A STANZA OF DELIVERANCE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

"He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes." Psalms 105: 37.

This verse has been making music in my heart for several days, and at times it has even claimed utterance from my tongue. I have caught myself singing a solo, with myself as the only hearer; and this has been the theme, "He brought them forth also with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble person among their tribes." I love texts which sing to me, and make me join in their tune. If this verse should get into your hearts, and set you singing in a similiar way, you will be entertaining a very pleasant visitor, and it will brighten a dark day for you.

Egypt may very fairly represent those states of sorrow and sadness, depression and oppression, into which God's people come far too frequently. Specially is the house of bondage a true picture of our condition when we are convinced of sin, but are ignorant of the way to escape from its guilt and power. Then sin which was once our Goshen of pleasure, becomes the iron furnace of fear. Though we yield to sin when under conviction, yet we are no longer its willing subjects; we feel that we are slaves, and we sigh by reason of sore bondage. Glory be to God, he has now brought us out from that state of slavery, and we can sing of freedom given by his own right hand!

Since then we have been permitted, in the order of God's providence, to live among evil persons who have had power over us, and have used it maliciously. They have hated our God, and, therefore, they have hated us, and shown their dislike of us in many harsh and exacting ways. We find no rest with them; but our soul is among lions. They seem as though they would devour us, or else frighten us from following the road to heaven.

Full often has our gracious God delivered his persecuted people from such a sorrowful condition, and brought them out into a large room, wherein he has made them happy with Christian fellowship, and enabled them to go about holy work without let or hindrance. At such times, when God's people have come out from under the yoke of their oppressors, the Lord has "brought them forth also with silver and gold, and there has not been one feeble person among their tribes."

It is also possible to go down again into Egypt by reason of our own depression of spirit, inward conflict, and despondency. If you are like the preacher, you are by no means a stranger to inward sinkings. Though you do not give up your faith but are still, like father Jacob, keeping your hold while the sinew is shrinking, yet you are "sore broken in the place of dragons." You feel that you are like that bush in the desert, which burned with fire, and, only through a miracle, was not consumed. When under temptations of the flesh, and memories of old sins, Satan himself comes in with his fiery darts, and you have a hard time of it. He will insinuate dark and dreadful thoughts and you will be haunted by them, day after day, till you feel like the poor Israelites under the lash of the Egyptian taskmaster. Your covenant God will bring you out of that state of anguish and distress, and when he does so, you will sing, "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and their was not one feeble person among their tribes."

God forbid that we should ever repeat that senseless and wicked trust in man, which once made us go down into Egypt for help! We will not go there for pleasure: what have we to do with drinking the waters of the muddy river? We drink of a better river than the Nile, even of the river of the water of life. But we shall go to the region of weakness and pain to die. Unless the Lord should suddenly come in his glory, we shall close our eyes in death as Jacob and Joseph did. Then when we go into the tomb, which will be a kind of Egypt for our body, we shall only tarry there for a season. We shall slumber for a while, each one in his bed of dust, but the trump of the archangel shall awaken us, and our bodies shall rise again. We shall not, however, come from the grave so poor and feeble as we went in. No, we shall be great gainers by our sojourn in the dark abode. Those who see the saints in the day of resurrection, ascending to their thrones from the Egypt of death, may fitly say. "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes."

I am going to try to handle my very delightful subject in the following way: —First, the deliverances of God's people are always wrought by divine power. Lay the stress on the first word: "He brought them forth." Secondly, their deliverances are attended with enrichment. "He brought them forth also with silver and gold." And, thirdly their deliverances are accompanied by a remarkable degree of strength. "There was not one feeble person among their tribes." May the Holy Spirit make rare music for you upon this harp of three strings.

First, then, when we are led out of the Egypt of our sorrow, our deliverance is by divine power. When Israel came out of Egypt, it was Jehovah who brought forth her armies. When any man is saved from spiritual bondage, it is the Lord who looseth the captive.

I know, therefore, from that, as well as from my own experience, that if ever a man is delivered from spiritual bondage of heart, it is not by any easy work or by a hasty word. Nay, all the power of sympathy and experience will fail with some souls. God alone can take away the iron when it enters into the soul. It is of small use for those afflicted in mind to write to me, or to others, if their distress is spiritual, for God only can deliver them. If they are in the dark, we can strike a match as well as anyone else; but since they need the shining of the sun, that remains with the Lord, who alone creates the light. Oh, that the Son of righteousness would rise with healing beneath his wings, on every soul that now sits in the midnight of despair! Deliverance from a cruel captivity, like that of Israel in Egypt, must be wrought by the high hand and the outstretched arm of Jehovah alone. When such a liberation is performed then do we rapturously sing, "He brought them forth."

This work of the Lord does not exclude the action of the will. The people of Israel came forth freely from the house of bondage. "He brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness." They set out exultingly, glad to escape from the intolerable oppression of Pharaoh, who was to them a tyrant indeed. God does not violate the human will when he saves men; they are not converted against their will, but their will itself is converted. The Lord has a way of entering the heart, not with a crowbar, like a burglar, but with a master-key, which he gently inserts in the lock, and the bolt flies back, the door opens, and he enters. The Lord brought Israel forth; but they had cried unto the Lord by reason of their sore bondage, and they did not receive a blessing without desiring it, yea, and sighing for it; and when it came, they joyfully accepted it, and willingly trusted themselves with him whom the Lord had made to be their mediator and leader, even Moses. They did not share the honor of their deliverance with God, but still they gave their hearty assent and consent to his salvation. Willing as they were to move, he was still true, "He brought them forth."

Brethren, he must have brought them forth, for they could never have come forth by themselves. If you have read enough of Egyptian history to understand the position and power of the reigning Pharaoh, you will know how impossible it was for a mob of slaves, like the Israelites, to make any headway against that imperious monarch and his absolute power. If they had clamored and rebelled, the only possible result would have been the slaughter of many, and the still further enslavement of the rest. There was no hope for the most distinguished Israelite against the tyranny of Pharaoh: he would simply cry, "Get you unto your burdens;" and they could do no less. Pharaoh crushed even his own Egyptians, and much more the strangers. You cannot look upon the pyramids and other vast buildings along the Nile, and remember that all these were built with unpaid labour, with the whip continually at the workman's back, without feeling that a pastoral, unarmed race, long held in servitude, could never have obtained deliverance from the power of the Pharaohs, if the omnipotent Jehovah had not espoused their cause. "He brought them forth."

Beloved, we can never escape from the bondage of sin by our own power. Our past guilt and the condemnation consequent thereon, have locked us up in a dungeon, whose bars we can never break. The prince of darkness also, has such power over our evil natures that we cannot overcome him, nor escape from under his dominion of ourselves. If we are ever set free from sin and Satan, it will be eternally and infinitely true that the Lord has brought us forth out of the house of bondage. "Salvation is of the Lord."

Yet the Lord did bring them forth. Not in part, but in whole, he redeemed his people. Everyone of them was set free. Not only all the human beings, but all their cattle came forth, according to the word of the Lord, "Not a hoof shall be left behind." Christ Jesus, in redeeming his people will have all or none. All that the Father gave him shall come to him, nor shall the power of sin, death, and hell, be able to hold in captivity one whom Jesus has effectually redeemed, nor one whom his Father chose. All the covenanted ones shall be his in the day when he makes up his jewels. He has paid too much for them to lose one of them. In the loss of one of them too much would be envolved: his word, his covenant, his power, his faithfulness, his honour, would all suffer, should one of his little ones perish. Therefore he makes their deliverance effectual, and in very deed he brings them forth.

The deliverance came when the lamb was slain. Pharaoh held Israel captive during all the plagues, but he could not go beyond a certain point. On that same night when they saw the lamb slain, and roasted with fire, while they sat in their houses protected by the blood sprinkled upon the lintel, and the two side posts of their doors, that selfsame night they quitted Egypt. They went forth under the seal of redemption, the blood-red mark of substitionary sacrifice. My dear hearer, perhaps this very night you also will go forth into glorious liberty. I know you will, if you will by faith look to Jesus as the Lamb slain for you. Will you now accept him as your own, and trust him to be your redemption? Behold then the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world! Take his precious blood, and let it be sprinkled on your door, yea, and upon your own self, that the angel of vengeance may pass you by. Can you come and feed on Christ at once, as the Lamb of God's passover? Do you say that this would be a bold and venturesome faith. Yet be so bold and venturesome. Blessed be the name of the Lord, none were ever rejected who dared to trust Jesus! We will sing about you and others if you have faith in the great sacrifice, and this will be our song, "He brought them forth."

Israel cannot remain under slavery to Egypt when once the redemption price, has been accepted, and the blood has been sprinkled. None know freedom from sin but those who trust the atoning blood. God forbid that I should point out to any way of hope but this one path; for without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin!

I have perhaps said enough on this point; but assuredly I have fallen short, unless I have made you know each one that deliverance from sin is solely by the power of God. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Unless a supernatural power is put forth in it, any form of deliverance from sin is worth nothing. If you have been born again from below, you will go below; you must be born again from above if you are to go above. There is no true liberty but that wherewith Christ makes you free. "If the Son shall make ye free, ye shall be free indeed." Do you know what it is, dear friends, to be brought out of prison by a miracle of grace, by a revelation of the Holy Ghost, by the blood of Jesus shed for many? If so, you will join with all the saints in singing, 'As for his people, he brought them forth."

Thus do we come forth from conviction of sin. "Now tell me," says one, "what does a man gain by being in a desponding, sorrowful condition, convinced of sin, and full of fears?" By the work of the Holy Spirit he will gain much. He will obtain a clearer knowledge of the evil of sin. This is a rare thing nowadays, when we have so many believers who are never penitent. It is a great thing for a child, who has the habit of stealing apples, to get himself well filled with the sourest of them, and feel the gripes strong within him. He will never touch such fruit any more. It is a great thing for a man in his early days, to know what a sour apple sin is, and to feel heart-ache and soul-anguish because of the exceeding bitterness of his evil ways. It is a lasting lesson. As the burnt child dreads the fire, and the scalded dog is afraid even of cold water, so the discipline of conscience, through divine grace, breeds a holy caution, and even a hatred of sin. We have few Puritans because we have few penitents. An awful sense of guilt, an overwhelming conviction of sin may be the foundation stone of a gloriously holy character.

The tried and tempted man will also see clearly that salvation is all of grace. He feels that, if he ever rises from his despondency, he can never dare to take an atom of the honour of the deliverance to himself; it must be of free grace only. He can do nothing, and he knows it. When a child of God can spell grace, and can pronounce it clearly, as with the true Jerusalem accent he has gained a great deal of spiritual silver and gold. I have heard a brother stutter over that word, "free grace," till it came out very like "free will." As for myself, that Shibboleth I pronounce without faltering, for my free will is that which I daily try to master and bring into complete subjection to the will of God, and to free grace I owe everything. Blessed is that man, who, by his experience, has been made to know that free grace is the source of every blessing and privilege, and that salvation is all of grace from first to last. By a knowledge of the great gospel principle of grace, men are brought forth also with silver and gold.

When you and I reach the shores of heaven, thus shall we come into glory. When we come forth out of our graves, it will not be with loss, but with enrichment. We shall leave corruption and the worm behind us, and with them all that earthly grossness which made us groan in these mortal bodies. God will bring us forth also with silver and gold. What golden songs will we sing! What silver notes of gratitude will we pour forth! What jewels of communion with one another, and of communion with our Lord, will adorn our raiment! If we, too, have been men of sorrows and acquainted with grief, how much more fully shall we enter into the joy of our Lord because we entered into His sorrow! We also have suffered for sin, and have done battle for God and for His truth against the enemy. We also have borne reproach, and become aliens to our mother's children; we too have been bruised in the heel, and yet in death have conquered death, even as He did, only by His grace. Hence the joy of fellowship with Him through eternity. What news we shall have to tell to angels, and principalities, and powers! The gems of our grateful history will be our trials and deliverances. Coming up from death to eternal life, this will be the sum of it, "He brought them forth also with silver and gold."

Dear friends, I am anxious to pass on to the third point for time is flying fast; but I cannot neglect the application of what I have said. I beg those of you who are sad and despondent to notice the truths I have advanced. I want you to believe that your present affliction is for your enrichment. You will come out of this Egypt with much profit of grace. "Let me out," cries one, "only let me out." I pray you, be not impatient." Why rush out naked when a little patience will be repaid with silver and gold? If I were laboring in Egypt, and heard that it was time for me to start to the land of Canaan, I should be eager to be gone at once; but if I found that I must be hindered for an hour or two I should certainly utilize the delay by disposing of my lands, and endeavoring to get together treasures which I could carry with me. The delay would not be lost time. Therefore, beloved friend, if you cannot at once obtain comfort, make good use of your affliction. Be always more earnest to profit by your trials than to escape from them. Be more earnest after the heavenly silver and gold than about hurrying away from the scence of conflict and temptation.

III. Thirdly; here is a very wonderful thing. Our deliverance is accompanied with health and strength: "There was not one feeble person among their tribes." In the thousands of Israel there was not one person who could not march out of the land keeping rank as an efficient soldier. Everyone was fit for the journey through the wilderness. They numbered hard upon two millions, if not more; and it is a very surprising fact that there should not have been one feeble person among their tribes. Mark the words, not only no one sick, but no one "feeble," none with the rheumatism, or other pains which enfeeble walking, or palsies which prevent bearing burdens. This was nothing less than a sanitary miracle, the like of which was never known in the natural order of things.

This fact is typical of the health and strength of the newly saved. The Lord's people, at conversion, are as a rule, wonderfully strong in their love to Jesus and their hatred of sin. In most cases our young converts, when they have truly come to Christ, even if they are a little timid, are vigorous, much in prayer, abounding in zeal, and earnest in speaking out the Gospel. Many of them, I believe, would die at the stake readily, while they are in their first love. In their earliest days nothing is too hot or too heavy for them, for the sake of Christ Jesus, their Lord. If I want a bit of work to be done which requires dash and self-sacrifice, give me a set of Israelites who have just come out of Egypt, for there is not one feeble person among their tribes. After they have gone some distance into the wilderness, they are apt to forget the right hand of the Lord, and to get fretting and worrying. Very soon many of them are sick, through being bitten by fiery serpents, or smitten with the plague. They begin grumbling and complaining, and run into all sorts of mischief in a short time; but when they first came out, they were so excellent that even the Lord said, "I remember thee, the love of thine espousals." I have known some of you, after you have been members of the church for a few months, greatly need a very nice cushion to sit upon, and the cosy corner of the pew; whereas once you could stand in the aisle, and not knowing you were standing. You have grown wonderfully particular about the singing, and the tunes, and the length of the prayer, and the preacher's attitude, and especially the respect paid to your own dear self. Only very choice service suits you; it would almost insult you if you were put to common work. You were not like that when you were first converted. Do you recollect how the crowd pressed upon you, and yet you were so absorbed in listening to the preacher's voice that you never minded it? What walks you took then to reach the service! I notice, my friend, that when your grace grew short, the miles grew long. When you first joined the church, I said to you, "I fear you live too far off to attend regularly." But you took me up very quickly, and said, "Oh, that is nothing, sir! If I can only get spiritual food, distance is no object." When you get cold in heart, you find it inconvenient to come so far, and you go to a fashionable place of worship, where your musical taste can be gratified. Yes, when grace declines, fancy rules the mind, and love of ease controls the body, and the soul loses appetite and grows greedy for empty phrases, and weary of the Word of God. May the Lord grant you grace to be among those of whom it is said, "There was not one feeble person among their tribes!"

It would be a glorious day if it were so with all God's people, that there were none feeble. We should, as a church, labour to reach this high standard. We would have the weakest to be as David, and David as the angel of the Lord. We would have our babes become young men, and our young men fathers in Christ. Do we reach this standard at the Tabernacle? Alas! we do not, by a very long way. There are numbers of very feeble persons among our tribes. I will not say a word against them, dear hearts! for I trust they are sincere, though feeble. How greatly I wish that they were more concerned about their own feebleness, for it is a real loss to the cause we have at heart! The feeble hinder the strong. We want all the strength of the host for storming the enemies' ramparts, whereas some of us have to stop behind to nurse the infirm. We should not mind this so much, only these are the same poor creatures that were nursed twenty years ago, and they have made no advance. May the Lord strengthen us all, till we shall all be made fit for the service of Jesus!

Oh, when we meet in the home country, when we once get to glory, what a delight it will be that there will be no sin or weakness there! When the Lord has once brought us forth from the world and all its troubles, then all sinful weakness shall be unknown. We shall all be raised in power, and shall be as the angels of God. Are you going there, dear friends? "Yes," says one, "I hope that I am going there; but I am a feeble person." Thank God that you are on the right road, even if you limp. It is better to enter into life halt, and maimed, and feeble, than to run and leap in the way of death. If I can give a lift to anyone who is feeble, I am sure I will. At the same time, I would urge you to cry to the Lord to make strong, and bid you trust in Christ for the power, which He alone can give, of faith to overcome doubts and fears.

If any of you have not believed unto eternal life, now put your trust in the Lord Jesus. They serve a good Master who trust alone in Jesus, and take up their cross and follow Him. In Him is life for the perishing, joy for the sorrowing, rest for the weary, and liberty for the captives. Are you shut up like a prisoner in a castle? Do but trust in Jesus, and He will batter in the dungeon door, and bring you out. Yea, and He will not give you a penniless liberty, a liberty to perish of want. Amen.

SENEX SMITH.

His Notes and Notions.

TOO MUCH MACHINERY.

One of the wisest and most successful orchardists visited me the other day. Of course, we discussed fruit culture. My visitor said: "One trouble is that we use too much machinery. The result of depending, as we do, on patent cultivators and weed cutters is that the ground around the trunks of the trees is hard. We can not get near enough to mellow it without danger of injuring the bark. In this hard lump are the most delicate fibrous roots, and they can not grow as they should. The remedy is to use the hoe and the fork. It seems slow, hard work compared with that of the machine on which the orchardist rides over from five to ten acres a day, but our orchardists are suffering from the want of it."

What he said was true, as I knew by sad experience, and the next day I sent my men out with forks to work around the trunks of the trees. Then, as I thought the matter over, it occurred to me that we might be trying to cultivate the vineyard of the Lord as we have been cultivating our orchards. Is there not too much machine work? Societies and conventions are good, just as cultivators are. But if we depend upon them exclusively, if we do not supplement them by personal labor, the result will be disappointing. Around every heart, as around every tree, there is an area of hard soil that no machine can mellow. It can be reached and cultivated only by individual effort.

I sat last week in a Sabbath-school convention. A thousand enthusiastic workers were there. The speeches and the resolutions were admirable. But unless those men and women went home to patient, personal, hand-to-hand work in their various schools with quickened faith and energy, their meeting together might do more harm than good. Toiling Sabbath after Sabbath with a class of thoughtless boys or girls, trying to interest them in divine truth, oh, how dull and discouraging it must seem after the glorious mass-meeting? But it is only by such humble and persistent work that any real success is secured.

The little girl who went up to the manacled culprit in the car, and said, with tears in her eyes, "Man, I am sorry for you," did more to melt his heart and to prepare the way for his salvation, than all the reformatory organizations in the land. The great need of the perishing world today is personal work—not mass-meetings in the interest of the masses, but brother seeking the wandering brother to lead him to Christ, and sister seeking the fallen sister that she may lift her up out of her degradation and despair.

I do not propose to abandon the use of cultivators in my orchard because I am hoeing around the trees. And I do not think we ought to disband our societies, numerous as they are, or to quit holding conventions. But we must remember that they are to aid and energize, not to supplant our individual efforts to save our fellowmen. The world is an aggregate of living units, and each of them must be reached and renewed before Christ can reign from sea to sea.

In the days of my boyhood we had no fire engines. When the cry of fire was heard the sexton ran to the church and rang the bell with all his might. And the people, hearing the alarm, hurried with their buckets to put out the fire. The ringing was useful to arouse the men in their shops and homes; but it was the buckets that did the work. We need to be waked up, to be enthused. But the agencies by which this is accomplished are but means to an end. Gospel work will always be personal—the individual in the lifeboat trying to grasp and rescue the individual in the water.

SHE GRABBED THE REIN.

A man was driving a spirited horse on a road that crossed the railroad. A train came rushing along. The horse was frightened, but the driver reined him to one side, and would have escaped. His wife, however, more frightened than the horse, seized one of the lines, not knowing what she did, and drew the animal back, so that the engine caught the carriage, capsized it, and she was killed. By her foolish interference she lost her life.

Such catastrophes do not occur only at railway crossings. Every day and in many departments of life they are witnessed. Men and women have not sense enough to let well enough alone, or to trust in those who know better what to do than themselves. They grab the reins and wreck that which others are trying to save.

There was trouble in a church. The pastor and deacon were working quietly to remove it. They were about to succeed. But a zealous brother, who lacked the important element of sanctified common sense, heard about it. He became intensely excited. He began to talk loudly and bitterly. This was like raking out smouldering embers and blowing upon them. The matter got into the papers. The minister and deacon were accused of temporizing. A bitter conflict resulted, and the church was wrecked.

There was trouble in a home. Judicious friends who loved that home were trying to bring together the alienated ones. But a busybody heard a rumor of what was going on, and rushed to report it to all his fellow-gossips. They took the reins out of the hands of the peacemaker, and ere long there was a public scandal, a suit for divorce and a bitter contest for alimony.

When will people learn that often the best thing they can do is to do nothing? And in regard to God's dealings with men it is true now, in many cases, as when Isaiah wrote: "Their strength is to sit still." If that woman had sat still, she would not have lost her life.—*Journal and Messenger*.

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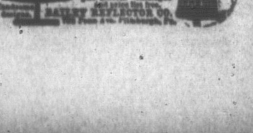
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