

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF EXODUS

by

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Exodus 7 - Exodus 11

These five chapters form one distinct section, the contents of which may be distributed into the three following divisions, namely, the ten judgments from the hand of the Lord; the resistance of **“Jannes and Jambres;”** and the four objections of Pharaoh. The whole land of Egypt was made to tremble beneath the successive strokes of the rod of God. All from the monarch on his throne to the menial at the mill, were made to feel the terrible weight of that rod. **“He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines: also, and their fig-trees; and brake the trees of their coasts. He spake, and their locusts came, and the caterpillars, and that without number, and did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength”** (Psalm 105:26-36).

Here the inspired Psalmist has given a condensed view of those appalling afflictions which the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart brought upon his land and upon his people.

This haughty monarch had set himself to resist the sovereign will and course of the Most High God; and, as a just consequence, he was given over to judicial blindness and hardness of heart. **“And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had spoken unto Moses. And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh: and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name. may be declared throughout all the earth”** (Exodus 9:12-16).

In contemplating Pharaoh and his actions, the mind is carried forward to the stirring scenes of the Book of Revelation, in which we find the last proud oppressor of the people of God bringing down upon his kingdom and upon himself the seven vials of the wrath of the Almighty. It is God's purpose that Israel shall be pre-eminent in the earth; and, therefore, every one who presumes to stand in the way of that pre-eminence must be set aside.

Divine grace must find its object; and every one who would act as a barrier in the way of that grace must be taken out of the way. Whether it be Egypt, Babylon, or "**the beast that was, is not, and shall be present,**" it matters not. Divine power will clear the channel for divine grace to flow, and eternal woe be to all who stand in the way. They shall taste, throughout the everlasting course of ages, the bitter fruit of having exalted themselves against "**the Lord God of the Hebrews.**" He has said to His people, "**no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper,**" and His infallible faithfulness will assuredly make good what His infinite grace hath promised.

Thus, in Pharaoh's case, when he persisted in holding, with an iron grasp, the Israel of God, the vials of divine wrath were poured forth upon him; and the land of Egypt was covered, throughout its entire length and breadth, with darkness, disease, and desolation. So will it be, by and by, when the last great oppressor shall emerge from the bottomless pit, armed with Satanic power, to crush beneath his "**foot of pride**" the favoured objects of the Lord's choice. His throne shall be overturned, his kingdom devastated by the seven last plagues, and, finally, he himself plunged, not in the Red Sea, but "**in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone**" (Comp. Revelation 17:8; Revelation 20:10).

Not one jot or one tittle of what God has promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, shall fail. He will accomplish all. Notwithstanding all that has been said and done to the contrary, God remembers His promises, and He will fulfil them. They are all "**yea and amen in Christ Jesus.**"

- dynasties have risen and acted on the stage of this world;
- thrones have been erected on the apparent ruins of Jerusalem's ancient glory; empires have flourished for a time, and then fallen to decay;
- ambitious potentates have contended for the possession of "**the land of promise**"

All these things have taken place; but the Lord has said concerning Palestine, "**the land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine**" (Leviticus 25:23). No one, therefore, shall ever finally possess that land but the Lord Himself, and He will inherit it through the seed of Abraham.

One plain passage of scripture is quite sufficient to establish the mind in reference to this or any other subject. The land of Canaan is for the seed of Abraham, and the seed of Abraham for the land of Canaan; nor can any power of earth or hell ever reverse this divine order. The eternal God has pledged His word, and the Blood of the everlasting covenant has flowed to ratify that word. Who, then, shall make it void? "**Heaven and earth shall pass away, but that word shall never pass away.**"

Truly,

“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the Heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places” (Deuteronomy 33:46-29).

*We shall now consider, in the second place, the opposition of “**Jannes and Jambres,**” the magicians of Egypt.*

We should not have known the names of these ancient opposers of the truth of God, had they not been recorded by the Holy Ghost, in connection with **“the perilous times”** of which the Apostle Paul warns his son Timothy. It is important that the Christian reader should clearly understand the real nature of the opposition given to Moses by those magicians, and in order that he may have the subject fully before him, I shall quote the entire passage from Paul’s Epistle to Timothy. It is one of deep and awful solemnity.

“This know, also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all, as theirs also was” (II Timothy 3:1-9).

Now, it is peculiarly solemn to mark the nature of this resistance to the truth. The mode in which **“Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses”** was simply by imitating, so far as they were able, whatever he did. We do not find that they attributed his actings to a false or evil energy, but rather that they sought to neutralize their power upon the conscience, by doing the same things. What Moses did they could do, so that, after all there was no great difference. One was as good as the other. A miracle is a miracle. If Moses wrought miracles to get the people out of Egypt, they could work miracles to keep them in; so where was the difference?

From all this we learn the solemn truth that the most Satanic resistance to God’s testimony, in the world, is offered by those who, though they imitate the effects of the truth, have but **“the form of godliness,”** and **“deny the power thereof.”** Persons of this class can do the same things, adopt the same habits and forms, use the same phraseology, profess the same opinions as others. If the true Christian, constrained by the love of Christ, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, visits the sick, circulates the scriptures, distributes tracts, supports the Gospel, engages in prayer, sings praise, preaches the Gospel, the formalist can do every one of these things.

And this, be it observed, is the special character of the resistance offered to the truth “**in the last days**” - this is the spirit of “**Jannes and Jambres**.”

How needful to understand this! How important to remember that, “**as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do**” those self-loving, world-seeking, pleasure-hunting professors, “**resist the truth!**”

They would not be without “**a form of godliness;**” but, while adopting “**the form,**” because it is customary, they hate “**the power,**” because it involves self-denial.

“**The power**” of godliness involves the recognition of God’s claims, the implanting of His kingdom in the heart, and the consequent exhibition thereof in the whole life and character; but the formalist knows nothing of this.

“**The power**” of godliness could never comport with any one of those hideous features set forth in the foregoing quotation; but “**the form,**” while it covers them over, leaves them wholly unsubdued; and this the formalist likes. He does not want his lusts subdued, his pleasures interfered with, his passions curbed, his affections governed, his heart purified. He wants just as much religion as will enable him “**to make the best of both worlds.**” He knows nothing of giving up the world that is, because of having; found “**the world to come.**”

In marking the forms of Satan’s opposition to the truth of God, we find that his method has ever been, first, to oppose it by open violence; and then, if that did not succeed, to corrupt it by producing a counterfeit. Hence, he first sought to slay Moses, (Exodus 2:15), and having failed to accomplish his purpose, he sought to imitate his works.

Thus, too, has it been in reference to the truth committed to the Church of God. Satan’s early efforts showed themselves in connection with the wrath of the chief priests and elders, the judgment-seat, the prison, and the sword. But, in the passage just quoted from II Timothy, we find no reference to any such agency. Often violence has made way for the far more wily and dangerous instrumentality of a powerless form, an empty profession, a human counterfeit.

The enemy, instead of appearing with the sword of persecution in his hand, walks about with the cloak of profession on his shoulders.

He professes and imitates that which he once opposed and persecuted; and, by so doing, gains most appalling advantages, for the time being. The fearful forms of moral evil which, from age to age, have stained the page of human history, instead of being found only where we might naturally look for them, amid the dens and caves of human darkness, are to be found carefully arranged beneath the drapery of a cold, powerless, unimportant profession; and this is one of Satan’s grand masterpieces.

That man, as a fallen, corrupt creature, should love himself, be covetous, boastful, proud, and the like, is natural; but that he should be all these, beneath the fair covering of “**a form of godliness,**” marks the special energy of Satan in his resistance to the truth in “**the last days.**”

That man should stand forth in the bold exhibition of those hideous vices, lusts, and passions, which are the necessary results of departure from the source of infinite holiness and purity, is only what might be expected, for man will be what he is to the end of the chapter. But on the other hand, when we find the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ connected with man's wickedness and deadly evil - when we find holy principles connected with unholy practices - when we find all the characteristics of Gentile corruption, referred to in the first chapter of Romans, associated with "**a form of godliness,**" then, truly, we may say, these are the terrible features of "**the last days**" - this is the resistance of "**Jannes and Jambres.**"

However, there were only three things in which the magicians of Egypt were able to imitate the servants of the true and living God, namely, in turning their rods into serpents, (Exodus 7:12) turning the water into blood, (Exodus 7:29) and bringing up the frogs; (Exodus 8:7) but, in the fourth, which involved the exhibition of life, in connection with the display of nature's humiliation, they were totally confounded, and obliged to own, "**this is the finger of God**" (Exodus 8:16-19).

Thus it is also with the latter-day resisters of the truth. All that they do is by the direct energy of Satan, and lies within the range of his power. Moreover, its specific object is to "**resist the truth.**"

The three things which "**Jannes and Jambres**" were able to accomplish were characterized by Satanic energy, death, and uncleanness; that is to say, *the serpents, the blood, and the frogs*. Thus it was they "**withstood Moses;**" and "**so do these also resist the truth,**" and hinder its moral weight and action upon the conscience.

There is nothing which so tends to deaden the power of truth as the fact that persons who are not under its influence at all, do the self-same things as those who are. This is Satan's agency just now. He seeks to have all regarded as Christians. He would fain make us believe ourselves surrounded by "a Christian world;" but it is counterfeit Christianity, which, so far from being a testimony to the truth, is designed by the enemy of the truth, to withstand its purifying and elevating influence.

In short, the servant of Christ and the witness for the truth is surrounded, on all sides, by the spirit of "**Jannes and Jambres;**" and it is well for him to remember this - to know thoroughly the evil with which he has to grapple - to bear in mind that it is Satan's imitation of God's reality, produced, not by the wand of an openly-wicked magician, but by the actings of false professors, who have "**a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof,**" who do things apparently right and good, but who have neither the life of Christ in their souls, the love of God in their hearts, nor the power of the word in their consciences.

"**But,**" adds the inspired apostle, "**they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifested unto all, as theirs also was.**" Truly the "**folly**" of "**Jannes and Jambres**" was manifest unto all, when they not only failed to imitate the further actings of Moses and Aaron, but actually became involved in the judgments of God.

This is a solemn point. The folly of all who are merely possessed of the form will, in like manner, be made manifest. They will not only be quite unable to imitate the full and proper effects of divine life and power, but they will themselves become the subjects of those judgments which will result from the rejection of that truth which they have resisted.

Will anyone say that all this has no voice for a day of powerless profession? Assuredly, it has. It should speak to each conscience in living power; it should tell on each heart, in accents of impressive solemnity. It should lead each one to enquire seriously whether he is testifying for the truth, by walking in the power of godliness, or hindering it, and neutralizing its action, by having only the form. The effect of the power of godliness will be seen by our **“continuing in the things which we have learned.”** None will continue, save those who are taught of God; those, by the power of the Spirit of God, have drunk in divine principle, at the pure fountain of inspiration.

Blessed be God, there are many such throughout the various sections of the professing Church. There are many, here and there, whose consciences have been bathed in the atoning Blood of **“the Lamb of God,”** whose hearts beat high with genuine attachment to His Person, and whose spirits are cheered by **“that blessed hope”** of seeing Him as He is, and of being eternally conformed to His image. It is encouraging to think of such. It is an unspeakable mercy to have fellowship with those who can give a reason of the hope that is in them, and for the position which they occupy. May the Lord add to their number daily. May the power of godliness spread far and wide in these last days, so that a bright and well-sustained testimony may be raised to the name of Him who is worthy.

The third point in our section yet remains to be considered, namely, Pharaoh’s four subtle objections to the full deliverance and complete separation of God’s people from the land of Egypt.

The first of these we have in Exodus 8:25. **“And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.”**

It is needless to remark here, that whether the magicians withstood, or Pharaoh objected, it was in reality, Satan that stood behind the scenes; and his manifest object, in this proposal of Pharaoh, was to hinder the testimony to the Lord’s name - a testimony connected with the thorough separation of His people from Egypt. There could, evidently, be no such testimony had they remained in Egypt, even though they were to sacrifice to Him. They would have taken common ground with the uncircumcised Egyptians, and put the Lord on a level with the gods of Egypt. In this case an Egyptian could have said to an Israelite, “I see no difference between us; you have your worship and we have ours; it is all alike.”

As a matter of course, men think it quite right for every one to have a religion, let it be what it may. Provided we are sincere, and do not interfere with our neighbour’s creed, it does not matter what shape our religion may happen to wear. Such are the thoughts of men in reference to what they call religion; but it is very obvious that the glory of the name of Jesus finds no place in all this.

The demand for separation is that which the enemy will ever oppose, and which the heart of man cannot understand. The heart may crave religiousness because conscience testifies that all is not right; but it craves the world as well. It would like to “**sacrifice to God in the land;**” and Satan’s object is gained when people accept of a worldly religion, and refuse to “**come out and be separate**” (II Corinthians 6). His unvarying purpose, from the beginning, has been to hinder the testimony to God’s name on the earth. Such was the dark tendency of the proposal, “**Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.**” What a complete damper to the testimony, had this proposal been acceded to! God’s people in Egypt and God Himself linked with the idols of Egypt! Terrible blasphemy!

Reader, we should deeply ponder this. The effort to induce Israel to worship God in Egypt reveals a far deeper principle than we might, at first sight, imagine. The enemy would rejoice, at any time, by any means, or under any circumstances, to get even the semblance of divine sanction for the world’s religion. He has no objection to such religion. He gains his end as effectually by what is termed “the religious world” as by any other agency; and, hence, when he can succeed in getting a true Christian to accredit the religion of the day, he gains a grand point. As a matter of actual fact, one knows that nothing elicits such intense indignation as the divine principle of separation from this present evil world.

You may hold the same opinions, preach the same doctrines, do the same work; but if you only attempt, in ever so feeble a manner, to act upon the divine commands, “**from such turn away,**” (II Timothy 3:5) and “**come out from among them,**” (II Corinthians 6:17) you may reckon assuredly upon the most vigorous opposition. Now how is this to be accounted for? Mainly by the fact that Christians, in separation from this world’s hollow religiousness, bear a testimony for Christ which they never can bear while connected with it. There is a very wide difference between human religion and Christ. A poor, benighted Hindu might talk to you of his religion, but he knows nothing of Christ. The apostle does not say, “if there be any consolation in religion;” though, doubtless, the votaries of each kind of religion find what they deem consolation therein. Paul, on the other hand, found his consolation in Christ, having fully proved the worthlessness of religion, and that too, in its fairest and most imposing form. (Comp. Galatians 1:13, 14; Philippians 3:4-11).

True, the Spirit of God speaks to us of “**pure religion and undefiled;**” but the unregenerate man cannot, by any means, participate therein; for how could he possibly take part in ought that is “**pure and undefiled?**” This religion is from Heaven, the source of all that is pure and lovely; it is exclusively before the eye of “**God and the Father,**” it is for the exercise of the functions of that new name, with which all are endowed who believe on the name of the Son of God. (John 1:12, 13; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23; I John 5:1). Finally, it ranges itself under the two comprehensive heads of active benevolence and personal holiness; “**To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world**” (James 1:27)

Now if you go through the entire catalogue of the genuine fruits of Christianity, you will find them all classed under these two heads; and it is deeply interesting to observe that, whether we turn to the eighth of Exodus or to the first of James, we find separation from the world put forward as an indispensable quality in the true service of God.

Nothing could be acceptable before God - nothing could receive from His hand the stamp of **“pure and undefiled,”** which was polluted by contact with an **“evil world.”** **“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”** (II Corinthians 6:17, 18).

There was no meeting-place for the Lord and His redeemed in Egypt; yes, with them, redemption and separation from Egypt were one and the same thing. God had said, **“I am come down to deliver them,”** and nothing short of this could either satisfy or glorify Him.

A salvation which would have left them still in Egypt, could not possibly be God’s salvation.

Moreover, we must bear in mind that the Lord’s purpose, in the salvation of Israel, as well as in the destruction of Pharaoh, was, that **“His name might be declared throughout all the earth;”** and what declaration could there be of that name or character, were His people to attempt to worship Him in Egypt? Either none whatever or an utterly false one.

Wherefore, it was essentially necessary, in order to the full and faithful declaration of God’s character, that His people should be wholly delivered and completely separated from Egypt, and it is as essentially necessary now, in order to a clear and unequivocal testimony for the Son of God, that all who are really His should be separated from this present world. Such is the will of God; and for this end Christ gave Himself. **“Grace unto you, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”**(Galatians 1:3-5).

The Galatians were beginning to accredit a carnal and worldly religion - a religion of ordinances - a religion of **“days, and months, and times, and years;”** and the apostle commences his Epistle by telling them that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for the purpose of delivering His people from that very thing. God’s people must be separate, not, by any means, on the ground of their superior personal sanctity, but because they are His people, and in order that they may rightly and intelligently answer His gracious end in taking them into connection with Himself, and attaching His name to them. A people, still amid the defilements and abominations of Egypt, could not have been a witness for the Holy One; nor can any one, now, while mixed up with the defilements of a corrupt worldly religion, possibly be a bright and steady witness for a crucified and risen Christ.

The answer given by Moses to Pharaoh’s first objection was a truly memorable one.

“And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God; lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days’ journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us” (Exodus 8:26, 27).

Here is true separation from Egypt - **“three days journey.”**

Nothing less than this could satisfy faith. The Israel of God must be separated from the land of death and darkness, in the power of resurrection. The waters of the Red Sea must roll between God's redeemed and Egypt, ere they can properly sacrifice to the Lord. Had they remained in Egypt, they would have to sacrifice to the Lord the very objects of Egypt's abominable worship.
* This would never do.

(*The word "abominations" has reference to that which the Egyptians worshipped).

There could be no tabernacle, no temple, no altar, in Egypt. It had no site, throughout its entire limits, for ought of that kind. In point of fact, as we shall see further on, Israel never presented so much as a single note of praise, until the whole congregation stood, in the full power of an accomplished redemption, on Canaan's side of the Red Sea. Exactly so is it now. The believer must know where the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ have, for ever, set him, ere he can be an intelligent worshipper, an acceptable servant, or an effectual witness. It is not a question of being a child of God, and, as such, a saved person. Many of the children of God are very far from knowing the full results, as regards themselves, of the death and resurrection of Christ. They do not apprehend the precious truth, that the death of Christ has made an end of their sins for ever, and that they are the happy partakers of His resurrection life, with which sin can have nothing whatever to do. Christ became a curse for us, not, as some would teach us, by being born under the curse of a broken law, but by hanging on a tree. (Compare attentively Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13).

We were under the curse, because we had not kept the law; but Christ, the perfect Man, having magnified the law and made it honourable, by the very fact of His obeying it perfectly, became a curse for us, by hanging on the tree. Thus, in His life He magnified God's law; and in His death He bore our curse. There is, therefore, now, no guilt, no curse, no wrath, no condemnation for the believer; and, albeit, he must be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, he will find that judgment-seat every bit as friendly by and by, as the mercy-seat is now.

It will make manifest the truth of his condition, namely, that there is nothing against him; what he is, it is God "**that hath wrought him.**" He is God's workmanship. He was taken up in a state of death and condemnation, and made just what God would have him to be. The Judge Himself has put away all his sins, and is his righteousness, so that the judgment-seat cannot but be friendly to him; yea, it will be the full, public, authoritative declaration to Heaven, earth, and hell, that the one who is washed from his sins in the Blood of the Lamb, is as clean as God can make him. (See John 5:24; Romans 8:1; II Corinthians 5:5, 10, 11; Ephesians 2:10).

All that had to be done, God Himself has done it. He surely will not condemn His own work. The righteousness that was required, God Himself has provided it. He, surely, will not find any flaw therein. The light of the judgment seat will be bright enough to disperse every mist and cloud which might tend to obscure the matchless glories and eternal virtues which belong to the Cross, and to show that the believer is "**clean every whit**" (John 13:10; John 15:3; Ephesians 5:27).

It is because these foundation-truths are not laid hold of in the simplicity of faith that many of the children of God complain of their lack of settled peace - the constant variation in their spiritual condition - the continual ups and downs in their experience.

Every doubt in the heart of a Christian is a dishonour done to the word of God and the sacrifice of Christ. It is because he does not, even now, bask in the light which shall shine from the judgment-seat, that he is ever afflicted with a doubt or a fear. And yet those things which so many have to deplore - those fluctuations and waverings are but trifling consequences, comparatively, inasmuch as they merely affect their experience. The effect produced upon their worship, their service, and their testimony, is far more serious, inasmuch as the Lord's honour is concerned. But, alas! this latter is but little thought of, generally speaking, simply because personal salvation is the grand object - the aim and end, with the majority of professing Christians. We are prone to look upon everything that affects ourselves as essential; whereas, all that merely affects the glory of Christ in and by us is counted non-essential.

However, it is well to see with distinctness, that the same truth which gives the soul settled peace, puts it also into the position of intelligent worship, acceptable service, and effectual testimony.

In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the apostle sets forth the death and resurrection of Christ as the grand foundation of everything. **“Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (Ver. 1-4).

Here is the Gospel, in one brief and comprehensive statement. A dead and risen Christ is the ground-work of salvation. **“He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification”** (Romans 4:25).

To see Jesus, by the eye of faith, nailed to the Cross, and seated on the throne, must give solid peace to the conscience and perfect liberty to the heart. We can look into the tomb and see it empty; we can look up to the throne, and see it occupied, and go on our way rejoicing. The Lord Jesus settled everything on the Cross on behalf of His people; and the proof of this settlement is that He is now at the right hand of God. A risen Christ is the eternal proof of an accomplished redemption; and if redemption is an accomplished fact, the believer's peace is a settled reality.

We did not make peace and never could make it; indeed, any effort on our part to make peace could only tend more fully to manifest us as peace breakers. But Christ, having made peace by the blood of His cross, has taken His seat on high, triumphant over every enemy. By Him God preaches peace. The Lord of the Gospel conveys this peace; and the soul that believes the Gospel has peace - settled peace before God, for Christ is his peace (See Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 1:20). In this way, God has not only satisfied His own claims, but, in so doing, He has found out a divinely-righteous vent through which His boundless affections may flow down to the guiltiest of Adam's guilty progeny. Then, as to the practical result of all this. The Cross of Christ has not only put away the believer's sins, but also dissolved for ever His connection with the world; and, on the ground of this, he is privileged to regard the world as a crucified thing, and to be regarded by it as a crucified one.

Thus it stands with the believer and the world. It is crucified to him and he to it. This is the real, dignified position of every true Christian. The world's judgment about Christ was expressed in the position in which it deliberately placed Him. It got its choice as to whether it would have a murderer or Christ. It allowed the murderer to go free, but nailed Christ to the Cross, between two thieves. Now, if the believer walks in the footprints of Christ - if he drinks into, and manifests, His spirit, he will occupy the very same place in the world's estimation; and, in this way, he will not merely know that, as to standing before God, he is crucified with Christ, but be led to realize it in his walk and experience every day.

But while the Cross has thus effectually cut the connection between the believer and the world, the resurrection has brought him into the power of new ties and associations.

If, in the Cross, we see the world's judgment about Christ, in resurrection we see God's judgment. The world crucified Him; but "**God hath highly exalted him.**" Man gave Him the very lowest, God the very highest, place; and, inasmuch as the believer is called into full fellowship with God, in his thoughts about Christ, he is enabled to turn the tables upon the world, and look upon it as a crucified thing. If, therefore, the believer is on one Cross and the world on another, the moral distance between the two is vast indeed. And if it is vast in principle, so should it be in practice. The world and the Christian should have absolutely nothing in common; nor will they, except so far as he denies his Lord and Master. The believer proves himself false to Christ, to the very same degree that he has fellowship with the world.

All this is plain enough; but, my beloved Christian reader, where does it put us as regards this world? Truly, it puts us outside and that completely. We are dead to the world and alive with Christ. We are at once partakers of His rejection by earth and His acceptance in Heaven; and the joy of the latter makes us count as nothing the trial connected with the former. To be cast out of earth, without knowing that I have a place and a portion on high, would be intolerable; but when the glories of Heaven fill the soul's vision, a little of earth goes a great way.

But some may feel led to ask, "What is the world?"

It would be difficult to find a term more inaccurately defined than "world," or "worldliness;" for we are generally disposed to make worldliness begin a point or two above where we are ourselves. The Word of God, however, has, with perfect precision, defined what "the world" is, when it marks it as that which is "**not of the Father.**" Hence, the deeper my fellowship with the Father, the keener will be my sense of what is worldly.

This is the divine way of teaching. The more you delight in the Father's love, the more you reject the world. But who reveals the Father - The Son. How? By the power of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, the more I am enabled, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, to drink in the Son's revelation of the Father, the more accurate does my judgment become as to what is of the world. It is as the limits of God's kingdom expand in the heart, that the judgment as to worldliness becomes refined. You can hardly attempt to define worldliness. It is, as some one has said, "shaded off gradually from white to jet black." This is most true.

You cannot place a bound and say, “here is where worldliness begins;” but the keen and exquisite sensibilities of the divine nature recoil from it; and all we need is, to walk in the power of that nature, in order to keep aloof from every form of worldliness.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” Walk with God, and ye shall not walk with the world. Cold distinctions and rigid rules will avail nothing. The power of the divine life is what we want. We want to understand the meaning and spiritual application of the **“three days’ journey into the wilderness”** whereby we are separated for ever, not only from Egypt’s brick-kilns and taskmasters, but also from its temples and altars.

Pharaoh’s second objection partook very much of the character and tendency of the first.

“And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away” (Exodus 8:28).

If he could not keep them in Egypt, he would at least seek to keep them near it, so that he might act upon them by its varied influences. In this way, they might be brought back again. and the testimony more effectually quashed than if they had never left Egypt at all. There is always much more serious damage done to the cause of Christ by persons seeming to give up the world and returning to it again, than if they had remained entirely of it; for they virtually confess that, having tried heavenly things, they have discovered that earthly things are better and more satisfying.

Nor is this all. The moral effect of truth upon the conscience of unconverted people is sadly interfered with, by the example of professors going back again into those things which they seemed to have left. Not that such cases afford the slightest warrant to any one for the rejection of God’s truth, inasmuch as each one is personally responsible and will have to give account of himself to God. Still, however, the effect in this, as well as in everything else, is bad. **“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them”** (II Peter 2:20, 21).

Wherefore, if people do not **“go very far away,”** they had better not go at all. The enemy knew this well; and hence his second objection. The maintenance of a border position suits his purpose amazingly. Those who occupy this ground are neither one thing nor the other; and, in point of fact, whatever influence they possess, tells entirely in the wrong direction. It is deeply important to see that Satan’s design, in all these objections, was to hinder that testimony to the name of the God of Israel, which could only be rendered by a **“three days’ journey into the wilderness.”**

This was, in good truth, going “very far away.” It was much farther than Pharaoh could form any idea of, or than he could follow them. And oh! how happy it would be if all who profess to set out from Egypt would really, in the spirit of their minds and in the tone of their character, go thus far away from it!

If they would intelligently recognize the Cross and grave of Christ as forming the boundary between them and the world! No man, in the mere energy of nature, can take this ground. The Psalmist could say, **“Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified”** (Psalm 143:2).

So also is it with regard to true and effectual separation from the world.

“No man living” can enter into it. It is only as **“dead with Christ,”** and **“risen again with him, through faith of the operation of God,”** that any one can either be **“justified”** before God, or separated from the world. This is what we mean by going **“very far away.”** May all who profess and call themselves Christians go thus far! Then will their lamp yield a steady light. Then would their trumpet give a certain sound. Their path would be elevated; their experience deep and rich. Their peace would flow as a river; their affections would be heavenly and their garments unspotted. And, far above all, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ would be magnified in them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, according to the will of God their Father.

The third objection demands our most special attention.

“And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, go, serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds, will we go: for we must hold a feast unto the Lord. And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so; go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence” (Exodus 10:8-11).

Here again we have the enemy aiming a deadly blow at the testimony to the name of the God of Israel.

Parents in the wilderness and their children in Egypt! Terrible anomaly! This would only have been a half deliverance, at once useless to Israel and dishonouring to Israel’s God. This could not be. If the children remained in Egypt, the parents could not possibly be said to have left it, inasmuch as their children were part of themselves. The most that could be said in such a case was, that in part they were serving the Lord, and in part Pharaoh. But the Lord could have no part with Pharaoh. He should either have all or nothing. This is a weighty principle for Christian parents. May we lay it deeply to heart! It is our happy privilege to count on God for our children, and to **“bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”** (Ephesians 6). We should not be satisfied with any other portion for “Our little ones” than that which we ourselves enjoy.

Pharaoh’s fourth and last objection had reference to the flocks and herds.

“And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you” (Exodus 10:24).

With what perseverance did Satan dispute every inch of Israel’s way out of the land of Egypt!

- He first sought to keep them in the land,
- Then to keep them near the land,
- Next to keep part of themselves in the land, and, finally,
- When he could not succeed in any of these three, he sought to send them forth without any ability to serve the Lord.

If he could not keep the servants, he would seek to keep their ability to serve, which would answer much the same end. If he could not induce them to sacrifice in the land, he would send them out of the land without sacrifices.

In Moses' reply to this last objection, we are furnished with a fine statement of the Lord's paramount claim upon His people and all pertaining to them.

“And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither” (Ver. 25, 26).

It is only when the people of God take their stand, in simple Childlike faith, upon that elevated ground, on which death and resurrection set them, that they can have anything like an adequate sense of His claims upon them. **“We know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither.”** That is, they had no knowledge of the divine claim or their responsibility, until they had gone **“three days' journey.”**

These things could not be known amid the dense and polluted atmosphere of Egypt. Redemption must be known as an accomplished fact, ere: there can be any just or full perception of responsibility. All this is perfect and beautiful. **“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.”**

I must be up out of Egypt, in the power of death and resurrection, and then, but not until then, shall I know what the Lord's service really is. It is when we take our stand, by faith, in that “large room,” that wealthy place into which the precious Blood of Christ introduces us; when we look around us and survey the rich, rare, and manifold results of redeeming love; when we gaze upon the Person of Him who has brought us into this place, and endowed us with these riches, then we are constrained to say, in the language of one of our own poets,

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my heart, my life, my all.”

“There shall not an hoof be left behind.” Noble words! Egypt is not the place for ought that pertains to God's redeemed. He is worthy of all, **“body, soul, and spirit;”** all we are and all we have belongs to Him. **“We are not our own, we are bought with a price;”** and it is our happy privilege to consecrate ourselves and all that we possess to Him whose we are, and whom we are called to serve.

There is nought of a legal spirit in this. The words, “**until we come thither,**” furnish a divine guard against this horrible evil. We have travelled the “**three days’ journey,**” ere a word concerning sacrifice can be heard or understood. We are put in full and undisputed possession of resurrection life and eternal righteousness. We have left that land of death and darkness; we have been brought to God Himself, so that we may enjoy Him, in the energy of that life with which we are endowed, and in the sphere of righteousness in which we are placed: thus it is our joy to serve.

There is not an affection in the heart of which He is not worthy; there is not a sacrifice in all the flock too costly for His altar. The more closely we walk with Him, the more we shall esteem it to be our meat and drink to do His blessed will. The believer counts it his highest privilege to serve the Lord. He delights in every exercise and every manifestation of the divine nature. He does not move up and down with a grievous yoke upon his neck, or an intolerable weight upon his shoulder. The yoke is broken “because of the anointing,” the burden has been for ever removed, by the blood of the Cross, while he himself walks abroad, “redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled,” in pursuance of those soul-stirring words, “**LET MY PEOPLE GO.**”

NOTE. - We shall consider the contents of Exodus 11 in connection with the security of Israel, under the shelter of the blood of the paschal lamb.

~ end of chapter 7-11 ~

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