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Sermons on Exodus by C H Spurgeon

Exodus 33:18-23 God's Glory and His Goodness

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE

“And he said, I beseech thee show me the glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand when I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.” — Exodus 33:18-23.

IT has frequently happened that good men in times of great trial have asked God, either to give them a signal token of his love, or a special revelation of himself, that they might be strengthened and encouraged thereby. I suppose of many here present it is true that, when called by the Master to great labor or deep affliction you have been conscious of the same inward desire; your heart has craved after some extraordinary dispensation of grace to counterbalance the extraordinary visitation of suffering that has overtaken you. Were you indulged with singular nearness to God and unusual glimpses of his glory, you feel it would then be easy to leave all matters in his hand, and acquit yourselves valiantly; strong for service, whatever there is to do and patient in enduring, whatever there may be to bear. That prayer, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory,” is a natural yearning, a spontaneous impulse of the soul. Albeit, I know that there is a grievous incredulity, a sinful unbelief which asks to see signs and wonders, and without them men will not believe; yet I think there is a desire which springs up in the breasts of believers from an earnest childlike feeling of dependent upon the great Father God, which is not sinful, and which God accepts, and to which he often sends a gracious reply.

Now we will not linger over any preliminary reflections. Our text is rather long, and our time this evening is very short. Let us draw your attention, in the first place, to the fact that: —

I. God's Glory Evidently Lies In His Goodness.

You observe that when Moses said, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory,” the answer given him was this, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee” So then, beloved, if we could actually see the glory off the Lord, then the infinite graciousness of his thoughts, his words, and his deeds, all concentrated in one noontide effulgence, and all beaming forth with ineffable brightness, would break on our vision. But, of course, it is not a glory to be seen with mortal eyes; for God is a spirit, and, therefore, he is not to

be discerned by our weak senses, or to be understood by our gross materialism. Still, I put it thus: could God be beheld by the mind of man, and his perfections unfolded to our creature apprehensions, we should perceive that the chief splendor of his Majesty lay in his infinite benevolence. God is love. This is the prominent point of the divine character. Though all excellent qualities beyond measure or degree, surpassing thought or reckoning, could be found in him, yet, like the blended hues of many colors in the rainbow, the whole might be summed up in such words as these, "Thy goodness."

Some sublime evidences and brilliant reflections of this goodness of God may be seen in the works of creation. Who can leisurely walk in the fields, or saunter among the hills and dells, observing the beauty and order, the uses and capabilities of this fertile earth, without breathing a tribute of gratitude to the goodness of the Creator? Who can look up to the heavens with a gleam of sensibility, or a glimmer of intelligence, by day or by night from these dusky streets of ours, and observe the lustre of the constellations, or meditate on the regular motion of the celestial bodies, without an overwhelming impression of the transcendent goodness of the Lord? Yes; "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." The woods ring with the melody of "happy birds that hymn their rapture in the ear of God": the cattle on a thousand hills low out his praises: and winged insects in countless numbers hum their joy. The world is his temple, in which everything speaks of his glory. Some glimpses of his goodness may be perceived in Providence too. The history of man is the unrolling of the volume of divine benevolence to a great extent. That silver thread runs through all the web of human history. Yet, my brethren, these are but glimpses, for, alas! in creation (and in Providence too) much is to be seen of the terror and of the justice of God as well as of his goodness. Earthquakes swallow cities. Storms sweep away not only the possessions men own, but the men themselves who own the possessions. Shipwrecks are constantly occurring, and the sea is a vast cemetery. Dire famines are still abroad. Fell diseases stalk forth and mow down their helpless victims. The Lord most high is terrible; yet surely he is good. His decrees are inscrutable. What then? We must be always ready to worship him with resignation as well as with exultation, with bated breath as well as with grateful song. Tell me of the goodness of God to the whole animate creation; commend me to the tiny insects that dance in the sunbeams of his widespread benevolence. And I tell you that he is great in power also; his ways baffle our scrutiny. For by one chill wind, by one cold frost, in the course of a night millions of millions of those creatures perish at once. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God! Whether in creation or in Providence, between the tenderness that fosters life and the sternness that destroys life, the balance is held so steadily that we can but get glimpses of God's goodness by broadly surveying or minutely examining them.

The full display of the goodness of God, however, is reserved for the working of his grace in the redemption of man. Do ye ask wherein the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared? The answer is, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." It is here at the cross, by the blood of the Covenant, that Jehovah makes his goodness known in its diviner forms. That God should be good to creatures is something to be thankful for, but that he should be good to sinful creatures exhibits his character in a far more marvellous light, and should constrain our gratitude beyond all degree. That he should plan a scheme of redemption, that he should give his Son to carry out that purpose, that his Holy Spirit should bow the heavens and come down and be resident on earth, dwelling in the bodies of his people, that he might work out the good pleasure of his own will wherein is goodness. Is the earth a temple?—its windows are few and narrow, letting in little light compared with the temple of God's grace, which seems to be a very crystal palace, letting in the light of his grace on all sides: or rather it is like one huge pearl itself, whose light beams from within and makes the earth and the nations bright with the radiance of its glory. If you would see the goodness of God in its purest tenderness, you must come into the Sanctum Sanctorum, into the holy of holies, where he dwells in the hearts of his people, who form the living temple of the living God. The experience of one and all who know him will bear witness to this. It would appear, however, that in the manifestation of this grace, the goodness of God shines in a peculiar light. Another attribute is blended with it. Permit me to read the verse to you: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."

You observe here that, while God's goodness is his glory, the very glory of his goodness lies in his sovereignty. What less than this can be meant by the sentence, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy"? "God is not bound to be gracious to anyone, and he is peculiarly jealous of his right to bestow his grace where he will. "Shall I not do as I will with my own?" is the question which the Most High seems to be constantly asking. He will show mercy, but he will take care so to grant it that his own absolute prerogative shall be conspicuous. He exercises a right of his own in every act of mercy — it is not of debt, but of grace — therefore, no flesh shall glory in his presence. The creature may not say unto his Maker, "Why hast thou made me thus?" No man is permitted to challenge his authority, or ask, "Why hast thou withheld such a gift from me, or why hast thou bestowed such a gift on another"? Against his fiat there is no appeal. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." I know this attribute of divine sovereignty does not shine in a very lovely light to many eyes. Oh! may those eyes be touched with a heavenly salve, and they will see better. The naked grandeur of the fact is not to be impeached; the eyes are in fault — let them be abashed — the eyes that are dazzled and blinded by the excess of its splendor, for the Lord is God, he giveth no account of his matter. The Lord Most High death as he wills among the armies of heaven, and with the inhabitants of this lower world. Glory be to his name. Some of us have learned to love this attribute and to rejoice therein. We

thank God that he is King. We delight in his absolute sovereignty, knowing as we do that he is too wise to err, too good to be unkind; therefore, we say, "Let his will be done on earth even as it is in heaven"; and in all things let his counsels prevail; for in submission to him we find all the purposes of his heart on our side, while in resistance to him we find all his decrees set in array against us. Let not the creature, therefore, ask account from the Creator; let not the subject call in question his rightful Lord; above all, let not the disciple have a scruple about his Master's teaching. Not, indeed, that we should gaze at this one attribute till our eyes are so blinded with its dazzling splendor that we cannot perceive other attributes of the Almighty. All his perfections blend and harmonize; none of them clash or contradict one another.

God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, but he always exercises that sovereignty with respect to justice. He treats no man unequally. In judgment he is impartial. Amongst lost spirits not one shall dare charge the Judge of all with partiality. The equity of their sentence shall be palpable alike to the criminal and the foe. Unmoved by passion or by prejudice, the heavens shall declare his righteousness: and hell itself shall be unable to impeach the integrity with which he administers the laws and statutes of his universal kingdom. Neither does God exercise that sovereignty inconsistently with wisdom. He has chosen a people, and he did not choose them because of their merits, yet depend upon it he made a wise choice. Were we endowed with more wisdom, we might easily discern the choice God has made is not only gracious, but highly judicious. He is not blind and unwitting that the counsel of his heart should be distorted with a random change or an inevitable fatality. What though we cannot decipher the why or the wherefore? There is a reason which he has not been pleased to reveal; therefore, it ill becomes us to pry into matters so far beyond the sphere of our intelligence: and still less would it be fitting to ascribe to mere caprice motives which we are unable to fathom. Our Sovereign Lord acts according to his own will, it is true; but know that he acts according to the counsel of his will, that is to say, not without deliberation, forethought, and pre-science of all the issues. Nor is this sovereign choice of God ever exercised apart from his goodness. He is infinitely gracious, infinitely benevolent, infinitely loving. His election makes the grace he bestows, the compassion he feels, and the love he manifests, more abundantly conspicuous. Some preachers have set forth this doctrine as if it were their delight to represent the Almighty as an austere Ruler, to be dreaded rather than to be revered. By exaggerating one feature of his admirable character, or rather by neglecting to draw other features in their due proportion, they have produced an unseemly caricature, instead of an attractive delineation. His absolute dominion has thus made men shudder as if it were an awful despotism wherewith he tramples down the creatures whom verily he upholds by his power. But know ye that the Lord is good, that his tender mercy is over all his works, and his mercy endureth for ever. Though in the exercise of his supreme prerogative, he saith, "I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," yet he speaks again in words like these, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in him that dieth, but had rather that he turn unto me and live." He willeth not, he declares, the death of the sinner. Infinite mercy is not inconsistent with unrivalled sovereignty. Do you tell me to show you that? Nay, but I cannot show you it; it is for God to show you. Who am I that I should attempt to reveal the Infinite? Go ye to him and put up the prayer, "Show me thy glory," and you shall see his goodness with his sovereignty illuminating it like a blaze of light, ever making it more resplendent, never obscuring it. At any rate, beloved, the doctrine is transparent enough to arrest attention. Do not, I beseech you, reject it. I know how angry it makes some men to allude to it, but I know also how good a thing it often proves for them to be incensed, when the truth is more perspicuous than palatable; for if the arrows of God stick fast in their conscience and wound them, there will come healing afterwards. Anything that rouses men from their apathy and makes them think is salutary. What though this doctrine may look like a stumbling block in your pathway, it is one of the great thought-leaders that has often brought men on their knees before the majesty of heaven. But ah! the best of men while here below can only have a partial view of this glory of God's goodness and sovereignty. Moses, highly favored as he was, beholds it but in a measure. He sees the skirts of God's garment: he cannot see his face. And yet it has been well observed that this very Moses afterwards saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ on the mountain of Transfiguration. "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." Here thou canst but know in part, but soon, and oh! how soon! thou shalt know even as thou art known. The veil will soon be rent, my brethren. If we have believed in Jesus, the least among us shall soon be wiser than the wisest of those who still linger behind in the wilderness. We shall stand before the throne upon that sea of glass that glows with fire, and cast our crowns before the eternal One, and see the Infinite One and glory in the sight. Thus have we tried to show you that the glory of God lies in his goodness and his sovereignty.

II. His Glory Can Be Best Seen In The Cliff Of The Rock.

Moses was put into the cliff of the rock. Surely I am not guilty of trifling with a literal fact or fancifully spiritualising the sacred narrative, when I take up the language of the Apostle Paul, and say, "That rock was Christ." If the rock from which the Israelites drank was Christ, surely this cliff in the rock, this splitting of the rock, this making a shield and shelter of the rock, was a true type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**"Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."**

It is no poetical fiction, no coinage of the brain. It is a substantial truth that Jesus is the cliff of the rock wherein we stand when we come to God in Christ Jesus. There it is that we can look upon the goodness and the sovereignty of Jehovah, and more fully survey the glorious vision than it were possible for us to behold anywhere else. Apart from Christ, men do not see the true goodness of

God. The description that some preachers give of God's goodness amounts to this: that men's sins are such trifles that God will entirely overlook them as frailties of the creature, or if he should punish the transgressors, it will be with gentle discipline, and not with fiery indignation; and that only for a short time, after which they will either perish by annihilation, or else peradventure they will enter into life everlasting by a general restitution. Sin is treated with an indifference that borders on levity. It excites so little aversion among men, that they begin to think it of no very great account in the sight of God. He is too good and generous to be hard upon his poor subjects, who did but follow their own inclinations and trample on his laws. Knowing what they are, he pities them, as if vice were a disease and crime a misfortune. Take heed, my friends, of all such sophistries. That leniency is not goodness. In fact, it is the very opposite. It has neither integrity nor benignity to recommend it. Take the case of a legislator or a judge, whose sense of justice might be lax, while his feelings were too tender to denounce a crime, and too timid to condemn a criminal; would you consider him deserving of eulogy? Suppose a magistrate on the bench should say, "Well, it is true this man did break into a dwelling-house, smite the servant, kill the owner, and abstract the property. The evidence is clear, but there are extenuating circumstances. He wanted a little money, or he would not have done it. Poor man! the money tempted him. Let us take a merciful view of the matter. Is not money a commodity that everybody is anxious to get? Are we not all exposed to temptation? Do not put him in prison; do not sentence him to death; how would you like to be hanged yourself? Reprove the unhappy fellow; give him his liberty; encourage him with the hope of a better career in the future." What would you think of this new species of charity? When felony is yclept a misdemeanour, and murder is condoned as a casualty, I can hardly imagine you would feel very comfortable with the red-handed culprit by your side in this Tabernacle; you would rather not have him go home and sleep in one of your houses to-night; your generous hospitality would rather grudge him a cordial welcome. No; we say that kindness to the murderer is cruelty to the nation; the easy good nature that makes light of sin is a wrong to the community; the reprieve and the release of heinous offenders is a breaking up of the defences that shield us from men whose conduct is unscrupulous, and whose disposition is ferocious. Or when, to give another example, I see a man in Holland, digging away at the dykes which are made to keep out the sea, I might ignorantly resent any interference with him. Why should not the man have a little sand if he wants it to put on his floor, or why may not he take home a bag of earth to make the things in his garden grow better? — do not molest him! Nay, but with the knowledge I now possess of the consequences, I should say, he will let in the sea: he will break up the ramparts! It cannot be endured; it must not be tolerated; he infringes the law to the hazard of his neighbors, so that it becomes such a high offense, that mercy extended to him would be a misery to the surrounding population. What say ye, then, my dear friends, shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Would ye impute to him a pitiful clemency, that rather exposes weakness than exhibits strength of character? No such callousness or apathy, no such disregard of the rights and wrongs of the inhabitants of the world belongs to the government of the Most High. Even the mercy of God, which is revealed in Christ and recorded in the Bible, is wise and discriminating. He is as severe as if he were not kind, and he is as tender as if he were not rigorous. His justice is never eclipsed by his mercy, and his mercy is not diminished, but rather is increased in splendor by his justice. Never, I pray you, think that men can understand the goodness of God till they see Christ Jesus. When they see him crucified, they discover how he pardons sin, but not till an atonement is made — how he puts away the transgression, but not till the law is fulfilled and made honorable by the suffering of the Only Begotten. He does not pull up the sluices of iniquity and let loose the floods upon mankind. He is too good to do that. He lays help upon one that is mighty, and executes his vengeance upon the sinner's Substitute. You never see his goodness till you get into Christ.

Nor does any man ever see God's sovereignty aright until he comes into the cliff of the rock, Jesus Christ. I love the high doctrines of the covenant of grace, I must confess, most devoutly and devotedly. But of this I am quite certain, that all the counsels of the Father concerning his people, and all the benefits he has conferred on his people were bestowed in the person of his well-beloved Son. Still, I know of no greater pest under heaven than high doctrine preached or believed in as an abstract system of divinity or a blind fatalism, by those who have not their heart set upon the One Mediator whom God appointed, the blessed Redeemer whom he has accepted as our representative. Oh! how they caricature God as a Moral Governor! Oh! how they burlesque the gospel as a proclamation of good tidings to the children of men! The love they attempt to describe is unlovely, and the mercy they essay to publish is unattractive. They sing hymns of grace to the tune of reprobation. But in Christ Jesus you may see how sovereignty blends with sympathy, and how the strong will that knows no mutability is consistent with the goodwill that owns no animosity. The Lord is King, but the silver scepter is in his hand. He fulfils his own decrees, but his decrees are not grievous, for Christ is the Messenger of the Covenant, and he proclaims his readiness to receive every heavy-laden soul that comes to him for mercy.

Now I further remark that in the gifts of the gospel and the blessings of Christ we see divine goodness. You will never see divine goodness so clearly as you do in the fact that God gave his Son. "God so loved the world that he gave" — gave what? — gave what token of his love — gave the air we breathe, the fruits of the earth we feed upon, the flowers that charm our eye, the gorgeous sun that shines resplendent in the skies — these are proofs of his benevolence no doubt, but all other proofs are comprehended in this — "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The gospel of good news everywhere declares that whosoever believeth in Christ is not condemned. Herein the amazing goodness of God is described in a few words — an infinity of meaning is pressed into a single sentence. The blessings that God has conferred on us in Christ — comprehending as they do the Holy Spirit who brings all things to us — show the riches

of his goodness. Earthly blessings are but the nether springs, and they are often discoloured in a measure by the soil through which they flow, but heavenly blessings are the upper springs, leaping from the eternal throne immortal and pure, making those that drink pure and immortal, so that they shall never die. In Christ you can see divine sovereignty as you never saw it before. Oh! I like to think that Christ is King — that over all the world he reigns — that God hath committed all power into his hands who is our brother touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The sorts of

Jacob might not go to Pharaoh, but it was a good thing when it was said, “Go to Joseph,” for they would none of them be afraid to go to their brother. And now there is a mediatorial kingdom set up on the earth in which Christ alone is the Head. And who would wish to have a better Head and a better King? We can trust the power with him, for he has absolute wisdom, unlimited goodness, unbounded grace. Oh! how glad are we that the Lord reigneth, and that Christ Jesus is head over all things to his Church, that he is King of kings and Lord of lords, according to that ancient saying, “Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion” In Christ sovereignty and goodness shine as with noontide radiance.

And now I would ask you, my dear hearers, to remember that the sovereign grace of God may be seen in the gospel that is preached to you. God might, if he had willed, have made salvation conditional upon your performing certain works. He has not done so He has been pleased to give salvation to every soul that will believe in Jesus Christ. In his sovereignty he has been pleased to make faith the channel of saving blessing. He, in his sovereignty, might have ordained a thousand graces as the way to mercy, but he has only put two. “Repent,” saith he, and in another place, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” The knowledge of salvation might have been put so far beyond the reach of common intelligence, that the whole of the British Museum could not have contained the volumes in which it was written, and an entire lifetime could not have sufficed to learn the rudiments of this best of all the sciences. Instead of that, he has put it in these simple sentences, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”; “He that believeth not shall be damned.” Here is his sovereignty and his goodness too. Thank God for so simple a plan of salvation, and thank him, I pray you, for such promises as he has made. Listen sinner. He has said, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He has said, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.” He might have chosen to send the gospel to the great and mighty, but he has dispensed it freely to the poor; he has directed it to the humble, yea, and he has made a special mark that he has provided it for every broken and contrite heart that trembles at his word. How can you kick at sovereignty, however absolute, which is exercised in so tender, so gentle, so merciful a manner? Instead of rebelling against his scepter, come and kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way. Bow down before his nailed feet, and ask the pardon that his wounds and death have purchased. Come to his cross, and let your trust fix itself in his passion, which has expiated the guilt of all believers; in his resurrection, which has secured life to all that trust him, and in his intercession, which guarantees salvation to all that come unto God by him — salvation even to the uttermost. Oh! see him! he might, if he had so willed, have withheld the gospel; he might, if he willed, have clogged the gospel with terms and conditions which would make the acceptance of it a hardship. Or he might have denied to you the hearing of it, even though he gave others that unspeakable privilege. What, then, should be your gratitude, when he has been pleased to send his messenger to you with these tidings of grace, this proclamation of pardon: “Trust in the Only Begotten, who died on the cross, and I will forgive you — forgive you now”? “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as snow.” Oh! yield, yield you now. May his blessed Spirit come with these words of mine, which I would to God could be made more quick and powerful than they are — may his eternal Spirit come and clothe them with might and with energy to convince your conscience, to convert your heart, to renew your spirit, to make you bow before the infinite heart so good and yet so absolute. Then might you say, “Great God, I own thee King, I love thee because thou art a gracious God, I worship thee because thou couldst reject me if thou willed. I kneel at thy footstool and pray thee to accept me, not for my merit, since I have none, but for thy mercy’s sake; oh I for Christ’s sake, have pity upon me.” He will hear you, sinner. An answer of peace shall be given you — shall be given you now.

The practical end of all this may be summed up in a few sentences. Sinner, unsaved, you are in the hands of God to do what he likes with you. He can destroy you: he can save you. A moth is not more feeble beneath the finger of a man than you are beneath the finger of God. Be not, therefore, highminded. Submit yourself to him whose power is able to crush or to uphold you. But know that he in whose hands thou art is infinitely good and gracious; therefore, appeal to him for mercy; by all means cherish hope; yield not to fell despair; suffer not that demon like a nightmare to sit on your breast, to crush out all your energies, stifle all your cries, and prevent your drawing near to God in prayer. He is not more majestic and absolute as a sovereign than he is benignant and pitiful. When you are in his hands, you are in good hands. Resist not his will; repine not at his decrees; confide in his clemency; approach him in the courts of his house; fall down at his mercy-seat; adore him by his generous titles; seek shelter in his love; give earnest attention to the gospel; believe it implicitly. Right soon will you then get silent musings, obvious reasonings, solid arguments to banish fear and nourish hope. God need not have sent his Son into the world to suffer and to die. It must have been gratuitous on his part. That you should have a share in this great redemption could never be inferred from his justice; it must be referred to his grace. But if you believe him, then the redemption is yours; the faith you have in him is a token of the favor he has towards you. If you rely upon the simple fact that Christ died for you, your faith is the substance of the thing you hope for, and it shall be the evidence of your special redemption. His blood was shed for your remission. Because he poured out his soul unto

death, therefore your soul is raised up to everlasting life. Your relying upon Christ is my warranty for accrediting you with all the immunities and all the advantages of his salvation.

This sovereign goodness of God ought to be a great encouragement to any of you that have been great sinners, because while there is no competition on your part in which merit might bear the palm, there is a complacency on his part in which grace can assert its claims. If he can save whom he will, he may be an willing to save you who are the most depraved as he is to save those who have been the most virtuous of mankind. Do you heartily repent at this good hour of your transgressions? God has not limited the promise Of this mercy to those who have transgressed but a little, but he is wont to make the chief of sinners the objects of his chiefest mercy. It is well for us that grace is distributed sovereignly. Better that we should look to his goodwill than dream of our own freewill. To be suitors for the great benefits he has treasured up for his people is far preferable to being schemers seeking to justify ourselves and forge a righteousness void of worth, graceless, heartless, and good for nothing. Since he does as he wills, he may be willing to give to you what you are desirous to ask of him. Nay; he does will to give to you if now he moves your will to accept at his hand the rich fruit of the Savior's passion. Never did a soul desire God, but God desired that soul. Whenever a soul yearns to be saved through Jesus Christ, admiring the grace as it has been vouchsafed to others, and craving the like grace for itself, that hunger and thirst are prompted by God, and by God it shall be satiated; for blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousnes, they shall be filled. Oh! come then, come and welcome. What more, what better can I do to conclude than ring again that silver bell which has so often resounded clear and loud in this Tabernacle? It has not lost ought of its sacred melody or its enchanting power: —

**“From the Mount of Calvary,
Where the Savior deigned to die,
What transporting sounds I bear,
Bursting on my ravished ear:
Love’s redeeming work is done,
Come and welcome, sinner come”**

Come, I pray you, for his mercy's sake. Amen.

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Exodus 12:3-4. — Too Little for the Lamb

They shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. —Exodus 12:3-4

THE lamb was to be eaten, all eaten, eaten by all, and eaten at once. The Lord Jesus is to be received into the soul as its food, and this is to be done with a whole Christ, by each one of his people, and done just now. The whole subject of the Passover is rich in instruction; we will confine ourselves to the particulars within this verse.

I. THE TEXT REMINDS US OF A PRIMARY PRIVILEGE.

1. That each man of Israel ate the Passover for himself; "every man according to his eating" So do we feed upon Jesus, each one as his appetite, capacity, and strength enable him to do.

2. But this same delicious fare should be enjoyed by all the family: "a lamb for an house;" Oh, that each of the parents, and all the children and servants may be partakers of Christ! By teaching, training, prayer, and holy example, this favor may be secured, for the Holy Spirit will add his blessing.

Let not these two favors be despised. Let no man be content without personal salvation, nor without the salvation of his whole house. We have both promised in that famous text, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

II. THE TEXT IS SILENT AS TO A CERTAIN CONTINGENCY.

1. The lamb was never too little for the family; and assuredly the Lord Jesus is never too little even for the largest families, nor for the most sinful persons.

2. There is no reason to stint our prayers for fear we ask too much.

3. Nor to stay our labors because the Lord Jesus cannot give us strength enough, or grace enough.

4. Nor to restrain our hopes of salvation for the whole family because of some supposed narrowness in the purpose, provision, or willingness of the Lord to bless.

"Every man according to his eating" may feast to the full upon Christ. Every believing sinner may take Christ to himself, and there is no fear that one will be refused, for "it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell,"

III. THE TEXT MENTIONS A POSSIBILITY, AND PROVIDES FOR IT.

There may be a want of persons to feed upon the Lamb, though there can be no lack of food for them to feed upon. The last thing that was supplied to the great marriage feast was guests. The oxen and the fatlings were killed, and all things were ready, long before "the wedding was furnished with guests"

1. One family is certainly too small a reward for Jesus, too little for the Lamb.
2. One family is too little to render him all the praise, worship, service, and love which he deserves.
3. One family is too little to do all the work of proclaiming the Lamb of God, maintaining the truth, visiting the church, winning the world. Therefore let us call in the neighbor next unto our house.

Our next neighbor has the first claim upon us.

He is the most easy to reach, and by each calling his next neighbor all will be reached.

He is the most likely person to be influenced by us.

At any rate there is the rule, and we are to obey it. "Beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). We read of Andrew, "he first findeth his own brother Simon" (John 1:41). Those who repaired Jerusalem built every man over against his own house (Neh. 3:28).

If our neighbor does not come when invited, we are not responsible; but if he perished because we did not invite him, bloodguiltiness would be upon us. "If thou dost not speak — his blood will I require at thine hand" — (Ezekiel 33:8).

IV. THE WHOLE SUBJECT SUGGESTS THOUGHTS UPON NEIGHBORLY FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL.

1. It is good for individuals and families to grow out of selfishness, and to seek the good of a wide circle.
2. It is a blessed thing when the center of our society is "the Lamb"
3. Innumerable blessings already flow to us from the friendships which have sprung out of our union in Jesus. Church fellowship has been fruitful in this direction.
4. Our care for one another in Christ helps to realize the unity of the one body, even as the common eating of the Passover proclaimed and assisted the solidarity of the people of Israel as one nation. This spiritual union is a high privilege.
5. Thoroughly carried out, heaven will thus be foreshadowed upon earth, for there love to Jesus and love to one another is found in every heart.

Let us be personal in our piety, and never be put off with a mere national religion or family profession.

Let us be generous in our religion, and never neglect our families, our friends, or the neighborhood in which we dwell.

Things of Interest

A little boy asked his mother which of the characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress* she liked best. She replied, "Christian, of course; he is the hero of the whole story." Her son said, "I don't, mother, I like Christiana best; for when Christian went on his pilgrimage he started alone, but when Christiana went she took the children with her."

"The Lord said unto Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark." True religion thinks of the house. I once knew a man who walked a long distance to hear what he called "the truth." Neither his wife nor any of his children went to any place of worship, and when he was asked about them by me, he told me that "the Lord would save his own"; to which I could not help replying that the Lord would not own him. For this he demanded a warrant, and I gave him this: — "He that provideth not for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Does God acknowledge such persons as his elect?

A man was going to his work one morning, when he was told that the river had burst its banks, and was sweeping down the valley,

carrying death and destruction wherever it went. His informant did not seem much concerned about the matter, but the brave workman immediately rushed off down to the lower part of the valley, shouting, "If that's so, somebody has got to let the people know." By his timely warning he saved the lives of many people.

Eating together is one of the most effectual symbols of fellowship; hence the Passover and the Lord's Supper remind us of our oneness in Christ. Never let us eat our morsel alone. When we eat the fat and drink the sweet, let us joyfully send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared.

Exodus 12:1-20: Exposition

Sermon Notes

by C H Spurgeon

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They were thus to exercise an act of faith. Why were they to eat in haste, but that they expected soon to be gone? They were to stand like travelers who are starting upon a journey, believing that God was about to set them free. Oh, that we would always exercise faith in all our devotions, for without faith it must ever be impossible to please God.

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

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

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

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

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Exodus 14: Exposition

Sermon Notes

by C H Spurgeon

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

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

Exodus 14:1–2 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth between Migdol and sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it ye shall encamp by the sea

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

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

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

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

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

can really subdue a proud and stubborn heart.

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

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

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

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

Exodus 14:10. and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Exodus 14:15. — Unseasonable Prayer

Wherefore criest thou unto me? Exodus 14:15

There may come a time when this question needs to be asked even of a Moses. There is a period when crying should give place to action: when prayer is heard and the Red Sea is dividing, it would be shameful disobedience to remain trembling and praying. Therefore Moses must lift his rod and speak to the children of Israel that they go forward. Every fruit of the Spirit comes in its season, and is then most precious: out of season even prayer comes not to perfection. Ask, by all means; but prepare yourself to receive. Seek earnestly; but do not hold back when the hour arrives for you to find. Knock, and knock again; but hasten to enter as soon as the door is open.

When we ought to believe that we have the mercy, why do we continue to cry for it as though we had not obtained it? When increased faith is all that is wanted, why are we seeking the blessing which God places within reach of our faith? When duty is quite clear, why hesitate to perform it and make prayer an excuse for our delay?

The question should be asked of all who pray, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?"

I. SOMETIMES THE ANSWER WILL BE VERY UNSATISFACTORY.

1. Because I was brought up to do so. Some have perpetrated gross hypocrisy through repeating forms of prayer which they learned in childhood. We have heard of one who prayed for his father and mother in his old age (John 9:24).
2. It is a part of my religion. These pray as a Dervish dances or a Fakir holds his arm aloft; but they know nothing of the spiritual reality of prayer (Matt. 6:7).
3. It is a right thing to do. So indeed it is if we pray aright; but the mere repetition of pious words is vanity (Isa. 29:13).
4. I feel easier in my mind after it. Ought you to feel easier? May not your formal prayers be a mockery of God and so an increase of sin (Isa. 1:12-15; Ezek. 20:31)?
5. I think it meritorious and saving. This is sheer falsehood, and a high offence against the merit and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

II. SOMETIMES THE ANSWER WILL BETRAY IGNORANCE.

1. When it hinders immediate repentance. Instead of quitting sin and mourning over it, some men talk of praying. "To obey is better than sacrifice" and better than supplication.
2. When it keeps from faith in Jesus. The gospel is not "pray and be saved"; but "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Matt. 7:21; John 6:47).
3. When we suppose that it fits us for Jesus. We must come to him as sinners, and not set up our prayers as a sort of righteousness (Luke 18:11, 12).
4. When we think that prayer alone will bring a blessing.

III. SOMETIMES THE ANSWER WILL BE QUITE CORRECT.

1. Because I must. I am in trouble, and must pray or perish. Sighs and cries are not made to order, they are the irresistible

outbursts of the heart (Ps. 42:1; Rom. 8:26).

2. Because I know I shall be heard, and therefore I feel a strong desire to deal with God in supplication. "Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him" (Ps. 116:2).
3. Because I delight in it: it brings rest to my mind, and hope to my heart. It is a sweet means of communion with my God. "It is good for me to draw near to God" (Ps. 73:28).
4. Because I feel that I can best express the little faith and repentance I have by crying to the Lord for more.
5. Because these grow as I pray. No doubt we may pray ourselves into a good frame if God the Holy Ghost blesses us.
6. Because I look for all from God, and therefore I cry to him (Ps. 62:5). He will be enquired of by us (Ezek. 36: 37).

Where must those be who depend upon their own prayers?

What are those who live without prayer

What are those who can give no reason for praying, but

superstitiously repeat words without heart?

Cases in Point, etc.

An anxious enquirer to whom I had plainly put the great gospel command, "Believe in the Lord Jesus," constantly baffled my attempts to lead her out of self to Christ. At last she cried out, "Pray for me! pray for me!" She seemed greatly shocked when I replied, "I will do nothing of the kind. I have prayed for you before; but if you refuse to believe the word of the Lord, I do not see what I can pray for. The Lord bids you believe his Son, and if you will not do so, but persist in making God a liar, you will perish, and you richly deserve it" This brought her to her bearings. She begged me again to tell her the way of salvation, she quietly received it as a little child, her frame quivered, her face brightened, and she cried! "Sir! I can believe, I do believe, and I am saved. Thank you for refusing to comfort me in my unbelief. "Then she said very softly, "Will you not pray for me now?" Assuredly I did, and we rejoiced together that we could offer the prayer of faith.

A good illustration of the need of following up prayer by effort may be found in the following anecdote:—

A scholar was remarkable for repeating her lessons well. Her schoolfellow, rather idly inclined, said to her one day, "How is it that you always say your lessons so perfectly?" She replied, "I always pray that I may say my lessons well." "Do you?" said the other; "well then, I will pray, too": but alas! the next morning she could not even repeat a word of her usual task. Very much confounded, she ran to her friend, and reproached her as deceitful: "I prayed," said she, "but I could not say a single word of my lesson" "Perhaps," rejoined the other, "you took no pains to learn it" "Learn it! Learn it! I did not learn it at all" answered the first, "I thought I had no occasion to learn it, when I prayed that I might say it." The mistake is a very common one.

In a great thaw on one of the American rivers, there was a man on one of the cakes of ice, which was not yet actually separated from the unbroken mass. In his terror, however, he did not see this, but knelt down and began to pray not seen aloud for God to deliver him. The spectators on the shore cried loudly to him, "Man, man, stop praying, and run for the shore" So I would say to some of you, "Rest not in praying, but believe in Jesus." — Quoted in "The Christian," 1874

On one occasion, when Bunyan was endeavoring to pray, the tempter suggested "that neither the mercy of God, nor yet the blood of Christ, at all concerned him, nor could they help him by reason of his sin; therefore it was vain to pray." Yet he thought with himself, "I will pray." "But" said the tempter, "your sin is unpardonable." "Well" said he, "I will pray" "It is to no boot," said the adversary. And still he answered, "I will pray." And so he began his prayer, "Lord, Satan tells me that neither thy mercy nor Christ's blood is sufficient to save my soul. Lord, shall I honor thee most by believing thou wilt and canst? or him, by believing thou neither wilt nor canst? Lord, I would fain honor thee by believing that thou canst and wilt" And while he was thus speaking, "as if someone had clapped him on the back," that scripture fastened on his mind, "O man, great is thy faith"

Seek thou thy God alone by prayer,
And thou shalt doubt--perchance despair;
But seek him also by endeavor,
And thou shalt find him gracious ever.

Exodus 20:1-17: Exposition

Sermon Notes

by C H Spurgeon

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

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

Exodus 20:4-6. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve they: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Exodus 24:1-8 Exposition

Sermon Notes

by C H Spurgeon

Now let us read the passage to which Paul refers in Hebrews 9:19-21.

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

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

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

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

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Exodus 32:26. — Who Is on the Lord's Side?

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. — Exodus 32:26

ISRAEL had rebelled against Jehovah, and had set up the golden calf. Moses appeared among them, and in great wrath threw down their idol and rebuked Aaron. The people were awe-struck by the presence of the servant of the Lord, and sought their tents, save only a number of the more hardened who brazened it out. Moses, feeling that this great rebellion must be crushed and punished, summoned the faithful to his standard, and those who came were of the tribe of Levi. These, with stern fidelity, fulfilled their mission, and hence were made teachers of Israel for ever. Decision is that which the Lord looks for in his ministers, and when he sees it he will reward it. Remember the blessing of Levi, in Deuteronomy 33.

And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummin and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.

All true men ought to be decided, for a dreadful conflict is going on at this present day, and a curse will fall on neutrals.

I. THE CONFLICT, AND WHICH IS THE LORD'S SIDE.

Belief in God against Atheism and other forms of unbelief.

Scripture in opposition to false philosophy and "modern thought"

The gospel versus superstition.

Christ versus self-righteousness.

The commands of God versus self-pleasing.

Holiness and right, against sin and oppression.

II. THE LORD'S FRIENDS AND WHAT THEY MUST DO.

They must own their allegiance openly. "Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord" (verse 29).

They should come out and rally to the standard: "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." We do this by open union with the church, by boldly rebuking sin, by testifying for truth, by not conforming to the world, and by conforming to Christ our Lord (2 Cor. 8:5).

They must be willing to be in a minority: one tribe against eleven, if need be.

They must become aggressive. "Put every man his sword by his side" (verse 27).

Their zeal must overmaster nature's ties. "Neither did he acknowledge his brethren? etc., (Deut 33:9).

They must do what they are bidden. "And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses" (Exodus 32:28).

III. THE LORD'S HOST AND ITS ENCOURAGEMENTS.

Their cause is that of right and truth. A good cause is a firm foundation and a powerful stimulus of valour.

It is the cause of the Almighty God. "They have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant" (Deut 30:9).

Christ himself is our Captain. Who can hesitate with such a Chieftain?" A leader and commander for the people" (Isa 55:4).

The Angels are with us. Horses of fire and chariots of fire are round about the Lord's servants (2 Kings 6:17).

Thousands of the best of men have been on this side (Heb. 12:1).

It is the side of conscience, and of a clean heart.

It is that side of the warfare which ends in heaven and victory, world without end (Rev. 19:14).

IV. THE QUESTION OF THE TEXT, AND PROPOSALS FOR ENLISTMENT.

Take the shilling: by faith receive the promise.

Put on the colors: by confessing Christ openly in baptism.

Submit to drill: be willing to learn, and yield to discipline.

Put on the regimentals: wear the garments of holiness, the livery of love, the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13-18).

Gird on your sword: "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"

Enter on civil war first. Wage war within your own soul. Slay sin, conquer self, cast down high looks, etc.

March to the field. Fight with falsehood, superstition, cruelty, oppression, drunkenness, uncleanness, and sin of every sort, anywhere and everywhere.

Illustrative Extracts

"We trust the Lord is on our side, Mr. Lincoln," said the speaker of a delegation of Christian people to that good man, during one of the darkest days of the American Civil War. "I do not regard that as so essential as something else;" replied Mr. Lincoln. The worthy visitors looked horror-struck, until the President added: "I am most concerned to know that we are on the Lord's side."

Mr. Lincoln was right. The right side is not my side or your side. The Lord's side is the place to which every one of us should rally. His banner has right, truth, love, and holiness written on it. Be sure you stand up for God's banner, even if you stand alone.

Guizot, in his life of St. Louis of France, says that the latter had many vassals who were also vassals of the King of England, and that many subtle and difficult questions arose as to the extent of the service which they owed to these kings. At length the French king commanded all those nobles who held lands in English territory to appear before him, and then he said to them, "As it is

impossible for any man living in my kingdom and having possessions in England rightly to serve two masters, you must either attach yourselves altogether to me, or inseparably to the King of England" After saying this, he gave them a certain day by which to make their choice.

The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in his train?

"Set down my name, Sir" According to Bunyan, these were the words of the man who fought his way into the palace, and who was welcomed with the song —

Come in, come in,
Eternal glory thou shalt win.

A dear friend of mine, the head of a family of grown-up sons and daughters, lately passed away very suddenly. The day before he died, all the members of the household were with him, including one who had recently, like the rest, experienced the power of saving grace. The father's joy was great, as he put his hand upon one after another of his offspring, saying with an overflowing heart, "And this one on the Lord's side!--and this one on the Lord's side!" How would it be with our hearer should he have to stand at the death-bed of a godly parent? Would that parent rejoice over him because he is on the Lord's side?