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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton,  
Sunday morning, 29th December 1963

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Deuteronomy 8:2-3

Moses had led the people through the wilderness and they were very near entering into the Promised Land. It was about forty years since the Lord delivered them from Egypt; and here he exhorts them to 'remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.' This is more than a mere history. It is a history, inspired history, but it is not written for history's sake; it is written for our instruction.

It is very noticeable that when the Lord Jesus was carried into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, He withstood and overthrew the devil by the Word of God, saying, "It is written"; and every word with which the Lord Jesus withstood Satan was taken out of the Book of Deuteronomy.

His ancient people were a typical people and, therefore, it is the spiritual significance which is of importance; and that which is of first importance is to examine ourselves as to whether we have any interest in those blessings that the Lord has for His people. Therefore, it is first a very searching and solemn consideration. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness."

The first thing then must be, have we any reason to believe that the Lord is our God? One evidence that He is your God is that you have come these forty years, maybe fifty, thirty, twenty years, through the wilderness by His leading; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." There are two important points then for us to consider with respect to our own personal cases. First have we any grounds to believe that the Lord is our God? 'Remember all the way which the Lord Thy God led thee.'

If we go back to the beginning to which this refers, it is to His people in Egyptian bondage; and His people in Egypt are a type of His people before they are called by grace - in the world; led captive by the devil at his will, under the influence and in the evident service of the devil, the god of this world, in Egyptian darkness. The Lord had a message for Moses concerning His people, for He put a difference between the Egyptians and His people, and He said to Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for, I know their sorrows." It was only His people that cried unto Him and were brought under affliction in Egypt. O what a mercy that was! It would not be unkind but what a mercy it would be if any of our young people who are the servants of the god of this world, in Egyptian darkness, should be given to feel the captivity in which they are, and to be brought to cry by reason of their taskmasters. "I know their sorrows." O what a mercy for the Lord's people, He knows those that are His. They felt the world was a beautiful place - I well remember it; it is so full, it affords everything that our nature craves after; down every street, see what provisions there are for the flesh, what entertainments of the devil; and look what there is for ambition in this world. O what a mighty power it needs to overturn, overturn, overturn the world in a poor sinner's heart and make it a wilderness, so that instead of joy in the world, there is sorrow!

"And I have seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of the land, into a good land, a large, into a land flowing with milk and honey." Well, the point we were upon is this - the evidence that the Lord is thy God and you look back and remember when you were brought to feel that this world was a taskmaster; that it is a dying world, an artificial world. And not only so, do you remember when you realised that it was a city of destruction; and that it must end and all the possessions that you could accumulate must be left? Well, a mercy to look back to that.

But the Lord delivered His people from Egypt. He took ten plagues to move Pharaoh to let them go not because the Lord could not have brought them out without a plague at all, but the reason why He brought ten plagues upon the Egyptians was to demonstrate to them His infinite power, His divine sovereignty, His Lordship; and yet those Egyptians followed the Israelites to the Red sea. Do you remember in a sense, in a measure, how when you were gradually brought out of the world, the god of this world still pursued you? "We will not let the people go." When, as it were the world, the flesh, and the devil were loath to let you go. Why some of you feel that it needed ten plagues to bring you out of Egypt, but this great deliverance is celebrated throughout the Word of God and for the encouragement of His people in subsequent difficulties. For, says the Lord by David, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide that I may fill it." As much as to say: There are no greater manifestations of My power than to deliver you from Egypt. Therefore, seeing that I have done so open thy mouth wide; you cannot open it wider than such deliverance as you had from Egypt. Open it as wide as you feel the depth of your iniquity as wide as you feel the depravity of your nature, as wide as the lust of the power of your flesh and temptation, open it as wide as My redeeming love, as wide as My invincible and saving grace.

'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years in the wilderness.' Well, they were very thankful and sang the song of Moses. You read in the 15th chapter of Exodus, how they thought things were well now; their enemies were dead now. How long did it last - three days. Why was that? It was not the trouble of the Egyptians. Have you not proved it? Can you trace this, that whereas you hope the Lord has brought you out of the world, you had to bring yourself with you; a body of sin and death, a fallen nature. Although they were delivered from the Egyptians, they had to prove that they had themselves. Three days, they began to murmur because the waters of Marah were bitter. But O how faithful was God to His covenant! He showed them a tree which being cast into the waters sweetened them. These things are to be observed and will be observed by faith. They murmured only three days after such deliverance. Are you any better than your fathers? And even that did not last long, "for they took their journey from Elim, and the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron saying "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of the Egyptians, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we did eat bread to the full, for He hath brought us forth into this wilderness to kill us with hunger." They were delivered from the Egyptians, but they had themselves. Do you know that?

O my friends, you read the record of the journey into the wilderness of the Lord's people - and their rebellions, and their lustings. You read of it in the 106th Psalm; in the 9th chapter of Nehemiah and many other places. Why did not the Lord give them up? You have the answer in Hosea; "How shall I give thee up Ephraim? He could not because of the covenant of grace. And another reason He gives; "For I am God and not man." 'Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God'... we want to bring forward, if helped, one or two more evidences of the Lord being our God, for it is the all-important matter of the text. If He is not our God, then we have no lot or part in the matter.

We have just referred to being brought out of the world into the wilderness, and for Israel the whole wilderness journey was a life of complete dependence upon God. "And He led them by a pillar of

cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night." land that is an emblem of His gracious presence. That presence that He promised to Moses would go with him: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

Well then, the second thing that we would mention is, has the Lord brought us into the wilderness? This joins up with that same experience in Hosea, "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably unto her, I will give her her vineyards from thence, and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth." A wonderful experience! So that a second evidence after being brought out of Egyptian bondage is whether the Lord has brought us into the wilderness.

The flesh dislikes this. I don't wonder at Orpah, seeing that she had no change of heart, when Naomi said that they would have nothing if they followed her but tribulation, Orpah says – 'I will go back to my country, to my gods; I was alright there, very happy there.' Ruth says, "Entreat me not to leave thee." Do you know that? I say do you know it? Were you ever there? Could you say that to the Lord's people because they are His people and because you had a little glimpse of His glory, a little sweet taste of His mercy, an influence of His grace, "Entreat me not to leave thee" Well, the Lord will make this world a wilderness to real pilgrims, those who are led forth the right way to heaven. I wish I could speak of it. The contrast is only known to faith. The contrast that is made by the Spirit in the understanding of a poor sinner between the things of this world and those things of the kingdom of grace here issue in the kingdom of glory hereafter. Things which "the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard neither have never entered into the heart of a man the things that God hath prepared for them that wait for Him, for them that love Him." Have you ever seen them? They are unseen and yet seeable to faith. Can we as being brought out of the world really say -

*There's nothing here can satisfy,  
Not gold, nor health, nor fame.*

*(Gadsby's 507 altered)*

Nothing to satisfy, and yet only such people really give thanksgiving unto God for temporal blessings, for health and strength, for daily bread and for mercies countless as the sands. They alone in a right mind can say concerning the blessings of this life, "We are not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies." Yet, they must say that they cannot satisfy. There is no life in them, no eternity in them. Nothing in them that can pardon sin; nothing that can bring peace; nothing that can give heaven.

Well, if in a measure you know that, it is a second evidence that the Lord is thy God and that He is leading you. We shall not be able to live on these evidences, but faith will live upon the Object of them and, therefore, another evidence will be this, "We have no abiding city here." O, said Paul to the Hebrews, after that rich epistle in which he set before them the glory of Christ, the dignity of His divine Person, the riches of His glory and grace in the work that He undertook, the glory of Emmanuel, God with us, His sufferings and His death and resurrection, he said to them, "Let us therefore, go forth unto Him, without the camp." As much as to say – 'if all my preaching and all my epistles should issue in your experience being less than going forth unto Him of whom I have declared, then you will come fatally short.' "Let us go forth unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach, for here we have no continuing city." And that was not the end of it - "We seek one to come, we seek one to come."

'Thou shalt remember all the way that the Lord thy God led thee.' Do you remember too when you were brought to feel your need of Him as a ruined sinner? O how essential this is in experience! Conviction of sin by the Holy Ghost is a conviction that will penetrate to the very core of your heart. Conviction is a blessing. To be convinced of sin so as to realise that you are universally under the dominion of sin and you have the sentence of death in yourself and see no way of escape in self;

and then for the same blessed Spirit to open to you a way of escape - and not only a way of escape from a deserved hell, but a way of escape to a blessed undeserved heaven! Do you know anything of that, those two opposites?

Thou shalt remember when the Lord first made Himself precious to you as a poor sinner. I have been very tried about my own case: but there are one or two little things in experience that I am thankful for. I don't want to preach myself but, 'thou shalt remember all the way' therefore, we will remember the beginning of the way. Why, I remember the first fourteen years of my life. I sat in this Chapel, how irksome it was, how tedious it was; I longed to get out. I don't know of course whether there is anybody here like that now; if there is, I know just your feelings. O but when this takes place, "I will allure her." When this world became blighted, when its fine gold looked dim, when its best garments appeared to be moth-eaten, when the Lord rebukes a man for iniquity and makes beauty to consume away like a moth - and then shows a poor sinner something glorious, divine, eternal, substantial, that which you will not leave behind as we must leave behind everything else, and makes Himself precious, so that instead of being weary of the things of God, with anticipation we wait for the service to commence

*With joy they hasten to the place,  
Where they the Saviour oft have met.*

*(Gadsby's 1001)*

'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years' but it was all in the wilderness; but the just shall live through the wilderness, by faith and faith has a long-distance sight, it looks through, above and beyond the wilderness.

Abraham, O what an example he was! He was called to go into a place that he should after receive for an inheritance and he obeyed and went forth, not knowing whither he went. God called him alone and blessed him and in that beautiful narrative of him being sent out we read this, "They went to go to the land of Canaan and to the land of Canaan they came." And so will every one of His dear people whom He brings out of Egypt; they will endure unto the end, and "not a hoof shall be left behind."

'But thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God led thee these forty years.' O see the way that He led His people, through the 107th Psalm. Why, they got into trouble immediately. They were in trouble all the way through that Psalm and upon every dispensation; it ended in this - "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" That is how they knew Him. Is that how you have known Him? Can you read through that 107th Psalm and in your own measure trace your own experience through it? Why He loved the people! Why did He then bring them right down to the very gates of death to be bound in affliction and iron? Why, to demonstrate His wisdom and power: "He breaketh the gates of brass and cutteth the bars of iron in sunder," they would not have known that except they were bound. 'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee,' brought thee into some strange places, into darkness, into deeps. What would He want to bring them such a way for if He loved them? An earthly King would not do that to the Royal family they would have the best of cars and the best of attention to see them through life in the easiest and most comfortable manner. And yet the children of the King are, through much tribulation, to enter into the kingdom. The reason is 'To humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no.' The whole purpose is sanctification; "This is the will of God concerning you, even your sanctification." The work of redemption was completed by Christ in His work and upon Calvary's cross; but the work of sanctification is a life work of the Spirit in the soul, And the means to a great extent of sanctification, is sanctified affliction, trials, disappointments, losses, crosses and it is for that reason that the Lord

said, "If any man will come after Me, let Him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me." Deny, not his pocket, but himself - a most difficult thing.

'These forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee.' We are proud by nature. We are rebellious by nature. We say, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?' We say naturally, "We will not have this man to reign over us." O what an inexpressible blessing to be an object of divine love and grace! If the Lord should come against that proud rebellious nature and hold up His mighty hand of grace and say to some poor sinner 'Ye are not your own; you think you are, but you are not.' - and then to begin to deal with that sinner, what a mercy it would be. In how many ways has the Lord given you to know that you are, not your own? Jeremiah learned more than that, he said, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself". I know it; and the history of dear Jeremiah will tell us how he learned it. He did not sit down by the fire and read it out of a book. O for an experimental religion!

'To humble thee.' Not to humble thee before men, God does not do that. Grace is ennobling, it makes princes of His people, but they are humbled before God - and we have no need to be humbled before anybody else but before God. There are many things that will humble us. One thing is the wilderness condition. Affluence was in Egypt. Have what you like, do what you like, satisfy the lusts of your flesh - no opposition, very nice, very nice says nature. O what an amazing thing it is to have, the eyes opened, and to see light in God's light, and to be brought into a state of dependence upon God! A natural man would say, I would rather be independent of everybody. But how the Lord can humble man, may be strong in health and go up the street carrying everything before him saying, there is nothing the matter with me, the whole world is before me. The Lord could touch that man, bring him down in affliction, pain of body, and put him into hospital. He has done so to His people. Can you trace some of the things and places, into which the Lord had brought you to humble you? To give you to know that you are but a creature of a day and crushed before a moth? And while this teaching is going on it is a two-way teaching. As He humbles you and teaches you what you are really, so He teaches you what He is and not only what He is, but that what He is, He is for you. So that the dealings of the Lord with His people are in effect like a cantilever bridge, and some of you will realise this as you sit in the pew, that when the Lord for wise ends has brought burdens to bear down upon you, ready to crush you, there has been a secret and mysterious upward support and the more pressure that is brought upon you, the more that blessed support keeps you from despair. Do you know anything of these things? It brings us into the experience of those that have gone before. This is how Paul knew the Lord. He says, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed." Why not? If you are troubled, why not distressed? Why! "the true light has shined into your heart and given you to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," so that we see more in Him to rejoice in, than in all our troubles to distress us. "We are perplexed, but not in despair." Why not? Because that blessed Spirit has revealed infinite wisdom, wisdom to direct our way; revealed one who can find out knowledge of witty inventions that can make and force a passage through, iron bars and brazen gates. "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." O! this sweet humbling. And this is another thing that will humble you, when faith sees the glory of God in Christ.

*The more Thy glories strike my eyes,  
The humbler I shall lie.*

*(Gadsby's 475)*

Well, if these things are true, it should give us some indication whether we are the Lord's and whether He is leading us. There is this about it, my friends, if we are our own guide we shall go to destruction, whatever we think of it. O that the Lord would make us wise, to consider our latter end! Men live as though they were going to live throughout eternity; they call their own lands by their own name as though they are going to perpetuate them. O, but look how sudden those terrible

disasters! And we would feel sympathy for the victims on the sea, and in many other ways, in the air. O, how gay those people who started out for that voyage! Doubtless there are many of them who would say "Who is the Lord?" But what about it? O my friends,

*The storm of death rolls on apace  
And who can say how nigh?*

*(Gadsby's 1093)*

These things will humble us and it is a wonderful thing to be given to see ourselves as we really are. Not as we think we are. Take a look round a cemetery, there we must be. Take a look round a hospital and see distress and pain, it is reality. People that are laughing - and their laughter is like the crackling of thorns under a pot, all their laughter is vain; but O to see divine reality that wherever we come, if we come into a hospital, if we come into a calamity and disaster, we might have the testimony of the Spirit that "this God is our God, He will be our guide." through every circumstance, through all dangers, in the midst of all affliction and during all pains; "This God is our God for ever and ever, He will be our guide even unto death." Good teaching. O that is a happy man, and he only is happy who "has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God."

You will remember it, says the Lord by Moses, because "the Spirit will bring to your remembrance whatsoever He hath said; whatsoever He has done." Some of your signs you may not be able to see. The mists of unbelief may cover all the evidences but they are still there.

'To humble thee and to prove thee.' "Search me, O God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts." is easy to repeat. I wonder how many of us could really pray it and be willing for God to do it? Well it could not do you any harm because if He thus proved you and searched you and found there was nothing in you at all, you would not be worse. You may deceive yourself, but if He proved you and tried your faith, which is more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto to praise and honour unto the appearing of Jesus Christ. I have said this in my heart when I have prayed the Lord to search me, that if He should search me and find that I have nothing in me that is of the Holy Ghost, no life and no grace, would He in much mercy give me a grain of faith, a spark of life. Well then, may the Lord make this Scripture useful to His dear people. We have come to the last Lord's Day this year and I have been looking back a little and here Moses declares to the people, 'Thou shalt remember all the way.'

May the Lord add His blessing.  
Amen.