

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

MOSES' DECISION.

A Sermon

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“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”—Hebrews xi. 24, 25, 26.

LAST Sabbath-day we spoke upon the faith of Rahab. We had then to mention her former unsavoury character, and to show that, notwithstanding, her faith triumphed, and both saved her and produced good works. Now, it has occurred to me that some persons would say, “This faith is, no doubt, a very suitable thing for Rahab and persons of that class; a people destitute of sweetness and light may follow after the gospel, and it may be a very proper and useful thing for them, but the better sort of people will never take to it.” I thought it possible that, with a sneer of contempt, some might reject all faith in God, as being unworthy of persons of a higher condition of life and another manner of education. We have, therefore, taken the case of Moses, which stands as a direct contrast to that of Rahab, and we trust it may help to remove the sneer; though, indeed, that may be of small consequence, for if a man is given to sneering it is hardly worth while to waste five minutes in reasoning with him. The scorner is usually a person so inconsiderable that his scoffing deserves to be unconsidered. He who is great at sneering is good for nothing else, and he may as well be left to fulfil his vocation.

It occurred to me also that, perhaps, some might, in all seriousness, say, “I have, through the providence of God, and the circumstances which surround me, been kept from outward sin; moreover, I am not a member of the lowest ranks, and do not belong to the class of persons of whom Rahab would be a suitable representative. In fact, I have, by the providence of God, been placed in a choice position, and can, without egotism, claim a superior character. It is possible that such persons may feel as if they were placed under a disadvantage by this very superiority. The thought has passed over their mind, “The gospel is for sinners; it evidently comes to the chief of sinners

and blesses them. We are free to admit that we are sinners, but perhaps, because we have not sinned so openly, we may not be so conscious of the sin, and consequently our mind may not be so well prepared to receive the abounding grace of God which comes to the vilest of the vile." I have known some who have almost wished that they were literally like the prodigal son in his wanderings, that they might be more readily like him in his return. It is altogether a mistake under which they labour, but it is by no means an uncommon one. Perhaps, as we introduce to their notice one of the heroes of faith, who was a man of noble rank, high education, and pure character, they may be led to correct their thoughts. Moses belonged to the noblest order of men, but he was saved by faith alone, even by the same faith which saved Rahab. This faith moved him to the faithful service of God and to a self-denial unparalleled. My earnest prayer is that you who are moral, amiable, and educated, may see in the action of Moses an example for yourselves. No longer despise a life of faith in God. It is the one thing which you lack, the one thing above all others needful. Are ye young men of high position? Such was Moses. Are ye men of spotless character? Such also was he. Are ye now in a position where to follow out conscience will cost you dear? Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible, and though for a while a loser he is now an eternal gainer by the loss. May the Spirit of God incline you to follow in the path of faith, virtue, and honour, where you see such a man as Moses leading the way.

We shall first consider *the decided action of Moses*; and, secondly, *the source of his decision of character*—it was "by faith." Thirdly, we shall look into *those arguments by which his faith directed his action*; after which we shall briefly reflect upon those practical lessons which the subject suggests.

I. And first let us observe THE DECIDED ACTION OF MOSES. "When he had come to years he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." We need not narrate the stories which are told by Josephus and other ancient writers with regard to the early days of Moses, such as for instance, his taking the crown of Pharaoh and trampling upon it. These things may be true; it is equally possible that they are pure fiction. The Spirit of God has certainly taken no notice of them in Holy Scripture, and what he does not think worth recording we need not think worth considering. Nor shall I more than hint at answers to the question why it was that Moses remained no less than forty years in the court of Pharaoh, and doubtless during that time was called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter," and, if he did not enjoy the pleasures of sin, at any rate, had his share in the treasures of Egypt. It is just possible that he was not a converted man up to the age of forty. Probably during his early days he was to all intents and purposes an Egyptian, an eager student, a great proficient in Egyptian wisdom, and also, as Stephen tells us in the Acts, "a man mighty in words and in deeds." During those early days he was familiar with philosophers and warriors, and perhaps in his engrossing pursuits he forgot

his nationality. We see the hand of God in his being forty years in the court of Pharaoh; whatever of evil or indecision in him may have kept him there we see the good result which God brought out of it, for he became by his experience and observation the better able to rule a nation, and a fitter instrument in the hand of God for fashioning the Israelitish state into its appointed form. Perhaps during the forty years he had been trying to do what a great many are aiming at just now; he was trying whether he could not serve God and remain the son of Pharaoh's daughter too. Perhaps he was of the mind of our brethren in a certain church who protest against ritualism but still remain in that church which gives to ritualism the fullest liberty. Perhaps he thought he could share the treasures of Egypt and yet bear testimony with Israel. He would be known as a companion of the priests of Isis and Osiris, and yet at the same time would bear honest witness for Jehovah. If he did not attempt this impossibility others in all ages have done so. It may be he quieted himself by saying that he had such remarkable opportunities for usefulness, that he did not like to throw them up by becoming identified with the Israelitish dissenters of the period. An open avowal of his private sentiments would shut him out from good society, and especially from the court, where it was very evident that his influence was great and beneficial. It is just possible that the very feeling which still keeps so many good people in a wrong place may have operated upon Moses till he was forty years of age; but then, having reached the prime of his manhood, and having come under the influence of faith, he broke away from the ensnaring temptation, as I trust many of our worthy brethren will ere long be able to do. Surely they will not always maintain a confederacy with the allies of Rome, but will be men enough to be free. If, when Moses was a child, he spoke as a child, and thought as a child, when he became a man he put away his childish ideas of compromise; if, when he was a young man, he thought he might conceal a part of the truth, and so might hold his position, when he came to ripe years enough to know what the truth fully was, he scorned all compromise and came out boldly as the servant of the living God.

The Spirit of God directs our eye to the time when Moses came to years: that is to say, when his first forty years of life were over; then, without any hesitation he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and took his part with the despised people of God.

I beg you to consider first, *who he was that did this*. He was a man of education, for he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Somebody says he does not suppose the wisdom of the Egyptians was anything very great. No, and the wisdom of the English is not much greater. Future ages will laugh as much at the wisdom of the English as we now laugh at the wisdom of the Egyptians. The human wisdom of one age is the folly of the next. Philosophy, so called, what is it but the concealment of ignorance under hard names, and the arrangement of mere guesses into elaborate theories? In

comparison with the eternal light of God's word all the knowledge of men is "not light but darkness visible." Men of education, as a rule, are not ready to acknowledge the living God. Philosophy in its self-conceit despises the infallible revelation of the Infinite, and will not come to the light lest it be reproved. In all ages, when a man has considered himself to be wise, he has almost invariably despised the Infinite wisdom. Had he been truly wise, he would have humbly bowed before the Lord of all, but being only nominally so he said, "Who is the Lord?" Not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen. Did not our Lord himself say it, and his word is for all time, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes?" But yet, sometimes a man of education like Moses, is led by the blessing of heaven to take the side of truth, and of the right, and when it is so, let the Lord be magnified!

Beside being a man of education, he was a person of high rank. He had been adopted by Thermuthis, the daughter of Pharaoh, and it is possible, though we cannot be sure of it, that he was the next heir by adoption to the Egyptian crown. It is said that the King of Egypt had no other child, and that his daughter had no son, and that Moses would, therefore, have become the King of Egypt. Yet, great as he was, and mighty at court, he joined with the oppressed people of God. May God grant that we may see many eminent men bravely standing up for God and for his truth, and repudiating the religion of men; but if they do, it will be a miracle of mercy indeed, for few of the great ones have ever done so. Here and there in heaven may be found a king, and here and there in the church may be found one who wears a coronet and prays; but how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven. When they do so God be thanked for it.

In addition to this, remember that Moses was a man of great ability. We have evidence of that in the administrative skill with which he managed the affairs of Israel in the wilderness; for though he was inspired of God, yet his own natural ability was not superseded but directed. He was a poet: "Then sung Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." That memorable poem at the Red Sea is a very masterly ode, and proves the incomparable ability of the writer. The ninetieth Psalm also shows the range of his poetic powers. He was both prophet, priest, and king in the midst of Israel, and a man second to no man save that Man who was more than man. No other man I know of comes so near in the glory of his character to Christ as Moses does, so that we find the two names linked together in the praise of heaven,— "They sung the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb." Thus you see he was a truly eminent man, yet he cast in his lot with God's people. It is not many that will do this, for the Lord has usually chosen the weak things to confound the mighty, and the things that are not to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. Yet here he,

who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, took this great man, this wise man, and gave him grace to be decided in the service of his God. Should I address such a one this morning I would anxiously pray that a voice from the excellent glory may call him forth to the same clear line of action.

Next, consider *what sort of society Moses felt compelled to leave*. In coming forth from Pharaoh's court he must separate from all the courtiers and men of high degree, some of whom may have been very estimable people. There is always a charm about the society of the great, but every bond was severed by the resolute spirit of Moses. I do not doubt that being learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, such a man as Moses would be always welcome in the various circles of science; but he relinquished all his honours among the *elite* of learning to bear the reproach of Christ. Neither great men nor learned men could hold him when his conscience had once pointed out the path. Be sure, also, that he had to tear himself away from many a friend. In the course of forty years one would suppose he had formed associations that were very dear and tender, but to the regret of many he associated himself with the unpopular party, whom the king sought to crush, and therefore no courtier could henceforth acknowledge him. For forty years he lived in the solitude of the desert, and he only returned to smite the land of Egypt with plague, so that his separation from all his former friendships must have been complete. But, O true-hearted spirit, should it break every fond connection, should it tear thy soul away from all thou lovest, if thy God requires it, let the sacrifice be made at once. If thy faith hath shown thee that to occupy thy present position involves complicity with error or sin, then break away, by God's help, without further parley. Let not the nets of the fowler hold thee, but as God gives thee freedom, mount untrammelled and praise thy God for liberty. Jesus left the angels of heaven for your sake; can you not leave the best of company for his sake?

But I marvel most at Moses when I consider not only who he was and the company he had to forego, but *the persons with whom he must associate*, for in truth the followers of the true God were not, in their own persons, a loveable people at that time. Moses was willing to take upon himself the reproach of Christ, and to bear the affliction of God's people when, I venture to observe again, there was nothing very attractive in the people themselves. They were wretchedly poor, they were scattered throughout all the land as mere drudges, engaged in brickmaking, and this brickmaking, which was imposed upon them for the very purpose of breaking down their spirit, had done its work all too well. They were utterly spiritless, they possessed no leaders, and were not prepared to have followed them if they had arisen. When Moses, having espoused their cause, informed them that God had sent him they received him at first, but when the prophet's first action prompted Pharaoh to double their toil by an enactment that they should not be supplied with straw, they upbraided Moses at once; even as forty years before, when he interfered

in their quarrels, one of them said, "Wilt thou slay me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" They were literally a herd of slaves, broken down, crushed and depressed. It is one of the worst things about slavery that it unmans men and unfits them even for generations for the full enjoyment of liberty. Even when slaves receive liberty we cannot expect them to act as those would do who were free born, for in slavery the iron enters into the very soul and binds the spirit. Thus it is clear that the Israelites were not very select company for the highly educated Moses to unite with: though a prince he must make common cause with the poor; though a free man he must mingle with slaves; though a man of education he must mix with ignorant people; though a man of spirit he must associate with spiritless serfs. How many would have said, "No, I cannot do that; I know what church I ought to unite with if I follow the Scriptures fully, and obey in all things my Lord's will; but then they are so poor, so illiterate, and their place of worship is so far from being architecturally beautiful. Their preacher is a plain, blunt man, and they themselves are not refined. Scarce a dozen of the whole sect can keep a carriage; I should be shut out of society if I joined with them." Have we not heard this base reasoning till we are sick of it, and yet it operates widely upon this brainless, heartless generation. Are there none left who love truth even when she wears no trappings? Are there none who love the gospel better than pomp and show? Where God raises up a Moses what cares he how poor his brethren may be? "They are God's people," says he, "and if they are very poor I must help them the more liberally. If they be oppressed and depressed, so much the more reason why I should come to their aid. If they love God and his truth I am their fellow-soldier, and will be at their side in the battle." I have no doubt Moses thought all this over, but his mind was made up, and he took his place promptly.

In addition to other matters, one mournful thing must be said of Israel, which must have cost Moses much pain. He found that among God's people there were some who brought no glory to God, and were very weak in their principles. He did not judge the whole body by the faults of some, but by their standards and their institutions: and he saw that the Israelites, with all their faults, were the people of God, while the Egyptians, with all their virtues, were not so. Now, it is for each one of us to try the spirits by the word of God, and then fearlessly to follow out our convictions. Where is Christ recognised as the head of the church? Where are the Scriptures really received as the rule of faith? Where are the doctrines of grace clearly believed? Where are the ordinances practised as the Lord delivered them? For with that people will I go, their cause shall be my cause, their God shall be my God. We look not for a perfect church this side of heaven, but we do look for a church free from Popery and sacramentarianism and false doctrine; and if we cannot find one we will wait until we can, but with falsehood and priestcraft we will never enter into fellowship. If there be faults with the brethren it is

our duty to bear with them patiently, and pray for grace to overcome the evil; but with Papists and Rationalists we must not join in affinity, or God will require it at our hands.

Consider now *what Moses left by siding with Israel*. He left honour—he “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter;” he left pleasure—for he refused to “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;” and, according to our apostle, he left wealth as well, for in taking up the reproach of Christ he renounced “the treasures of Egypt.” Very well, then, if it comes to this, if to follow God and to be obedient to him I have to lose my position in society and become a Pariah; if I must abjure a thousand pleasures, and if I am deprived of emoluments and income, yet the demands of duty must be complied with. Martyrs gave their lives of old, are there none left who will give their livings? If there be true faith in a man’s heart he will not deliberate which of the two to choose, beggary or compromise with error. He will esteem the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

Consider yet once more *what Moses espoused* when he left the court. He espoused abounding trial, “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God;” and he espoused reproach, for he “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.” O, Moses, if you must needs join with Israel there is no present reward for you; you have nothing to gain but all to lose; you must do it out of pure principle, out of love to God, out of a full persuasion of the truth, for the tribes have no honours or wealth to bestow. You will receive affliction, and that is all. You will be called a fool, and people will think they have good reason for so doing. It is just the same today. If any man today will go without the camp to seek the Lord, if he go forth unto Christ without the gate, he must do it out of love to God and to his Christ, and for no other motive. The people of God have no benefices or bishoprics to offer; they therefore beseech men to count the cost. When a fervent convert said to our Lord, “Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,” he received for answer, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay my head.” To this hour truth offers no dowry but herself to those who will espouse her. Abuse, contempt, hard fare, ridicule, misrepresentation—these are the wages of consistency; and if better comes it is not to be reckoned on. If any man be of a noble enough spirit to love the truth for truth’s sake, and God for God’s sake, and Christ for Christ’s sake, let him enlist with those of like mind; but if he seek anything over and above that, if he desire to be made famous, or to gain power, or to be well beneficed, he had better keep his place among the cowardly dirt-eaters who swarm around us. The church of God bribes no man. She has no mercenary rewards to proffer, and would scorn to use them if she had. If to serve the Lord be not enough reward, let those who look for more go their selfish way: if heaven be not enough, let those who can despise it seek their heaven below. Moses, in taking up with the people of God,

decidedly, and once for all, acted most disinterestedly, without any promise from the right side, or any friend to aid him in the change; for the truth's sake, for the Lord's sake, he renounced everything; content to be numbered with the down-trodden people of God.

II. Now, secondly, what was THE SOURCE OF MOSES' DECISION? Scripture says it was faith, otherwise some would insist upon it that it was the force of blood. "He was by birth an Israelite, and therefore," say they, "the instincts of nature prevailed." Our text assigns a very different reason. We know right well that the sons of godly parents are not led to adore the true God by reason of their birth. Grace does not run in the blood; sin may, but righteousness does not. Who does not remember sons of renowned lovers of the gospel, who are now far gone in Ritualism? It was faith, not blood, which impelled Moses in the way of truth. Neither was it eccentricity which led him to espouse the side which was oppressed. We have sometimes found a man of pedigree and position who has associated with persons of quite another rank and condition, simply because he never could act like anybody else, and must live after his own odd fashion. It was not so with Moses. All his life through you cannot discover a trace of eccentricity in him: he was sober, steady, law-abiding; what if I say he was a concentric man, for his centre was in the right place, and he moved according to the dictates of prudence. Not thus can his decision be accounted for. Neither was he hurried on by some sudden excitement when there burned within his soul fierce patriotic fires which made him more fervent than prudent. No, there may have been some haste in his slaying the Egyptian on the first occasion, but then he had forty more years to think it over, and yet he never repented his choice, but held on to the oppressed people of God, and still refused to think of himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. It was faith then, faith alone, that enabled the prophet of Sinai to arrive at his decision, and to carry it out.

What faith had he? First, he had faith in Jehovah. It is possible that Moses had seen the various gods of Egypt, even as we see them now in the drawings which have been copied from their temples and pyramids. We find there the sacred cat, the sacred ibis, the sacred crocodile, and all kinds of creatures which were revered as deities; and in addition there were hosts of strange idols, compounded of man, and beast, and bird, which stand in our museums to this day, and were once the objects of the idolatrous reverence of the Egyptians. Moses was weary of all this symbolism. He knew in his own heart that there was one God, one only God, and he would have nothing to do with Amun, Pthah, or Maut. Truly, my very soul cries to God, that noble spirits may in these days grow weary of the gods of ivory, and ebony, and silver, which are adored under the name of crosses and crucifixes, and may come to abominate that most degrading and sickening of all idolatries in which a man makes a god with flour and water, bows down before it, and then swallows it, thus sending his god into his belly, and, I might say worse. The satirist

said of the Egyptians, "O happy people, whose gods grow in their own gardens;" we may say with equal force, O happy people, whose gods are baked in their own ovens! Is not this the lowest form of superstition that ever debased the intellect of man. The fetish worship of the negro is not more grovelling. O that brave and true hearts may be led to turn away from such idolatry, and abjure all association with it, and say, "No, I cannot, and dare not. There is one God that made heaven and earth, there is a pure Spirit who upholdeth all things by the power of his might, I will worship him alone; and I will worship him after his own law, without images or other symbols, for has he not forbidden them." Has he not said, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God"? Oh that God would give to men faith to know there is but one God, and that the one God is not to be worshipped with man-ordained rites and ceremonies, for he is "a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth!" That one truth, if it were to come with power from heaven into men's minds, would shiver St. Peter's and St. Paul's from their topmost cross to their lowest crypt; for what do these two churches teach us now but sheer clear idolatry, the one of rule and the other by permission, for now men who boldly worship what they call the "sacred elements" have leave and license to exercise their craft within the Church of England. Every man who loves his God should shake his skirts clear of these abominations, and I pray God that we may find many a Moses who shall do so.

The faith of Moses also rested in Christ. "Christ had not come," says one. Nay, but he was to come, and Moses looked to that coming one. He cast his eye through the ages that were to intervene, and he saw before him the Shiloh of whom dying Jacob sang. He knew the ancient promise which had been given to the fathers, that in the seed of Abraham should all the nations of the earth be blessed; and he was willing, in order to share in the blessing, to take his part in the reproach. Dear Friends, we shall never have a thorough faith in God unless we have also faith in Jesus Christ. Men have tried long, and tried hard, to worship the Father apart from the Son; but there stands it, and it always will be so: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." You get away from the worship of the Father if you do not come through the mediation and atonement of the Son of God. Now, though Moses did not know concerning Christ all that is now revealed to us, yet he had faith in the coming Messiah, and that faith gave strength to his mind. Those are the men to suffer who have received Christ Jesus the Lord. If any man should ask me what made the Covenanters such heroes as they were; what made our Puritanic forefathers fearless before their foes; what led the Reformers to protest and the martyrs to die; I would reply, it was faith in the Invisible God, coupled with faith in that dear Son of God who is God Incarnate. Believing in him

they felt such love within their bosoms, that for love of him they could have died a thousand deaths.

But then, in addition to this, Moses had faith in reference to God's people. Upon that I have already touched. He knew that the Israelites were God's chosen, that Jehovah had made a covenant with them, that despite all their faults, God would not break his covenant with his own people, and he knew, therefore, that their cause was God's cause, and being God's cause it was the cause of right, the cause of truth. Oh, it is a grand thing when a man has such faith that he says, "It is nothing to me what other people do, or think, or believe; I shall act as God would have me. It is nothing to me what I am commanded to do by my fellow-creatures, nothing to me what fashion says, nothing to me what my parents say, as far as religion is concerned; the truth is God's star, and I will follow wherever it may lead me. If it should make me a solitary man, if I should espouse opinions which no one else ever believed in, if I should have to go altogether outside the camp, and break away from every connection, all this shall be as immaterial to me as the small dust of the balance; but if a matter be true I will believe it, and I will propound it, and I will suffer for its promulgation; and if another doctrine be a lie I will not be friends with it, nay, not for a solitary moment; I will not enter into fellowship with falsehood, no, not for an hour. If a course be right and true, through floods and flames if Jesus leads me, I will pursue it.." That seems to me to be the right spirit, but where do you find it now-a-days? The modern spirit mutters, "We are all right, every one of us." He who says "yes" is right, and he who says "no" is also right. You hear a man talk with mawkish sentimentality which he calls Christian charity. "Well, I am of opinion that if a man is a Mahometan, or a Catholic, or a Mormonite, or a dissenter, if he is sincere, he is all right." They do not quite include devil worshippers, Thugs and cannibals yet, but if things go on they will accept them into the happy family of the Broad Church. Such is the talk and cant of this present age, but I bear my witness that there is no truth in it, and I call upon every child of God to protest against it, and, like Moses, to declare that he can have no complicity with such a confederacy. There is truth somewhere, let us find it; the lie is not of the truth, let us abhor it. There is a God, let us follow him, and it cannot be that false gods are gods too. Surely truth is of some value to the sons of men, surely there must be something worth holding, something worth contending for, and something worth dying for; but it does not appear now-a-days as if men thought so. May we have a respect for God's true church in the world which abides by the apostolic word and doctrine. Let us find it out, and join with it, and at its side fight for God and for his truth!

Once again, Moses had faith in the "recompense of the reward." He said thus within himself, "I must renounce much, and reckon to lose rank, position, and treasure; but I expect to be a gainer notwithstanding, for there will be a day when God shall judge the sons of men; I expect a judgment throne

with its impartial balances, and I expect that those who serve God faithfully shall then turn out to have been the wise men and the right men, while those who truckled and bowed down to gain a present ease, shall find that they missed eternity while they were snatching after time, and that they bartered heaven for a paltry mess of pottage.” With this upon his mind, you could not persuade Moses that he ought to compromise, and must not be uncharitable, and ought not to judge other good people, but should be large-minded, and remember Pharaoh’s daughter, and how kindly she had nurtured him, and consider what opportunities he had of doing good where he was; how he might befriend his poor brethren, what influence he might have over Pharaoh, how he might be the means of leading the princes and the people of Egypt in the right way, and perhaps God had raised him up on purpose to be there, who could tell, and so-on, and so-on, and so-on—you know the Babylonian talk, for in these days you have all read or heard the plausible arguments of the deceivableness of unrighteousness, which in these last days teaches men to do evil that good may come. Moses cared for none of these things. He knew his duty, and did it, whatever might be the consequences. Every Christian man’s duty is to believe the truth, and follow the truth, and leave results with God. Who dares do that? He is a king’s son. But again I say it, who dares do that in these days?

III. Thirdly, we are going to run over in our minds some of THE ARGUMENTS WHICH SUPPORTED MOSES in his decided course of following God.

The first argument would be, he saw clearly that God was God and therefore must keep his word, must bring his people up out of Egypt and give them a heritage. Now he said within himself, “I desire to be on the right side. God is almighty, God is all truthful, God is altogether just. I am on God’s side, and being on God’s side I will prove my truthfulness by leaving the other side altogether.”

Then, secondly, we have it in the text that he perceived the pleasures of sin to be but for a season. He said to himself, “I may have but a short time to live, and even if I live to a good old age, life at the longest is still short; and when I come to the close of life what a miserable reflection it will be that I have had all my pleasure, it is all over, and now I have to appear before God as a traitorous Israelite who threw up his birthright for the sake of enjoying the pleasures of Egypt.” Oh that men would measure everything in the scales of eternity! We shall be before the bar of God all of us in a few months or years, and then think you how shall we feel? One will say, “I never thought about religion at all,” and another “I thought about it, but I did not think enough to come to any decision upon it. I went the way the current went.” Another will say, “I knew the truth well enough, but I could not bear the shame of it, they would have thought me fanatical if I had gone through with it.” Another will say, “I halted between two opinions, I hardly thought I was justified in sacrificing my children’s position for the sake of being out and

out a follower of truth.” What wretched reflections will come over men who have sold the Saviour as Judas did! What wretched deathbeds must they have who have been unfaithful to their consciences and untrue to their God! But oh! with what composure will the believer look forward to another world! He will say, “By grace I am saved, and I bless God I could afford to be ridiculed, I could bear to be laughed at. I could lose that situation, I could be turned out of that farm, and could be called a fool, and yet it did not hurt me. I found solace in the society of Christ, I went to him about it all, and I found that to be reproached for Christ was a sweeter thing than to possess all the treasures of Egypt. Blessed be his name! I missed the pleasures of the world, but they were no miss to me. I was glad to miss them, for I found sweeter pleasure in the company of my Lord, and now there are pleasures to come which shall never end.” O brethren, to be out and out for Christ, to go to the end with him, even though it involve the loss of all things, this will pay in the long run. It may bring upon you much disgrace for the present, but that will soon be over, and then comes the eternal reward.

And, then, again, he thought within himself that even the pleasures, which did last for a season, while they lasted were not equal to the pleasure of being reproached for Christ’s sake. This ought also to strengthen us, that the worst of Christ is better than the best of the world, that even now we have more joy as Christians, if we are sincere, than we could possibly derive from the sins of the wicked.

I have only this to say in closing. First, we ought all of us to be ready to part with everything for Christ, and if we are not we are not his disciples. “Master, thou sayest a hard thing,” says one. I say it yet again, for a greater Master has said it,—“He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” “Unless a man forsake all that he has he cannot be my disciple.” Jesus may not require you actually to leave anything, but you must be ready to leave everything if required.

The second observation is this—we ought to abhor the very thought of obtaining honour in this world by concealing our sentiments or by making compromises. If there be a chance of your being highly esteemed by holding your tongue, speak at once and do not run the risk of winning such dishonourable honour. If there be a hope of people praising you because you are so ready to yield your convictions, pray God to make you like a flint never to yield again; for what more damning glory could a man have than to be applauded for disowning his principles to please his fellow-men! From this may the Lord save us!

The third teaching is that we ought to take our place with those who truly follow God and the Scriptures, even if they are not altogether what we should like them to be. The place for an Israelite is with the Israelites, the place for a Christian man is with Christian men. The place for a thorough-going disciple of the Bible and of Christ is with others who are such, and even if they

should happen to be the lowest in the land, and the poorest of the poor, and the most illiterate and uneducated persons of the period, what is all this if their God loves them and if they love God? Weighed in the scales of truth the least one among them is worth ten thousand of the greatest ungodly men.

Lastly, we must all of us look to our faith. Faith is the main thing. You cannot make a thorough character without sincere faith. Begin there, dear hearer. If thou art not a believer in Christ, if thou believest not in the one God, may the Lord convert thee, and give thee now that precious gift! To try and raise a character which shall be good without a foundation of faith is to build upon the sand, and to pile up wood and hay and stubble, which wood, hay, and stubble are very good things as wood, hay, and stubble, but they will not bear the fire; and as every Christian character will have to bear fire, it is well to build on the rock, and to build with such graces and fruits as will endure trial. You will have to be tried, and if you have, by sneaking through life as a coward, avoided all opposition and all ridicule, ask yourself whether you really are a disciple of that master of the house whom they called Beelzebub; whether you are truly a follower of that crucified Saviour who said, "Except a man take up his cross daily and follow me, he cannot be my disciple." Suspect the smooth places; be afraid of that perpetual peace which Christ declares he came to break. He says, "I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword." He came to bring fire upon the earth; and "what would I," said he, "if it be already kindled."

“ Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas.

Sure I must fight if I would reign,
Increase my courage, Lord,
I'd bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy Word.” Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Proverbs i.