to his father. Christ gave Himself for us that He might bring us to God. What a gladsome revelation of God this is! His loving, gracious heart longs to have us to Himself that He might bless us with Himself. He has given Himself for us and to us that He Himself might have us.

IV. The Conditions of a Blessed Life. "If you will obey My voice and keep My covenant, then" (v. 5). After we have been made near to God there are conditions by which this life of fellowship and nearness is to be maintained and continued. There are two here—

1. Obedience. "If you will obey My voice" (v. 5). His voice we may continually hear through the Word. It is not a mere sound we obey, but a living, personal voice, conveying the thoughts and mind of God into our very hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit through the written Word.

2. Faithfulness. "And keep My covenant" (v. 5). If the Lord has been pleased to make covenants with us (Deuteronomy 5:2), it ought to be our special delight to keep them. Our own covenants may be poorly made and as poorly kept, and may be just the proud boastings of our self-confidence. His covenants of grace assure the fullness of blessing.

V. The Purpose of this Great Salvation. That through our obedience and faithfulness after being brought to Himself, we might be—

1. A Peculiar Treasure. The Lord has chosen us to be a special people unto Himself (Deuteronomy 7:6), a people peculiar for purity and good works, for character and actions (Titus 2:14). The Lord's portion is His people. How much value does the Lord set upon His blood-bought treasure? He has sold all that He had to purchase it (Matthew 13:45, 46; 2 Corinthians 8:9).

2. A Kingdom of Priests. God's people are not only precious to Him, but as royal priests they are useful. They are mediators for others, and channels through whom He may communicate His will to others who are as yet far from God. You see your calling, brethren, to pray men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God, and to make intercession for transgressors. Kings and priests unto God (v. 6).

3. A holy Nation. This may teach us the testimony that the Church as a whole ought to bear for God. "They shall call them the holy

people, the redeemed of the Lord" (Isaiah 62:12). The Temple of God is holy, which you are (1 Corinthians 3:17).

VI. The Vow of Consecrated Lives. "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (v. 8). Let it be the language of our trusting, trembling hearts. By His grace we will (1 Corinthians 29:5).

THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

Exodus 19:1-25; Exodus 20:1-26

The prophetic and priestly character of Moses as a type of Christ comes out very clearly here. As a prophet He tells the people "words which the Lord commanded" (chapter 19:7). As a priest He tells the "words of the people unto the Lord" (v. 9). As a prophet Christ reveals to us the will of God, as a priest He makes intercession for us. The giving of the law was accompanied with all the solemn symbols of its terrible, yet holy character (chapter 19:16). The giving of the Spirit at Pentecost was also accompanied with the signs that ought to characterize this present dispensation (Acts 2:4). Both dispensations have a special ministry. The law was given to reveal sin (Romans 7:7), the Spirit came to reveal the Savior and give dominion over sin. Look at the order—

I. The Solemn Promise. "The people answered, All that the Lord has promised we will do" (chapter 19:8). What an outburst of self-conceit and ignorance! Until the greatness and holiness of God is seen, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin felt, man is ever ready to make his empty promises to God. The young ruler is a typical case (Mark 10:17-22).

II. The Divine Purpose. "Lo, I come" (chapter 19:9). "To prove you" (chapter 20:20). The people had agreed to do His will, now He comes to prove them. Those who would be saved by their work have a severe and fiery trial to undergo. They must meet God as a righteous Judge, not as a merciful Father. "The law is holy, just, and good," a perfect standard. It is the divine measure whereby the character of man is proved and tested. It is the fan in the hand of God the Spirit that separates the chaff from the wheat with infallible rectitude. The law, like a fan, cannot show mercy. It sifts, proves, justifies, or condemns. It is an officer to drive us into the school of Christ.

III. The Needful Preparation. "Be you ready, for the Lord will come, whoever touches the mount shall be surely put to death" (chapter 19:11, 12). The Lord was coming to prove them; a note of warning was given that much preparation was needed. "Prepare to meet your God" (Amos 4:12). Holy, holy, holy is the Lord. If one but touch the mount he shall die. "He who offends in one point is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Only touch a forbidden thing and the sentence of death is passed upon you. Because sin (not sins) has entered the world death has entered. "The soul that sins it shall die." How can a man be just with God? Never "by the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:20).

IV. The Awful Presence. "The Lord came down" (chapter 19:16-20). His coming by the law is heralded by a sevenfold, or perfect expression of His terribleness. "Thunder, lightning, cloud, fire, smoke, quaking, trumpet." There is nothing here to encourage, attract, or pacify. Such is His character as the Judge. Here we have no blood of atonement, so there is no hope for man this way. Alas, for the bloodless theology of the present day (Hebrews 9:22). Who shall be able to stand when He appears? "Our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

V. The Effect Produced.

1. They were appalled. "They removed and stood afar off" (chapter 20:18). This was all the nearness their good works could bring them. "Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God?" (1 Samuel 6:20), said the men of Bethshemesh. None without a Mediator. No man can come unto the Father but by Me. To approach God apart from the Cross of redemption is to come unto "fire and to blackness and darkness and tempest" (Hebrews 12:18).

2. They Desired a Mediator. "They said unto Moses, Speak you with us, and let not God speak with us lest we die" (chapter 20:19). The need of a Mediator is felt when sin is known (Job 9:30-33). The terrors of Sinai reveal the need of Calvary. Here is a mount that we must touch or die. "There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

VI. The New Way. "An altar shall you make,... and I will come unto you, and I will bless you" (chapter 20:24). Two kinds of sacrifices are named: "Burnt-offerings" and "Peace-offerings." Christ is both; through the altar of His Cross He offered Himself unto God as a whole burnt-offering, that He might make peace through the blood of His Cross. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. There I will meet you, and I will bless you. Jesus said, "I am the Way" (John 14:6). God's eyes and heart are there perpetually (1 Kings 9:3). "By the deeds of the law shall no man be justified." "By grace are you saved." The fiery fingers of the law points to the peace-speaking blood of atonement. "Even so, Father, for so it seems good in Your sight" (Matthew 11:26).

THE BONDAGE OF LOVE.

Exodus 21:1-6.

The coming down of God on Sinai, in the covenant of the law, brought no offered year of release to the slaves of sin. There was a trumpet, but not a jubilee one; when it sounded they stood trembling afar off. The year of jubilee speaks of spiritual freedom and rest, and is also prophetic of the coming Millennial Age. This incident before us very aptly illustrates the self-will blindness and suicidal choice of those who prefer to remain in bondage to their old master, sin, than to accept the freedom offered and declared by the jubilee trumpet of the Gospel of Christ, saying, "I love my master, and will not go free." If the ear of such is bored with the awl of eternal slavery they have themselves to blame. They love to have it so. Sin is a master, and many love him, with such a love, too, that constrains to wholehearted service. But looked at in another way we might see here a picture of—

I. The Helpless Sinner's Privileges. He was—

1. Bought. "If you buy an Hebrew" (v. 2). The bought one represents one who could do nothing for himself. Only the helpless poor are purchased as slaves. Such were some of us, but "you are bought with a price" (1 Peter 1:19). Oh, such a price, the precious blood of Christ!

2. Bought to Serve. "Six years he shall serve" (v. 2). The master must have some return for his outlay. Be not unprofitable servants, "You are bought with a price, therefore glorify God (who has given the Ransom) in your body and your spirit, which are His" (1 Corinthians 6:20). "You were the servants of sin, but now, being free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18).

3. Set at Liberty. "He shall go free for nothing" (v. 2). In this service there comes a glorious freedom, a blessed rest in His yoke (Matthew 11:29). The jubilee trumpet has special reference to bond-servants. The Lord Jesus Christ in His Gospel offers full liberty to His bond-slaves. "Whom the Son makes free are free indeed." "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ has made us free" (Galatians 5:1). We note next—

II. The Devoted Servant's Choice. It was—

1. A Choice of Continual Service. "I will not go free" (v. 5). He had a will, but he used it to show forth his delight in his master's will. He used his liberty by taking the liberty to show that he preferred active bondage to idle freedom. I will not, he says, have the freedom that would separate me from my master's work. "Go you and do likewise." "Go to the ant you sluggard" (Proverbs 6:6).

2. A Choice Constrained by Love. "I love my master" (v. 5). Those who have had six years' experience of the service and fellowship of Christ will not desire to leave Him in the seventh. The love of Christ constrains us. "I love my children." The children we may have begotten in the faith form another link of connection with the master. Every convert, through our instrumentality should lead us into closer touch with the Lord for their sakes. I love my children and will not go free.

3. A Choice Implying Entire Consecration. "Then his master shall bore his ear, and he shall serve him forever" (v. 6). The bored ear declared a willing and unalterable separation for the master's use. Our Lord Himself, constrained by love to His Father, says, "I delight to do Your will; mine ear have You opened" (pierced, R.V., margin) (Psalm 40:6, 7). His ear was pierced with an awl of perfection and eternal devotion to His Father's business. The disciple is to follow his Master. Him only shall you serve (1 Samuel 7:3).

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At your feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be,
Ever, only, all for Thee.

THE ANGEL SAVIOR.

Exodus 23:20-25.

We may well interpret this angel as the Son of God, for the work here attributed to Him is beautifully typical of the great work accomplished by Jesus Christ our Savior. "The angel of His presence saved them, in His love; and in His pity He redeemed them" (Isa 63:9).

I. The Savior. See how his character accords with that of Christ.

1. He was from Heaven. "An angel" (v. 20). No man can redeem his brother; deliverance must come from above. God alone could find a ransom.

2. He was Sent by God. "I send an angel" (v. 20). The messenger of God who delighted to do His will. God sent His Son to bless us. Sent in love (John 3:16).

3. He Bore the Name of God. "For My Name is in Him" (v. 21). His Name was called the wonderful, the Mighty God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," and manifesting Himself in and through the body of the Lord Jesus (1 Timothy 3:16).

4. He Had Power to Forgive Sins. If you provoke Him He will not pardon your transgressions (v. 21), implying that He could forgive such. This angel had the right to forgive, because he acted for and in the Name of God. "The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10). This authority He also received of the Father.

II. The Salvation. This salvation was great and wonderful, worthy of the God who preached this glorious Gospel. The Gospel of God contains His great and precious promises.

1. To Deliver Us From Our Enemies. "I will cut them off" (v. 23). Our enemies, sins and lusts, had a firm grip of us, but He cut them off. He alone can break the bonds that bind us to the foe.

2. To Bring Us Out. "to bring you into the place" (v. 20). Out "from the power of darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). Out and in.

3. To Keep Us in the Way (v. 20). He is not only able to deliver, but also to keep us from falling out of the way. It is so easy to fall out by the way unless we continue to watch and pray. Jesus says, "I am the Way," "Abide in Me." (John 14:6).

4. To Bless our Common Mercies. "He shall bless your bread and your water" (v. 25). With this blessing in our basket and in our store (Deuteronomy 28:5) we may truly experience that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is" (1 Timothy 4:8).

5. To Deliver Us From Sickness. "I will take sickness away from the midst of you" (v. 25). "He bore our sins." Is it not also written, "Himself bare our sicknesses?" (Matthew 8:17). "According to your faith be it unto you."

6. To go Before Us. I send an angel before you (v. 23). The Good Shepherd goes before His sheep. He has gone before us through the valley of the shadows of this present life, through the portals of the tomb, through the experience of resurrection, and through the heavens into the Father's presence. "Follow Me."

7. To Prepare a Place for Us. "To bring you into the place which I have prepared" (v. 20). Canaan, like the many mansions in the Father's house, was prepared for a prepared people. "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-3).

III. The Saved. In the presence of such a Savior, and in the enjoyment of such a salvation, let us ask. What are the responsibilities of the saved?

1. Walk Humbly. "Beware of Him" (v. 21). These are solemn words of warning. Let us never forget the high and holy dignity of Him who died for us. "Fear God." Let not familiarity ripen into presumption. "Walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

2. Obey Fully. "Beware of Him, and obey His voice" (v. 21). "One is your Master, even Christ" (Matthew 23:10). Hear the still small voice of your Angel Redeemer in His Word, and by His Holy Spirit. "Whatever He says unto you, do it" (John 2:5). "By faith Abraham obeyed" (Deuteronomy 18:19).

3. Trust Continually. "Provoke Him not" (v. 21). How often has He been provoked through our unbelief (Numbers 14:11). Oh, these God provoking doubts of ours, how they assert themselves when circumstances seem dark and tangled! Like Jacob we lament, "All these things are against me" (Genesis 42:36), while God in mercy is busy planning for our good.

4. Stand Firmly. "You shall not bow down to their gods, nor do after their works" (v. 24). We are all so ready to bow to the gods of this world, and to do after the habits and customs of the ungodly. "Be you separate, says the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:17). That you may be able to stand, "Put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11).

5. Serve Faithfully. "You shall serve the Lord your God" (v. 25). What a privilege to serve Him before whom angels fall and adore! "It is written, Him only shall you serve" (Matthew 4:10). "This is the work of God that you believe" "You serve the Lord Christ." Be faithful unto death.

BEHOLD THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT.

Exodus 24:1-8.

"Behold the blood of the covenant." These words, uttered by Moses as he sprinkled the people with the crimson life-stream, forcibly remind us of John's "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). A covenant is a bargain between two parties, something that comes in between as a ground of agreement and a bond of perpetual union. This thought is beautifully expressed in Exodus 12, "The blood shall be to you for a token." This was man's side. "When I see the blood." This was the divine side. It was covenant blood. Such is the Blood of His Cross. "Reconciled through the death of His Son." "This cup is the New Testament (covenant) in my blood, drink you all of it" (Luke 22:20), and be one, even as "I and My Father are one." We shall now observe—

I. When this Blood was Shed. As with the death of Christ, so with the sacrifice here, there is much in the circumstances. It was—

1. After God was Honored. "Come up unto the Lord and worship" (v. 1). Before the Cross was readied Christ had this testimony, that He pleased God (Matthew 3:15). Moses came near the Lord, while the others worshiped "afar off." Jesus worshiped in the Holy of Holies.

2. After the Word of the Lord was Revealed. "Moses told the people all the words of the Lord" (v. 4). Christ did not die until He had finished the work and declared the words the Father gave Him. "I have given them the words which You gave Me" (John 17:8). The Way was made plain before the sun went down.

3. After an Altar had Been Built. And Moses built an altar. The Cross appeared before the sacrifice was made. "And He bearing His Cross." A fixed altar suggests the determinate counsel of God. There "they crucified Him" (John 19:18).

II. What this Blood Signifies. Sacrifice, and this—

1. Implies Sin. Sin, like a man's shadow, is only seen in the light. Sin is the dominating element in the character of fallen human nature. Man is a sinner. "Without God" (Ephesians 2:12).

2. Implies Substitution. The offerings and sacrifices were unto the Lord, and in behalf of the people. "He was wounded for our transgressions." "He suffered for us." The sacrifices were first the Lord's by right, then allowed for the people, and again accepted by Him on the altar. A perfect type of Him who was the Lamb of God, given for us and accepted again through death in our stead.

3. Implies Salvation. Isaac was saved when the ram took his place on the altar (Genesis 22:13). He "gave Himself for me." "All that believe are justified" (Acts 13:39).

III. Where this Blood was Sprinkled. It was—

1. Sprinkled on the Altar. "Moses took half of the blood and sprinkled it on the altar" (v. 6). The altar represents the claims of God's holiness and justice. Before the people could be blessed His righteousness must be satisfied. Before the sinner can be saved Christ must offer Himself without spot unto God. The halving of the blood between the altar and the people indicate the double character of the sacrifice of Christ. He both fulfills the law and makes peace. In doing the Father's will He provides redemption for man. In Him every attribute of God is satisfied and every need of man fully met. "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!" (Psalm 107:8).

2. Sprinkled on the People. "Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you." The blood on the people signified—

1. Redemption. They had come into personal contact with the life ("the life is in the blood") that had been offered to God for them. All the value of the sacrifice, as in His sight, is now imputed to them. "We have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). It signifies also—

2. Reconciliation. It was the blood of the covenant. "How much more shall the Blood of Christ" (Hebrews 9:14). We are "made near by the Blood" (Ephesians 2:13). It implies—

3. Obligation. "All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient" (v. 7). Be faithful unto death. This covenant, like the way of salvation, is all of grace and cannot fail. Through these immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we have a strong consolation who have laid hold on this hope set before us. "The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect to do His will" (Hebrews 13:20, 21).

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Or, The Person and Work of Christ.

Study I. THE CHARACTER AND USE OF THE ARK. Exodus 25:9-22.

The first vessel God instructed Moses to make was the Ark. All the others were of no value apart from it. As the symbol of Jehovah's presence, all must take their relative value from it. What is the Church without the Christ but a Tabernacle without an Ark, a system without a sun, a body without a soul? What the Ark was to the Israelites Christ ought to be to us—an ever-present, all-sufficient, solemn, and divine reality; a source of blessing that never failed when rightly approached. Let us look at the Ark, then, as a type of Christ, "Emmanuel, God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

I. The Origin of the Ark, or the Revelation of Christ. Jehovah Himself revealed the plan and pattern of the Ark to Moses (Exod. 25:10-22). The whole scheme was divinely originated and divinely revealed. So the holy men of old who lived in the mount with God, it was given to testify of Christ as "He who should come." "God spoke in times past by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1). Man, apart from revelation, cannot find out God. "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is a telescopic view of Christ, a vision of the pattern on the mount. They have told us beforehand that when it is come to pass we might believe.

II. The Materials of the Ark, or the Character of Christ. "Make an Ark of shittim wood, and you shall overlay it with pure gold" (Exod. 25:10, 11). The incorruptible wood and the pure gold remind us at once of the pure humanity and glorious divinity of our blessed Lord—two natures as distinct as wood and gold, yet mysteriously united in one person. Unitarianism is put to shame, even in the types. The wood grown in the earth represents Christ as our kinsman, "bone of our bone." The gold speaks of Him as God's fellow: "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). It is the gold of His divinity that gives power and preciousness, glory and beauty, to the wood of His humanity. Incorruptible humanity alone could never stand in the sinner's stead. Christ is divinely fitted to represent both God and man. Man needs one to represent him to God. This is what the Ark taught; this is what Christ does.

III. The Anointing of the Ark, or the Baptism of Christ. "You shall make an oil of holy ointment. . . And you shall anoint the Ark" (Exod. 30:25, 26). The holy oil consecrated the Ark of God's appointed purpose, set it apart for its special mission. The holy oil represents the Holy Spirit, which comes forth from God the Father to consecrate and fit for service. This holy oil was not to be poured upon man's flesh (Exod. 30:31, 32). The old man, or selfish life, is not to be sanctified, but put off. At the banks of Jordan Christ, the Ark of our testimony, received His holy anointing, and was publicly set apart for His holy mission. So He could say, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," to preach, to heal, to deliver, to recover, and to set at liberty. This the Ark did for Israel; and this the Christ of God does for us.

IV. The Contents of the Ark, or the Obedience of Christ. "And he put the testimony (law) into the Ark... And put the mercy-seat above" (Exod. 40:20). The broken law, which could only minister death, was here covered in the presence of God. And covered with a "seat of mercy." What a blessing! Man could not keep the law, but the Ark could. Christ alone could say, "Your Jaw is within My heart" (Psalm 40:8). In Him, as our Ark, the broken law is shut up, covered in mercy. By His Cross He took it "out of the way" (Colossians 2:14). Looking up into His Father's face, he could say without fear, "I have finished the work You gave Me to do" (John 17:4). The righteous demands of God are all fully met in Him. Here God rests as He did of old, on the mercy-seat between the cherubim, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

V. The Purpose of the Ark, or the Atonement of Christ: "There I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from between the two cherubim, which are upon the Ark" (Exod. 25:22). The Ark was the place of meeting, and the medium of communion. This is what Christ, through His atoning death, becomes to all who believe. In Him we meet with God in mercy; through Him we have fellowship and communion. Christ, as the mercy-seat between God and a broken law, is the only way of acceptance before God. "No man can come unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). There can be no communion without atoning sacrifice. "He is the atoning sacrifice" (1 John 2:2). "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:11). "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

VI. The Position of the Ark, or the Intercession of Christ. "You shall put the Ark in the most holy place" (Exod. 26:34). The Ark stood continually in the immediate presence of God on Israel's behalf. The mercy-seat made continual intercession for them. Although unseen within the veil, Christ, our Ark, has sat down on high. In the Holy of Holies He ever lives to make continual intercession for us. Though now we see Him not—the Heavens having received Him out of our sight—yet the Blood speaks. What a comfort to know that the law which was against us is completely covered for us in the Holy of Holies, and that on this mercy-seat God delights to dwell and to give gifts unto men, even the rebellious!

VII. The Sprinkling of the Ark, or the Appropriation of Christ. "And he shall take of the blood, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy seat" (Leviticus 16:14). The blood of the sin-offering was put upon the lid of the Ark, thus connecting mercy with the sacrifice for sin. The virtue of the Ark within the veil could only be received by virtue of the blood shed without the camp,

teaching us that Christ's mediatorial work can only be appreciated by those who believe and appropriate His sacrificial. Reconciliation and peace with God can only be enjoyed on the ground of atoning blood. To come before God without the blood was death. Solemn warning to those who lightly esteem it. The blood upon the mercy-seat secures our acceptance before God; the blood before it secures our standing with God.

Study II. THE VARIOUS POSITIONS OF THE ARK.

In considering the different positions in which we find the Ark, we might look at them as typical of some of the relationships Christ sustains towards His people.

I. The Ark as the Guide of Israel, or Christ Leading His People. "The Ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them" (Numbers 10:33). The Ark was to them an infallible guide. It went on before "to search out a resting-place for them." Christ, the Good Shepherd, goes before His sheep. He leads them into green pastures, He has sought and found a resting-place for His people, for "He makes them to lie down" (Psalm 23). Christ, our Ark, leads into rest before He leads into service. He says, "Come unto Me," before He says, "Take My yoke" (Matthew 11:28, 29).

II. The Ark in the Midst of Israel, or Christ Upholding His People. When the camp was pitched the Ark stood in the midst. All the strength of Israel lay in the Ark as the token of God's power. Just as the branches are upheld by the vine, so were the twelve tribes upheld by the Ark. So is the Church upheld by Christ. He Himself is the candlestick; we, as believers, are the branches. "He walks in the midst of seven golden candlesticks" (Rev. 2:1). He is the strength of His people. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved" (Psalm 46:5).

III. The Ark in the River of Jordan, or Christ the Surety of His People. "And the priests that bare the Ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until all the people were passed clean over" (Joshua 3:17). The Ark was their surety in the river. God's pledge of salvation. While Christ, the Ark of our surety, rests upon the throne of grace the river of judgment will be held back. So that whoever will may pass clean over into the land of promise. "Behold, now is the accepted time." As soon as the Ark removed the floods came. "When Christ shall rise up the door will be shut" (Luke 13:24, 25).

IV. The Ark at the Walls of Jericho, or Christ Overcoming for His People. "So the Ark of the Lord compassed the city, and the wall fell down flat" (Joshua 6:11-20). All took their place according to the position of the Ark. When the Church of Christ does this nothing shall be impossible. They trumpeted with all their might, but they trusted not in their trumpets, but in the Ark, as the token of Jehovah's power. Men may find a pleasure in trumpeting (preaching) who have no real faith in the power of Christ's presence to overcome, but such blowing will gain no victory. They may shout until they are black in the face, but no wall will be overturned.

V. The Ark on the New Cart, or Christ desiring His People. "Make a new cart, and lay the Ark of the Lord upon it, and see if it goes up by the way of His own coast, and the kine took the straight way" (1 Samuel 6:7-12). Although Israel had previously sinned, yet the Ark of the Lord seeks the straight way back to His people. So does the heart of Christ yearn for His right place among His people, which sin and unbelief had robbed Him of, "While the Ark was away the glory of Israel had departed" (1 Samuel 4:22). If the Lord is not with us "Ichabod" may be written on all we do. But the Lord takes pleasure in His people. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3:20).

VI. The Ark in the House of Obed-edom, or Christ Blessing His People. "The Ark continued in the house of Obed-edom, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household" (2 Samuel 6:11). The Holy One (Ark) that stood within the veil now rests within the threshold of a home. He who inhabits Eternity also dwells in the heart of the humble and contrite one (Isaiah 57:15). Wherever Christ is received blessing is given. Some were afraid to receive the Ark. But as many as received Him received power and blessing (John 1:12). Some had no room for the Ark. Have you any room for Jesus in your heart or in your home?

VII. The Ark in the Tent of David, or Christ a Pilgrim with His People. "So they brought the Ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it" (1 Chronicles 16:1). The tent is the abode of the pilgrim. The Ark in the tent may be symbolic of Christ sojourning with His people as pilgrims and strangers on the earth. David, as a man of war, was only permitted to build for the Ark a tent. The present condition of the Church is one of warfare and pilgrimage. The Lord, therefore, as a pilgrim with His people, has no fixed abode.

VIII. The Ark in the Temple of Solomon, or Christ Resting with His People. "And they brought up the Ark of the Lord, and drew out the staves" (1 Kings 8). The house of glory has been finished. The reign of peace has come. Now the staves of the Ark are drawn out, signifying that its wanderings are now ended, and that it has found at last its resting-place. Surely the days of Millennial peace and glory are here suggested, when the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord (Habakkuk 2:14), and when "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" (Isaiah 53:11),

IX. The Ark between Ebal and Gerizim, or Christ Judging His People. In Joshua 8:33, 34 we see six tribes on Mount Gerizim to bless, and six tribes on Mount Ebal to curse, and the Ark standing between (see also Deuteronomy 27 and 28). The blessing and the

cursing were according to all that was written in the Book. By the Word of the Lord are they judged. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Our works will either stand on Ebal or Gerizim to be burned or blessed (1 Corinthians 3:13). Perhaps we have also here in type Matthew 25:32-46, where we see the cursed on the one hand, the blessed on the other, and Jesus in the midst.

Study III. THE POWER OF THE PRESENCE OF THE ARK.

In looking at the power of the Ark in its various connections, we wish to see Jesus and the power of His presence when brought into contact with Him.

I. The Presence of the Ark is the Hope of the Humble. "Joshua rent His clothes, and fell upon his face before the Ark of the Lord" (Joshua 7:6). Israel had fled before the men of Ai, defeated because of secret sin. This bows Joshua to the earth, humbled and helpless before the Lord. Secret sin is the cause of much of our failure in service for God. If we did realize, like Joshua, the dishonor such failures bring to Christ, we would be oftener on our face before Him. Although the enemy has at times got an advantage over us, what a comfort to know that He has said, "Lo, I am with you," and that "All power is given unto Me" (Matthew 28:18-20).

II. The Presence of the Ark is the Glory of Israel. "The glory is departed from Israel, for the Ark of God is taken" (1 Samuel 4:22). Israel without the Ark is as a flock without a shepherd, salt without savor, a body without a soul. What is more useless than savorless salt? Who is more helpless than a powerless Christian? (Judges 16:20). The presence of Christ is the glory of His Church. The Church, or the believer, will live and shine and triumph just in the proportion that Christ is living and shining in them. He will not give His glory to another.

III. The Presence of the Ark is the Downfall of Heathenism. "Dagon fell upon his face before the Ark, and his head and his hands were cut off" (1 Samuel 5:4). No other God is able to stand in the presence of Christ, our Ark. All the powers of this world must yet fall prostrate and broken before Him, whose Name is above every name. Bring the living Christ face to face with heathenism, and it will fall headless and handless at His feet. There is no other remedy. There may be Dagon in the heart that exalt themselves against God, such as pride, worldliness, bad temper. Let Christ step on to the throne of the heart and these will fall down.

IV. The Presence of the Ark is the Perplexing of its Enemies. "What shall we do with the Ark (1 Samuel 5:8)? "What shall we do to the Ark (chap 6:2)? Pilate said, "What shall I do then with Jesus?" and the scribes and Pharisees communed one with another what they might do to Jesus" (Luke 6:11). They agreed, like the Philistines, to send Him away. They besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts. When Christ, by His Spirit and Word, comes before the hearts of sinners there is perplexity still. "What must I do?" Either there is submission and acceptance, or resistance and rejection.

V. The Presence of the Ark is the Rebuking of the Presumptuous. "The men of Beth-shemesh looked into the Ark. And He smote of the people 50,000" (1 Samuel 6:19). To lift the lid of the Ark was to remove that which covered the broken law, and so expose themselves to the "ministry of death." Such must be the doom of all who presumptuously set aside the atonement of Christ (1 John 2:2). "Uzzah rashly put forth his hand to the Ark of God, and God smote him for his error" (2 Samuel 6:6). The warning had been given. "They shall not touch any holy thing lest they die" (Numbers 4:15). The Ark, as the symbol of Jehovah's strength, does not need the hand of man to steady it. Eli trembled for the Ark, and fell down dead (1 Samuel 4:18). Unbelief makes many tremble for the cause of Christ. What presumption to have thrown a rope to Christ while He walked on the sea! Some wise men in these days seem more concerned about saving Christ than getting men saved by Him. Yes, they are anxious lest the sun should get blown away with the winds.

VI. The Presence of the Ark is the Joy of God's People. "So David and all Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shoutings. And David danced before the Lord with all his might" (2 Samuel 6:15, 16). The manifest presence of Christ always brings gladness to the hearts of God's people; and such joy is sure to provoke the sneer of the ungodly, just as the daughter of Saul mocked David. If David danced with joy when he thought of all that is meant by "the Ark with us," how much more might we when we think of all that is meant by "Christ in us."

VII. The Absence of the Ark is the Defeat of God's People. "They presumed to go up, nevertheless the Ark of the Lord departed not out of the camp" (Numbers 14:44). They went without the Ark, and were smitten before the enemy. If we go in our own strength the same consequences will follow. Every Christless effort is a failure in the sight of God, although it be rewarded with the praise of men. "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). It is quite possible for a "special effort" to win souls— to be nothing but a fair show of the flesh. Peter toiled all night in a Christless boat and "caught nothing" (Luke 5:5), but when he had the Master with him he had good success.

THE ATONEMENT MONEY.

Exodus 30:11-16.

It is interesting to note that this money, given by the people as an "atonement for their souls," went to form the foundation of the Tabernacle, so that the Tabernacle, as the House of God, literally stood upon the price of souls— Redemption. The Church of God today has no other standing. This "half shekel" is a figure of the precious Blood of Christ, by which we have been ransomed for God (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Observe that—

I. All alike needed a Ransom. "Every man" (v. 12). In relation to God all are alike, there is no difference, for all have sinned. Birth, wealth, position, education, reformation will not avail to commend one more than another. God's Word has settled this. Every man must bring a ransom (Hebrews 9:22).

II. The Ransom Price was Divinely Fixed. "Half a shekel" (v. 13), says the Lord, neither more nor less. God does not leave it to man to say how much he will give for his soul. Such could only minister to his vanity. Man is so ignorant of himself and of the terrible nature of sin that it is not in him to mention what the ransom should be. "Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24). Where? In His own bosom, in the Person of His Son (John 3:16). "My Beloved Son." This is the price fixed by Jehovah before the world was created.

III. The Ransom was Divinely Judged. "After the shekel of the sanctuary" (v. 13). Each half shekel brought as atonement money must be after the perfect standard of holiness. The atonement money must be up to the weight of the sanctuary shekel, up to the righteous demands of a holy law. The Lord Jesus Christ, as our Ransom, was tested and judged by the perfect law of righteousness. He was up to the sanctuary standard (Matthew 17:5).

IV. The Ransom was alike for All. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less" (v. 15). God has but one price for souls, "The precious Blood of Christ." Neither more nor less. Not the blood and your prayers, gifts or good works, nothing must be added to the Blood of His Cross, nothing can be taken from it. "He gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6). Those who preach a bloodless Gospel are blocking the way of sinners to God. It matters not what culture or criticism may say, His Word stands unalterable. "Neither more nor less."

V. The Ransom had to be Personally Presented. Every man shall give (v. 14). Salvation is a personal and individual matter. No one can "redeem his brother" (Psalm 49:7). The testimony of Moses had to be believed, the price taken, and definitely brought to God for a very special and definite purpose. So the Word of the Gospel must be believed, Christ personally and consciously accepted (John 1:12), and offered to God as the only but God-pleasing ransom. Neither is there salvation in any other Name. Jesus paid it all. "It is finished."

VI. The Ransom was the only Ground of Acceptance. It did not matter what a man might bring; if he did not bring the appointed "half shekel" he could not be accepted, he could not be a ransomed soul. A man was not accepted because he was rich or poor, learned or illiterate, good or bad, but because he presented the atonement money. This was the only condition, and all who brought it became partakers of the redemption, irrespective of caste or character. Here the rich and poor meet together, the Lord alone is the Savior of all. "He who believes not is condemned already" (John 3:18).

VII. The Ransomed were Expected to Serve. "They were to go forth to war" (Numbers 1:45). We are delivered that we might "serve Him all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75). Saved to serve (Acts 27:23). "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). Having been ransomed at such a price, let us therefore glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are His. The ransomed of the Lord who go out to fight shall return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. The battle is the Lord's, your God shall fight for you. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Psalm 107:2).

THE ANOINTING OIL.

Exodus 30:22-33.

This holy anointing oil is a striking emblem of the Holy Spirit, the uses to which it is put clearly indicate the emphatic symbolic character. Dr. Kurtz reminds us that the Orientals used oil for three very definite purposes: (1) In anointing the body. (2) In preparation of food. (3) For giving light in their lamps. So the Holy Spirit gives freshness to the body, strength for the heart and soul, and brightness of life for a testimony to others. May He who never speaks of Himself guide us into the truth about Himself! Concerning this oil, it was—

I. Holy. "A holy anointing oil" (v. 31). This was its distinguishing and essential characteristic, because its chief purpose was to sanctify and set apart for the service of God. The Spirit is constantly spoken of as "Holy," the Comforter who is the "Holy Spirit." The

Spirit is not more holy than the Father or the Son, but His great mission is to make holy by coming into contact with that which has been consecrated to God. "Be you holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 20:26).

II. Claimed by the Lord. "This shall be a holy anointing oil unto Me" (v. 31). The holy oil was itself the seal of Jehovah, everything it touched it sanctified. It was the voice of God asserting his authority. It was the hand of God that laid hold on and separated the vessels for His use. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He acts for Him, carrying out His will in the Church, as the House of God. He is the gift of both Father and Son (John 14:26).

III. Put upon Aaron and his Sons. Aaron is a type of Christ, and his sons of believers in Christ who are the sons of God. Our Aaron received His anointing at Jordan, the sons at Pentecost. It was the same oil that was poured on both. So we are baptized by the same Spirit that came upon the Lamb of God, and for the same purpose, that we might "minister unto the Lord." "Because you are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (Galatians 4:6). How closely connected Aaron and his sons were as to privileges and service! Are we the worthy sons of such a Father? This holy anointing oil is for every son. It is a great heritage (1 John 2:27). Have you claimed this portion?

IV. Used to Sanctify the Vessels. "You shall anoint all the vessels... and sanctify them, that they may be most holy" (vv. 26-29). Every separate article, and everything connected with each, was touched and separated by the holy oil, the table and all his vessels. Surely the teaching here is plain. As vessels, if we would be made meet for the Master's use, all our belongings and connections must be yielded over to Him who has called and cleansed us. Our wills, affections, desires, thoughts, all under the control of the Holy anointing, all recognized as belonging to God.

V. Not Put Upon Man's Flesh. "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured" (v. 32). Only upon the pure white mitre of the priest could it be poured, not upon flesh. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The Holy Spirit does not by His coming to us, or in us, ever sanctify the flesh. The flesh is to be crucified; its works are to be mortified, not sanctified. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and so cannot be used by the Spirit. The pride and selfishness of the carnal mind will never have an unction from the Holy One. "Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured." This holy anointing will never be given for our own glory. The spirit has come to glorify Christ (John 16:14), if we are not willing and ready to glorify Christ in our lives we cannot have the communion of the Holy Spirit. His presence is power.

VI. Not to be put upon Strangers (v. 33). The strangers were all those outside the priesthood, those who were not sons. Every son, no matter how poor or ignorant, could have the holy anointing. No other could. And no amount of professional sanctity would avail in its stead. This was a privilege inherited by birth. "Born not of the will of the flesh, but of God" (John 1:13). We are first made children, then heirs.

VII. Not to be Imitated. "Whoever compounds any like it shall be cut off" (v. 33). It is impossible for us to imitate the workings of the Holy Spirit without bringing upon our spirits the separating blight of death. "God is not mocked." There is an inscrutable something about those anointed with the Holy Spirit that no learning, eloquence, or earnestness can produce. There is a fire of enthusiasm that is not of God, a false fire, the "old man's" unholy imitation of the anointing of God. No zeal can manufacture this, no penance can purchase it. It is the gift of God. "Receive you the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22).

THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE.

Exodus 33:12-16.

A great promise from a great and faithful prince is a great and precious privilege. Let our God but speak, and His Word will infallibly be fulfilled. "He has given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be made partakers of the divine nature." The 1000 promises of our bankrupt human nature are of no value. "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." Let us inquire—

I. How this Promise was Sought. "Moses says unto the Lord, See, you have said, Bring up this people " (v. 12). The promise was sought then in the face of a great commission. How could he "bring up this people" without the powerful, guiding presence of the subduing God. It has been often said that "God's biddings are His enablings." His presence is always associated with His commands and demands. We may confidently ask and expect His all-sufficiency to meet our every need in doing His will (2 Corinthians 9:8).

II. What this Promise Offered. "My presence shall go with you" (v. 14). Who is able to unpack all the treasures contained in this casket? The treasures of earth and ocean may be exhausted, but all the demands and needs of a redeeming humanity will never in time or eternity be able to diminish in any degree the riches herein contained. And this promise is yours, "Lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20). This presence can only be made real to us by the indwelling Spirit of God, just as the sun's presence or influence

is made real to us through the medium of the atmosphere. Grieve the Holy Spirit and you close the door against the gracious presence. As the glory filled the Holy Place so may His presence fill our souls!

III. When this Promise was Given. It was given in answer to a cry and desire that was infinitely pleasing to God. Moses prayed, "Show me Your glory that I may know You. "Those who seek to know Him "shall know Him and rejoice." He delights to manifest Himself to such eager, honest, devoted souls. The pure in heart shall see God. He shall pour water upon him that is thirsty. How often we cry for blessing instead of for God. God Himself is to be the joy of our hearts. The way into the fullness of blessing is not by seeking blessing, but by seeking God. Show me that I may know You. "This is life eternal to know You" (John 17:3), and not only life, but love, joy, peace, and power.

IV. What this Promise Brought. If the presence of an earthly potentate creates and manifests such distinctions among men, surely we may expect that the presence of God will also bring distinguishing marks. His presence gives the—

1. Evidence of Grace. "It shall be known that your people have found grace in that you go with us" (v. 16). Walking in the enjoyment of His presence implies that we may live on the fullness of His grace. Sweet thought, His presence means abounding grace. His grace is made sufficient for us, while His presence is going with us.

2. Assurance of Rest. "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest" (v. 14). Rest for every inch of the way, and in every circumstance of life. His presence gives rest as the presence of the sun gives light, or as the vine gives the sap to the indwelling branch, or better still, as the presence of the mother gives comfort to the sick child. "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Abide with Me, and your rest will abide. "I will fear no evil for You are with me." His presence gives rest—

(1) From the power of sin.

(2) From the fear of man.

(3) From the cares of the world.

(4) From the anxieties of service (Matthew 11:29).

3. Power of Separation. "You go with us, so shall we be separated" (v. 16). His presence with them separated them from the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage. His presence with Abraham separated him from Ur of the Chaldees, from his kindred, from his father's house (Genesis 12:1). The holy oil—symbol of the presence of God the Holy Ghost—separated Aaron and his sons for the service of the Lord. The presence of God with us, by the Holy Spirit, will separate us from the life and thoughts of the world, from the dominion of Satan, and the tyranny of self. His presence separates. If we will not come out and be separate from the unclean then we must part with the presence. "How can two walk together except they be agreed."

THE PRAYER OF MOSES

Or, the Servant's Need.

Exodus 33:12-23.

Those called of God like Moses, to be ambassadors for Him among a perverse people, have need, like Moses, to be the "meekest of men." Although the treasure is great the vessel is but earthen (2 Corinthians 4:7). In this prayer there are four God-honoring requests—

I. That the Guidance of God might be Given.

"Show me now Your way" (v. 13). All who have had close dealings with God feel the need of being led by the Spirit. Moses asks this favor for two reasons—

1. That I May Know You. Still hungering, after all he knew of Him (Exod. 24:18). Paul had the same longings (Philippians 3:10). "We shall know if we follow on to know" (Hos. 6:3).

2. That I May Find Grace. While Ruth followed in the field of Boaz she found "handfuls on purpose." "When I sent you, lacked you anything?" They answered, "Nothing" (Luke 22:35; Psalm 65:11).

II. That the Presence of God might be Known.

"If Your presence go not." God has said, "My presence shall go." And in the strength of this promise Moses wished to go. His presence secures—

1. Fellowship and Rest. "Go with you, and give you rest" (v. 14). This is not fellowship with a fancy, but with the living God (1 John 1:3). And the rest is so real that Moses speaks of it as being "carried up" underneath the everlasting arms.

2. Protection and Victory. His presence is the protecting pillar of His people (Exod. 14:20). The apple tree, under which they sit with great delight (Song of Solomon 2:3). The pledge of success and victory (Hebrews 13:5, 6).

III. That the Power of God might be Manifest.

"Wherein shall it be known." The savor proves the salt (Matthew 5:13). If the presence of God is with us it will be known by its—

1. Separating Power. "So shall we be separated." God and the world are not agreed. How can they walk together? (2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Hebrews 9:24-26).

2. Convicting Power. The separated life condemns the world (Hebrews 11:17). The presence of God convicts the guilty (Acts 2:37; 7:54).

IV. That the Glory of God might be Seen. "Show me Your glory" (v. 18). "Show me Your way" leads to "Show me Your glory." This request God answered with a twofold promise. He promised—

1. The Sight of His Character. "I will make My goodness pass before you." His glory is His goodness (compare verses 19-22). In Christ we see the glory of His grace (John 1:17) passing before us. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!" (Psalm 107:8).

2. The Shelter of His Hand. "I will cover you with My hand." None feel the need of covering more than those who behold His glory (Isaiah 6:5). In the cleft of the rock Moses had this vision. So in the wounded Christ is the glory of God's goodness seen (2 Corinthians 5:19). His glory has been seen in the face of Moses—veiled; in the face of Jesus—revealed; in the face of Stephen—imparted (Exodus. 34:29; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Acts 6:15). "Show me your glory."

THE TRANSFIGURED FACE

Exodus 34:29-35

There are many who covet the shining face, but who dread and shrink from the soul discipline necessary to produce it. Moses prayed, "Show me Your glory," and behold, "the skin of his face shone." Does this request not reveal a heart sickness at the glory of this world, and soul-hunger for the glory that satisfies forever more? It is an acknowledgment that God only can show His glory. Those who know best the way of God, and who have seen most of His glory, are most anxious to "know His way (chapter 33:13), and to see His beauty.

I. The Cause of this Shining. "He was with the Lord forty days and forty nights" (v. 28). Who could spend forty days of unbroken fellowship with God without being transformed into His likeness? Some diamonds after being exposed to the light can retain their brightness, and emit light in the darkness. Moses desired to see His glory. God said, "I will make My goodness pass before you." While he gazed on His goodness his soul was transfigured, and the glory of it shone in his face. At the Cross of Christ we see the glory of His goodness. Have we taken it in? Does it shine out in our lives? The glory without is the result of fullness within.

II. The Place where the Glory Appeared. "The skin of his face" (Exodus 34:29). The light of God's countenance shone in the countenance of His servant. A well-known missionary in China got the name of Mr. Gloryface because his countenance beamed with a heavenly light. The face shone indicating that the whole character of Moses was to bear testimony to his divine mission. The face is the index of the man, the expression of an inner life and disposition. In the face of Jesus we see the glory of God. Does the world see in our face the evidence that we are made partakers of the divine nature? (2 Corinthians 3:18).

III. The Effect of this Glory had—

1. On Others. "They were afraid to come near him" (v. 30). When He who is glorious in holiness manifests Himself through the consecrated life of His servant, the ungodly are rebuked and alarmed, they are afraid to come near. A Christ-like look has often made the sinner blush. Men of the world fear holiness as the serpent does fire.

2. On Himself. "Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone" (Exod. 34:29). His was unconscious shining. As the old negro said, "I can't help it, de light of de Cross makes me shine." "Moses was very meek" (Numbers 12:3), and God made him very mighty. "Uzziah was marvelously helped until he was strong" (2 Chronicles 25:15). The soul that is fully accepted with, and for God will be beautified, and will exercise a holy unconscious influence over others. No human can paint this glory, no earthly alchemy will

ever change the natural into the divine. In the secret of His presence alone can this power be had, this shining must first begin in the heart (2 Corinthians 4:6).

IV. The Glory was Veiled before the People. "Until Moses had done speaking with them he put a veil on his face" (v. 33). There is much that belongs to the Christian that is easily and joyfully carried that others cannot bear. Those who walk in the light of His face have often experiences of the deeper things of God that have to be veiled from the weak eyes of carnal believers. There are truths and experiences that can only be revealed to those who are able to bear them. Besides, God may give us blessings and revelations that are not to be communicated to others, "Unspeakable things which it is not possible for a man to utter" (2 Corinthians 12:4).

V. The Glory was Unveiled before the Lord. "When Moses went in before the Lord he took the veil off" (Exod. 34:34). Blessed be His Name, we can always with open countenance behold Him. He perfectly understands the hidden thoughts of the heart. We can talk with Him freely of those things that others cannot see or look on. If the Lord has in mercy given us light which even our fellow Christians cannot yet appreciate, so that it has to be partly veiled, let us beware of coming before the Lord of Light and Glory with the veil on, as if He did not appreciate to the full our new and heavenly experience. "Arise, shine, for your light is come" (Isaiah 60:1). In the mount of communion it shall be seen and imparted.

CONSECRATION AND ITS RESULTS.

Exodus 40:33-38.

The Tabernacle is a type of the body of Christ (Hebrews 9:11), the sacrifices prefigure His shed blood. In that it was the habitation of God, it is also a figure of our body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). In these verses we have a golden chain of holy connections.

I. There was the Yielding up of all to God. "They reared up... and set up. So Moses finished the work" (v. 33). Everything made and prepared for the Tabernacle was now set in its place. Putting every vessel and hanging in their places just meant the giving up of all to God. Many things had been in their own hands for preparation. Now all was handed over as belonging to the Lord. This is the first step to a consecrated life. Yield to Him what is His own. "Yourselves, you are not your own." "Present yourselves" (Romans 12:1).

II. The Claiming of all by God. "The cloud covered the tent" (v. 34). This cloud was the symbol of Jehovah's presence. When it covered or rested on the tent it was the assurance to Israel that what had been offered was now accepted and sealed for His use. God demands our all—for what have we that we have not received?—and when our all is sealed to Him our all is accepted by Him, and the seal of the Spirit's presence is as surely given, although we may not yet be conscious of it. "He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him," and also able to use it (Romans 6:13).

III. The Filling. "The glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (v. 34). The order is perfect: surrender, acceptance, possession. The disciples were completely surrendered to the will of God when they waited in the upper room, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. The Tabernacle was filled before it was used. Stephen was a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord" (Micah 3:8). The filling of the tent with the glory was the consecration of it on the divine side. We can give—or yield—God alone can consecrate by the filling. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be consecrated in the truest and fullest sense. "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

IV. The Result which Followed the Filling.

1. The Exclusion of Man. "Moses was not able to enter because the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (v. 35). Man's place is outside when God comes in. Self must stand back when the Holy Spirit fills. There is no room or place for the energy of the flesh when the power of the Holy Spirit possesses us. When Christ is enthroned within, then it is "Not I, but Christ" (Galatians 2:20). When we see His glory, then we cry, "Woe is me!"

2. The Divine Leading. The cloud which filled the house became their guide. "When the cloud was taken up, then they went onward" (v. 36). The same Spirit who fills our souls is to guide us in all the ways and will of God. There is a very vital connection between the filling and the leading (see Matthew 3:16; 4:1). The cloud was to the tent what the holy anointing is to be to us (1 John 2:27), an abiding, filling, guiding, separating presence. "He leads me, O blessed thought!"

3. Witness-Bearing. "The cloud of the Lord was... in the sight of all the house of Israel" (v. 38). The tent was called "the Tabernacle of Witness." It was a witness to the presence, power, and holiness of God. "You are My witnesses," says the Lord. But we, like the Tabernacle, are no witness until we are filled. A house, or heart, destitute of Christ can never be a witness to Him. A withered branch bears a poor testimony to the fullness of the vine. It is God Himself in us, by the Holy Spirit, that bears witness. "The Spirit of My Father," Jesus said, "speaks in you" (Matthew 10:20). The early disciples of Christ were filled with the Holy Spirit before they

became witnesses for Him (Acts 1:8). The branch must be filled with sap before the character of the tree can be manifested in fruit.