

January 2019

Exodus 14:15, 1927 - 1930

O.P. Kretzmann

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.valpo.edu/kretzmann_collection



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, O.P., "Exodus 14:15, 1927 - 1930" (2019). *O.P. Kretzmann Collection*. 80.
https://scholar.valpo.edu/kretzmann_collection/80

This Collection Record is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives & Special Collections at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in O.P. Kretzmann Collection by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

Missions

EXODUS 14, 15.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

EXODUS 14, 15.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

EXODUS 14, 15.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

What a magnificent picture forms the background for our text! The children of Israel are standing upon the shores of the Red Sea. Behind them lie four hundred years of bondage and oppression. By divine command they have gone out from the land of Egypt and are on their way to the promised land of Canaan. But the Red Sea lies before them, deep and impassable. Their rear-guard can already see the hosts of Pharaoh approaching in the distance, hastening to take revenge for the killing of their firstborn. Surely, it is a perilous situation, a moment filled with anxiety. Doubt and confusion are written on all faces. What now? Did the Lord their God lead them from the land of Egypt only to let them perish miserably beneath the chariots of the hosts of Pharaoh? Is this the end of Jehovah's protection and guidance?— No — above the crying and wailing of the bewildered people Moses hears the voice of the great God of his fathers speaking to him: "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." My friends, you are today celebrating your annual Missionfestival. It would seem to me that in certain respects your position today is similar to that of the children of Israel. The four hundred years in Egypt were for them a trial, a means by which the Lord strengthened and established their faith. You too, as a congregation, have

experienced many trials. The Lord has led you through devious ways and many vicissitudes to the present day, to your Missionfestival of the year 1925. And what now? My friends, I truly believe that under God you are standing on the threshold of a glorious future, a future fraught with promise. And on this day of days for you, what greater message can I bring to you than the words of the eternal Lord of hosts, spoken to his servant Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." Therefore let us this afternoon put our hands into the hands of the Lord and say, "Lord, lead on; we are ready." Even as Moses and the children of Israel, so let us also hearken to His divine command: Go forward!

We would briefly note:

1. Why?

2. How?

Go forward - Why? It is evident that the primary reason must always be because it is the Lord's will. Throughout the ages this has always been the fundamental motive for all work done in the kingdom of God. Two thousand years ago our Lord and Savior stood on the hilltop in Galilee and said to the little band of disciples around him, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And from that very moment the church of God, the church militant here on earth has carried a tremendous responsibility. Into a world reeking with sin and iniquity, it was to carry the message of the cross - into a world hostile and proud it was to hurl the message of the Prince

of Peace - into a sinsick, sincurst and dying world it was to bring the water of life, the glorious news that from Calvary's hill a voice of blood was flowing, sufficient to wash, cleanse and redeem the whole human race. What an awful responsibility! Over against the ever recurring waves of ^{Muskeery}atheism and unbelief the church of God was to place the Rock of Ages; instead of the ever varying theories of men concerning the mysteries of life and death, the church was to place the cross as the center of all human thought, as the basis for all man's hopes, as the glorious end and fulfilment of God's eternal plans for the human race. What a tremendous responsibility! And, my friends, that same responsibility still exists today. Also to you and to to me comes the voice of God: Go forward, go forward in the work of the Lord! The great Lord of the Church says to us just what He said to the children of Israel: Go forward! Never, never will He say to us, "Sit down by the shore and wait!" Never so long as sin is in the world and faith in the blood-stained Redeemer is the only salvation from sin, will He say to us, "Rest here in peace!" No - by reason of this divine command the church of God must go on and on, despite the devil, world and flesh, to its final glorious consummation.

But this command of the Lord comes with especial force at certain times in the history of the world and the church. And surely such a time is the present. Lift up your eyes and look about you! Were there ever times like these? Beating into our ears we hear the watchwords of the day: Progress, Development, Evolution. But where are they? In

Religion? Lift up your eyes and look about you! Who today still worships the God of our fathers and the Christ of Calvary? In morals? Look about you! In spite of all that men may say concerning progress and development, our day and age is becoming increasingly materialistic, increasingly sensual, increasingly forgetful of God and of eternity. All around us as a Church men are going down - all about us are the sick and suffering - all around us is the crying need of faith in a crucified Redeemer - all around us are men ignorant of the one thing needful - faith in the crucified and risen Savior. Truly the command of our Lord: Go forward! comes with especial force in times like these.

And yet, my friend, these times bring with them added opportunities! Everywhere thoughtful minds are recognizing the need for a breaking away from the modern views of life which disregard the welfare of the soul entirely. On all sides men are recognizing the fact that the absence of religious training is producing its horrible effects in the youth of our land, as seen in the ever-increasing crime wave, in the utter disregard for law and order. And who will deny that these phenomena bring added opportunities for us? Everywhere in our land new doors are being opened to us - and this is also true of Central Illinois. There are any number of towns in our immediate vicinity which have never heard a Lutheran sermon, which have never heard that the Lutheran church stands foursquare on the Bible and points to the cross as man's only salvation for time and

eternity.

But permit me to come still closer to home. Decatur has at the present time a population of about 50,000 people. You, my dear friends, who live with these people, work with them - do you know how many have never given their Savior more than a passing thought? How many of these have ever heard you speak of Christ? How many have you invited to come to church with you? Oh, what a sad thing it is to see our Congregations place bulletin-boards before their churches and then forget entirely that they are to be living, walking, breathing bulletins, bringing the message of salvation to men walking in darkness.

May I address myself for a moment to the young people here present. It is a sad fact that many of our young people today are ashamed of their Christianity, ashamed of their Savior, afraid of the ridicule of halfbaked intellectuals and silly butterflies. O, my young friend, let me appeal to you today to make the Church's business your business. Humanly speaking, the future of our Church rests with you. Is your faith the living, throbbing, vital certainty which will lead you to go out into the highways and byways of this city and compel them to come in? The command of the Lord, the troublous times, your ever-increasing personal opportunities - all these call out to you today: Go forward, go forward in the work of the Lord! With you rests the future of the church! Choose ye this day what will you have! Will you have a Church reactionary and slow, blindly blundering on, forgetful of its divine mission, extracting from the present nothing

but its bitterness, from the past nothing but its mistakes - will you have a church dying from its stupid head to its stiff knees and stony heart - a church with no light in its filmy eyes, no health in its palsied hands, no living faith on its icy lips? Or will you have a church which clings to the eternal truths, a church which lives the living words of Christ, a church with power, a church fully and throbbingly alive to the command of its great Lord and Master: Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every living creature. To you, to you whom the Lord has given youth and health and strength comes His command with especial force this day: Go forward, go forward in the work of the Lord! Stand up, stand up, for your Savior, confess Him before the world, point your community to the cross on Calvary's hill and may God bless you in your endeavors!

Surely we all recognize the great need for heeding our Lord's command to go forward. But there are always some who ask: How? In what way shall we go forward? How shall we go about it? Briefly we would therefore also note this phase of the question before us. HOW?

One of the greatest missionaries the world has ever seen was the man whose name your church carries - the Apostle Paul. From the moment that the Lord opened his eyes in the city of Damascus his whole life was one continual "going forward" - one continual round of blazing, burning missionary zeal. And what was the secret of his power? How did he go about his work?

We note that the Apostle took every step for-

ward in faith. It was his faith which really overcame the heathen world and led it to the foot of the cross. And so, my friends, we too are called to go forward in faith. It is our faith, our own personal faith in the eternal truth of our message which, after all, must be the fundamental means by which we go forward. And this faith must not be and cannot be a weak, vague, temporizing faith! No, it must be the faith which overcame the world, the faith which believes in one God and Father as the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, the faith which believes in one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Godman, the Redeemer, who came into this world to shed His holy precious blood on crosscrowned Calvary for the sins of a lost and fallen race. Hear me, my friends - you will never bring men to Christ by telling them "do this and do that"; you will never save a single soul by talking of a wishy-washy morality - you will never lead a single human being to the cross by means of the Social Gospel or a program of uplift and reform. No, the basis for all your endeavors must be faith, a living, throbbing, burning faith in your Savior - the Faith which filled a Paul, a Peter, a Luther, a Walther, a Faith which will drive you on and on in an overwhelming zeal to go forward in the work of the Lord.

We note also that the Apostle Paul went forward with prayer. When he was not preaching, he was praying. In the first chapter of his great letters to the Philippians he tells them that he remembers them in every one of his prayers before the throne of mercy. And his was the right kind of prayer. Moses in the scene from which our text is taken, had also

prayed, but the Lord answered, "Wherefore criest thou unto me"? Moses had said, "Here is the sea with its wild billows raging, beating on the shore. We cannot go forward". His prayer had been a cry of despair, of doubt in the Lord's providence. But Paul's prayers flowed from his faith, and so also we should pray - and in faith and prayer lead the world to Christ until that glorious day when the Lord Himself shall come down and transform our faith here on earth into sight and full knowledge hereafter and our prayers into songs of thanksgiving.

At every Missionfestival we hear so much of prayer. We expect it, we take it as a matter of course. And just for that reason I would dwell on it a moment longer. Some years ago I was privileged, etc. O, my friends, to put tears into our prayers - how many of us do that? The greatest missionary ever on this earth was our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And the climax of His missionary activity we find in that magnificent scene when He was traveling from Jericho to Jerusalem and halted for a moment on the top of the Mt. of Olives. He beheld the city beneath Him - a seething cauldron of wickedness, unbelief and ungodliness. And He wept bitter tears, tears of divine pity and compassion. And with these tears still glistening in His eyes, He went forward into the city and spent His last four days of freedom preaching the Gospel of repentance. O, my friends, will we not also follow our Lord in this respect, will we not pray for our missionwork with tears, tears of pity and sympathy for a sinsick and fallen

race, tears of sorrow over the hardness of men's hearts, and the terrible doom toward which they are rushing. You know that when you plant a seed in your garden you must give it water if it is to grow. And so also when you have planted the seed of the Gospel in men's hearts - then water it with your tears and truly the Lord will, in His due time, give you an abundant and glorious harvest.

Go forward in faith, in prayer, sincere prayer. One point, you will note, is still missing. And that is work. It was work for the children of Israel to gather all their belongings and go forward into the Red Sea. And so also your going forward means work - hard work, unselfish work - yet glorious work. Yes, glorious work for it means leading souls to the foot of the cross. And this work follows so easily and naturally from your faith and your prayers, that I need not dwell on it any longer.

O, my friends, I pray you do not treat this work lightly. After all it represents the supreme reason for your and my existence in this world. Go forward, go forward in the work of the Lord until that day when the Lord Himself will say to you: "Come over to the other shore and rest!" And then your work here on earth for the bloodstained, crucified Savior will be transformed and translated into an eternity of singing the praises of the risen, glorious Savior, radiant and mighty.-

AMEN.