

**MOSES AND  
THE EXODUS**

*The Bible for  
School and Home*

*by J. Paterson Smyth*

*The Book of Genesis*

*Moses and the Exodus*

*Joshua and the Judges*

*The Prophets and Kings*

*When the Christ Came:  
The Highlands of Galilee*

*When the Christ Came:  
The Road to Jerusalem*

*St. Matthew*

*St. Mark*

*The Bible for School and Home*

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THE EXODUS**

by

*J. Paterson Smyth*

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## I

This series of books is intended for two classes of teachers:

1. *For Teachers in Week Day and Sunday Schools.* For these each book is divided into complete lessons. The lesson will demand preparation. Where feasible there should be diligent use of commentaries and of any books indicated in the notes. *As a general rule* I think the teacher should not bring the book at all to his class if he is capable of doing without it. He should make copious notes of the subject. The lesson should be thoroughly studied and digested beforehand, with all the additional aids at his disposal, and it should come forth at the class warm and fresh from his own heart and brain. But I would lay down no rigid rule about the use of the Lesson Book. To some it may be a burden to keep the details of a long lesson in the memory; and, provided the subject has been very carefully studied, the Lesson Book, with its salient points carefully marked in coloured pencil, may be a considerable help. Let each do what seems best in his particular case, only taking care to satisfy his conscience that it is not done through

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laziness, and that he can really do best for his class by the plan which he adopts.

2. *For Parents* who would use it in teaching their children at home. They need only small portions, brief little lessons of about ten minutes each night. For these each chapter is divided into short sections. I should advise that on the first night only the Scripture indicated should be read, with some passing remarks and questions to give a grip of the story. That is enough. Then night after night go on with the teaching, taking as much or as little as one sees fit.

I have not written out the teaching in full as a series of readings which could be read over to the child without effort or thought. With this book in hand a very little preparation and adaptation will enable one to make the lesson more interesting and more personal and to hold the child's attention by questioning. Try to get his interest. Try to make him talk. Make the lesson conversational. Don't preach.

## II

### HINTS FOR TEACHING

An ancient Roman orator once laid down for his pupils the three-fold aim of a teacher:

1. *Placere* (to interest).
2. *Docere* (to teach).
3. *Movere* (to move).

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1. To interest the audience (in order to teach them).
2. To teach them (in order to move them).
3. To move them to action.

On these three words of his I hang a few suggestions on the teaching of this set of Lessons.

### *1. Placere (to interest)*

I want especially to insist on attention to this rule. Some teachers seem to think that to interest the pupils is a minor matter. It is not a minor matter and the pupils will very soon let you know it. Believe me, it is no waste of time to spend hours during the week in planning to excite their interest to the utmost. Most of the complaints of inattention would cease at once if the teacher would give more study to rousing their interest. After all, there is little use in knowing the facts of your subject, and being anxious about the souls of the pupils, if all the time that you are teaching, these pupils are yawning and taking no interest in what you say. I know some have more aptitude for teaching than others. Yet, after considerable experience of teachers whose lesson was a weariness to the flesh, and of teachers who never lost attention for a moment, I am convinced, on the whole, that the power to interest largely depends on the previous preparation.

Therefore do not content yourself with merely studying the teaching of this series. Read widely and freely. Read not only commentaries, but books that will

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give local interest and colour—books that will throw valuable sidelights on your sketch.

But more than reading is necessary. You know the meaning of the expression, "*Put yourself in his place.*" Practise that in every Bible story, using your imagination, living in the scene, experiencing, as far as you can, every feeling of the actors. To some this is no effort at all. They feel their cheeks flushing and their eyes growing moist as they project themselves involuntarily into the scene before them. But though it be easier to some than to others, it is in some degree possible to all, and the interest of the lesson largely depends on it. I have done my best in these books to help the teacher in this respect. But no man can help another much. Success will depend entirely on the effort to "put yourself in his place."

In reading the Bible chapter corresponding to each lesson, I suggest that the teacher should read part of the chapter, rather than let the pupils tire themselves by "reading round." My experience is that this "reading round" is a fruitful source of listlessness. When his verse is read, the pupil can let his mind wander till his turn comes again, and so he loses all interest. I have tried, with success, varying the monotony. I would let them read the first round of verses in order; then I would make them read out of the regular order, as I called their names; and sometimes, if the lesson were long, I would again and again interrupt by reading a group of verses myself, making remarks as I went on. To lose their interest is fatal.

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I have indicated also in the lessons that you should not unnecessarily give information yourself. Try to question it *into* them. If you tell them facts which they have just read, they grow weary. If you ask a question, and then answer it yourself when they miss it, you cannot keep their attention. Send your questions around in every sort of order, or want of order. Try to puzzle them—try to surprise them. Vary the form of the question, if not answered, and always feel it to be a defeat if you ultimately fail in getting the answer you want.

### 2. *Docere (to teach)*

You interest the pupil in order that you may *teach*. Therefore teach definitely the Lesson that is set you. Do not be content with interesting him. Do not be content either with drawing spiritual teaching. Teach the facts before you. Be sure that God has inspired the narration of them for some good purpose.

When you are dealing with Old Testament characters, do not try to shirk or to condone evil in them. They were not faultless saints. They were men like ourselves, whom God was helping and bearing with, as He helps and bears with us, and the interest of the story largely depends on the pupil realizing this.

In the Old Testament books of this series you will find very full chapters written on the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the election of Jacob, the Sun standing still, the slaughter of Canaanites, and other such subjects. In connection with these I want to say something that

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especially concerns teachers. Your pupils, now or later, can hardly avoid coming in contact with the flippant scepticism so common nowadays, which makes jests at the story of the sun standing still, and talks of the folly of believing that all humanity was condemned because Eve ate an apple thousands of years ago. This flippant tone is "in the air." They will meet with it in their companions, in the novels of the day, in popular magazine articles on their tables at home. You have, many of you, met with it yourselves; you know how disturbing it is; and you probably know, too, that much of its influence on people arises from the narrow and unwise teaching of the Bible in their youth. Now you have no right to ignore this in your teaching of the Bible. You need not talk of Bible difficulties and their answers. You need not refer to them at all. But teach the truth that will take the sting out of these difficulties when presented in after-life.

To do this requires trouble and thought. We have learned much in the last fifty years that has thrown new light for us on the meaning of some parts of the Bible; which has, at any rate, made doubtful some of our old interpretations of it. We must not ignore this. There are certain traditional theories which some of us still insist on teaching as God's infallible truth, whereas they are really only human opinions about it, which may possibly be mistaken. As long as they are taught as human opinions, even if we are wrong, the mistake will do no harm. But if things are taught as God's infallible truth, to be believed on peril of doubting God's Word, it may do grave mischief, if in after-life the pupil find

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them seriously disputed, or perhaps false. A shallow, unthinking man, finding part of his teaching false, which has been associated in his mind with the most solemn sanctions of religion, is in danger of letting the whole go. Thus many of our young people drift into hazy doubt about the Bible. Then we get troubled about their beliefs, and give them books of Christian evidences to win them back by explaining that what was taught them in childhood was not *quite* correct, and needs now to be modified by a broader and slightly different view. But we go on as before with the younger generation, and expose them in their turn to the same difficulties.

Does it not strike you that, instead of this continual planning to win men back from unbelief, it might be worth while to try the other method of not exposing them to unbelief? Give them the more careful and intelligent teaching at first, and so prepare them to meet the difficulties by-and-by.

I have no wish to advocate any so-called "advanced" teaching. Much of such teaching I gravely object to. But there are truths of which there is no question amongst thoughtful people, which somehow are very seldom taught to the young, though ignorance about them in after-life leads to grave doubt and misunderstanding. Take, for example, the gradual, progressive nature of God's teaching in Scripture, which makes the Old Testament teaching as a whole lower than that of the New. This is certainly no doubtful question, and the knowledge of it is necessary for an intelligent study of

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Scripture. I have dealt with it where necessary in some of the books of this series.

I think, too, our teaching on what may seem to us doubtful questions should be more fearless and candid. If there are two different views each held by able and devout men, do not teach your own as the infallibly true one, and ignore or condemn the other. For example, do not insist that the order of creation must be accurately given in the first chapter of Genesis. You may think so; but many great scholars, with as deep a reverence for the Bible as you have, think that inspired writers were circumscribed by the science of their time. Do not be too positive that the story of the Fall *must be* an exactly literal narrative of facts. If you believe that it is I suppose you must tell your pupil so. But do not be afraid to tell him also that there are good and holy and scholarly men who think of it as a great old-world allegory, like the parable of the Prodigal Son, to teach in easy popular form profound lessons about sin. Endeavor in your Bible teaching “to be thoroughly truthful: to assert nothing as certain which is not certain, nothing as probable which is not probable, and nothing as more probable than it is.” Let the pupil see that there are some things that we cannot be quite sure about, and let him gather insensibly from your teaching the conviction that truth, above all things, is to be loved and sought, and that religion has never anything to fear from discovering the truth. If we could but get this healthy, manly, common-sense attitude adopted now in teaching the Bible to young people, we should, with

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God's blessing, have in the new generation a stronger and more intelligent faith.

### 3. *Movere (to move)*

All your teaching is useless unless it have this object: to move the heart, to rouse the affections toward the love of God, and the will toward the effort after the blessed life. You interest in order to teach. You teach in order to move. *That* is the supreme object. Here the teacher must be left largely to his own resources. One suggestion I offer: don't preach. At any rate, don't preach much lest you lose grip of your pupils. You have their attention all right while their minds are occupied by a carefully prepared lesson; but wait till you close your Bible, and, assuming a long face, begin, "And now, boys," etc. and straightway they know what is coming, and you have lost them in a moment.

Do not change your tone at the application of your lesson. Try to keep the teaching still conversational. Try still in this more spiritual part of your teaching to question into them what you want them to learn. Appeal to the judgment and to the conscience. I can scarce give a better example than that of our Lord in teaching the parable of the Good Samaritan. He first interested His pupil by putting His lesson in an attractive form, and then He did not append to it a long, tedious moral. He simply asked the man before Him, "Which of these three *thinkest thou?*"—i.e., "What do you think about it?" The interest was still kept up. The man, pleased at the appeal to his judgment, replied promptly, "He that

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showed mercy on him;” and on the instant came the quick rejoinder, “Go, and do thou likewise.” Thus the lesson ends. Try to work on that model.

Now, while forbidding preaching to your pupils, may I be permitted a little preaching myself? This series of lessons is intended for Sunday schools as well as week-day schools. It is of Sunday-school teachers I am thinking in what I am now about to say. I cannot escape the solemn feeling of the responsibility of every teacher for the children in his care. Some of these children have little or no religious influence exerted on them for the whole week except in this one hour with you. Do not make light of this work. Do not get to think, with good-natured optimism, that all the nice, pleasant children in your class are pretty sure to be Christ’s soldiers and servants by-and-by. Alas! for the crowds of these nice, pleasant children, who, in later life, wander away from Christ into the ranks of evil. Do not take this danger lightly. Be anxious; be prayerful; be terribly in earnest, that the one hour in the week given you to use be wisely and faithfully used.

But, on the other hand, be very hopeful too, because of the love of God. He will not judge you hardly. Remember that He will bless very feeble work, if it be your best. Remember that He cares infinitely more for the children’s welfare than you do, and, therefore, by His grace, much of the teaching about which you are despondent may bring forth good fruit in the days to come. Do you know the lines about “The Noisy Seven”?—

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“I wonder if he remembers—

Our sainted teacher in heaven—  
The class in the old grey schoolhouse,  
Known as the ‘Noisy Seven’?

“I wonder if he remembers

How restless we used to be.  
Or thinks we forget the lesson  
Of Christ and Gethsemane?

“I wish I could tell the story

As he used to tell it then;  
I’m sure that, with Heaven’s blessing,  
It would reach the hearts of men.

“I often wish I could tell him,

Though we caused him so much pain  
By our thoughtless, boyish frolic,  
His lessons were not in vain.

“I’d like to tell him how Willie,

The merriest of us all,  
From the field of Balaclava  
Went home at the Master’s call.

“I’d like to tell him how Ronald,

So brimming with mirth and fun,  
Now tells the heathen of India  
The tale of the Crucified One.

“I’d like to tell him how Robert,

And Jamie, and George, and ‘Ray,’  
Are honoured in the Church of God—  
The foremost men of their day.

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“I’d like, yes, I’d like to tell him  
    What his lesson did for me;  
And how I am trying to follow  
    The Christ of Gethsemane.

“Perhaps he knows it already,  
    For Willie has told him, maybe,  
That we are all coming, coming  
    Through Christ of Gethsemane.

“How many besides I know not  
    Will gather at last in heaven,  
The fruit of that faithful sowing,  
    But the sheaves are already seven.”

LESSON I

**THE FIELD OF ZOAN**

*Read Exodus I.*

**§ 1. Recapitulation**

This story of Exodus is but a continuation of the story we read in Genesis. You remember what we learned there:—

(1) That God had a great purpose for the children of Israel, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the world, that they should bear the torch of God's light for all the nations upon earth.

(2) That it seems to have been necessary for His purpose that they should go down to live and learn, and suffer in Egypt, and thus become welded into a nation. So God revealed to Abraham what should happen in Egypt, and that afterwards the nation should be restored to Palestine (Genesis xv. 13).

(3) That in His providence, in what seemed the merest chance ways, Joseph got sold into Egypt, and the famine came and drove down his brethren, and he

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became prime minister to Pharaoh, and invited down all his family. So God's purpose began to be fulfilled.

(4) That the patriarchs looked forward to the final fulfilment of these promises. Did Abraham see the promises fulfilled? Did Isaac? Did Jacob? What is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews? (xi. 13). "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but, etc." And then at last Joseph died, with less apparent likelihood of fulfilment than ever. But as he was dying, he took an oath of his brethren, "God will surely visit you, and bring you to the land which He promised, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." So he died, "and they embalmed him, and he was put in a mummy case in Egypt." (Genesis i. 26). That is the last word of Genesis, and for centuries afterwards careless people in Egypt or Goshen might smile at the foolishness of Joseph's faith. But 500 years later comes Exodus, and then Joshua and the Kings and the Prophets, and at last the coming of Christ, and the long history of the Church. Does it look now as if God had failed in His promise?

### § 2. *The Gap in the Story*

"Joseph died and they put him in a mummy case in Egypt." After this there is a great gap in the story—300 years of silence while the Israelites lived and were enslaved in Egypt, and the mummy of their dead chief lay in its burial case waiting to be carried away when the Deliverance should come. During that long period many stirring events happened in Egypt, changes of dynasties, new races of kings, just as happened in

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England when Saxon and Norman and Plantagenet and Tudor dynasties succeeded one after the other to the throne. We know a good deal now about Egyptian history from the many discoveries of monuments of the Pharaohs, and from the writings and pictures that have been found in the old tombs. But they tell us very little about the shepherds from Palestine who had been left in Goshen after the death of the great prime minister Zafenath-Paneah. Enough, however, is known to make the chief students of Egyptian history pretty well agreed as to the period when the Exodus story comes in. More than 2000 years before Christ, they tell us, a great defeat fell upon Egypt. A foreign race, the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, invaded the land and subdued it, and reigned as conquerors just as William the Conqueror and his Normans did in the old Saxon days in England. It is thought that one of these Hyksos kings, Apepi, was the Pharaoh of Joseph's day. Then came the Great Revolution, when the native Egyptians rose against them, laid in ruins their royal city of Tanis, and swept them with terrible slaughter from the land, and a native race of kings succeeded to the throne. Then came another revolution, and another new line of Pharaohs, the Rameses dynasty, and it is with the first four of these Rameses kings that our story is concerned. They were called—

Rameses I.

Seti I.

RAMESES II.

MERENPTAH.

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This, it is believed, was the new race of kings “that knew not Joseph.” In England, when the Normans came, they neither knew nor cared about the great men or the great deeds of the Saxon time. So it would naturally be here. Probably the enslaving of the Israelites began under the first two of these Rameses Pharaohs. Then came the specially cruel treatment under Rameses II., “Rameses the Great,” “the Pharaoh of the Oppression.” He is known in Egyptian history as the great builder of cities, just the man that would need slaves to work hard for him in the brick-fields. The name of the store city RAMESES seems also to point to him as its builder, since he was the most famous king of that name. And later on some years ago M. Naville discovered and excavated the other store city of Pithom, and found from the inscriptions that King Rameses had been active there. So we have good reason to believe that this great royal builder Rameses II. was really the Pharaoh who oppressed Israel. When he died (Exodus ii. 23) he was succeeded by his son Merenptah, a weaker king, but also a builder, who carried on and completed his father’s designs. He, it is believed, was the Pharaoh who contended so fiercely with Moses, and would not let Israel go. Some day you may be able to study for yourselves the reasons which have led Egyptian scholars to fix thus the time of the Exodus. We cannot go into the matter more fully here.

§ 3. *The Field of Zoan*

Before we begin the story of Moses, would it not be well to have some idea of the place and the times in which its scenes occurred? In the after-life of Israel a place called ZOAN seems to have stood out prominently in the national memory. When speaking of Hebron, the historian says, “it was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.” (Numbers xiii. 22). And when the Psalmist long afterwards is celebrating God’s wonders in Egypt, he writes,—

“Marvellous things did He in the sight of their fathers,  
In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.”

And again:—

“How He had wrought His signs in Egypt,  
And His wonders in the field of Zoan.”  
—(Psalm lxxviii. 12, 43)

So if we could find out what and where Zoan was we should probably find out from Egyptian history something more than we are told in the Bible about the story of Israel.

Now we know very well where Zoan is. There is a famous city in ancient history, the city of Tanis or Tsan, the royal city of the shepherd kings, and probably the scene of Joseph’s glory, which there are several reasons for identifying with Zoan. One convincing reason is that 700 years after Moses a set of Greek scholars in *Egypt* made the famous Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint Bible, and when translating the above verses of the 78th Psalm they rendered it,—

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“Marvellous things did He in the sight of their fathers,  
In the land of Egypt, in the field of Tanis.”

Therefore they, residing in Egypt at a time when Tanis was still a flourishing provincial town, must have known that Zoan was but another name for the once famous Tanis, which had been the royal city of the Pharaohs in the land of Goshen 700 years before.

Egyptian history is perfectly clear as to the fact that Zoan or Tanis, which had been destroyed in the Great Revolution, when the Hyksos were driven out with great slaughter, was afterwards rebuilt in glory and splendour by Rameses the Great, “the Pharaoh of the Oppression.” It was his royal city, and therefore, if scholars are right in fixing the date of the Exodus, Tanis would be certainly the city of Moses, and if we could form any idea of its appearance in the days of its glory, we should be able to call up in our minds in some degree some of the greatest scenes of his life.

### ***§ 4. The Grave of a Dead City***

Far away in the Delta of the Nile, in the centre of the ancient land of Goshen there lies to-day, the grave of a dead city. It is like a great sand island heaped up into desolate piles of reddish brown mud and strewn all over with ruins. Nearly forty years ago (in 1884) a boat arrived one morning at the side of this desolate mound, and a traveller sprang ashore to view the dreary ruins in the dim light of the morning. The mound covered

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the ruins of the ancient city of Zoan, or Tanis, and the traveller was the famous explorer, Dr. Flinders Petrie, sent out from England by the Egypt Exploration Fund, to uncover this lost city of the Pharaohs. Some time before they had sent out a Frenchman, M. Naville, for the purpose, but he thought the task too great for the time at his disposal, and, turning aside in another direction, came unexpectedly upon the most fortunate find of his life, the buried store city of Pithom,<sup>1</sup> which the Israelites had built for Pharaoh (Exodus i. 11).

So the exploring of Tanis remained for an Englishman. For five months Dr. Petrie worked at the ruins with his little band of helpers. He dug and explored and measured and photographed, till he had found and given to the world a list of the buried wonders, and an idea of what the ancient Tanis was like.<sup>2</sup>

Digging for Egyptian cities is a curious sort of work, for usually there are two or three of them one under the other. Hundreds of years before Moses there was the older city of Tanis, the great royal city of the Hyksos Shepherd Kings, and probably the scene of Joseph's glory. In the Great Revolution that I told you of, this ancient Tanis was laid in utter ruins, and probably remained so for centuries getting gradually covered by the drifting desert sands. Then after centuries came King Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the Oppression, and rebuilt it in great stateliness and grandeur. And ages later

<sup>1</sup>See *The Store City of Pithom* by E. Naville, published by the Egypt Exploration Fund.

<sup>2</sup>See *Tanis* by Flinders Petrie (Trübner & Co.).

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still, there was a Roman town there, whose people were walking about over the buried statues and buildings of King Rameses' day. And even in Christian days it became the seat of a Christian bishopric, probably on account of the persistent Coptic tradition that it was the city of Moses' birth. So you see Dr. Petrie had no easy task when he gathered his crowd of Arab labourers to dig up the buried city of Moses and King Rameses.

First he found the ruins of a long double row of pillars and sphinxes, which he saw at once must have been the avenue of the temple. So he set to work and exposed the pillars and statues and the sphinxes of black marble, with their strange human faces and lion bodies. Then he dug on to the red granite temple, 1000 feet long, and the old houses of the city. But he could not get very far on with the work. "We can only imagine," he says, "what interest may await us when we reach the dwellings of the people who lived around the splendid temple . . . replete with noble statues, and dominated in every part by the royal splendour of RAMESES beloved by Amon."<sup>1</sup> There could certainly be no question as to King Rameses' connection with it. Everywhere was the name of this vainglorious Pharaoh. Not content with his

<sup>1</sup>And still more so surely when they dig down lower still where, he says, "must lie the older town, the town of the bearded Hyksos." He got some of their statues there, "all distinguished by an entirely different type of face to any in other Egyptian monuments, and which cannot be attributed to any other known period. It is therefore all the more certain that they belong to this foreign race." Also they are without exception of the black or grey granite, never of the favourite red granite. The Hyksos had no control of the red granite quarries of Assuan, so had to use black.

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own pillars and sphinxes, Dr. Petrie found that he had chiselled off the names of the more ancient kings from their monuments, and everywhere covered them with his own. All the ruins told of King Rameses, how he had rebuilt Zoan and adorned it with splendid statues and buildings. The temple was so full of his monuments and inscriptions that one might almost believe that he himself was the god who was worshipped there. And what an old boaster he was! He calls himself “the Smiter of Nations, the Strong Bull, the Destroyer of His Enemies, Rames beloved of (the god) Amon.” (See Flinders Petrie, *Tanis*.)

Though Dr. Petrie found these splendid memorials overthrown and displaced, yet one could well imagine them whole and erect—one could imagine the scene in those far back days, when King Rameses reigned and worshipped in the temple, walking in procession through his grand avenue of sphinxes and obelisks, to worship the Sun and the River as gods, to be worshipped himself almost as a god. We cannot yet identify where his palace and public buildings stood, but we can see where he had erected, overtopping the city, the most stupendous monument that ever man had raised to himself, a great colossal statue, carved out of one solid block of red granite, 90 feet high, and weighing over 900 tons! Think of the vast labour and probably the cruel slave-driving involved in cutting that giant block from its far-off quarry, and bearing it to its destination right across Egypt. One can see the huge brick wall of the city crumbled into dust, and one can guess that somewhere, amid all its grandeur, there were rows of

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mean little slave huts, somewhere along the river, where men and women lived like beasts of burden, in pain and degradation, thinking that neither God nor man cared anything about them.

If we had sufficient money and leisure would it not be interesting to start off all of us together by the morning train to the ruins of Tanis to study on the spot the childhood of Moses? It would take us some weeks to go, and we must carry plenty of provisions, for Dr. Petrie found it very hard to get anything to eat. Fancy our sitting down next month on a piece of that huge statue of King Rameses, and thinking of the time when it was such a familiar object to the eyes of Moses, and when the Israelite slaves used to look up to it across the river and curse it and the tyrant in their bitter hearts! Then we might turn and look eastward for the Exodus route. Aye, we might go back 500 years earlier still, and think of the older city underneath the city of Rameses, and watch in imagination the splendid funeral of Jacob as it started from Tanis away to the far-off grave of his fathers in Hebron. *From Zoan to Hebron!* I think I should like to open my Bible just then and read with a new connection that verse I have referred to (Numbers xiii. 22): “Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.”

### § 5. *How Pharaoh “Dealt Wisely”*

Now we are ready to read our lesson for to-day (Exodus i.). We can imagine the Pharaoh in his splendid new city of Tanis, with its stately buildings and its avenue

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of obelisks and sphinxes leading to the great temple, and his huge red statue, 90 feet high, commanding the whole scene. And outside, the bands of slaves bending under the whip of the taskmasters, and cursing Pharaoh and his vanity and cruelty, and the clever statesmanship that had “dealt wisely” with them, so as to gradually break down their spirit till they were too cowed and degraded to rise in the might of their numbers against him.

Pharaoh was afraid that their numbers would make them dangerous in case of a war—but he was also afraid that they should “get them up out of the land” (v. 10), and that he should lose all this valuable slave labour, so much wanted for his great buildings and for digging canals, and working at the hardest task in Egypt, the artificial watering of the land that was out of reach of the river. (See v. 14, for the two sorts of work.) So King Rameses “dealt wisely” with them, and got his fears quieted, and his lands watered, and his two store cities of Pithom and Rameses built. That was all that concerned him. Never mind Right or Mercy. Never mind Justice and the God of Justice if he can get his own will done.

But somehow Justice and the God of Justice are not so easily flung aside. No king or nation can do these things without putting themselves wrong with God, whether it be in Egypt long ago, or in America to-day. So God had to punish Egypt and to deliver Israel. Not that He was against Egypt any more than against Israel. This is no story of God’s favouritism for one people as

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against another. It is the lesson of a divine eternal law that must be always and everywhere against wrong.

People don't think that God is watching—I am sure Pharaoh did not. And I am pretty sure the Israelites did not as they struggled on in their hopeless misery. I dare say they often thought with bitter mockery of the dead Joseph in his lonely mummy case, and of his hopeful prophecy, that God would surely visit them and deliver them. Yet all the time God's plan was being silently and slowly worked out, as we shall see in the following chapters.

### NOTES

Exodus xii. 41 gives the Israelites' sojourn as 430 years. The genealogies and the Egyptian chronology tend to confirm this. Rawlinson's *Moses* conjecturally divides the period thus:—70 years under Joseph's protection, 160 years in which they were "afflicted," but not severely oppressed, and 100 years in which "their lives were made bitter, and the Egyptians made them to serve with rigour." (Exodus i. 14).

Probably the extreme measure of destroying the male infants was a temporary one, owing to dread of the formidable Kheta or Hittite race. They were a frequent source of uneasiness to Egypt, and the Israelites occupied the frontier which would first be attacked in an invasion by them. Naturally Pharaoh feared that they would side with the invaders, and so win their freedom,

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and all the more so since they probably resembled them in language, costume, habits, etc.

Verse 11, "Treasure Cities."—The Hebrew word corresponds very closely both in form and meaning with "magazines," depots of ammunition and provisions; the same word is used in 1 Kings ix. 19; 2 Chronicles viii. 4, and xxxii. 28.

Captives were employed in great numbers for building and enlarging such depots under the Egyptian kings of the 18th and 19th dynasties.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

### QUESTIONS FOR LESSON I

Who is the chief person in the Exodus story?

Who was chief person dealt with at the end of Genesis?

What did Joseph prophesy as he died?

How many years had passed before the Exodus began?

Who was King Rameses?

Can you tell anything of the discovery of Moses' old city?

What was the condition of the Israelites in Egypt in Moses' day?

LESSON II

**THE TRAINING OF  
THE DELIVERER**

*Read Exodus II. 1-10.*

*Acts VII. 17-22.*

**§ 1. Moses' Infancy**

Do you remember in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the little slave hut of Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe, with their merry little boys Mose and Pete? I am thinking now of a slave hut like it out by the brick-fields of Tanis 3000 years ago, where another godly slave man and his wife tried to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord. What were their names? Of what tribe? (Daughter=descendant, no reason for the common notion that Jochebed was elderly and was Amram's aunt.) Perhaps in more prosperous days they belonged to high family in the tribe, but now all was changed. I can fancy this poor slave father working naked in the hot brick-fields or at the canal, and coming home at night weary and bleeding from the overseer's whip, and

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perhaps for the moment inclined to doubt in his sore heart if God saw or cared at all.

Why should we think it was a religious home? Were all the Israelites in Egypt religious? No (Joshua xxiv. 14; Ezekiel xx. 5-9). But here, when we see all God's providential care afterwards for the bringing up and training of the Deliverer, we can hardly doubt he would be born into a religious home. And also in the New Testament we hear of the faith of his parents (Hebrews xi. 23). What other children? Miriam, the first Mary in the Bible, about fifteen, and a little boy Aaron, three years old (*ch.* vii. 7), able to run about and delight his mother with his funny baby talk. I wonder how he escaped being thrown into the river? Probably because he was born before this cruel order, and that it applied only to babies.

Now into this home, with the cruel order hanging over the people, a little boy was born. Was he ugly? (see *ch.* ii. 2; Acts vii. 20; Hebrews xi. 23). I dare say his mother would have thought him lovely in any case. They always do. But this baby was especially so, and his mother was all the more drawn to him. Generally great joy about a new baby. Was it so here? Why not? Oh, what an awful dread they had of the king's inspectors, and the dark river, and the horrible crocodiles waiting for their prey! What did Jochebed do? Hid the baby. Children warned not to tell. How long hidden? A baby three months old with healthy lungs is not easy to hide. So the poor distracted mother had to find some other plan. Do you think she prayed and trusted God about it? (Hebrews xi. 23).

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What was her plan? Yes; we are told by Josephus, the Jewish historian,<sup>1</sup> that Pharaoh's daughter, the Princess Thermuthis, was married and childless, and greatly longed for a child. If it was so, the quick-witted mother would know it. At any rate it was her only chance. And so we can picture her in the early dawn stealing along with her baby, terrified lest he should cry and betray her, till she got to the reeds in the secluded water where the princess went down to bathe. We can see her placing the little ark in the reeds and passionately kissing her little boy and lifting her streaming eyes to Heaven as she commends him to God's care. We know exactly what such a mother would do. Then the wise little sister was set to watch.

Now tell me what happened? How did she guess it was a Hebrew child? Perhaps the features and dress and the knowledge that only a Hebrew mother would risk her baby's life like this. See the simple way, like mere chance, in which God answered the poor mother's prayers. The princess was childless, and the baby was very beautiful, and when he looked at her and cried in his helplessness and fright, her heart went out at once to the little crying child. I think Moses, who tells the story, likes to dwell on her kindness and compassion. I daresay he loved her a good deal, and that she was dead when he wrote the story, and he liked to think of her kindly heart. People who are not accustomed to thinking of God in human affairs would call these things chance. Do you think so? Do you not think the

<sup>1</sup>*Antiquities of the Jews*, II. 9, §4, 5.

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parents' prayers and faith and God's high purpose for the child had something to do with it?

Tell me now of Miriam's clever little plan. Do you think the princess suspected it? I should not wonder if she did, especially when she saw how the mother held and looked at her child. But if the princess suspected she held her tongue about it, and sent the child away to be nursed for her. I suppose she would not dare to take it to the palace. How glad that little mother was that night as she carried home her baby safe and secure, and how her faith would be strengthened, and how she and her husband and children would bow down before God in thankfulness for His answer to their prayers.

### ***§ 2. His Boyhood, His Mother's Bible***

So during his early years the boy remained at home with his mother. How would this affect God's plan for his future? Don't you see? The early years of a child are the most important time with regard to his religion. The teaching and the feelings about God and the habit of prayer and trust acquired in our childhood sink more deeply into us than any later teaching. We can remember best of all the hymns and prayers learnt in our childhood. So you see, instead of the child being taught to worship the sacred hawk and the black bull in the big red temple of Pharaoh, he was here in his earliest years in the hands of a mother who loved and trusted God, and who would teach him to love and worship God as she did herself. That was the grand foundation for the religion of his after life.

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Did you ever wonder what Bible Moses' mother had, and how did he and Joseph and the ancient Israelites learn about God? As far as we can learn there existed, long before a word of Genesis was written, a sort of "Bible before the Bible." There was the Creation Story, The Story of the Fall, The Story of the Flood, etc. Perhaps they were written down before Abraham's day, when writing was well known. More probably they were handed down from father to son, and preserved in memory in the folk lore of the people without any writing. So Moses may well have learned them from his mother in the slave hut. (See my Introduction to Genesis in this series.)

Of course, as the child grew up he had to leave his mother and go to live in the palace to play with princely companions, and be waited on by courtly attendants, and be surrounded by all the refinement and luxury of the most refined and luxurious court in the world. There would doubtless be much of servile flattery and obedience to his every whim. There is always much in the position of a young prince to spoil his nature, whether in Egypt or anywhere else. And I fear in Egypt Moses would see much that was not good for a boy to see. Don't you think it was a good thing for him that he had been brought up by a religious mother? Ah! that is about the best thing God can give to any of us.

As I look at Dr. Petrie's photographs of what he found in the buried city where Moses had lived, and still more as I see the strange old pictures of Egyptian life that have come down to us from the time of Moses, I can picture the sights around the boy as he looked from

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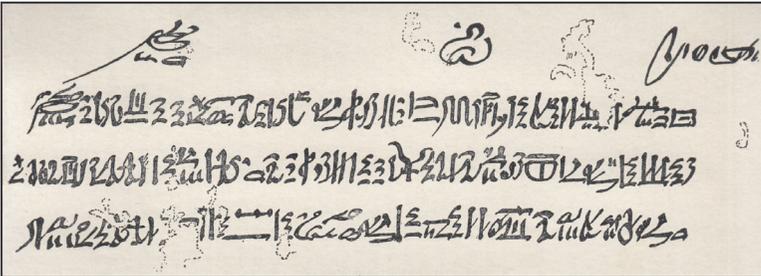
the palace roof, or drove in his little chariot through the city, the streets swarming with gaily-dressed crowds, the river crowded with barges in full sail, the music and song, the procession of priests down that long avenue of sphinxes to the great temple of Ptah; and sometimes, on more exciting days, the return of the king from some triumphant expedition with his kilted soldiers and bright swift chariots, and the long rows of captives dragged through the streets. Wonderful sights in that ancient city of Tanis, where Moses was a boy, with the grey mysterious desert stretching away behind, a wonderful delightful life for a boy, flattered and petted and admired like this young prince Moses. I wonder if he ever saw the darker side of that life—the hot brick-fields in the blazing sun, and the slaves sweating at their tasks and crying out under the cruel lash. I wonder too if the little mother who so loved him and prayed for him was ever allowed to see him in his palace days, or was the new royal mother so jealous of his love that she shut out the poor parents from him altogether? Did the poor mother die without her child beside her? Was Amram flogged to death in the brick-fields before the boy grew up? And had they to wait till they passed into the Waiting Life beyond the grave to understand God's high plans for their son in the palace? I should not wonder if it were so.

### ***§ 3. His Education, His Copybook***

One thing at any rate was well attended to in King Rameses' days—the education of boys of high rank.

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In his boyhood Moses would be taught reading and writing, but not so simply as they are taught in our country to-day. His books were like rows of curious pictures. When he was learning to read the old writings and the inscriptions and monuments he found that an eagle meant *a*, and an owl was *m*, a chicken was *u*, a hawk stood for *hur*, and a vulture for *mut*. But when he had to write them in his copybook he found that the pictures had to change their forms a good deal for the convenience of rapid writing. Should you like to see one of Moses' copybooks? I cannot show you that, but I can show you one like it. Here is the reproduction from a photograph of one.



### WHAT MOSES' COPYBOOK WAS LIKE

Photograph of an Egyptian boy's copybook about the time of Moses (*Anastasian Papyri*, 5, 16). The left-hand word of the first line, *asha* (= "much") is corrected as not written well enough. From Erman's *Ancient Egypt*.

It was not written by Moses, but by another Egyptian boy of about the same period or a little earlier. There are several of them in the museums, for when a boy of high rank died, his copybooks, the only achievement of his youthful powers, were frequently buried with him. An Egyptian copybook is easily recognized from

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its size and shape and often from the writing-master's corrections over the line. In this photograph you can see how at one end of the first line the boy had written badly the word 'asha' which means *much*, and how the teacher had corrected it just above. I can even tell you how many pages of copybook one Egyptian boy had to do each day. For one copybook is dated on one page the 24th of the month Epiphi, and three pages back is the 23rd, and three pages forward the 25th Epiphi. So that boy had to write three pages a day.<sup>1</sup>

I think boys were pretty much the same in Moses' time as they are to-day. I notice that at the back of the copybooks are all sorts of scribbling and queer boyish pictures of houses and cows and drawings of men in that sort of high art which belongs to idle schoolboys from time immemorial, with round head and dots for the eyes and hands sticking out like garden rakes. Only I think the idle boys in Moses' day got a little more flogging than such boys do now. For here are some of the schoolmasters' opinions and advice. "The youth has a back he attends when it is beaten." "Spend no day in idleness or thou wilt be flogged; for the ears of a boy are placed on his back and he hears when it is flogged."<sup>2</sup> And so one is not surprised to read that "at noon the children rushed out of school *shouting for joy!*" I dare say Moses was much the same sort of boy as yourselves, only I don't think he was idle, else he could hardly have been so "learned in all the wisdom of

<sup>1</sup>See Erman's *Life in Ancient Egypt*, ch. xiv.

<sup>2</sup>Anastasi Papyri 5, 8, 6 in British Museum quoted in Erman's *Ancient Egypt*.

the Egyptians.” Besides, reading and writing he would learn also arithmetic and music, and what probably he liked better, games of wrestling and fencing, games of draughts, and the various games of ball depicted in Egyptian paintings.

#### **§ 4. *His Youth and Manhood***

And when he grew up he was of course sent to one of the two great ancient universities—the Oxford and Cambridge or the Harvard and Yale of Egypt. Tradition says that On or Heliopolis was his college city. You remember it was there that Joseph met his wife, “Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On.” (Genesis xli. 45). Here in this college they taught all the higher branches of learning. They taught chiefly religion as it was understood in Egypt—a wonderful religion, with its popular side for the common crowd, its sacred hawks, and bulls, and crocodiles to be worshipped—and yet behind all that, the belief in one God great and good, who was behind and above all these, and who demanded that men should be righteous and true. They had a wonderful book, the “Book of the Dead,” which surely must have been an inspiration from God, telling of a future life and the Judgment of the Soul. It helps us to understand that the Spirit of God was not confined to the Jews only; that in all the nations of the earth God left not Himself without witness in some degree. Besides religion, they taught Astronomy, Law, and Medicine, and Literature, and the art of writing

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poetry, which Moses made such good use of in after days (Exodus xv., Deuteronomy xxxii.).

Do you think he attended to his studies? See what St. Stephen says (Acts vii. 22), “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” And what else?—“and mighty in word and in deed.” In his days, as in our own, the only way in which a prince could be mighty in deeds was by joining the army. It is what we should expect of a prince of Egypt. The Pharaohs were great warriors and led their own soldiers in person. We have several pictures of this king Rameses of Moses’ day at the head of his army, and accordingly Jewish tradition tells us that Moses was a soldier, that he became a great warrior and led an expedition against the Ethiopians, from which he came back in triumph. Probably he served too in the Hittite wars of King Seti and King Rameses, and all this experience would be most useful in later days when he had to marshal the great Israelite host. Again you see God’s hand preparing him for his future. His study of Law and his knowledge of literature helped him to legislate for Israel. His acquaintance with the Egyptian religion helped him in his appeals to Pharaoh’s conscience. His experience of war made him a fit leader of men. In his boyish lessons and his college studies and his drill in the Egyptian barracks, he probably had no idea that he was preparing himself for the future which God had before him; yet because he did them well he was more useful. So with our boys too. They have their lessons to learn and their work to do, and their business is just to do their best at them—looking forward to the future and trying to make themselves thoroughly fitted

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to do useful work for God. But chiefly I want you to see here the wonderful way in which God by ordinary means got his great plans worked out. For He is doing just the same to-day. Next chapter tells of Moses' great life decision.

### **QUESTIONS FOR LESSON II**

Who were (1) Aaron, (2) Miriam, (3) the Princess?

Who was the child born in the slave hut?

What great danger was he in and how was he saved?

God had a plan for Moses' life. How was it helped by (1) being with his mother, (2) by his training in college and in the army?

While he was a young prince in the palace where was his family?