

# The Love and the Calling.

by Horatius Bonar

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*God's love calls us out of the world and into a relationship with him, leading us on a journey through the desert to our home in Canaan.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 3:8, Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:15, John 3:16, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 5:1, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 11:10, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 21:4

**Topics:** "Divine Calling", "God's Love"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes God's unwavering love for Israel, recalling how He called His people out of Egypt, a symbol of their bondage and sin. Despite the stern messages from the prophets, God's love remained constant, as He sought to deliver them to a promised land, just as He called His Son, Jesus, out of Egypt. Bonar illustrates that this calling is not just historical but also applies to believers today, who are called out of the 'Egypt' of this world into a journey towards their eternal home. He highlights the importance of recognizing our birthplace in sin, the divine calling we receive, the challenging journey of faith, and the glorious home awaiting us in heaven. Ultimately, it is God's love that initiates and sustains this transformative journey.

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## Transcript

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." - Hosea 11:1

God's words to Israel by this prophet are hard and stern. Though intermixed with expressions of tenderness, as, "How shall I give you up?" this book is full of fearful things. In the midst of these God here stops and reminds them of his love- his first love- the kindness of their youth, the time of their espousals. It was sincere and deep; all along it had been so; and all his messages by the prophets were no proof of hatred or enmity. He loved them in Abraham; he loved them in Jacob; he loved them when they went down to Egypt; he loved them in the days of their bondage; and he showed his love in calling him- even Israel his son, his first-born- out of Egypt.

The deliverance from Egypt was always in after ages the great standing proof to which God appealed, of his love: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." This calling out of Egypt was done more than once. The most marvelous was that under Moses; but in after ages, when they were carried into Egypt, God interposed and called them out. Neither Egypt nor Babylon was to be the home of his people; only a sojourn, a place of exile; no more. Out of it they must be called. They whom God did not love might remain there; they whom he loved could not be allowed to do so. Servants or

friends might, but not sons.

For sons there was Canaan and Jerusalem- the land flowing with milk and honey. The last fulfilling or "filling up" of these words, was in the case of God's only-begotten Son. Israel's history was the rehearsal of his. He was in certain points to tread in their steps, to go over their history in himself. And what a closeness of connection, what a oneness between Him and them does this imply! Thus in him many words of the prophets received a filling up, a completion, a fulfillment, which makes every one who reads feel how true, how accurate, how overflowing full are the words of God.

It is not by accommodation, or allusion, or figure that these words are applied to Christ. No; in him they receive their last filling up, their perfect accomplishment; the last drop of the purposed metal is poured into the mold; it can contain no more; it needs no more. Then was that fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Egypt was not to be the home of Jesus; and yet it was to have the honor of sheltering him; yes, sheltering him when Israel cast him out. But out of it he must be called. God's purpose and God's word demanded it.

O marvelous fullness of the divine word! O superhuman perfection of exactness in each announcement! Not one jot or tittle fails! Heaven and earth may pass away; star after star may be broken or blotted out; but the divine word remains unharmed and glorious amid the universal wreck. All that is on earth of beauty and excellence may come to nothing; the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand forever!

In both these cases we see the word literally fulfilled. The nation of God and the Son of God were called out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage. Why this calling? Could they not remain? Was not Goshen as fruitful as Canaan? In the case of Jesus, the reason is obvious. It was in no sense his home or native land. He had fled to it for shelter, and it had received him, even as it did Israel at first. But he had work to do elsewhere; work which could not be done in Egypt. It was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel that he was sent.

In the case of Israel, we may say also, they could not remain. Though born in Egypt, it was not their true home. They were the heirs of another heritage, given by God himself; they too had work to do which could not be done in Egypt; there was a purpose to be fulfilled in them by their settlement in Canaan; too long connection with Egypt would have corrupted them with its idolatry, and worldliness, and pleasures; they had a testimony to bear in behalf of the true God which could not be borne in Egypt, so that even though they had never been oppressed, they could not have remained.

It was to Jerusalem, to Canaan, to Zion, to Lebanon that they were bound. Not out of the Nile, but of Jordan, are they to drink; with streams from Lebanon are they to quench their thirst. Whatever attractions Egypt might have (in the case of Moses it was riches, and royalty, and learning, and luxurious ease), they must not tarry; nor look behind, like Lot's wife; nor sigh, as they did afterwards in the desert, for its carnal plenty. But the word is for us figuratively what it was for Israel literally. It is for us, for we are one with Israel, and one with the Son of God.

Out of Egypt the church is called; each chosen one, each saint, each son, each Israelite indeed is called. Let us consider our history under the following chapters-

(1.) Our birthplace;

(2.) Our calling;

(3.) Our journey;

(4.) Our home.

I. OUR BIRTHPLACE. It is this Egypt world- "this present evil world." It is evil, yet it is fair to look upon, with its pleasures, its gaities, its riches, its glories, its pomps, its glitter, its songs, its magnificent palaces and gorgeous array. Egypt was one of the best specimens of the world. Into it were gathered all the world's wealth, and art, and science, and philosophy, and splendor of every kind. It was a fascinating region; every object in it magnetic to the natural man, and intoxicating to the unregenerate heart. Everything was there but the true God. The world's religion was there decked out in its goodness of temple, picture, statue, and image of every kind. The world's wisdom was all there; its 215 astronomy, its natural science, its mechanical arts, its architecture, its skill in ornament, with all fascinations for the natural man, all stimulants for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. All natural knowledge, natural beauty, natural progress, are here; intellect, power, greatness, pomp, splendor- all are here.

Yet amid all these the true God is not. When human intellect is at its highest, true religion at its lowest! The world by wisdom knows not God. All idolatry, of the vilest and most foolish kind, is here. All sensuality, oppression, wickedness are here! As was Egypt, so is this world! It is this "present evil world"; it "lies in wickedness"; and it is our birthplace!

Not Bethlehem, as in the case of the Son of God, nor Jerusalem, but Egypt is our birthplace. Children of wrath; sons of the evil one; born in sin- these are the figures which describe us. We are by nature men of Egypt.

II. OUR CALLING. We did not rise and flee of ourselves. We would have remained there forever. We loved Egypt, and delighted in its vanities. It was the home of our hearts. But God called us. He "called us with a holy calling." He called us as he did Abraham out of Ur; as he did Israel out of Egypt; as he did the fishermen out of their boats. With his own almighty voice he called us. We could not but obey. It was irresistible. Hence He made us willing in the day of his power.

Many voices within and without had called us. Conscience said, Arise, and depart. The soul's deep longings after something higher said the same. Every pain, trial, disappointment, vexation, bereavement said, Arise, and depart. But all these failed. Then God spoke the word, and we found it irresistible, He spoke, and it was done. Then all those former voices which we had hitherto slighted gathered strength. Pain, grief, weariness, affliction, all spoke out now; and God spoke in them. Even the feeblest voice of all seemed irresistible. It was not so much one call as a thousand; each one irresistible. Yes, out of Egypt God called us. Blessed and holy calling!

III. OUR JOURNEY. It is through the desert. Not at once into the kingdom; not at once to heaven; but circuitously. And this long journey is characterized not by smoothness, but by roughness! It is a waste howling wilderness; a land of barrenness, of heat, of thirst, and hunger, and weariness. It is the right path, for God is our leader; it is safe, for God is our keeper; it is blessed, for God is our companion; but still it is rough, and dark, and dreary.

Yet it is needful,

- (1.) The LENGTH of it is needful, that patience may have her perfect work;
- (2.) the ROUGHNESS of it is needful, that we may be purified;
- (3.) the INTRICACIES of it are needful, that God may have his opportunities for guiding us;
- (4.) the DARKNESS of it is needful, that Christ may be realized as the sun;
- (5.) the SORROW of it is needful, that the Holy Spirit may be known as the Comforter. How much less would we know of God and of ourselves were this journey different! How much should we lose were we taken at once into the kingdom; as there can be no second opportunity hereafter of going over the way again! Let us prize the journey in all its aspects.

IV. OUR HOME. Canaan is our promised land, and Jerusalem our city. For God has prepared for us both a land and a city; a home for eternity; not merely better than the desert, but better than Egypt; a home that more than makes up for all that we have left behind; eternal in the heavens, an incorruptible inheritance; the many mansions; God's home and ours; Christ's home and the church's forever; better than the earthly Jerusalem or the earthly paradise; in which we shall never be disturbed; from which we cannot be driven; in which we can neither be tempted nor sin; everlasting and glorious. It is to that we are bound, and we lay up our treasure there.

It is God's love that has done all this: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." God's love has done it! It is love that calls us out and draws us out; the mighty love of God. It is love that takes us as we are, and which we are to take as it is. It is love like that to Abraham and to Israel. It is the love of the shepherd to his sheep; of the woman to her lost piece of silver; of the father to his lost son. It is love to which he himself bears witness: "I loved him,"- loved him even from the days of his childhood. It is love exhibited in the cross; love realized in the tens of thousands that have been called out of Egypt by it!

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