

REMEMBER!**NO 1406**

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 31, 1878,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“You shall remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt,
and the Lord your God redeemed you.”
Deuteronomy 15:15.*

IN an autobiography of William Jay we read that on one occasion he called to see the famous Mr. John Newton, at Olney, and he observed that over the desk at which he was accustomed to compose his sermons, he had written up in very large letters the following words—“Remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” To my mind this story invests the text with considerable interest. It was most fitting that such a remarkable convert as he should dwell upon such a theme and place such a text conspicuously before his eyes. Might it not with great propriety be placed in a similar position by each one of us? Mr. Newton lived and acted under the influence of the memory which the text commands, as was seen that very morning in his conversation with Mr. Jay. “Sir,” said Mr. Newton, “I am glad to see you, for I have a letter just come from Bath, and you can perhaps assist me in the answer to it. Do you know anything of So-and-So (mentioning the name)?” Mr. Jay replied that the man was an awful character, had once been a hearer of the Gospel, but had become a leader in every vice. “But, sir,” said Mr. Newton, “He writes very penitently and who can tell? Perhaps a change may have come over him.” “Well,” said Mr. Jay, “I can only say that if ever he should be converted, I should despair of no one.” “And I,” said Mr. Newton, “have never despaired of anybody since I was, myself, converted.” So, you see, as he thought of this poor sinner at Bath, he was remembering that he also, was a bondman in the land of Egypt and the Lord his God had redeemed him. And why should not the same redemption reach even to this notorious transgressor and save him? The memory of his own gracious change of heart and life gave him tenderness in dealing with the erring, and hope with regard to their restoration. May some such good effect be produced in our minds—we are not all called to be preachers of the gospel, but in any capacity a holy, beneficial, sanctifying effect will be produced upon a right mind by remembering that we were bondmen, but the Lord our God redeemed us. May the Holy Spirit at this hour, bring the amazing grace of God to our remembrance with melting power.

As to the particular fact of the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, great care was taken that it should be remembered. The month upon which they came out was made the commencement of the year. “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you” (Exo. 12:2). A special injunction was issued, “Observe the month of Abib and keep the passover unto the Lord your God: for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night.” An ordinance was established on purpose that the deliverance might be commemorated, and the eating of the passover lamb was made binding upon the whole of the people, so that they should not forget the sprinkling of the blood. The Word of the Lord ordained, saying, “And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.” They were enjoined, also, to instruct their children concerning it, so that in addition to a ceremonial there was an oral tradition to be handed from father to son. “And when your son asks you in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God has commanded you? Then you shall say unto your son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand” (Deut. 6:20, 21). Their law of ten Commands commenced with a reminder of that remarkable fact—“I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: you shall have no other gods before Me.” All through the book of Deuteronomy you will observe that this is the one weighty and oft repeat-

ed argument for obedience and faithfulness—“Remember that you were a bondman in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you.”

Now, beloved, if the Jew was so carefully instructed to remember his deliverance out of Egypt, should not we also, take heed to ourselves that we by no means forget or cast into the background, our yet greater redemption through the precious blood of Christ by which we were set free from the yoke and bondage of sin? See how Paul, in Ephesians 2:11, 12, 13, speaks to us who have been called by grace from the ends of the earth—“Why remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.” He puts the same thought into other words in Romans 6:17, 18, when he says—“God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.” Paul would have us remember our redemption. And God the Holy Spirit who spoke by Paul would have us remember it. Will we not give earnest heed to such solemn counsels? The blessed effects that will flow from such a memory urge us to remember it and because of this our discourse of this morning is intended to be a humble assistance towards such a memory. O my brothers and sisters, forget all else just now, and give your heart to the work before you and “remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.”

First, then, let us consider *our bondage*, secondly, *our redemption*, and thirdly, *the influence of the memory of the two facts*. I shall not try to say anything fresh or new. It would be out of place to attempt it, for my present duty is to awaken your memories as to former days. I have only to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. He who is only a remembrancer for the past must not look about for novelties. We speak what you know and ask you to testify to what you have felt.

I. First let us consider OUR BONDAGE. It was exceedingly like the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt. There are many points in which a parallel might be drawn. We will indicate them in a few words.

First, when we were unregenerate and sold under sin, *we were enslaved to a mighty power against which we could not contend*. It would have been of no use for the Israelites to have commenced an insurrection against Pharaoh. He was too firmly established upon the throne and his soldiers by far too strong for poor, feeble, shepherd tribes to be able to resist. They scarcely dared to think of such a thing and brethren, if fallen man single-handedly had the heart to contend with sin and Satan, he would certainly be unable to achieve a victory. The fall has left us “without strength.” The law, with all its force, is “weak through the flesh.” Alas, man has no heart for spiritual liberty otherwise the Lord would lend him power. But apart from divine power, what man can break loose from his sin? Shall the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then shall he that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well, unassisted by divine strength. No, brethren, the fetters which enchain the mind of the carnal man are much too strong for him to snap them. He may resolve to do so, as in moments of reflection some men do, but, alas, he is soon weary of the struggle for liberty and resigns himself to his prison. If man had been capable of his own redemption, there would never have descended from heaven the divine Redeemer, but because the bondage was all too dire for man to set himself free, therefore the eternal Son of God came here that He might save His people from their sins. Our natural bondage was caused and maintained by a power tremendous in energy and craft. The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, held us beneath his iron sway and sin exercised a tyrannical dominion over us from which we could not break.

Worse still, we were like the Israelites in another respect. *Our slavery had so degraded us that we had no heart to desire an escape*. One of the worst points of slavery is that it frequently degrades men into contentment with their condition. That would be thought by some to be a benefit, but it is a giant evil, for a man has no right to be satisfied in slavery. Such contentment is an ensign of debased manhood. Freedom is the right of every human being and he is not truly a man if he can be happy in bondage. The Israelites were so trampled down that they crouched at their oppressors’ feet and made themselves as content as they could in their enslaved condition. As they were turned into beasts of burden, so

were their minds brutalized, until their chief joy lay in the onions and the cucumbers with which they refreshed themselves and the fish of which they later spoke so longingly. They declined from a thoughtful family into a clan of groveling laborers without heart or hope, so that when Moses went to them, at first he was not received. And when he was sent of God with his brother, Aaron, the people at the first hour of conflict shrank into their former cowardice and would willingly have remained slaves sooner than excite Pharaoh's wrath. They had been ground down so terribly with their hard labor in mortar and in brick that they scarcely dared to think of freedom, and that was just your case and mine, beloved friends. We too, were willing slaves of death and sin. If we are free this morning it was not because when left to ourselves we fought for liberty and refused to wear a fetter. No, our bonds were on our hearts and we chose our own degradation. The slave from the south of old, watched the northern star and followed it through brake, swamp and forest to obtain his liberty, but our eyes refused to look to Jesus, who is the Star of Freedom. We boasted that we were born free and were never in bondage to any man and so we most effectually proved our bondage under our own pride. We perhaps, called ourselves free-thinkers and at any rate we meant to be free actors, yet all the while we were in bondage and did not care to seek true liberty. Can you not remember when you hugged your chains and kissed your bonds, and like a madman who crowns himself with a wisp of straw and calls himself a king, embraced the foolish pleasures of this world and thought yourselves supremely blessed in such base enjoyments?

Remember again dear brethren that you were in bondage similar to that of Egypt, for while in that condition *you toiled hard and found that all the service wherein Satan made you to serve was with rigor*. The Israelites built treasure cities for Pharaoh and they are supposed to have erected some of the pyramids. But their wage was very small and their taskmasters were brutal. Laborers engaged upon royal works received no wages, but were simply served with sufficient bread to keep them alive. The Israelites were called upon to make an enormous quantity of bricks and at last, the chopped straw which was necessary to make the clay bind together, which had been given out of the royal granaries, was refused them and they were bid to go over all the land to hunt up what they could of stubble instead of straw. Thus their labor was increased beyond all bearing. Could not many a sinner tell of horrible nights and woeful mornings when under the power of his passions? Who has woe? Who has redness of the eyes? Who is filled with dread of death? Who flees when no man pursues? Of all tyrants sin and Satan are the cruelest. How are men worn out in the devil's destructive service! What an expense does sin entail! It is a costly thing for many, to obey their own vices. They are impoverished by their passions. Those who complain if they are pressed for subscriptions to holy causes should consider how much more they would have spent in the pleasures of the world. Why, men squander fortunes upon their frivolities or upon their lusts, and encumber future generations to indulge a vice which ruins their health, destroys their reputation and sends them to an early grave. If you will have your own way that way will be the hardest you can choose. It does not matter in what position a man may be, whether rich or poor, illiterate and fond of the more vulgar pleasures, or tutored and educated and prone to more fashionable vices. Everywhere sin leads on to hard service, and its exactions increase from day to day. If men were but in their senses, drunkenness, gambling, gluttony, wantonness and many other vices would be punishments rather than pleasures, and yet they live in them.

There was a time, dear brethren, when, in addition to our hard toil, *our bondage brought us misery*. Don't you remember when you dared not think a day's conduct over for the life of you? When if you had been compelled to sit down and review your own character it would have been an intolerable task? I recollect also, when a sense of sin came over me and then indeed, my life was made bitter with hard bondage. I labored to set up a righteousness of my own, for I could not yield to the righteousness of Christ. That was laboring as in the very fire. I strove by my own good works to accomplish my own salvation and tried by prayers and tears to pay the debt I owed to God, but all in vain. I was sinning all the while by refusing Christ and endeavoring to rival my Savior. So far I speak for myself, but I know that you have done the same. Do you remember, brethren, when your pleasures ceased to be pleasures? When all the amusements of the world lost their flavor and became flat, stale, nauseous and you turned away and asked in vain for something that would content you? Do you remember when at last you saw yourself in your true condition and bewailed yourself before the living God as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn? Ah, then you felt like Israel in Egypt when they sighed and cried by reason of the

bondage. And blessed be God, the parallel runs further, for in your case also, God heard the groaning and remembered His covenant (Exo. 2:24).

All this, while *our enemy, was aiming at our destruction*. This was what Pharaoh was driving at with Israel. He intended to cut off the nation by severe tasks, or at least to reduce its strength. As his first policy did not succeed, he set about to destroy the male children. And even so, Satan when he has men under his power, labors by all means to utterly destroy them, for nothing short of this will satisfy him. Every hopeful thought he would drown in the river of despair, lest by any means the man should shake off his yoke. The total overthrow of the soul of man is the aim of the great enemy. What a mercy to have been redeemed out of the hand of the enemy!

And like Israel in Egypt, *we were in the hands of a power that would not let us go*. There came a voice by Moses who said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, Let My people go.” But Pharaoh’s answer was, “I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” And such was the language of our corruptions, such the language of the devil that had dominion over us. “I will not let you go,” said the fierce prince of darkness and like a strong man armed, he kept his goods in peace. You remember that telling sermon which thrilled you and awoke in you desires for liberty? You recollect how there seemed to ring in the halls of your nature the resounding voice, “Let my people go”? But you did not go, for that slavish will of yours held you in bondage. Your sins captivated you. Then came the reading of the Scriptures, or a mother’s exhortation, or another earnest sermon and again the voice was heard, “Thus says the Lord, Let My people go.” You began to feel uneasy in your condition and to venture somewhat into the border country, but you could not escape. The iron had entered into your soul, your heart was captive. Blessed was the day when the strong man armed, that kept you as a man keeps his house, was overcome by a stronger than he and cast out forever. Then Jesus took possession of your nature, never to leave it, but to hold His tenancy world without end. Glory be to God, we were bondmen in Egypt, but the Lord our God redeemed us, and let His name be praised.

I would assist you still further to remember that bondage. It cannot be hard for some of you to do so, for you are “from Egypt lately come.” Some of you have been set free now these twenty years, some perhaps these fifty years. But it cannot be difficult for you to remember what must be so indelibly impressed upon you. I can imagine thirty years after coming out of Egypt, some of the gray fathers who had crossed the Red Sea telling their sons the sad story of the bondage in Egypt. “I, your father,” one of them would say, “was beaten with rods by the taskmaster because when I had made up my full tale of bricks I was required to make twice as many. I toiled far into the night at brick-making, but I could not accomplish the task, and I remember how the blows descended upon my back like burning hail. Look here, my son,” he would say, as he stripped himself to show the scars, “these are the memorials of Egyptian bondage.” Ah, glory be to God, we are free. No more do we carry clanking chains upon our souls, but we still bear the old scars about us. Sometimes the old temper rises, or the old lusts flame up. When a man has had a bone broken, it may have been well set and he has, for the most part, forgotten the problem, yet in bad weather I have heard it said, “The old bone talks a bit.” And alas, the bones we broke by our sins will talk a bit at times, and their talk is a sad reminder of our former state. Snatches of ill songs, recollections of old lusts and I know not what besides, are scars which remind us that we were bondmen in Egypt. Many a mother that came out of Egypt when she looked at her boy would say, “And I might have been the joyful mother of seven sons, but they were one after another snatched from my bosom by the remorseless servant of the Egyptian tyrant and put to death.” With her joy for what was left her, would be mingled sorrow for what she had lost. Yes, and in your families it may be your younger children have been brought under religious influences, but your older sons are as irreligious as you were when they were lads at home. Many are led to think of their own evil example in former years, as they see their wayward sons persevering in sin. As you think of them you may say, “I see my bondage in my son. I see my sin repeated in my child.” These also, are mournful memorials of our carnal state. But, indeed, I need not thus remind you, for everything may refresh your memories as to your former bondage. Is it not so? The task set before you in the text is an easy one and I charge you therefore, remember that you were once bondmen in Egypt.

II. In the second place, we have to think of the blessed fact of OUR REDEMPTION—“The Lord your God redeemed you.” Here again there is a parallel. He redeemed us first *by price*. Israel in Egypt

was an unransomed nation. God claimed of that nation the firstborn to be His. As it is written, “Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is Mine.” That portion had been His claim from the first. And the law was afterwards carried out by the setting apart of the Levitical tribe to take the place of the firstborn. But Israel in Egypt had never set apart its firstborn at all, and was therefore an unredeemed people. How was all that indebtedness to be made up? The nation must be redeemed by a price and that price was set forth by the symbol of a lamb which was killed, roasted and eaten, while the blood was smeared upon the lintel and the two side posts. Beloved, you and I have been redeemed with blood. Blessed Lord Jesus, “You were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood.” “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” You cannot, you must not, you shall not forget this. You were bondmen, but Jesus your Lord redeemed you. He took your nature and was thus next of kin to you, and it became His right to redeem you, which right He has exercised to His own cost but to your eternal gain. The price by which you were set free He counted down in a wondrous coinage, minted from His own heart. The ransom is paid and the jubilee trumpet proclaims that you and your heavenly possessions are now delivered from all mortgage and encumbrance through the blood of Jesus Christ. Remember that with a great price you have obtained this freedom. The Lord says, “I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you.”

But there would not have been a coming out of Egypt unless there had been a display of *power* as well as a payment of price, for with a high hand and an outstretched arm the Lord brought forth His people. There are always two redemptions to every man who is saved—redemption by price and redemption by power. You know what power God put forth in the land of Egypt when He worked all His plagues in the field of Zoan. But that was nothing compared with the power of Christ when He broke the head of the old dragon. When He utterly destroyed the kingdom of sin and led our captivity captive. Greater than Moses’ rod were Christ’s pierced hands. He has done it. He has done it. Our tyrant has no more power to hold us in chains, for Christ has vanquished him forever.

Another form of redemption was also seen by Israel, namely, in the *power exerted over themselves*. I think sufficient stress has never been laid upon this. That they should have been *willing* to come out of Egypt was no small thing—universally willing so that not a single person remained behind. So unanimous and so eager were they to come out of Egypt, though almost rooted to the soil, that a number of Egyptians came up with them. According to the word of Moses, “Not a hoof shall be left behind,” they all left the land and neither sheep, nor goat, nor ox, much less man, woman, or child remained. Israel was glad to come out and even Egypt was glad when they departed. It is wonderful that they were all *able* to come out of Egypt. There was never an army yet, but what had some sick in it. The ambulance and the hospital are always needed. But of this grand army we are told, “He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.” Marvelous display of power was this. And so, beloved, we will tell it to the praise of God this day that He made us willing to come out of the Egypt of our sin to which we were rooted. And making us willing, He made us able, too. The power of the Spirit came upon us and the might of His grace overshadowed us and we did arise and come to our Father. Let grace have all the glory.

Shall I need to press upon you then, to let your minds fly back to the time when you realized your redemption and came up out of the land of Egypt? It was a divine interposition. “*The Lord your God redeemed you.*” And it was personally experienced for, “*The Lord your God redeemed you.*” It was a matter of clear consciousness to your own soul. You were a bondman; you knew it and felt it. The Lord your God redeemed you and you knew it and felt that also. You knew it as much as a galley slave would know it if he no more tugged the oar. As much as the captive who has pined away in the dungeon through weary years would know it when once more he breathed the air and felt that he was free. “You were a bondman, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” There can be no doubt about it. Satan himself could not make some of us doubt it. The chains were so real and the liberty so delightful. It was a mental phenomenon for which there can be no accounting except upon this belief, that the Lord our God Himself, came and set us free.

III. Thus, brethren, I have set before you the subject for your memory. I shall now try to show you THE INFLUENCE WHICH THIS DOUBLE MEMORY OUGHT TO HAVE UPON YOU.

We should naturally conclude, without any reference to Scripture, that if a Christian man kept always in mind his former and his present state, it would render him *humble*. You have been preaching and God has blessed you to the conversion of many. Do you feel elated? “Remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” You are getting on in knowledge and your character is evidently much improved. Your inner life is full of peace and comfort. Do you feel as if you were some great one? Do not play the fool. You are less than nothing. Remember that you were a poor miserable slave, brown, sun-dried, smoke-tinged and that not long ago. You would have been in hell if it had not been for sovereign grace. Or if not there, perhaps you would have been among drunkards and swearers, and lewd men and women, or at least among the proud, self-righteous Pharisees. When you are honored of the Lord and happy in the full assurance of faith, remember that you were a bondman and walk humbly with your God.

In the next place, be *grateful*. If you have not all the temporal mercies that you would desire, yet you have received the choicest of all mercies, liberty through Jesus Christ, therefore be cheerful, happy and thankful. Remember that you were a bondman and if you have but little of this world’s good, be thankful for the great spiritual blessing you have received in being set free from the galling yoke. Do not receive such a liberty as this without blessing those dear, pierced hands which were nailed to the tree that you might be delivered. Let gratitude abound, as you remember the wormwood and the gall.

Being grateful, be *patient* too. If you are suffering or ailing, or if sometimes your spirits are cast down, or if you are poor and despised, yet say to yourself, “Why should I complain? My lot may seem difficult, yet it is nothing in comparison with what it would have been if I had been left a prisoner in the land of Egypt. Thank God I am no longer in bondage to my sins.” The slave of the sad times in America would leap on the Canadian shore. And though he came there with all his earthly goods wrapped up in his handkerchief and knew not where his next meal would come from, yet he would spring upon the shore, dance for joy and say, “Thank God, I am free. I am penniless, but free.” How much more then, may you, whatever your suffering or sorrow may be, exclaim, “Thank God, I was a bondman, but the Lord my God has redeemed me, and I will be patient, whatever I am called to bear.”

Next, be *hopeful*. What may you not yet become? “It does not yet appear what we shall be.” You were a bondman, but grace has set you free. Who knows what the Lord may yet make of you? Is there anything that He cannot or will not do for one whom He has already redeemed by His blood? He has set you free from sin. Oh, then, He will keep you from falling and preserve you to the end. “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Are you thus hopeful? Then be *zealous*. Here earnestness should find both fire and fuel. We were bondmen, but the Lord has redeemed us. What, then, can be too hard for us to undertake for His sake? We must give all to Him who has purchased us to Himself and we must continue to do so as long as we live. John Newton persisted in preaching even when he was really incapable of it, for he said “What? Shall the old African blasphemer leave off preaching Jesus Christ while there is breath in his body? No, never.” He felt that he must continue to bear testimony, for our text was always before him, “Remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.”

But now kindly follow me while I, as briefly as I can, show you the Lord’s own use of this remembrance. And the first text I shall quote will be found in Deuteronomy 5:14. This is what He says—“The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your ass, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates; that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out of there through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.” You were a bondman. What would you have given for rest then? Now that the Lord has given you this hallowed day of rest, guard it sacredly. When you were a bondman you knew the heart of a servant and you sighed because your toil was heavy. Now that you are set free, if you have servants, think of them, and so order your household that they may as much as possible, enjoy their Sabbath. Certain household duties must be performed, but plot and plan to make these as light as possible, “that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.” If you meet

with any that are in bondage of soul and cannot rest, obey the text in its spiritual teaching. Rest in the Lord Jesus yourself, but endeavor to bring all your family into the same peace, “that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.” Surely if you have been set free from the iron bondage you ought not to need urging to keep with all sacredness this holy day, which the mercy of God has hedged about. Nor should you need exhorting to rest in the Lord and to endeavor to lead others into His rest.

In Deuteronomy 7 we have another use of this remembrance. Here the chosen people are commanded to keep separate from the nations. They were not to intermarry with the Canaanites nor make alliances with them. Israel was to be separated, even as Moses said, “You are a holy people unto the Lord your God.” And the reason he gives in the eighth verse is this—“The Lord redeemed you out of the house of bondmen.” Ah, brethren, if we are redeemed from among men, if there is a special and particular redemption, as we believe, by which Christ loved His church and gave Himself for it, then as the specially blood-bought ones, we are under solemn obligations to come out from the world and to be separate from it. Did not Jesus say of His redeemed, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”? Therefore come you out from among them and be you separate.

In the eighth chapter redemption is used as an argument for obedience, and they are exhorted not to forget the laws and statutes of the Lord. And above all, they are warned lest in the midst of prosperity their heart should be lifted up so as to forget the Lord their God who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. The same argument runs through the 11th chapter and it is a very clear one. We ought to render glad obedience to Him who has worked us so great a deliverance.

We find in the thirteenth chapter that the redemption from bondage is used as an argument for loyal attachment to the one and only God. The tendency of the nation was to idolatry, since all the countries round about had many gods and lords. But the Lord commanded His people to put to death all prophets and dreamers of dreams who might seek to lead them away from the worship of Jehovah. “You shall stone him with stones that he dies,” says the tenth verse, “because he has sought to thrust you away from the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” You must not have another God, for no other God delivered you. Worship Him to whom you owe your all.

Our own text is set in the following connection. If a man entered into forced servitude, or came under any bonds to his fellow man among the Jews, he could only be held for six years. And on the seventh he was to go free. “And when you send him out free from you, you shall not let him go away empty: you shall furnish him liberally out of your flock and out of your flour, and out of your winepress: of that which the Lord your God has blessed you, you shall give unto him. And you shall remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you.” The Lord’s people should be considerate of those who are in their employment. The recollection of their own bondage should make them tender and kind to those who are in subservience to them and never should a Christian man be ungenerous, illiberal, severe, churlish with his servants, or with any who are dependent upon him. Be large-hearted. Do not be angry at every little fault, or swift to observe every slight mistake. And be not forever standing on your exact rights, litigious, sticking out for the last half-farthing as some do. I am almost sorry if a mean, stingy man gets converted, for I am afraid he will be no credit to Christianity. There should be in a man redeemed with the blood of Christ something like nobility of soul and benevolence to his fellow men. Even this stern book of the law teaches us this.

I have no time except to remind you that they were bound to keep the passover because of their deliverance from Egypt as we find in the 16th chapter at the 1st verse. “Observe the month of Abib and keep the passover unto the Lord your God: for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night.” So let us also, take heed unto ourselves that we keep all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. Let us keep the ordinances as they were delivered unto us and neither alter nor misplace them. Hold fast the truth and be not moved from it by the cunning craftiness of men. Walk according to the teaching of Scripture in all things, keeping the good old way, because the Lord our God redeemed us and His truth is unchangeable.

Again, in the sixteenth chapter, verses ten to twelve, you have the great redemption used as an argument for liberality towards the cause of God. They were to give unto the Lord rejoicingly of that which the Lord had given to them. “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord

your God which He has given you.” And that because of the twelfth verse, “You shall remember that you were a bondman in Egypt: and you shall observe and do these statutes.” In the twenty-sixth chapter the same teaching is reduced to a set form, for they were there commanded to bring each one a basket of first fruits and offer it unto the Lord, saying—“The Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And He has brought us into this place, and has given us this land, even a land that flows with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which You, O Lord, have given me.” Need I even for a moment, impress this duty upon you?

Last of all, in the twenty-fourth chapter there remains one more lesson. We are there exhorted to be careful concerning the fatherless and the widow (Deut. 24:17). A generous spirit was to be exhibited towards the poor. They were not to fetch in all their sheaves from the field if any were forgotten, nor to scrape up every single ear of corn from among the stubble, as some do these days, nor to beat their olive trees twice, nor to gather the grapes of their vineyard a second time. But they were to leave something for the poor. This was the argument—when you were in Egypt, when you had to make bricks without straw, how glad you were to turn your children in among the stubble to gather a few ears to make a loaf of bread. And now the Lord has given you a better land, therefore deal well with the poor. Brethren, let the needy never be forgotten by you. Do not be miserly. Do not imitate those farmers who would comb their fields with a small-toothed comb if they could, sooner than the poor should glean, raking it and raking it again and again. No, the ransomed Israelites were not even to pick all their fruit, for the argument was, “Would not you, when in Egypt, have given anything for a bunch of those grapes which grew in the gardens of the rich?” Think therefore, of the poor and deal kindly with them, even as you would wish others to deal with you.

With this I close. Be thoughtful of all your fellow men. You that have been redeemed with price, be you tender-hearted, full of compassion, putting on the heart of mercy. In spiritual things take care that you never rake the corners of your fields. Do not rob the gospel of its sweetness. There is a class of preaching out of which the last ear of wheat has been taken. Their gospel is criticized into nothing. The skeptical commentators come in and pick nearly every bunch of grapes and then the modern-thought gentry devour the rest. The preaching of modern times is as an olive tree beaten till not a trace of fruit remains. Let it not be so with us, but let the preacher say, “I was a bondman and therefore I will drop handfuls on purpose for poor souls in trouble.”

Brethren, be very considerate to seekers. Look them up. Talk to them after the sermon. Say a word to those sitting in your pew which may encourage their poor trembling hearts to lay hold on Jesus Christ. Remember that you were a bondman. The smell of the brick kiln is upon you now, my brother, my sister. You have not yet cleansed all the clay from your hands with which you did work in mortar and in brick. Then do not become selfish, unloving, unkind, but in all things love your neighbor as yourself and so prove that you love the Lord your God with all your heart. God bless you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—DEUTERONOMY 6:1-15;
24:17-22; 26:1-11.**

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—152, 660, 810.

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