

## **Jehovah's Demand and Satan's Objections.**

"Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness" Exodus 5: 1.

C. H. Mackintosh.

What a volume of truth is contained in this sentence! It is one of those comprehensive and suggestive passages which lie scattered up and down the divine volume, and which seize, with peculiar power, upon the heart, and open up a vast field of most precious truth. It sets forth, in plain and forcible language, the blessed purpose of the Lord God of Israel to have His people completely delivered from Egypt and separated unto Himself, in order that they might feast with Him in the wilderness. Nothing could satisfy His heart, in reference to them, but their entire emancipation from the land of death and darkness. He would free them not only from Egypt's brick-kilns and task-masters, but from its temples and its altars, and from all its habits and all its associations, from its principles, its maxims, and its fashions. In a word, they must be a thoroughly separated people, ere they could hold a feast to Him in the wilderness.

Thus it was with Israel, and thus it is with us. We, too, must be a fully and consciously delivered people ere we can properly serve, worship, or walk with God. We must not only know the forgiveness of our sins, and our entire freedom from guilt, wrath, judgement, and condemnation; but also our complete deliverance from this present evil world and all its belongings, ere we can intelligently serve the Lord. The world is to the Christian what Egypt was to Israel; only, of course, our separation from the world is not local or physical, but moral and spiritual. Israel left Egypt in person; we leave the world in spirit and principle. Israel left Egypt in fact; we leave the world in faith. It was a real, out-and-out, thorough separation for them, and it is the same for us. "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness."

1. To this rigid separation, as we very well know, Satan had and still has many objections. His first objection was set forth in the following words, spoken by the lips of Pharaoh, "Go ye, and *sacrifice to your God in the land.*" These were subtle words — words well calculated to ensnare a heart that was not in communion with the mind of God. For it might with great plausibility and apparent force be argued, Is it not uncommonly liberal on the part of the king of Egypt to offer you toleration for your peculiar mode of worship? Is it not a great stretch of liberality to offer your religion a place on the public platform? Surely you can carry on your religion as well as other people. There is room for all. Why this demand for separation? Why not take common ground with your neighbours? There is no need surely for such extreme narrowness.

All this might seem very reasonable. But then, mark Jehovah's high and holy standard! Hearken to the plain and positive declaration, "Let My people go!" There is no mistaking this. It is impossible, in the face of such a statement, to remain in Egypt. The most plausible reasonings that ever could be advanced vanish into thin air in the presence of the authoritative demand of the Lord God of Israel. If He says, "Let My people go," then go we must, spite of all the opposing power of earth and hell, men and devils. There is no use in reasoning, disputing, or discussing. We must obey. Egyptians may think for themselves; Jehovah must think for Israel; the sequel will prove who is right.

And here let us just offer a word, in passing, as to the subject of "narrowness," about which we hear so much now-a-days. The real question is, "Who is to fix the boundaries of the Christian's faith? Is it man or God — human opinion or divine revelation?" When this question is answered, the whole

matter is easily settled. There are some minds terribly scared by the bugbear of "narrow-mindedness." But then we have to inquire what is narrowness, and what breadth of mind? Now, what we understand by a narrow mind is simply a mind which refuses to take in and be governed by the whole truth of God. A mind governed by human opinions, human reasonings, worldly maxims, Selfish interests, Self will. This we unhesitatingly pronounce to be a narrow mind.

On the other hand, a mind beautifully subject to the authority of Christ — a mind that bows with reverent submission to the voice of Holy Scripture — a mind that sternly refuses to go beyond the written Word — that absolutely rejects what is not based upon "Thus saith the Lord" — this is what we call a broad, elevated mind.

Reader, is it not — must it not be so? Is not God's Word — His mind, infinitely more comprehensive, wide, and full than the mind and ways of man? Is there not infinitely greater breadth in the Holy Scriptures than in all the human writings under the sun? Does it not argue more largeness of heart, and devotion of soul to be governed by the thoughts of God than by our own thoughts or the thoughts of our fellows? It seems to us there can be but one reply to these questions; and hence the entire subject of narrowness resolves itself into this simple but very telling motto, "We must be as narrow as Christ, and as broad as Christ."

We must view everything from this blessed standpoint, and then our entire range of vision will be correct, and our conclusions thoroughly sound. But if Christ be not our standpoint, but self, or man, or the world, then our entire range of vision is false, and our conclusions thoroughly unsound.

All this is as clear as a sunbeam to a single eye and an honest and loyal heart. And, really, if the eye be not single, and the heart true to Christ, and the conscience subject to the Word, it is a complete loss of time to argue or discuss. Of what possible use can it be to argue with a man who, instead of obeying the Word of God, is only seeking to turn aside its edge? None whatever. It is a hopeless task to reason with one who has never taken in the mighty moral import of that most precious word — obey.

We must now return to our immediate theme. There is something uncommonly fine in Moses' reply to Satan's first objection, "It is not meet so to do: for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He shall command us" (Ex. 8: 26).

There would have been a lack of moral fitness in presenting to Jehovah, in sacrifice, the object of Egyptian worship. But, more than this, Egypt was not the place in which to erect an altar to the true God. Abraham had no altar when he turned aside into Egypt. He abandoned his worship and his strangership when he went down thither; and if Abraham could not worship there, neither could his seed. An Egyptian might ask, Why? But it is one thing to ask a question, and another thing to understand the answer. How could the Egyptian mind enter into the reasons of a true Israelite's conduct? Impossible. What could such an one know of the meaning of a "three days' journey"? Absolutely nothing.

"Beloved, the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." The motives which actuate, and the objects which animate, the true believer lie far beyond the world's range of vision; and we may rest assured that in the exact proportion in which the world can enter into and appreciate a Christian's motives the Christian must be unfaithful to his Lord.

We speak, of course, of proper Christian motives. No doubt there is much in a Christian's life that the world can admire and value. Integrity, honesty, truthfulness, disinterested kindness, care for the

poor, self-denial — all these things may be understood and appreciated; but, admitting all this, we return to the apostolic statement that "The world knoweth us not": and if we want to walk with God — if we would hold a feast unto Him — if it is our heart's true and earnest desire to run a consistent heavenly course, we must break with the world altogether, and break with *self* also, and take our stand outside the camp, with a world-rejected, Heaven-accepted Christ. May we do so, with fixed purpose of heart, to the glory of His own precious and peerless name!

2. Satan's second objection is very near akin to his first. If he cannot succeed in keeping Israel in Egypt, he will at least try to keep them as near to it as possible. "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only *ye shall not go very far away*" (Ex. 8: 28).

There is more damage done to the cause of Christ by an apparent, partial, half-hearted giving up of the world, than by remaining in it altogether. Wavering, undecided, half-and half professors injure the testimony of the Lord more than out-and-out worldlings. And, further, we may say, there is a very wide difference indeed between giving up certain worldly things, and giving up the world itself. A person may lay aside certain forms of worldliness, and, all the while, retain the world deep down in the heart. We may give up the theatre, the ball-room, the race-course, the billiard-table, etc., yet cling to the world all the same. We may lop off some of the branches, and yet cling with tenacity to the old trunk.

This must be carefully seen to. We feel persuaded that what multitudes of professing Christians need is to make a clean break with the world — that very comprehensive word. It is utterly impossible to make a proper start, much less to make any progress, while the heart is playing fast and loose with the holy claims of Christ. We do not hesitate to express it as our settled conviction that, in thousands of cases, where souls complain of doubts and fears, ups and downs, darkness and heaviness, lack of assurance and comfort, of light, liberty, joy, peace, and vivid realisation, it is owing to the simple fact that they have not really broken with the world. They either seek to hold a feast to the Lord in Egypt, or they remain so near as to be easily drawn back again; so near that they are neither one thing nor the other.

How can such people be happy? How can their peace flow as a river? How can they possibly walk in the light of a Father's countenance, or in the joy of a Saviour's presence? How can the blessed beams of that sun that shines in the new creation reach them through the murky atmosphere that envelops the land of death and darkness? Impossible! They must break with the world, and make a clear, decided, whole-hearted surrender of themselves to Christ. There must be a full Christ for the heart, and a full heart for Christ.

Here, we may rest assured, lies the grand secret of Christian progress. We must make a proper start before ever we can get on; and in order to make a proper start we must break our links with the world, or, rather, we must believe and practically carry out the fact that God has broken them for us in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The cross has separated us for ever from this present evil world. It has not merely delivered us from the eternal consequences of our sins, but from the present power of sin, and from the principles, maxims, and fashions of a world that lieth in the hands of the wicked one.

It is one of Satan's masterpieces to lead professing Christians to rest satisfied with looking to the Cross for salvation while remaining in the world, or occupying a border position — "not going very far away." This is a terrible snare, against which we most solemnly warn the Christian reader. What is the remedy? True heart-devotedness to and fellowship with a rejected and glorified Christ. To walk with Christ, to delight in Him, to feed upon Him, we must be apart from the godless, Christless, wicked world — apart from it in the spirit of our minds and in the affections of our hearts — apart from it, not merely in its gross forms of moral pravity, or the wild extravagance of its folly and gaiety, but apart

from its religion, its politics, and its philanthropy — apart from the world in all that goes to make up that comprehensive phrase.

But here we may be asked, "Is Christianity merely a stripping, an emptying, a giving up? Does it only consist of prohibition and negation?" We answer, with hearty and blissful emphasis, No! A thousand times, No! Christianity is pre-eminently positive — intensely real — divinely satisfying. What does it give us in lieu of what it takes from us? It gives us "unsearchable riches" in place of "dung and dross." It gives us "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven," instead of a poor passing bubble on the stream of time. It gives us Christ, the joy of the heart of God, the object of Heaven's worship, the theme of angels' song, the eternal sunlight of the new creation, in lieu of a few moments of sinful gratification and guilty pleasure. And, finally, it gives us an eternity of ineffable bliss and glory in the Father's house above, instead of an eternity in the awful flames of hell.

Reader, what sayest thou to these things? Is not this a good exchange? Can we not find here the most cogent reasons for giving up the world? It sometimes happens that men favour us with their reasons for resigning this, that, and the other branch of worldliness; but it strikes us that all such reasons might be summed up in one, and that one be thus enunciated: "The reason for resigning *the world* — *I have found Christ.*" This is the real way to put the matter. Men do not find it very hard to give up cinders for diamonds, ashes for pearls, dross for gold. No; and in the same way, when one has tasted the preciousness of Christ, there is no difficulty in giving up the world.

If Christ fills the heart, the world is not only driven out, but kept out. We not only turn our back upon Egypt, but we go far enough away from it never to return. And for what? To do nothing? To have nothing? To be gloomy, morose, melancholy, sour, or cynical? No; but to "hold a *feast* to the Lord." True, it is "in the wilderness"; but then the wilderness is heaven begun, when we have Christ there with us. He is our Heaven, blessed be His name — the light of our eyes, the joy of our hearts, the food of our souls; for even Heaven would be no Heaven without Him, and the wilderness itself is turned into a heaven by His dear, bright, soul-satisfying presence.

Nor is this all. It is not merely that the heart is thoroughly satisfied with Christ; but the mind also is divinely tranquillised as to the difficulties of the path, and the questions that so constantly crop up to trouble and perplex those who do not know the deep blessedness of making Christ their object, and viewing all in direct reference to Him.

For instance, if I am called to act for Christ in any given case, and, instead of looking at the matter simply in its bearing upon Him and His glory, I look at how it will affect me, I shall most assuredly get into darkness and perplexity, and reach a wrong conclusion. But if I simply look at Him, and consider Him, and see how the matter bears upon Him, I shall see the thing as clear as a sunbeam, and move with holy elasticity and firm purpose along that blessed path which is ever illuminated by the bright beams of God's approving countenance. A single eye never looks at consequences, but looks straight to Christ, and then all is simple and plain; the body is full of light, and the path marked by plain decision.

This is what is so needed in this day of easy-going profession, worldly religiousness, self-seeking, and man-pleasing. We want to make Christ our only standpoint — to look at self, the world, and the so-called Church, from thence, regardless of consequences. Oh that it may be so with us, through the infinite mercy of our God! Then we shall understand something of the force, depth, beauty, and fullness of the opening sentence of this paper, "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness."

Note the way in which Satan disputes every inch of the ground in the grand question of Israel's

deliverance from the land of Egypt. He would allow them to worship *in* the land, or *near* the land; but their absolute and complete deliverance *from* the land is what he will, by every means in his power, obstinately resist.

But Jehovah, blessed be His eternal name, is above the great adversary, and He will have His people fully delivered, spite of all the powers of hell and earth combined. The divine standard can never be lowered — "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness." This is Jehovah's demand, and it must be made good, though the enemy were to offer ten thousand objections. The divine glory is intimately involved in the entire separation of Israel from Egypt, and from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." To this the enemy demurs; and to hinder it he puts forth all his malignant power, and all his crafty schemes. We have already considered two of his objections, and we shall now proceed to the third.

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

These words contain a very solemn lesson for the hearts of all Christian parents. They reveal a deep and crafty purpose of the arch-enemy. If he cannot keep the parents in Egypt, he will at least seek to keep the children, and in this way mar the testimony to the truth of God, tarnish His glory in His people, and hinder their blessing in Him. Parents in the wilderness, and their children in Egypt! — how opposed to the mind of God, and utterly subversive of His glory in the walk of His people.

We should ever remember — strange that we should ever forget! — that our children are part of ourselves. God's creative hand has made them such; and, surely, what the Creator has joined together, the Redeemer would not put asunder. Hence we invariably find that God links a man and his house together. "Thou and thy house" is a phrase of deep practical import. It involves the very highest consequences, and conveys the richest consolation to every Christian parent; and, we may truly add, the neglect of it has led to the most disastrous consequences in thousands of family circles.

Very many — alas, how many! — Christian parents, through an utterly false application of the doctrines of grace, have allowed their children to grow up around them in wilfulness and worldliness and while so doing they have comforted themselves with the thought that they could do nothing, and that in God's time their children would, if included in the eternal purpose, be gathered in. They have virtually lost sight of the grand practical truth that the One who has decreed the end has fixed the means of reaching it, and that it is the height of folly to think of gaining the end while neglecting the means.

Do we, then, mean to assert that all the children of Christian parents are, of necessity, included in the number of God's elect; that they will all be infallibly saved? — and if not, that it is the parents' fault? We mean to assert nothing of the kind. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." We know nothing of God's eternal decrees and purposes. No mortal eye has scanned the page of His secret counsels.

What, then, is involved in the weighty expression, "Thou and thy house"? There are two things involved in it. In the first place, there is a most precious privilege; and, in the second place, a deep responsibility. It is unquestionably the privilege of all Christian parents to count on God for their

children; but it is also their bounden *duty* — do we dislike the homely word? — to train their children for God.

Here we have the sum and substance of the whole matter — the two sides of this great question. The Word of God, in every part of it, connects a man with his house. "This day is salvation come to *this house*." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*" (Luke 19; Acts 16). Here lies the solid basis of the privilege and responsibility of parents. Acting on the weighty principle here laid down, we are at once to take God's ground for our children, and diligently bring them up for Him, counting on Him for the result. We are to begin at the very beginning, and go steadily on, from day to day, month to month, year to year, training our children for God.

Just as a wise and skilful gardener begins, while his fruit trees are young and tender, to train the branches along the wall where they may catch the genial rays of the sun, so should we, while our children are young and plastic, seek to mould them for God. It would be the height of folly, on the part of the gardener, to wait till the branches become old and gnarled, and then seek to train them. He would find it a hopeless task. And, most surely, it is the very greatest folly, on our part, to suffer our children to remain for years and years under the moulding hand of Satan, and the world, and sin, ere we rouse ourselves to the holy business of moulding them for God.

Let us not be misunderstood. Let no one suppose that we mean to teach that grace is hereditary, or that we can, by any act or system of training, make Christians of our children. No! nothing of the kind. Grace is sovereign, and the children of Christian parents must, like all others, be born of water and of the Spirit, ere they can see or enter the kingdom of God. All this is as plain and as clear as Scripture can make it; but, on the other hand, Scripture is equally clear and plain as to the duty of Christian parents to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

And what does this "bringing up" involve? What does it mean? In what does it consist? these, surely, are weighty questions for the heart and conscience of every Christian parent. It is to be feared, that very few of us indeed really understand what Christian training means, or how it is to be carried on. One thing is certain, namely, that Christian training means a great deal more than drilling religion into our children, making the Bible a task-book, teaching our children to repeat texts and hymns like a parrot, and turning the family circle into a school. No doubt it is very well to store the memory of a child with Scripture and sweet hymns. No one would think of calling this in question. But is it not too frequently the case that religion is made a weariness to the child, and the Bible a repulsive school-book?

This will never do. What is really needed is to surround our children with a thoroughly Christian atmosphere, from their earliest moments; to let them breathe the pure air of the new creation; to let them see in their parents the genuine fruits of spiritual life — love, peace, purity, tenderness, holy disinterestedness, genuine kindness, unselfishness, loving thoughtfulness of others. These things have a mighty moral influence upon the plastic mind of the child, and the Spirit of God will assuredly use them in drawing the heart to Christ — the centre and the source of all these beautiful graces and heavenly influences.

But, on the other hand, who can attempt to define the pernicious effect produced upon our children by our inconsistencies, by our bad temper, our selfish ways, our worldliness, and covetousness? Can we be said to bring our children out of Egypt when Egypt's principles and habits are seen in our whole career? It may be we use and teach the phraseology of the wilderness or of Canaan; but our ways, our manners, our habits are those of Egypt, and our children are quicksighted enough to mark the gross inconsistency, and the effect upon them is deplorable beyond expression. We have but

little idea of the way in which the unfaithfulness of Christian parents has contributed to swell the tide of infidelity which is rising around us with such appalling rapidity.

It may be said, and said with a measure of truth, that children are responsible spite of the inconsistency of their parents. But, most assuredly, whatever amount of truth there may be in this statement, it is not for parents to urge it. It ill becomes us to fall back upon the responsibility of our children in view of our failure in meeting our own. They are responsible, no doubt, but so are we; and if we fail to exhibit before the eyes of our children those living and unanswerable proofs that we ourselves have left Egypt, and left it for ever, need we marvel if they remain?

Of what possible use is it to talk about wilderness life, and our being in Canaan, while our manners, our habits, our ways, our deportment, our spirit, the bent of our whole life, bears and exhibits the impress of Egypt? None whatever. The language of the life gives the lie to the language of the lips, and we know full well that the former is far more telling than the latter. Our children will judge from our conduct, not from our talk, where we really are; and is this to be wondered at? Is not conduct the real index of conviction? If we have really left Egypt, it will be seen in our ways; and if it be not seen in our ways, the talk of the lips is worse than worthless; it only tends to create disgust in the minds of our children, and to lead them to the conclusion that Christianity is a mere sham.

All this is deeply solemn, and should lead Christian parents into the most profound exercise of soul in the presence of God. We may depend upon it there is a great deal more involved in this question of training than many of us are aware of. Nothing but the direct power of the Spirit of God can fit parents for the great and holy work of training their children, in these days in which we live, and in the midst of the scene through which we are passing. That word falls upon the heart with heavenly sweetness and power: "My grace is sufficient for thee." We can, with fullest confidence, reckon upon God to bless the very feeblest effort to lead our dear children forth out of Egypt. But the effort must be made, and made, too, with real, fixed, earnest purpose of heart. It will not do to fold our arms and say, "Grace is not hereditary. We cannot convert our children. If they are of the number of God's elect they must be saved; if not, they cannot."

All this is one-sided and utterly false. It will not stand; it cannot bear the light of the judgement-seat of Christ. Parents cannot get rid of the holy responsibility of training their children for God; that responsibility begins with, and is based upon, the relationship; and the right discharge of it demands continual exercise of soul before God, in reference to our children. We have to remember that the foundation of character is laid in the nursery. It is in the early days of infancy that Christian training begins, and it must be steadily pursued, from day to day, month to month, and year to year, in simple, hearty dependence upon God who will, most assuredly, in due time, hear and answer the earnest cry of a parent's heart, and crown with His rich blessing the faithful labours of a parent's hands.

And, while on this subject of training children, we would, in true brotherly love, offer a suggestion to all Christian parents as to the immense importance of inculcating a spirit of implicit obedience.

If we mistake not, there is very wide-spread failure in this respect, for which we have to judge ourselves before God. Whether through a false tenderness, or indolence, we suffer our children to walk according to their own will and pleasure, and the strides which they make along this road are alarmingly rapid. They pass from stage to stage with great speed, until, at length, they reach the terrible goal of despising their parents altogether, throwing their authority entirely overboard, and trampling beneath their feet the holy order of God, and turning the domestic circle into a scene of godless misrule and confusion.

How dreadful this is we need not say, or how utterly opposed to the mind of God, as revealed in His holy Word. But have we not ourselves to blame for it? God has put into the parents' hands the reins of government, and the rod of authority, but if parents, through indolence, suffer the reins to drop from their hands; and if through false tenderness or moral weakness, the rod of authority is not applied, need we marvel if the children grow up in utter lawlessness? How could it be otherwise? Children are, as a rule, very much what we make them. If they are made to be obedient, they will be so; and if they are allowed to have their own way, the result will be accordingly.

Are we then to be continually chucking the reins and brandishing the rod? By no means. This would be to break the spirit of the child, instead of subduing his will. Where parental authority is thoroughly established, the reins may lie gently on the neck, and the rod be allowed to stand in the corner. The child should be taught, from his earliest hour, that the parent only wills his good, but the parent's will must be supreme. Nothing is simpler. A look is enough for a properly trained child. There is no need whatever to be continually hawking our authority; indeed nothing is more contemptible whether in a husband, a father, or a master. There is a quiet dignity about one who really possesses authority; whereas the spasmodic efforts of weakness only draw out contempt.

We have found, through many years of experience and careful observation, that the real secret of successful training lies in the proper adjustment of firmness and tenderness. If the parent, from the very beginning, establishes his authority, he may exercise as much tenderness as the most loving heart can desire or display. When the child is really made to feel that the reins and rod are under the direct control of sound judgement and true affection, and not of a sour temper and an arbitrary will, there will be little difficulty in training him.

In a word, firmness and tenderness are the two essential ingredients in all sound education; a firmness which the child will not dare to question; a tenderness which takes account of the child's every real want and right desire. It is sad indeed if the idea which a child forms of parental authority be that of arbitrary interference with, or a cold indifference to, his little wishes and wants. It is not thus our heavenly Father deals with us; and He is to be our model in this as in all beside.

If it be written, and it is written, "Children, obey your parents in all things"; it is also, in beautiful adjusting power, written, "Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged." Again, if it be said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right"; it is also said, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In short, the child must be taught to obey; but the obedient child must be allowed to breathe an atmosphere of tenderness, and to walk up and down in the sunshine of parental affection. This is the spirit of Christian education.

Most gladly would we dwell further on this great practical subject; but we trust sufficient has been said to rouse the hearts and consciences of all Christian parents to a sense of their high and holy responsibilities in reference to their beloved offspring; and also to show that there is a great deal more involved in bringing our children out of Egypt, and taking God's ground for them than many of us are aware of. And if the reading of the foregoing lines be used of God to lead any parent into prayerful exercise in this most weighty matter, we shall not have penned them in vain.

4. We shall close this paper with the briefest possible reference to the enemy's fourth and last objection, which is embodied in the following words, "And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you." He would let them go, but without resources to serve the Lord. If he could not keep them in Egypt, he would send them away crippled and shorn. Such is the enemy's last demurrer.

But mark the noble reply of a devoted heart. It is morally grand. "And Moses said, Thou must



give us also sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and" — ponder these suggestive words — *"We know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither."*

We must be fully and clearly on God's ground and at His stand-point, before ever we can form any true idea of the nature and extent of His claims. It is utterly impossible while surrounded by a worldly atmosphere, and governed by a worldly spirit, worldly principles, and worldly objects, to have any just sense of what is due to God. We must stand on the lofty ground of accomplished redemption — in the full-orbed light of the new creation — apart from this present evil world, ere we can properly serve Christ.

It is only when, in the power of an indwelling Spirit, we see where we are brought by the death and resurrection of Christ — "three days' journey" — that we can at all understand what true Christian service is; and then we shall clearly see and fully own, that "all we are, and all we have, belong to Him." "We know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither." Precious words! May we better understand their force, meaning, and practical application! Moses, the man of God, meets all Satan's objections by a simple but decided adherence to Jehovah's demand, "Let My people go, that they hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness. "

This is the true principle we are called to maintain spite of all objections. If that standard be lowered, ever so little, the enemy gains his point, and Christian service and testimony are undermined — if not made impossible.

May the Eternal Spirit lead our souls into the wide field of practical truth indicated by the heading of this paper, "Jehovah's demand, and Satan's objections."

Many are the chains that bound me  
But the Lord has loosed them all,  
Arms of mercy now surround me  
Favours these, nor few, nor small  
Saviour, keep me!  
Keep Thy servant lest he fall.