

ENTANGLED IN THE LAND

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A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1890.

*“For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled
in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”*

Exodus 14:3.

ISRAEL was clean escaped from Egypt. Not a hoof of their cattle was left behind, nor foot of child or aged man remained in the house of bondage. But though they were gone, they were not forgotten by the tyrant who had enslaved them. They had been a very useful body of workers, for they had built treasure cities and storehouses for Pharaoh. Compelled to work without wages, they cost the tyrant nothing but the expenditure of the lash. His exactions of forced labor had grown intolerable to the people, but the buildings erected had been a joy to the lord of Egypt. When they were quite gone, Pharaoh woke up to a sense of his loss, and his attendants felt the same, so that they cried, “Why have we done this that we have let Israel go from serving us?” Then they resolved to drive them back again, and they thought it easy to do so, for they said, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.” They knew that the Israelites had no spirit for war, and they felt sure that they had only to overtake them, and hurry them back, like a drove of cattle. They had found them such submissive servants that they expected to fit their fetters on them again, and rivet them forever. Perhaps their God had shot His last arrow, and Egypt might capture His people again without fear of plagues. Thus men thought, but the Lord thought otherwise.

Do not I speak to some at this hour who, during the last few months, have, by the power of the Lord's gracious hand, escaped out of the bondage of sin? You have got clean away from your old master. With a high hand and an outstretched arm has God brought you forth into liberty. You remember the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the Paschal Lamb, and you are now on your way to Canaan. But your former master and his friends have not forgotten you. You were once a valuable servant to Satan, and he will not willingly lose you. Some of you whom God has saved by grace could drink for Satan, and lie for him, and swear for him, and lead others into evil ways, and you could do cheerfully other things which I need not mention, which he always desires to have done in his kingdom. You were a trained servant, and knew your master's way so as to answer his purpose better than most. Servants of Satan usually serve him greedily, and you were very eager. Nothing is too hot or too heavy for men who are thoroughly enthusiastic for evil. Sins that should be thought degrading are followed by men under the notion of pleasure and gaiety. “A short life and a merry one,” is too often the cry of persons who are preferring death to life. The devil has the knack of making his bondsmen boast of their freedom, and they follow with eagerness that which is to their own loss and ruin. Poor slaves! Their slavery has blinded their minds. Thanks be unto God, certain of you have lately fled from your former bondage, but the point I am to speak of is this—*the great tyrant has not forgotten you*, and he designs in his heart your capture and re-enslavement. He and his are continually looking for opportunities by which they may bring you again into the thralldom of evil, fasten the manacles of habit upon your hands, and fit the fetters of despair upon your feet. By the grace of God I hope that the Prince of evil, and his helpers, will be disappointed, but they will leave no stone unturned to effect their purposes. One of their hopes of driving you back is the belief that you are entangled by your circumstances and surroundings. They conceive that you have got into serious difficulty through your conversion, and that you cannot find your way out

of your perplexity. Now, the enemy says, “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil.” The Pharaoh of the infernal regions thinks to drive the fugitives back again like a flock of sheep, and, notwithstanding all that God has done for them, he hopes again to bring them under his yoke. If Jehovah has brought you out, His work will never be undone, but the enemy’s hope lies in his belief that you are hopelessly entangled by your present environment.

I speak just now mainly to new converts, and I trust I may encourage them. Satan has less hope of getting back those who have escaped from his tyranny for many years. If he can trip them up or worry them, even now, he will take a delight in doing it, but he begins to see that the older pilgrims are really the Lord’s, and cannot fall into his hands. Of those who have only lately escaped from his power he has greater hope, for they have not yet proved by the test of experience that the work within them is divine. He hopes that possibly theirs is only temporary reformation, and if so, he can soon make them slip back into the mire of sin, from which he hopes they have only half escaped. I am going to speak to the raw recruits, “from Egypt lately come,” hoping that, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, they may be cheered in pressing forward, and may feel that they can never go back to their old sins.

The early period of Christian faith, like the infancy of life, is crowded with dangers. Literally, newborn life is so precarious that it is a wonder that any infant survives, and infant spiritual life is so full of weaknesses and diseases that none would survive were it not for Almighty grace. Hence the need of the special precept, “Feed my lambs.” It is our bounden duty to look well after beginners in the ways of God. The moral mortality in our churches is mainly among the new converts. If they survive the first years of temptation, they continue with us as a rule. Our church roll shows that the leakage is through the unseasoned timbers—

*When they have conquered early fears,
And vanquished youthful wrong,
Grace will preserve their following years,
And make their virtues strong.*

If we leave them without help and comfort in their beginning, we cannot tell how much they will sin and suffer. With the view of helping them, I shall speak, first, upon *one of our early dangers*, and, secondly, upon *our security against that danger*.

I. ONE OF OUR EARLY DANGERS is this; we may become entangled in the land, the wilderness may shut us in. That entanglement takes a great many shapes. I will only hint at a few of them.

Dealing with old friends is a frequent one. The man is a new creature in Christ Jesus, and since his friends find that he is so, they trouble him. His foes are they of his own household. How is the youth to make an open confession of Christ before his infidel father? Possibly the convert is a wife. How is she to be a Christian if she is married to an ungodly husband? Our earthly loves have great power over us, and it is right that they should, but herein comes a hindrance to spiritual life. Satan says to himself, “Ah! He cannot break away from my kingdom, for his brother, his wife, or his betrothed will keep him in my service.” It may not only be one member of the family, but several may combine to draw back the half-escaped one. It may be that parents, brothers, sisters, friends of all sorts, will unite in their efforts to jeer the young Christian out of his faith, and lead him off from the road of uprightness. We hear much of the Salvation Army, but, alas! There is an Army of Damnation too. Very zealous and crafty are these followers of the evil one. Cruel mockings, accusations of hypocrisy, slanders, and unkindnesses are not spared to turn the young Christian from the right way. Because of household opposition Satan says, “He is entangled in the land.” The adversary thinks that you have not the courage to stand up against your relatives, and will not dare to confess your Lord before your wife, or your father. We shall see now whether the Lord has brought you out, or whether you are running off on a mere whim of your own; the devil will not be slow to apply the test.

In some cases the entanglement is not so much that of the family as of society. I have personally known one or two friends moving in high circles who have said to me, “As soon as I am known to be a Christian, my friends will cut my acquaintance. I do not know what I shall do when I have to visit at certain houses; assuredly I shall have to run the gauntlet.” It has been a quiet pleasure to me when I have found that they have been banished from such “society” altogether, for it could never have been of any spiritual advantage to them, and it might have proved a snare. Their loss was a real gain. But, oh! How

many are afraid of Sir John and of Lady Mary, or of some wealthy neighbor! These fine folks may be nothing very great after all, but, still, weak hearts are all too apt to dread the loss of their patronage, and are ready enough to make a great cross of being frowned out of their society.

In other circles the same difficulties occur. The workshop has its trials as well as the drawing room. "Ah!" says Satan, "the man came out, and confessed himself a Christian the other night, but I know where he works, and there is not a man in the place who will sympathize with him. He will be entangled in the land." It happens that one begins in the morning with a joke, a second comes on with an oath, a third follows suit with a sharp and bitter observation. All day long they give the new convert such handfuls of mud as they can find, and the hope of the evil one is that thus he will be forced back into his old ways. The same thing happens on the farm, or on board ship, or in the barracks; old companions want to have our society, and are not pleased with the silent rebuke which is implied in our separating from them. You know more about this than I do, but I wonder not at Satan saying, "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in." Why, some of you can scarcely descend the steps of this Tabernacle, convinced of sin and awakened to seek eternal salvation, before an old friend meets you, and, by his careless salutation, he makes you forget the emotion which just before was so manifest! Or if you get over the first attack, you are so warmly assailed indoors that you are greatly inclined to give in. Alas for the many who are speedily entangled in the nets of human associates, and never gain the liberty of Christ! The demands of business, of position, of self-interest, of custom—these all hold men as birds are caught with bird-lime, or, as the needle is held by a powerful magnet, and so they are prepared to listen to evil entreaties, and return to the country from which they came out.

To some, the entanglements come from *having to deal with new matters*. All things have become new, and among the rest even their ordinary business wears a different aspect. It used to be conducted in such and such a way, but now, on examination, the man says, "I am a Christian. I cannot do as I have done, and yet, how can I alter it?" It is a very simple matter to fall into those ways of trade which are questionable, but it is not quite so easy to quit them, and to gain a livelihood. When you alter one custom of trade, another matter hangs upon it, and needs a change, and it is not easy to bring partners, and clerks, and workpeople, out of old ways into new. They are very apt to be sticklers for former methods. Moreover, there are people in the trade who think you more nice than wise, and will even refuse to do business with you if you are so particular. It is no small thing for the convert to set himself right with the world in his changed mode of dealing, yet this has got to be done, and done with decision, too, or there is no escaping from evil. At such a time the struggler feels—"I am entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut me in," and the enemy of souls, is of the same opinion. Now is his opportunity, but if you escape him now he will never again have such an advantage over you.

At the same time, our young brother may be alarmed about the other side of his new associations—namely, joining the church. It seems an ordeal to young beginners to come to see the pastor about uniting with the Lord's people. I am sure they need not be at all terrified of *me*, for no one will more heartily welcome any sincere seeker after Jesus. All that I shall ask is a simple confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and if that is given, even with fear and trembling, I shall be well content. Yet, to the timid beginner, it seems very solemn to be spoken to by the elders of the church. Mr. Bunyan puts lions in front of the Palace Beautiful, by which palace he means the church. I have been told by a facetious person that Mr. Bunyan meant by these lions the deacons and elders. Well, I can only say that I find them brave as lions, but even if they were terrible as those monarchs of the forests, there is no just cause for fearing them, for Mr. Bunyan adds "The lions are chained." If any of you are afraid of our deacons and elders, you are so without reason, for the lions are chained by the intense love they bear both to their Lord and to all pilgrims to Zion. A guard is set before the door of the church for a necessary purpose, for we would have none enter who are self-deceived, but none of the brethren in office among us will harm anyone who desires to serve the Lord, and dwell with His people. If you have been troubled about your admission to the church, I hope that fear will come to an end by your pushing forward, and being enrolled in our ranks. Get right in your position both towards the world and the church, and let not the evil one say with regard to either of these matters, "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in."

We have known others *bewildered with doctrinal difficulties*. When a man's soul is renewed he begins to think, and he desires to understand many things which before were indifferent to him. He meets with that most plain and precious truth, that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," and he is well satisfied with that declaration. Still, as he grows, he seeks more knowledge, and longs to understand the deep things of God. Possibly, as a young beginner he goes beyond his depth. He perceives the doctrine of election in the Bible, and he asks, "What is this?" It may be he is greatly confused with this doctrine, for though it is rich with comfort for those who, by reason of years, have had their senses exercised, yet it is a hard nut for babes in brace. It is simple enough when seen from one side of it, but from another it is a bottomless mystery. We have seen minds quite bewildered, where to us all things have seemed plain.

I have known people stumble over hard texts. "What does *this* text mean? What does *that* passage mean? What does the other Scripture mean?" You would be astonished if you knew how many people are disturbed in mind, lie awake at nights, and are likely to lose their faith in Christ over Scriptures which are as cheering as can be when once they are understood. These people need that some man should guide them, for, like the Ethiopian nobleman, they will not otherwise understand what they read. In former periods, many lost themselves in meditations upon free will, predestination, irresistible grace, and so forth. It was a pity that they dwelt so much upon the decrees of the Father, and so little upon the work of the Lord Jesus. They got their heads muddled by things too high for them. People are more frivolous now, as a rule, and this evil is rare. Still, there are to be found, here and there, thoughtful persons, not yet fully instructed in the faith, which are puzzled and confused as the infinite glory of revealed truth opens up before their astonished gaze. They will know hereafter, but for the present they are sorely troubled and perplexed, and their cruel enemy rejoices that "They are entangled in the land." Nothing contributes more to this than the divisions in the Christian church. One preacher cries up one thing, and another quite the contrary, till young converts cry, "Who are we to believe?" and they stand as if they had come to crossroads, and do not know which way to take. I am sorry it should be so, but there is a promise to the family of faith, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord." You shall not lose your way if you will accept the Word of God as a little child. Be of good courage, for it is written—"He shall guide you continually."

Far worse is the case of those who are *entangled through strange discoveries*. They came in among professed believers, and they supposed that all Christians were perfect (which, by the way, is a mere supposition), and now they have met with a certain loud professor who has acted very dishonorably and unkindly towards them, and they cry out with astonishment, "How is this?" We, who know by experience and observation that Judas may be looked for among common disciples, since he appeared among the chosen twelve, are not so staggered when we see a hypocrite. We now expect to see black sheep, even in the choicest flock, but the new convert is sorely grieved and stumbled when he finds out the melancholy fact that all men are not what they seem. Great mischief is worked among young Christians by hypocritical or inconsistent professors. God grant that none of us may be of that kind, for the blood of souls will lie at the door of such persons!

It may be that, in his earliest days, the young convert finds out with surprise that his own heart is brimming over with sin. He thought that he was so changed that no sin remained in him, and no temptation from without could move him. He hoped that he was so sure of the truth of God that he would never doubt, and now he has to cry, "Lord, help my unbelief," for he can hardly decide whether he believes or not. He has discovered another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity. He finds that when he would do good, evil is present with him, and this inward conflict between the flesh and the spirit comes upon him as a terrible surprise. "Why am I like this?" he cries. "Can I be a child of God and have such dreadful thoughts? Could I feel so wretched if I were indeed a possessor of grace?" When young beginners get into this rough road, they are taken by surprise, and know not what to do. Then is it that the adversary of their souls hopes that "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in."

Akin to this are their *amazements at painful experiences*. It may be the Lord withholds the light of His countenance from them, and then they walk in darkness, and see no light. If they were always to enjoy calm and comfort, they would with self-complacency boast, "My mountain stands firm; I shall never

be moved,” and the Lord hides Himself from them to slay their pride. If they were always at ease they would fall into living by feeling, instead of walking by faith. Therefore the Lord tries them, leads them by a desert path, clouds their sky, and burdens their backs. Then they inquire, “How is this?” Some of us know that when God shuts us up in the dark, He loves us as dearly as when He pours sunlight upon us, but beginners in the divine life do not know this, and they are terribly put to it, since they judge God’s heart by His hand. “Can I be a child of God, and yet be so afflicted? And why is my light so dim?” These frames and feelings, which come of our being frail, foolish, and feeble-minded, are a great perplexity, and when we cannot make them out, the adversary cries, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”

What if, at the back of all this, we should be *assailed with special trials*? Suppose it should be true that, ever since you have been a Christian, you have not prospered in worldly concerns as you did before. It will seem strange. When you were a man of the world, and were an enemy of God, you had plenty of money, and a host of friends, but now that you have become a Christian, your means and your friends are gradually melting away. It may be the case; I have known such an instance. Yet it is not hard to explain this in several ways. The Lord would not have us follow Him for the sake of what we get from Him. He would have us men, against whom even Satan could not say, “Have You not set a hedge about him, and all that he has?” Our Lord desires followers who will cling to Him at all risks, for no other reason but their value of Himself and His truth. He would have servants who, having counted the cost would lose estate and repute, yes, and life itself, sooner than turn aside from the way of their Lord. Perhaps you are being educated to this point of faithfulness. Do not, therefore, doubt, because of your exercises and tribulations, but take these things joyfully. The path to heaven lies by the dens of the leopards, and the haunts of the young lions. Dream not that God has forsaken you. Leave it to the devil to say, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”

Possibly, once more, some may be much beset on the road to heaven by *mental difficulties*. I do not often say much about these things, because there are plenty of preachers who, by mentioning difficulties, are really spreading them. Certain clever gentlemen of the cloth may think it their duty to sow doubts among their hearers, but I have no such ambition. They may imagine that they are answering the questions which they suggest, but it seems to me that they are merely advertising them to many of those who were previously unaware of them. This is an age when men assail the inspiration of the Bible, the atoning sacrifice, and the election of grace. I need not enlarge. Everything is now attacked. There is no part of the Bible which some critic would not take away from us. It may be, young friend, that, you cannot answer all the objections which you hear. Do not wonder if you cannot. You would be wiser than Solomon if you could reply to all objections that quibblers may invent. A friend came to me with a great difficulty, supposing that I could answer it off-hand; but I replied, “He who fashioned this piece of criticism took time in the making of it, and you must allow me the same time to demolish it. I will do my best with it, but remember, if you find a thousand difficulties which I cannot meet, that fact will not prove that they cannot be met, for I do not profess to be omniscient, nor do I assert that faith is a grace which has no difficulties to surmount.” If there were a thousand more objections which could not at this present, be answered, they might confuse our feeble minds, but they would not shake the eternal truth itself. God’s Word is sure, be the difficulties what they may. Know what you do know, and believe what you do believe, and get a firm grip of undoubted verities, and though, when you are worried with the doubts and hypotheses of philosophers and the like, Satan will say, “They are entangled in the land,” let him see that your worry is soon ended by a childlike faith in the living God. Real faith will find a way out of perplexity, or will make one. True faith will sooner set aside the conclusions of human reason than the declarations of God; in fact, faith teaches reason to be reasonable by setting before it the highest of all reasons, namely, the testimony of God. God send us such a childlike faith, and then we shall not be “entangled in the land”!

II. I have thus shown you what our danger is. Now, secondly, let us think of OUR SECURITY UNDER THIS TRIAL.

My text is, “*Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.*” Upon this I make the first observation, *that this is not true*. It is only what Pharaoh said. And so when Satan says, “They are entangled in the land,” it is not true; it is only one of the say-

ings of the father of lies. “They say”—says one. Well, what do they say? Let them say it; their saying it will not make it true. A troubled one comes to me, and complains of a certain charge which has been made, and he adds, as the sharp edge of it all, “Sir, it is not true.” Well, then, do not fret about it. One cries out, “They are taking away my character, and I feel it keenly because what they say is cruelly false.” Friend, do not feel it at all. You ought to feel it if what they say is true. Now, what Pharaoh said was not true, and his speech did not cause the children of Israel to be really entangled in the land. Pharaoh’s tongue speaks his wish, but his wish will not be realized. Our adversaries say that our cause is defeated. Is it? “Ah!” they say, “we have shut him up. The man cannot answer us; we have crushed his faith, and argued his confidence to death.” Have you? By the grace of God we stand fast in the once-delivered faith, after all your sophistries and boasts. You say that we are entangled, but we are not. “Show us,” they say, “the way in which you will get out of the wilderness.” No, that we cannot do, but, if you will wait a while, the Lord will show you *that*, by leading us graciously through the divided sea, and it may be also by drowning you therein, as He did the Egyptians when the waters overwhelmed them. Israel could not guess her way, but Israel could wait till God revealed it. Newly-emancipated one, you are shut in with doubts and difficulties suggested by carnal reason, but, I pray you, believe your God. By the blood of the cross, I entreat you, believe the Lord Jesus. By the eternal judgment and the great white throne, believe your God. “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” Wait you till He shall clear your way, through the very heart of the sea if need be; a way which will conduct you in safety to the other shore, where, with timbrel and with song, you shall proclaim His victory.

My next observation is this; that though Pharaoh said, “They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in,” yet *they had a guide*. Look at the surroundings of my text, and you will see that they were guided by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, so that they had no need to be in any perplexity as to their road. We, too, have a Guide. In providence we are not left without a Leader, and in spiritual things we are not left without the Spirit of God, who shall lead us into all truth. Young traveler, you are not turned out alone into a wild wilderness to find a path; the Good Shepherd goes before you; follow Him as the sheep follow their shepherd. He never led His flock in the wrong direction yet. Do what He bids you, and you are safe. Do as He did when He was here below; His example is your safe direction. Believe Him and obey Him. Keep to the narrow path. Hold fast your integrity, and never let go of your faith. You have a heavenly Guide. You are not left alone, and therefore you cannot be entangled in the land; the wilderness has *not* shut you in.

Remember, next, that *the Lord had appointed a way for these people*. There was not only a guide, but a way. But where was that way? Mountains blocked them on either side. They could not turn back, for Pharaoh shut up that route. Where should they go? The reedy Red Sea rolled across their front. Listen! Their way is across the bottom of that sea, and up from its depths to the other shore. A strange path! “It is no way at all,” cries unbelief. Have you never read concerning God, “Your way is in the sea, and Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps are not known”? Tried believer, the Lord will make a way for you where no foot has been before. That which, like a sea, threatens to drown you, shall be a highway for your escape.

I once had a friend, an upright gracious man, a gentleman whom God had prospered. He had, when engaged in a bank, acted uprightly in a matter in which his superiors judged him to be foolishly scrupulous, and therefore dismissed him. He could not do wrong, and so he was left with a wife and family, without a job, and, as everybody told him, irretrievably ruined, because of his “foolish conscientiousness.” He was for years the head of that very bank. In a singular way, the Lord made his discharge the means of his advancement, so that he rose, step by step, to be the master where he had been the rejected servant, and this, humanly speaking, would not have come about had it not been for the incident mentioned. Have faith that God can turn the evil into good, and that which threatens to annihilate you will be the means of your enlargement. Look you well to your integrity and the Lord will look to your prosperity. The way of faith is not a common turnpike road, which every careless traveler may traverse without care or study. It is a mysterious way, which no fowl knows, and the lion’s whelp has not trodden. Those who inherit the special glories of heaven must encounter the special perils of the deep and of the desert, and in their amazing journey they shall behold the glorious arm of the Lord working wonders for them.

Note well that the Lord would not only find them a way, *but, at the same time, overthrow their enemies*. You have come up out of Egypt, O young believer, but the taskmasters are at your heels! There may come a decisive moment, after which they shall never pursue you again. Those who seek your soul are to be destroyed, so that there shall not be one of them left. I believe that many a young convert hates sin, and hates all evil habits, but these evils keep dogging his footsteps, and seem as if they would master him, and then there comes a time of great struggle and tremendous battling without and within; on that one desperate field he fights the matter out. His adversaries are drowned in that Red Sea; his old sins and his old habits lose forever their former power. The Red Sea rolled between Israel and Egypt, and whatever else might trouble the pilgrim host, they were never, throughout the whole forty years, molested by Pharaoh, or any of the Egyptians. It is a grand thing when a man gets clean away from the world, and is reckoned as dead to it. He has burnt his boats, and has landed on the shore, from which he never can go back again, but must fight out the battle against sin even to the end. When a man is sworn into the army of Christ for eternity, and the world has cast him out, there is nothing for him but to go right ahead. Everything that he has is now staked on the cross of Christ. Happy man to have come to such a pass—to be once for all crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him! The Egyptians of sin which had so fiercely pursued him are drowned, and the rest of the Egyptians of evil have given him up, and he may go on his way to the promised land in peace, so far as his old taskmasters are concerned.

Remember, also, dear friends, that when these people were thought to be hopelessly entangled, *they were about to see the Lord perform for them a work which would be most helpful to their ultimate conquest of Canaan*, for when Pharaoh and his chariots were drowned in the sea, Palestine heard of it, and all the natives thereof began to tremble. Thus sang Moses in his famous song, “Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm they shall be as still as a stone. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold of the inhabitants of Palestine.” That day in which a convert has to fight out the battle once for all with himself shall give him strength for all future conflict, and smooth his pathway into the land that flows with milk and honey. You must not think, young Christian, because you are saved from guilt, that everything is done, and the warfare ended! There is a life-long conflict for you before you obtain possession of your inheritance, and, it may be that, if now, when you are in special trouble, you are found faithful, all the rest of the road will be cleared from similar troubles. Now shall the Egyptians be drowned in the sea. Some of us can recollect the time when we had to stand still and seriously ask, “Can I now be true to the Lord and His law? I am advised the other way by a very prudent friend. Can I reject this advice? I can see the worldly advantage that I should gain through acting in a crooked course. Can I forego that advantage? I can see that I shall have to suffer if I am conscientious. Can I take up my cross?” When, after hours of anguish and prayer, you have come out of every entanglement pure and free, from that time forth the Lord may lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and your victory over all other adversaries will be easy. Will not this comfort some of you who have just come to the Red Sea? The place of test and trial shall be the place of the ending of the foe.

Why had the Lord led the people so far if He would not still help them? Do I hear someone say, “I fear that I shall never get out of *my* difficulties”? Yet you believe that the Lord has brought you out from the dominion of Satan? Tell me, has God brought you so far to let you perish? He has broken off the yoke of sin; He has given you a hope in Christ, and you are a changed man. Do you think that He would do all this for you, and then leave you? Come, my brother, has the Lord brought you out of Egypt, by the precious blood of the Lamb, that you should die in the wilderness? Do you believe that Jesus has redeemed you to let you be lost, after all? I would speak personally to any elderly Christians here who begin to think that they shall one day fall by the hand of the enemy. How old are you? “Sixty.” Sixty? How long do you expect to live? Answer: ten years. Then if God has taken care of you for sixty years, can you not trust Him for the odd ten? “Well,” says one, “I am eighty.” Eighty? How long do you reckon to remain on earth Are you going to doubt for the few years that are yet to come? Have you trusted your God for eighty long years? Do not doubt Him now, I pray you. Do not please the devil by distrusting your faithful God. As surely as Jehovah begins He will finish. It shall never be said of any work of God, “He began to build, and was not able to finish.” If He has set you on the way to the eternal inheritance, He will surely bring you into it. God is never defeated or turned aside. “He shall not fail nor be discouraged.” Comfort one another, therefore, with such words as these.

Lastly, *the Lord must bring Israel out of all entanglement, for how else could He be glorified?* Suppose that the Israelites had been left to perish when Pharaoh said they were shut in, what then? What would the Lord have done for His great name? Would not the Egyptians have exulted over Israel's God? A Scotch minister tells the story of an aged saint who, on her dying bed, said that her Savior would never leave her to perish. "But suppose that He did not keep His promise, and you were to be lost?" She answered, "He would be a greater loser than I." When asked what she meant, she answered, "It is true that I would lose my soul, but God would lose His honor and His glory if He were not true." Brethren, if we have trusted in God, and have come out of the Egypt of the world through His grace, and have left all its sins behind us, if we were left to die in the wilderness, the Lord Jesus Christ would lose His glory as a Savior, the divine Father would lose His name for immutable faithfulness, and the Holy Spirit would lose His honor for perseverance in completing every work which He undertakes. The Lord God of Israel will never stain His glory, therefore be confident that He who brought you out of Egypt will bring you into Canaan. How I delight in that verse which we sang just now—

*"My name from the palms of His hands eternity will not erase;
Impressed on His heart it remains in marks of indelible grace:
Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in heaven."*

"Ah!" murmurs one, "I don't believe *that!*" Then I am sorry for you, for "according to your faith be it unto you." "I believe," says one, "that men may fall away and perish." It will be an evil thing for you if it should be to you according to your faith. If you have grace enough to grasp the whole range of blessing which the covenant of God offers you, then the whole shall be yours by a covenant of salt. He that thinks he can be off and on with God—saved today and lost tomorrow, and then saved again—has a comfortless creed to defend, and a world of absurdities to meet. You are born again. Suppose that you could lose the new life which comes by the new birth, what then? I have heard of people being born again, but could they be born again, and again, and again? According to the notion of some, certain persons are born again, and again, and again, and again, and again; I do not know how many times. There is nothing in Scripture to warrant such a strange idea. If you, my friend, will come and cast yourself on Christ, and take Him to be your Savior once for all, He will save you now with an everlasting salvation. He says, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Jesus Himself has said it, "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Believe for this with heroic faith. Believe for eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, who is able to work in you a lifelong escape from sin. According to your faith, so shall it be. Oh, no! The devil may say that we are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut us in, but we shall get out of the labyrinth right enough. Is it not written, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace"? We shall yet sing unto the Lord who has triumphed gloriously. Our sins and our fears has He thrown into the sea. So be it. Hallelujah! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—EXODUS 13:21, 22; 14.

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