

Out of Egypt

A SERMON – Preached on Sunday morning Dec. 4th 1864

BY Mister JAMES WELLS

AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, Borough Road

"Out of Egypt have I called my son:" Matthew 2, 15

THERE is a prediction that the Savior should grow up before God as a tender plant. All kinds of plants and flowers have been admired by men, and women too, and against that I say nothing. But this plant of plants, this plant that sends forth a fragrance that no other plant did or can; this rose that infinitely surpasses in beauty and attraction, where there is life to feel the attraction, all others; this tree of life, infinitely surpassing all others, has nevertheless been passed by as a plant of no importance to man, as a tree under which none have ever sought any pleasure or found any delight. So that if Jesus Christ had come into the world, and died, and risen again just as he did, and gone to heaven, and there left the matter, his name would have been forgotten long and long ago. And therefore, not unto man, not unto man, be the honor that the name of Jesus is still remembered. Hence the Lord himself would not leave this matter with man, but said concerning his dear Son, "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations." Oh, how great, then, is that change wrought in us! There was when we saw no beauty in him, and now he is to us the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely. There was when we cared naught for him; now; we feel that all is really worth seeking is embodied in him. There was when we sought him not; now we feel that all that is really worth seeking is embodied in him, and ministered to man by his Spirit by what he hath done and all things we can desire are not to be compared unto the excellency of this plant of great renown, to the excellency of the Son of God, to the excellency of this messenger of the everlasting covenant, in which is all our salvation, and, when in our right minds, all our desire. You will observe that our text is a quotation from the 1st verse of the 11th chapter of Hosea. We should hardly think, in reading that chapter that the Savior was here referred to. Here is another proof that the Old Testament scriptures speak concerning Christ, and that they perhaps point to him in many cases where we little think the Old Testament does point to him. And there are (and that will be the texture and substance of our discourse this morning) -there are analogies between the Savior being called out of Egypt and the children of Israel analogies-only a sample of them, for I should not be able, in the limited space and time of a sermon, to point out one quarter of those analogies; noticing the differences as I go along, because they will apply, as we go along, to us in our being called spiritually out of the Egypt of this world, where our Lord and Savior is still crucified. Suffice it first just to observe that, as the prediction stood, this plant of great renown was to grow up before the Lord. See what care the Lord took of the infancy of the Savior; so that the adversary, mighty as he was, namely, Herod, with all the powers he had at command, was not able to reach or injure the holy child Jesus. And just the care he took of him he takes of you; for he looks upon his people as one with him; loving them with the same love. So that even now he takes just the same care. If there be a Herod after you, and if there be powers called into action against

you, nevertheless there is the throne of grace open to you; and their schemes and plans may indeed surpass, all easily so, the wisdom and power you possess; but if you are enabled to commit your way unto the Lord, he will take you to some Egypt, some Babylon, some Moab, some place where perhaps you would rather not go, nevertheless there shall you be delivered, there shall the hand of the Lord redeem you. "Let my outcasts dwell with thee, Egypt; let my outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; let my outcasts dwell with thee Babylon." as the matter may require.

But I come at once then to the language of our text, "Out of Egypt, have I called my son." First, to serve God. The Lord said to Pharaoh, "Let Israel go, that he may serve me." The Israelites, therefore, were called out of Egypt to serve God. Jesus Christ was thus called out of Egypt to serve God. And I may, perhaps, before I enter into that service, just remind you of the difference here. It is true there is an analogy; both were called to serve God; But the Israelites who were called to serve God, when they came to encounter some of the difficulties connected with that service, they rebelled again, and again, and again. And so it has been with us; the Lord has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light; and yet, under many of the circumstances connected with the service of God; we have murmured at this, rebelled at this, sinned here and sinned there; so that our best righteousness are but as filthy rags, and we dare not appear before the Lord in them. Yet our services, notwithstanding these drawbacks, are accepted as evidence of belonging to the Lord. Let us, then, I hope with a little holy and sacred pleasure, mark the contrast here. Let us hear what the Savior himself says upon this very subject. He was called out of Egypt in order to serve God, for the eternal justification and eternal redemption of his people. Hear the Savior's own account of it, and see his confidence, in it and see the care he has through it all for his people. Hence, "The Lord God," says Christ, 50th of Isaiah, "hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious." Those words come like oil into my soul, and like wine into mine heart. "I was not rebellious." Bless his holy name, then, while we rebel, we will plea the name of Him that never rebelled; that while we in a thousand things rebel, as says one, "In many things," not in a few things, but "in many things" we all offend, our plea shall be that Jesus never rebelled, and that his obedience was not for angels, was not for himself, but for him that believes. If you are conscious of your rebellion, oh, how eagerly you will lay hold, by faith and hope and love, of His name that never rebelled! "I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." Alas! alas! I have not turned back, from the truth; no thanks to me I have not done that; but I have shrunk from a great many trials and a great many services. I have not served God with that constancy of devotion, I have not served God up to that standard of satisfaction, that I could wish, and I suppose never shall. What then must be my plea? We must come before the Lord and bless him for one that never turns back. Yes, he says, "I gave my back to the smiters" Here I am; If you wish to scourge me do so. Here I am if you wish to smite me, do so; here I am; if you wish to crucify me, do so. Here I am, Judas; you have been and arranged, I know it, though you think I do not, you have been and arranged with the Pharisees to buy me for thirty pieces of silver. Well; I will not run away; I will not go away; you shall have your way: that you do, do quickly. And if he had not given his back to the smiters, they never could have reached him; if he had not given himself so far, they never could have betrayed him; and if he had not laid down his life; they never could have crucified him. "Think ye not " and there mark his humility; he speaks as a man when he says, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled? "Nothing could make Him rebel nothing could make him turn back. He saw our sins, but turned not back from them; he saw all that would be inflicted upon Him of men and devils, but he turned not back from it; he saw the awful flaming sword that cut angels off forever from all hope

and help; He saw that fiery sword that would cut unnumbered millions off at the last day from all hope and help, and banish them to damnation eternal; he saw this sword before him, but turned not back. He knew he could endure it; he knew he could survive it; he knew he could endure the stroke; he knew he could quench the fire; he knew in his own personal worth he could meet all law's demands, rise triumphant from the dead, and bring his people into all the blessedness that should result from the perfection of his obedience to God. "Out of Egypt I have called my son," to serve me. Now mark his confidence in God; we must look upon the Savior as speaking there as man; in other words, as the Son of God: "The Lord God will help me: therefore I shall not be confounded." When I am baptized, my Father will show his approbation of me; that will help me as man; he will recognize my Sonship; when I am in the northern part of Canaan, the hill Hermon, I shall be transfigured, and he will again testify of who I am. Three days before I lay down my life at Jerusalem my Father will appear again; I shall always have his approbation, because I always do those things that please him. "The Lord God will help me" –so he did, by his approbation, "therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed," He despised the thought of ever being ashamed; he endured the cross, despised the shame, and that for the joy that was set before him. Wondrous Person! Ah, then, if we serve God, if we believe in God, if we pray to God, if we praise God, if we are with God, it must be by what this wondrous Person has done. But let us hear him again. He says, "Who will contend with me?" I will, says the enemy, well then "Let us stand together; who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me." So, says the enemy, I will, when I get a chance. And so, when Satan saw him in the wilderness solitary, Satan did go near to him, and tempted him forty days. Perhaps one of the things not yet revealed, that will be revealed to us when we get home to glory, will be what was going on in that forty days. My opinion is, something not fit to be revealed; my opinion is that during that forty days Satan brought up all the dregs of hell, and hurled them at the Savior; dregs of hell that no human language can describe; that is my opinion of the forty days, just as Satan, when he sees us cast down and solitary, that is the time he comes in upon us. Then, after the forty days, when Satan had exhausted all the counsels of hell, hardly knew what to do, after the forty days he tempted him with three more temptations; and I need not enlarge here to show, or to remind you, rather, how this adversary was defeated, how he was cast down, how he gained not one inch of ground. Can you and I say so? If David were here he would say, Ah, Satan was too much for me; he stirred me up to number the people, and to put confidence in human strength, numerical strength, instead letting my confidence be in the Lord. If Joshua were here he would say, Ah, Satan stood at my right hand; I could not move him; he did not care for me, I could not move him until the Lord came and put him under my feet. And if Peter were here he would say, Satan desired to have me; got me into his sieve and sifted out of me what I did not mean. Every Christian will bear testimony that in many respects Satan has been too much for him; in many instances Satan has been too many for him. Not so with Jesus; the dear Savior's conquest over him was entire, was complete. If you and I could understand that scripture a little more clearly than we do, it would be to our advantage. The Savior says, "These things" and it is by these things we have peace with God "I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer,"-you will overcome the world? No, he does not say that; the world overcomes us more or less every day. Where is there a Christian that does not, at all times feel himself just that character, I mean that of the stony-ground hearer? The cares of this world, and other things, entering in choke the word, and it chokes the word, and it becomes unfruitful; and do not these things hinder us? Have we not to lament that very much of the word is choked in us? and but for grace in the heart the whole of it would be choked. But, bless the Lord, where grace

is, though the memory may be plundered, the heart cannot be deprived of the grace, the life, the spirit, and the truth of the blessed God. But the Savior places our comfort in what he has done. He says, "Be of good cheer." Well, but, Lord, I am half swallowed up in worldly cares, and family cares, one thing and the other; I do not see how I can be of good cheer. Well, but "I overcome the world." Yes, Lord, if I could do it as thou hast done it! Ah, then you would not want me; you are proud enough as it is; you are important enough as it is; you are consequential enough as it is; and you would be a thousand times more so then. But "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." As though he should say, Find out, if you can, one single instance in which the world has overcome me: it has never drawn me from the truth; it has never driven me from the truth; it has never overcome me in one instance. Now, then, let that be your comfort. Confess that you are a poor captive; confess how the world chokes much of the word in you; confess what a poor creature you are, and plead my righteousness, plead my name, plead my obedience. Thus, then, I think I need not say more upon this point. Jesus was called out of Egypt to serve God, to live that life and to die that death that should bring in everlasting perfection, and he never rebelled during that service. The Israelites did rebel; we have rebelled, and do rebel, and I fear shall, at many circumstances, as long as we live. Bless his holy name, then, that he has made us acquainted with our need of him, and his suitability to us, and how welcome the poor and needy are to him! It is for these very destitute people that he wrought this righteousness. Go into the hedges and highways, to the penniless, and the houseless, and the friendless, and the outcast, and the helpless, and compel them to come in. Let no argument they can use prevail with you. If they say they have not a garment fit to appear in, tell them I have a wedding garment for them; if they say they have no worthiness, tell them that all their worthiness is in my name; If they say they are ignorant, tell them that I have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way. If they say, That is the very person that we have sinned against, and he only wants us to condemn us; tell them that my language is, "I," the very person against whom they have sinned with a high hand; "I, even I, am he that blotteth out their transgressions, and will not remember their sins." And if two or three should stand out and say, Well, it is very right, but we certainly are too bad to come; tell them that my language is, that "him that cometh," let him be who he may, or what he may, "to me, I will in no wise cast out." Thus, then, Jesus was called to a service he performed in perfection; we are called to serve God by faith, but called at the same time to know that we carry with us a nature that serves sin, while the mind serves the law of God; and hereby the Lord does, by various thorns in the flesh, teach us our own nothingness, the sufficiency of his grace, and the excellency of the service of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, God called him out of Egypt, not only to serve him as the substitute, but he called him out of Egypt because he was his Son. He was his own Son, and he therefore called him out of Egypt. The apostle says (and it is one of our privileges to understand that) to those who were led into these very things, by which things we escape the wrath to come, and get to heaven at last, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Whom he constituted his sons before he created the globe; he constituted his sons before Adam was formed; he constituted his sons in the depths of eternity; his goings forth in his eternal choice of his people were from everlasting; chosen, adopted, and made heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, before the world was. God called him because he was his son. And he convinced you of your state as a sinner because you were one of his sons; he gave you the spirit of faith, and wisdom, and revelation concerning Christ, because you were one of his sons, constituted so before Adam was. Thus, the analogy, and a beautiful analogy it is to.

But now for the difference between the two callings, a difference I dwell upon, and have dwelt upon, with very great pleasure; to my mind it is illustrative and very encouraging. And it is this, Jesus Christ was called out of Egypt on the ground not only that he was the Son of God, but on the ground of his own personal worth and worthiness. He was something worth calling; he was something worth going after; he was something worth having; he was something worth being required; he was something worth being sought for. That is the ground upon which he was called, his own worthiness; he was called to the priesthood on the ground of his own worthiness; he was called to heaven on the ground of his own worthiness; he was called to God's right hand on the ground of his own worthiness, "Thou art worthy" he is called to govern all nations, and to have power over all flesh, on the ground of his own worthiness. Thus, he was called on the ground of his own worthiness. On what ground were we called? Let us come to the Scriptures. God give us grace to bless his dear and precious, precious name for the grounds upon which we are called. He, on the ground of his own worthiness; we, on the same ground, on the ground of his worthiness. For we, as sinners, we were not worth calling; we were not worth the grace; we were not worth the price; we were not worth the mercy; we were not worth the trouble of calling; we were not worth the millionth part of the trouble the blessed God hath taken with us. But let us be careful now upon this matter. "Art thou not it" -here is the work of Christ, and here is the ground of his calling-" that hath cut Rahab," meaning Egypt, "and wounded the dragon?" the Egyptian power, represented by the king, Pharaoh. "Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way" that is something towards it, "for the ransomed to pass over?" "Therefore," as the redemption is wrought in "the redeemed of the Lord," on the ground of Christ's redemption, on the ground of the sufficiency of his sacrifice, "the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion;" there the Lord shall command the blessing, even life for evermore. Oh, you Wesleyans, who think that the great God tries to call people, and they will not come, and will not come, and will not come, and that there ought to be something in them to make them a consenting party, and that there ought to be something in them that will help the Almighty, you get that from creatures, that doctrine not from the blessed God; no. And you duty-faith people, you are just the same; you do not like to be called free-willers, but you are no better, you are rather worse, because one part of your gospel contradicts the other. Well now, look at those words; not only shall they return and come to Zion, but mark the final triumph of the same people, on the same ground; "everlasting joy shall be unto them;" just as sure as he has taken possession of the joy, so shall they; "everlasting joy shall be unto them; sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Thus, he was called on the ground of his own worth and worthiness; we are called on the ground not of any worth in us, but on the ground exclusively of the worth of the Lord Jesus Christ. I will have two more scriptures yet upon this; 31st of Jeremiah; "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he; "ah! That is it, Jeremiah ushers in thus: "Publish ye, praise ye," something wonderful; it is wonderful in our eyes, the Lord's work, and marvelous in our eyes. Well, suppose he was ransomed from the hand of him that was stronger than he; what shall be the result? "Therefore" Jeremiah was a good logician as well as a good theologian "Therefore they shall come," that are thus redeemed, thus ransomed, "and sing in the height of Zion;" that height of Zion means two things; Christ in his perfection, and Christ in eternal glory; "and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord;" having no goodness of their own, they flow together to his goodness; "for wheat," and Christ is that wheat; "and for wine," and Christ is that wine: the blood of the everlasting covenant; "and for oil," and the grace of God by Christ Jesus is the olive oil that makes the face to shine; "and for the young of the flock and of the herd," there are the little ones; that is milk, and the gospel is that milk, "sincere

milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;" "and their soul all be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all."

"Out of Egypt have I called my son?" Volumes contained in our text; I would venture to preach ten Sunday mornings! or ten Sunday evenings, upon such a text as this, and have something fresh, every time; for the analogies are almost endless between the Savior's call out of Egypt and our call; at the same time the contrast, setting forth those things that so attract a poor, sensible sinner, and them that love the Savior; he was called on the ground of his own worthiness. Let us now come to the New Testament and see on what ground we are thus brought to seek the Lord. Here it stands; "God, who rich in mercy;" there was rich mercy in the background, unknown to us; "and for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when dead in sins;" here is mercy in the background, and love in the background. There is the sinner going to hell fast as his sins and time can carry him; mercy steps in, ministers life, stops him; he begins to sigh, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and finds out there is not only mercy, but also love, great love. "Quickened us together with Christ Jesus;" nothing without Christ Jesus; "made us sit together in heavenly by Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Now my object this morning is to get near to God and be the means of bringing you near to God. Oh, what a release it is when we get, If It Is only a few moments, rid of our customary burdens and cares, and can leave everything behind, forget our poverty, remember our misery no more; if it be only a few moments sweet fellowship with the blessed God by Jesus Christ! We feel and see, then, in how many senses God calls his people out of Egypt; it will apply not only to their first calling, but every call out of trouble, every call out of difficulty, every call out of prison, as it were, every call out of captivity, every turn of our captivity, nothing but a call out of Egypt into the promised land. Thus, then, Jesus Christ was called to serve God, did so, and never sinned. The Israelites were delivered to serve God, but they mingled many rebellions. Jesus Christ did no sin; we must therefore plead not our own righteousness but his. Jesus Christ was called because he was the Son of God; so, we are called because we are sons, only he was so direct, we by adoption. He was called on the ground of his own worthiness; we were not worth calling, we were therefore called on the ground of the worthiness which the blessed God had provided.

One more point amidst the numbers that rise to my mind on the subject, and then I must close. I told you a first I should give you only a sample; I have left the whole heap behind; May you find it out, and profit by it. Fourth, the Israelites were called out of Egypt to possess a promised land. So was Jesus Christ; he was called out of Egypt to serve God in the wilderness of this world, and to reach the Promised Land. Ah, did the blessed Son of God come short? Did he, like Moses, view the Land but never reach the place? No, no, no, no. Jesus Christ went lower than any man ever went; he went down to the deeps of God's wrath, deeper than hell, overturned the mountains of sin by their roots, rose triumphant from the dead, reached the promised land, has full possession, universal and infinite welcome, there. Would that the Lord would give me not only grace, but more gifts to set forth some of these things! Now here is a thought strikes me here, that If I had gifts to do so how I should like to run out a long train of contrast between the treatment the Savior met with in this world, and the welcome which he meets in heaven. Could language describe it? No; I must not attempt it. Take up all his grief's here in his humiliation; see how they contrast; look at him as a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our

iniquities, and with his stripes we are healed, and so on; take all these up, and all you can think of, and see how they contrast with the universal welcome, blessedness, and glory, which he now possesses. He himself said, "Thou" and every Christian in the minor sense can adopt the same language, "Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." See the difference again, then. The Israelites came out of Egypt to possess a promised land; but alas! alas! what thousands upon thousands came short or the same, fell in the wilderness, never reached that land of brooks of water, of fountains and depth. springing out of the valleys and out of the hills; never reached that Land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees, of pomegranates and olive oil, and of honey; never reached that land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills, for permanent dwellings, you may dig brass; see how many thousands never reached that land! But Jesus did reach it. And how is it that you and I shall reach it? Are we better than the Israelites that came short? No, by no means; we should come short as they did, were there not this great difference between them and us; theirs was an external call to an external and temporal possession; their coming out of Egypt did not change their hearts; the man on the one side of the Red Sea was the same as he was on the other side. But our being called spiritually did change our hearts, and the Lord gave us a new heart, and he that has begun the good work will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" Just a word upon this: the secret that we do not, could not come short is not because of any worth or worthiness in us; it is because of the eternity of the Savior's work, the eternity of the new covenant, the faithfulness of God the Father, the power of the Holy Spirit. But I cannot close without one more word; though I have not applied this call, as you see, friends, out of Egypt, to one quarter of the circumstances to which it does apply, such as the resurrection at the last day, and so on, all applies; Out of Egypt have I called my son." But there is just a word or two, and it is this. It is, friends, believe me when I say it, a great a great mercy not only that He who began the good work will carry it on, but it is a great mercy for us to be ourselves concerned that it should go on. The evil works in our hearts will go on fast enough of themselves, and it is great mercy to be concerned that the good work should go on. I hope most of you are come this morning with that feeling: Now what do I desire today? Why, that the good work should be revived, that faith should strengthen, that charity should abound, that love should increase, spirituality should rise, that I may feel that the things of God are not passing by me, nor passing by them, and that I do wish above all to live that good life of faith upon the Son of God, and that I do wish above all that in that good life I may have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. I know not, even taking that comparatively low view of it, I know not what may overtake me, and the nearer I am to the Lord the safer I am; for "they that dwell in the secret place" –And Christ is that secret place- "of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." No plague shall come nigh thee there; no arrow shall reach thee there; there thou art in safe guard.

Thus, then, friends, while Jesus reached the land, he himself is the author, and he will be the finisher of our faith; the end of our faith shall be the salvation of our souls. May it be increasingly our concern to know that the good work is going on.