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Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on
Wednesday evening 13th. December, 1972

72/S

Hymns 267, 706, 379

Reading: Psalm 81

Text: Psalm 81.10

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"I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of
Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

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This Psalm appears to be written to be sung on certain occasions and on feast days, and like many Psalms has reference to God's dealings with His ancient people and their contrary ways, how they rebelled against Him and did not hearken to His words for which they suffered the consequences - O how profoundly solemn. God does not wink at sin as though it is something that does not matter much; the cost was too great to redeem His people from its awful curse to think lightly of it, and it is a wonderful mercy if we are convinced of sin to a point that makes us tremble before the Majesty of God, producing a sobriety in our religion as before God and His people. Is it not an amazing thing beloved friends, for any poor trembling sinner to feel that the Lord God has brought him out of the land of Egypt?

A lot of things are said about Egypt in the Scriptures and we are more or less familiar with the account of Joseph's going down into Egypt, what he passed through there, how he suffered, was eventually delivered, and exalted next to the throne, how Jacob and his sons eventually went down into Egypt and lived in the land of Goshen, how they multiplied until a Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph, who put them under terrible oppression. To some point, if we take a typical Gospel view, Egypt resembles a land of death and darkness. The hymn writer says,

"From Egypt lately freed,
By the Redeemer's grace,
A rough and thorny path we tread,
In hopes to see his face."

For many years the Lord's ancient people were there under a bitter bondage. They were cruelly oppressed, and it was a long time they were there; it was not a fortnight, but about 400 years, under a

a cruel torment, although the promise was held forth long before that they would occupy the promised land; but for many years there did not seem to be the slightest prospect of it ever coming to pass. I wonder if any of you have felt something like that, felt as though the Lord has forsaken you; and yet, away back in your spiritual exercises felt you had a promise that He would do something for you; yet for a long time it has been as though He had forgotten all about it. But a faithful God never forgets anything, and when the appointed time came, as you know, these people were brought out and delivered from their bondage, and so will all His dear people be, so will you be if you are now in a state of bondage. Do you feel to be in the land of Egypt under oppression, in darkness, shut up, hard pressed, and feeling like the Psalmist where he says, "Why hast thou forsaken me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy"? But the Lord had not forsaken His people, and in His own time it came to pass that He brought them out. If you are in an Egypt the time will come when the Lord will bring you out, I am sure He will, Even so it may be that some here feel as though the Lord has forgotten them. "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it". He does not say I brought thee out of the land of Egypt and that is all I am going to do for you, I have finished now; no, here is an encouraging word, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it". Is there a poor soul here who feels to be in the land of Egypt? If there is, the same blessed encouraging word can apply,

There are three points to notice in this verse, the first is "I am the Lord thy God", and that covers everything. It covers all providences, it covers everything in this life and it covers eternity. If the Lord is your God that secures your eternal happiness whatever you may have to struggle with while you are down here. It still stands true what my dear father said, "It will be worth a life-long struggle to be right at last." This is true of all the Lord's dear people, that He is their God, every one of them; but even so, though that is true, some may greatly question their own case. It is a very blessed spot in one's life

when one can feel that it is so. If you have had a moment in your life when you have really felt it, I am disposed to say that it has made a mark in your spiritual experience that will never be absolutely erased, never.

"I am the Lord thy God" involves a relationship. It is true that He is a covenant-performing God, and we can believe all that is said about this of His people; but it is the pronoun here that touches the spot, is it not. "I am the Lord THY God". This is a wonderful pronoun, and it is noticeable in the Psalms that however low David appears to have sunk in his feelings, however depressed he became, he never appears to lose sight of his relationship with his God. Is there not something profound about this? In an earlier Psalm we find him saying, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me". He does not say, 'I would not be like this if the Lord was my God'; no, our particular feelings do not affect our relationship, it does not make God something else, though we may feel He has hidden His face from us; but it is a very sweet moment when one can really feel that He is the Lord my God. And this is what He says, He has said it in a number of places, as relating to His people, "I am the Lord thy God".

As the Lord our God, if this can be true of us, we must be in a covenant relationship with Him. He is our God, we are His people, the sheep of His pasture. There is a covenant relationship that all the powers of hell can never overcome. There is a bond that death and hell can never break; is it not an amazing thought that the Majesty of heaven should condescend to covenant Himself with some poor sinners and as it were bind Himself to His own Word and promise that He will be their God and their Saviour, "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else". There is something very sweet in this blessed covenant; it is not a covenant of works, not a 'do and live' covenant, not a legal covenant, it is a covenant of grace from first to last. Nothing else will take us to heaven, friends, but this covenant of grace; with all that is involved, and that will never fail to take us there, for this blessed covenant of grace incorporates the whole of the

Redeemer's substitution, it is all bound up in it. What an amazing thought it is! So it is that His dear people sometimes see by faith the covenant love of a triune Jehovah in the wounds and blood of an incarnate God. What a profound thought it is and how is it with you, do you feel that this brings a hope in your heart of going to heaven? Has there ever been any indication that you might eventually enter those pearly gates? Has there been a moment when you have felt a sweet hope raised up in your soul that one day you will be with this wonderful God, where He is, and will see the King in His beauty in that land which is now often in our feelings very far off?

"I am the Lord thy God", I have made a covenant with thee. Some people make covenants and break them, but God has never made a covenant and broken it, although we read His people did break His covenant; but they did not break that covenant of grace that God Himself made. It is a wonderful moment when we can feel that we are bound up in a covenant that seals us for heaven. It is a beautiful word that good Kent has about this.

"This covenant, O believer, stands,
Thy rising fears to quell;
Sealed by the Surety's bleeding hands;
In all things ordered well."

"I am the Lord thy God". He has also a love to them, I am sure He has, although it may be some will say "I do not know how it can be so with me. I should feel more about it, and walk more in the light of it, have more assurance, more peace, feel more love myself, if the Lord had any love toward me and yet it ill becomes us to set up these conditions, our standing does not depend in this respect upon what we feel like, whether the Lord has a love toward us. Sometimes the Lord does give His people to feel that He has a love to them. I am sure that He let Jeremiah feel it so as that he could say, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee". How can a poor sinner ever know such an amazing wonder? I would say he knows it by the Lord's dealings with him in his soul and his providences too sometimes, and sometimes in answered prayer. Perhaps some of you may say, I

do not know what answered prayer is; I have prayed for years but I am still groping for the wall like the blind. That does not say He will never answer it; it is with Him to set the time to answer prayer, and when He does, then you will say, I have not waited a moment too long, it is all worth waiting for.

"I am thy God". As your God He will be a faithful God to you. He will be a faithful God in His chastenings, what a blessing some of the Lord's people have felt under a chastening! His love has never been sweeter than when felt under a rod of correction. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

"I am the Lord thy God". As the Lord thy God He sent His beloved Son to redeem thee, and this great work of redemption incorporates the blessed glorious Trinity. We read of it in Isaiah. "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee". What else beside that? "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine". When that comes inside you will say I have not waited one day too many, although it may have been over a number of years perhaps; this is not always so I know; but as the Lord thy God He gave His beloved Son to redeem thee. What a manifestation of divine love it was, and it was the Lord thy God that came, for the Lord Jesus Christ is God. He assumed our nature, He suffered what we deserve. He bore away the curse that we were under, He appeased the claims of justice, He opened a way to heaven for a poor groaning, burdened sinner. O what a blessed Emmanuel He is. Sometimes I have felt such a love to Him, more than I could say to anyone, this has been just a few times when I believe He has been precious in my soul. He suffered in our place, He stood in our place. You and I will never go to heaven unless He did. We cannot enter the realms of paradise with a curse upon us, but He was made a curse, and if He was made a curse for you, you will never fall under it, never, never.

"I am the Lord thy God". As the Lord thy God He will bring you through, although sometimes that may seem almost impossible, but He has said, "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee",

whatever objections you may raise. You say, I fear He will cast me off because of my dreadful sins, and that I will be left to die under the wrath of God against those sins. But that will never be to a poor sinner who clings for life and death to the cross of Calvary. There is no way to hell for a poor soul cleaving to Christ. "Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation". I am the Lord thy God, and as the Lord your God He will receive you one day. When our appointed days are numbered to us in this wilderness, He will receive us into the realms of bliss, "absent from the body, present with the Lord". Are there anxious, waiting, prayerful souls who feel, like myself, what good Newton says, "Tis a point I long to know"? The Lord in His great mercy confirm it; only He can, by His Spirit, for no one else can. A good friend might come to you and say, I am sure you are right, but what will that do for you? It might make you shake all the more, but if the Lord by His good Spirit speaks that word into your soul it will fill you with joy and peace in believing, "I am the Lord thy God".

He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. This refers to what He did for His ancient people and it is what He does for all His people in a Gospel sense, if we look upon Egypt in this way. I do not know that we can interpret it precisely, but it is a land of darkness and death. Sometimes this poor world seems like an Egypt. Sometimes your poor heart seems like an Egypt; but He brings His waiting people out of it.

"I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt", but He will not bring you out unless you are one of His. How can you hope that He has brought you out of the land of Egypt? Because you will not be satisfied with Egypt. This world will be a wilderness to you, that is, as to your feelings, you will find no rest in it. He will bring you out of it, and separate you unto Himself. He brought His people out of the land of Egypt; and what was connected with this bringing of His people out of Egypt? The shedding of blood, according to the divine direction of the ordinance of the Lord's passover, when the lamb had to be killed, the blood drawn from it and sprinkled upon the lintel and side posts of the house; so that, with the children of Israel, their

safety, their refuge was beneath the blood. If the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt He has done it this way. He has brought you out of the land of Egypt through the merit of His Son or you could not have been brought out of this Egypt. O what a blessed type is this paschal lamb; but it had to be eaten whole. Dear friends when it comes to the salvation of our guilty, wretched, ruined state and condition it is through the blood - "When I see the blood I will pass over you". Where there is no blood, there is nothing but bare justice to strike a poor sinner dead, but if the blood is sprinkled upon your conscience, or if you are sheltering beneath the blood, justice will never strike you; all mercy's streams flow freely through Calvary's blood.

He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. What then? There is an invitation here, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it". Bare justice closes the mouth of a poor sinner, he stands condemned and all he can say is,

"And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well".

There are no excuses; we shall never enter heaven with excuses, but if that precious blood is sprinkled upon us in its efficacy, and we are sheltering beneath it, we shall never sink into hell - never. O this blessed Lamb of God, how sweet He is. How beautiful at times before faith He is, He is Christ the heavenly Lamb.

"A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they"

"Open thy mouth wide". How can one open his mouth wide? When he gets hold of Christ, and gets a flash to speak in his soul of the sufficiency of His sin atoning sacrifice, substitution, death, and all prevailing intercession in the court of heaven. Now here is an invitation, "Open thy mouth wide". O but you may have some objections, I am such a great sinner. Sometimes I feel I shall receive what I deserve, and I hardly see how it can be otherwise with me. "Open thy mouth wide". This is what the Lord says, there is no point in my saying it unless the Lord says it, but He does say it. "Open thy mouth wide".

What is this opening of the mouth wide? There are two or

three things in it. To open the mouth wide is to plead in faith, to pray in faith, "Him that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him". To open your mouth wide is to ask for great things. But you say, I am a great sinner, - that is true, but is a reason why you should pray for a greater Saviour than all your great sins. "Open thy mouth wide". To open the mouth wide is to plead the precious blood of Christ, the blood that does for sin atone, to plead with God for heaven's everlasting redemption, to be delivered from the wrath to come, and for all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. "Open thy mouth wide". What then? Must I do something to merit it? The Lord's way of speaking in the Scriptures is, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it". What does that mean? It means He will grant your request. He will give you satisfaction, will satisfy you, "I will fill it". He will fill your soul with His love. He will fill your soul with a sense of forgiveness, He will fill your soul with a hope in His mercy, "Open thy mouth wide". So it is, dear friends, as we travel along in this wilderness; we have to pray our way along and sometimes in the face of much opposition, but here is an invitation, and here is a blessed reassuring promise, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it". Amen.