
EXODUS 1:1 Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt (every man and his household came with Jacob):

The name by which this book is generally distinguished is borrowed from the Septuagint, in which it is called εξοδος, Exodus, the going out or departure; and by the Codex Alexandrinus, εξοδος αιγυπτου, the departure from Egypt, because the departure of the Israelites from Egypt is the most remarkable fact mentioned in the whole book. In the Hebrew Bibles it is called ואלה שמות Ve-Elleh Shemoth, these are the names, which are the words with which it commences. It contains a history of the transactions of 145 years, beginning at the death of Joseph, where the book of Genesis ends, and coming down to the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness at the foot of Mount Sinai.

In this book Moses details the causes and motives of the persecution raised up against the Israelites in Egypt, the orders given by Pharaoh to destroy all the Hebrew male children, and the prevention of the execution of those orders through the humanity and piety of the midwives appointed to deliver the Hebrew women. The marriage of Amram and Jochebed is next related; the birth of Moses; the manner in which he was exposed on the river Nile, and in which he was discovered by the daughter of Pharaoh; his being providentially put under the care of his own mother to be nursed, and educated as the son of the Egyptian princess; how, when forty years of age, he left the court, visited and defended his brethren; the danger to which he was in consequence exposed; his flight to Arabia; his contract with Jethro, priest or prince of Midian, whose daughter Zipporah he afterwards espoused. While employed in keeping the flocks of his father-in-law, God appeared to him in a burning bush, and commissioned him to go and deliver his countrymen from the oppression under which they groaned. Having given him the most positive assurances of protection and power to work miracles, and having associated with him his brother Aaron, he sent them first to the Israelites to declare the purpose of Jehovah, and afterwards to Pharaoh to require him, in the name of the Most High, to set the Israelites at liberty. Pharaoh, far from submitting, made their yoke more grievous; and Moses, on a second interview with him, to convince him by whose authority he made the demand, wrought a miracle before him and his courtiers. This being in a certain way imitated by Pharaoh's magicians, he hardened his heart, and refused to let the people go, till God, by ten extraordinary plagues, convinced him of his omnipotence, and obliged him to consent to dismiss a people over whose persons and properties he had claimed and exercised a right founded only on the most tyrannical principles.

The plagues by which God afflicted the whole land of Egypt, Goshen excepted, where the Israelites dwelt, were the following: -

1. He turned all the waters of Egypt into blood.
2. He caused innumerable frogs to come over the whole land.
3. He afflicted both man and beast with immense swarms of vermin.
4. Afterwards with a multitude of different kinds of insects.
5. He sent a grievous pestilence among their cattle.
6. Smote both man and beast with boils.

7. Destroyed their crops with grievous storms of hail, accompanied with the most terrible thunder and lightning.
8. Desolated the whole land by innumerable swarms of locusts.
9. He spread a palpable darkness all over Egypt; and,
10. In one night slew all the first-born, both of man and beast, through the whole of the Egyptian territories.

What proved the miraculous nature of all these plagues most particularly was, 1st, Their coming exactly according to the prediction and at the command of Moses and Aaron. 2dly, Their extending only to the Egyptians, and leaving the land of Goshen, the Israelites, their cattle and substance, entirely untouched. After relating all these things in detail, with their attendant circumstances, Moses describes the institution, reason, and celebration of the passover; the preparation of the Israelites for their departure; their leaving Goshen and beginning their journey to the promised land, by the way of Rameses, Succoth, and Etham. How Pharaoh, repenting of the permission he had given them to depart, began to pursue them with an immense army of horse and foot, and overtook them at their encampment at Baal-zephon, on the borders of the Red Sea. Their destruction appearing then to be inevitable, Moses farther relates that having called earnestly upon God, and stretched his rod over the waters, they became divided, and the Israelites entered into the bed of the sea, and passed over to the opposite shore. Pharaoh and his host madly pursuing in the same track, the rear of their army being fairly entered by the time the last of the Israelites had made good their landing on the opposite coast. Moses stretching his rod again over the waters, they returned to their former channel and overwhelmed the Egyptian army, so that every soul perished.

Moses next gives a circumstantial account of the different encampments of the Israelites in the wilderness, during the space of nearly forty years: the miracles wrought in their behalf; the chief of which were the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, to direct and protect them in the wilderness; the bringing water out of a rock for them and their cattle; feeding them with manna from heaven; bringing innumerable flocks of quails to their camp; giving them a complete victory over the Amalekites at the intercession of Moses; and particularly God's astonishing manifestation of himself on Mount Sinai, when he delivered to Moses an epitome of his whole law, in what was called the Ten Words or Ten Commandments.

Moses proceeds to give a circumstantial detail of the different laws, statutes, and ordinances which he received from God, and particularly the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, and the awful display of the Divine Majesty on that solemn occasion; the formation of the Ark, holy Table and Candlestick; the Tabernacle, with its furniture, covering, courts, etc., the brazen Altar, golden Altar, brazen Laver, anointing oil, perfume, sacerdotal garments for Aaron and his sons, and the artificers employed on the work of the Tabernacle, etc. He then gives an account of Israel's idolatry in the matter of the golden calf, made under the direction of Aaron; God's displeasure, and the death of the principal idolaters; the erection and consecration of the Tabernacle, and its being filled and encompassed with the Divine glory, with the order and manner of their marches by direction of the miraculous pillar; with which the book concludes.

The names and number of the children of Israel that went down into Egypt, Exo 1:1-5. Joseph and all his brethren of that generation die, Exo 1:6. The great increase of their posterity, Exo 1:7. The cruel policy of the king of Egypt to destroy them, Exo 1:8-11. They increase greatly, notwithstanding their affliction, Exo 1:12. Account of their hard bondage, Exo 1:13, Exo 1:14. Pharaoh's command to the Hebrew midwives to kill all the male children, Exo 1:15, Exo 1:16. The midwives disobey the king's

command, and, on being questioned, vindicate themselves, Exo 1:17-19. God is pleased with their conduct, blesses them, and increases the people, Exo 1:20, Exo 1:21. Pharaoh gives a general command to the Egyptians to drown all the male children of the Hebrews, Exo 1:22.

Verse 1

These are the names - Though this book is a continuation of the book of Genesis, with which probably it was in former times conjoined, Moses thought it necessary to introduce it with an account of the names and number of the family of Jacob when they came to Egypt, to show that though they were then very few, yet in a short time, under the especial blessing of God, they had multiplied exceedingly; and thus the promise to Abraham had been literally fulfilled. See the notes on Genesis 46 (note).

EXODUS 1:2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,

EXODUS 1:3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,

EXODUS 1:4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

EXODUS 1:5 All the souls who came out of Jacob's body were seventy souls, and Joseph was in Egypt already.

EXODUS 1:6 Joseph died, as did all his brothers, and all that generation.

Verse 6

Joseph died, and all his brethren - That is, Joseph had now been some time dead, as also all his brethren, and all the Egyptians who had known Jacob and his twelve sons; and this is a sort of reason why the important services performed by Joseph were forgotten.

EXODUS 1:7 The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Verse 7

The children of Israel were fruitful - פרו paru, a general term, signifying that they were like healthy trees, bringing forth an abundance of fruit.

And increased - ישרץ yishretsu, they increased like fishes, as the original word implies. See Gen 1:20 (note), and the note there.

Abundantly - ירבו yirbu, they multiplied; this is a separate term, and should not have been used as an adverb by our translators.

And waxed exceeding mighty - ויעצמו במאד מאד vaiyaatmu bimod meod, and they became strong beyond measure - superlatively, superlatively - so that the land (Goshen) was filled with them. This astonishing increase was, under the providence of God, chiefly owing to two causes:

1. The Hebrew women were exceedingly fruitful, suffered very little in parturition, and probably often brought forth twins.

2. There appear to have been no premature deaths among them. Thus in about two hundred and fifteen years they were multiplied to upwards of 600,000, independently of old men, women, and children.

EXODUS 1:8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who didn't know Joseph.

Verse 8

There arose up a new king - Who this was it is difficult to say. It was probably Ramesses Miamun, or his son Amenophis, who succeeded him in the government of Egypt about A. M. 2400, before Christ 1604.

Which knew not Joseph - The verb יָדָא yada, which we translate to know, often signifies to acknowledge or approve. See Jdg 2:10; Psa 1:6; Psa 31:7; Hos 2:8; Amo 3:2. The Greek verbs εἶδω and γινώσκω are used precisely in the same sense in the New Testament. See Mat 25:12, and 1Jn 3:1. We may therefore understand by the new king's not knowing Joseph, his disapproving of that system of government which Joseph had established, as well as his haughtily refusing to acknowledge the obligations under which the whole land of Egypt was laid to this eminent prime minister of one of his predecessors.

EXODUS 1:9 He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we.

Verse 9

He said unto his people - He probably summoned a council of his nobles and elders to consider the subject; and the result was to persecute and destroy them, as is afterwards stated.

EXODUS 1:10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it happen that when any war breaks out, they also join themselves to our enemies, and fight against us, and escape out of the land."

Verse 10

They join also unto our enemies - It has been conjectured that Pharaoh had probably his eye on the oppressions which Egypt had suffered under the shepherd-kings, who for a long series of years had, according to Manetho, governed the land with extreme cruelty. As the Israelites were of the same occupation, (viz., shepherds), the jealous, cruel king found it easy to attribute to them the same motives; taking it for granted that they were only waiting for a favorable opportunity to join the enemies of Egypt, and so overrun the whole land.

EXODUS 1:11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. They built storage cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Raamses.

Verse 11

Set over them task-masters - שָׂרֵי מִסִּים sarey missim, chiefs or princes of burdens, works, or tribute; επιστατας των εργαων, Sept. overseers of the works. The persons who appointed them their work, and exacted the performance of it. The work itself being oppressive, and the manner in which it was exacted still more so, there is some room to think that they not only worked them unmercifully, but also obliged them to pay an exorbitant tribute at the same time.

Treasure cities - עָרֵי מִסְכְּנוֹת arey miscenoth, store cities - public granaries. Calmet supposes this to be the name of a city, and translates the verse thus: "They built cities, viz., Miscenoth, Pithom, and Rameses." Pithom is supposed to be that which Herodotus calls Patumos. Raamses, or rather Rameses, (for it is the same Hebrew word as in Gen 47:11, and should be written the same way here as there), is supposed to have been the capital of the land of Goshen, mentioned in the book of Genesis by anticipation; for it was probably not erected till after the days of Joseph, when the Israelites were brought under that severe oppression described in the book of Exodus. The Septuagint add here, και Ων, ἡ εστιν Ἡλιουπολις· and On, which is Heliopolis; i.e., the city of the Sun. The same reading is found also in the Coptic version.

Some writers suppose that beside these cities the Israelites built the pyramids. If this conjecture be well founded, perhaps they are intended in the word מִסְכְּנוֹת miscenoth, which, from סָכַן sachan, to lay up in store, might be intended to signify places where Pharaoh laid up his treasures; and from their structure they appear to have been designed for something of this kind. If the history of the pyramids be not found in the book of Exodus, it is nowhere else extant; their origin, if not alluded to here, being lost in their very remote antiquity. Diodorus Siculus, who has given the best traditions he could find relative to them, says that there was no agreement either among the inhabitants or the historians concerning the building of the pyramids - Bib. Hist., lib. 1., cap. lxiv.

Josephus expressly says that one part of the oppression suffered by the Israelites in Egypt was occasioned by building pyramids. See Clarke's note on Exo 1:14.

In the book of Genesis, and in this book, the word Pharaoh frequently occurs, which, though many suppose it to be a proper name peculiar to one person, and by this supposition confound the acts of several Egyptian kings, yet is to be understood only as a name of office.

It may be necessary to observe that all the Egyptian kings, whatever their own name was, took the surname of Pharaoh when they came to the throne; a name which, in its general acceptance, signified the same as king or monarch, but in its literal meaning, as Bochart has amply proved, it signifies a crocodile, which being a sacred animal among the Egyptians, the word might be added to their kings in order to procure them the greater reverence and respect.

EXODUS 1:12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out. They were grieved because of the children of Israel.

Verse 12

But the more they afflicted them - The margin has pretty nearly preserved the import of the original: And as they afflicted them, so they multiplied and so they grew That is, in proportion to their afflictions was their prosperity; and had their sufferings been greater, their increase would have been still more abundant.

EXODUS 1:13 The Egyptians ruthlessly made the children of Israel serve,

Verse 13

To serve with rigour - בפרך bepharech, with cruelty, great oppression; being ferocious with them. The word fierce is supposed by some to be derived from the Hebrew, as well as the Latin ferox, from which we more immediately bring our English term. This kind of cruelty to slaves, and ferociousness, unfeelingness, and hard-heartedness, were particularly forbidden to the children of Israel. See Lev 25:43, Lev 25:46, where the same word is used: Thou shalt not rule over him with Rigor, but shalt fear thy God.

EXODUS 1:14 and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all kinds of service in the field, all their service, in which they ruthlessly made them serve.

Verse 14

They made their lives bitter - So that they became weary of life, through the severity of their servitude.

With hard bondage - בעבדה קשה baabodah kashah, with grievous servitude. This was the general character of their life in Egypt; it was a life of the most painful servitude, oppressive enough in itself, but made much more so by the cruel manner of their treatment while performing their tasks.

In mortar, and in brick - First, in digging the clay, kneading, and preparing it, and secondly, forming it into bricks, drying them in the sun, etc.

Service in the field - Carrying these materials to the places where they were to be formed into buildings, and serving the builders while employed in those public works. Josephus says "The Egyptians contrived a variety of ways to afflict the Israelites; for they enjoined them to cut a great number of channels for the river, and to build walls for their cities and ramparts, that they might restrain the river, and hinder its waters from stagnating upon its overrunning its own banks; they set them also to build pyramids, (πυραμίδας τε ανοικοδομουντες), and wore them out, and forced them to learn all sorts of mechanic arts, and to accustom themselves to hard labor." - Antiq., lib. ii., cap. ix., sec. 1. Philo bears nearly the same testimony, p. 86, Edit. Mangey.

EXODUS 1:15 The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah,

 Verse 15

Hebrew midwives - Shiphrah and Puah, who are here mentioned, were probably certain chiefs, under whom all the rest acted, and by whom they were instructed in the obstetric art. Aben Ezra supposes there could not have been fewer than five hundred midwives among the Hebrew women at this time, but that very few were requisite see proved on Exo 1:19 (note).

EXODUS 1:16 and he said, "When you perform the duty of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birth stool; if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live."

 Verse 16

Upon the stools - על האבנים al haobnayim. This is a difficult word, and occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible but in Jer 18:3, where we translate it the potter's wheels. As אבן signifies a stone, the obnayim has been supposed to signify a stone trough, in which they received and washed the infant as soon as born. Jarchi, in his book of Hebrew roots, gives a very different interpretation of it; he derives it from בן ben, a son, or בנים banim, children; his words must not be literally translated, but this is the sense: "When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and ye see that the birth is broken forth, if it be a son, then ye shall kill him." Jonathan ben Uzziel gives us a curious reason for the command given by Pharaoh to the Egyptian women: "Pharaoh slept, and saw in his sleep a balance, and behold the whole land of Egypt stood in one scale, and a lamb in the other; and the scale in which the lamb was outweighed that in which was the land of Egypt. Immediately he sent and called all the chief magicians, and told them his dream. And Janes and Jimbres, (see 2Tim 3:8). who were chief of the magicians, opened their mouths and said to Pharaoh, 'A child is shortly to be born in the congregation of the Israelites, whose hand shall destroy the whole land of Egypt.' Therefore Pharaoh spake to the midwives, etc."

EXODUS 1:17 But the midwives feared God, and didn't do what the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the baby boys alive.

 Verse 17

The midwives feared God - Because they knew that God had forbidden murder of every kind; for though the law was not yet given, Exo 20:13, being Hebrews they must have known that God had from the beginning declared, Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, Gen 9:6. Therefore they saved the male children of all to whose assistance they were called. See Clarke's note on Exo 1:19.

EXODUS 1:18 The king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and have saved the boys alive?"

EXODUS 1:19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women aren't like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous, and give birth before the midwife comes to them."

Verse 19

The Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women - This is a simple statement of what general experience shows to be a fact, viz., that women, who during the whole of their pregnancy are accustomed to hard labor, especially in the open air, have comparatively little pain in parturition. At this time the whole Hebrew nation, men and women, were in a state of slavery, and were obliged to work in mortar and brick, and all manner of service In The Field, Exo 1:14, and this at once accounts for the ease and speediness of their travail. With the strictest truth the midwives might say, The Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women: the latter fare delicately, are not inured to labor, and are kept shut up at home, therefore they have hard, difficult, and dangerous labors; but the Hebrew women are lively, חַיִּוֹת chayoth, are strong, hale, and vigorous, and therefore are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. In such cases we may naturally conclude that the midwives were very seldom even sent for. And this is probably the reason why we find but two mentioned; as in such a state of society there could be but very little employment for persons of that profession, as a mother, an aunt, or any female acquaintance or neighbor, could readily afford all the assistance necessary in such cases. Commentators, pressed with imaginary difficulties, have sought for examples of easy parturition in Ethiopia, Persia, and India, as parallels to the case before us; but they might have spared themselves the trouble, because the case is common in all parts of the globe where the women labor hard, and especially in the open air. I have known several instances of the kind myself among the laboring poor. I shall mention one: I saw a poor woman in the open field at hard labor; she stayed away in the afternoon, but she returned the next morning to her work with her infant child, having in the interim been safely delivered! She continued at her daily work, having apparently suffered no inconvenience!

I have entered more particularly into this subject because, through want of proper information, (perhaps from a worse motive), certain persons have spoken very unguardedly against this inspired record: "The Hebrew midwives told palpable lies, and God commends them for it; thus we may do evil that good may come of it, and sanctify the means by the end." Now I contend that there was neither lie direct nor even prevarication in the case. The midwives boldly state to Pharaoh a fact, (had it not been so, he had a thousand means of ascertaining the truth), and they state it in such a way as to bring conviction to his mind on the subject of his oppressive cruelty on the one hand, and the mercy of Jehovah on the other. As if they had said, "The very oppression under which, through thy cruelty, the Israelites groan, their God has turned to their advantage; they are not only fruitful, but they bring forth with comparatively no trouble; we have scarcely any employment among them." Here then is a fact, boldly announced in the face of danger; and we see that God was pleased with this frankness of the midwives, and he blessed them for it.

EXODUS 1:20 God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied, and grew very mighty.

Verse 20

Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty - This shows an especial providence and blessing of God; for though in all cases where females are

kept to hard labor they have comparatively easy and safe travail, yet in a state of slavery the increase is generally very small, as the children die for want of proper nursing, the women, through their labor, being obliged to neglect their offspring; so that in the slave countries the stock is obliged to be recruited by foreign imports: yet in the case above it was not so; there was not one barren among their tribes, and even their women, though constantly obliged to perform their daily tasks, were neither rendered unfruitful by it, nor taken off by premature death through the violence and continuance of their labor, when even in the delicate situation mentioned above.

EXODUS 1:21 Because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

Verse 21

He made them houses - Dr. Shuckford thinks that there is something wrong both in the punctuation and translation of this place, and reads the passage thus, adding the 21st to the 20th verse: "And they multiplied and waxed mighty; and this happened (וַיְהִי וַיֵּהִי) because the midwives feared God; and he (Pharaoh) made (וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם) them (the Israelites) houses; and commanded all his people, saying, Every son that is born, etc." The doctor supposes that previously to this time the Israelites had no fixed dwellings, but lived in tents, and therefore had a better opportunity of concealing their children; but now Pharaoh built them houses, and obliged them to dwell in them, and caused the Egyptians to watch over them, that all the male children might be destroyed, which could not have been easily effected had the Israelites continued to live in their usual scattered manner in tents. That the houses in question were not made for the midwives, but for the Israelites in general, the Hebrew text seems pretty plainly to indicate, for the pronoun להם lahem, to them, is the masculine gender; had the midwives been meant, the feminine pronoun להן lahen would have been used. Others contend that by making them houses, not only the midwives are intended, but also that the words mark an increase of their families, and that the objection taken from the masculine pronoun is of no weight, because these pronouns are often interchanged; see 1Kgs 22:17, where להם lahem is written, and in the parallel place, 2Chr 18:16, להן lahen is used. So בהם bahem, in 1Chr 10:7, is written בהן bahen, 1Sam 31:7, and in several other places. There is no doubt that God did bless the midwives, his approbation of their conduct is strictly marked; and there can be no doubt of his prospering the Israelites, for it is particularly said that the people multiplied and waxed very mighty. But the words most probably refer to the Israelites, whose houses or families were built up by an extraordinary increase of children, notwithstanding the cruel policy of the Egyptian king. Vain is the counsel of man when opposed to the determinations of God! All the means used for the destruction of this people became in his hand instruments of their prosperity and increase. How true is the saying, If God be for us, who can be against us?

EXODUS 1:22 Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "You shall cast every son who is born into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

Verse 22

Ye shall cast into the river - As the Nile, which is here intended, was a sacred river among the Egyptians, it is not unlikely that Pharaoh intended the young Hebrews as an offering to his god, having two objects in view:

1. To increase the fertility of the country by thus procuring, as he might suppose, a proper and sufficient annual inundation; and
2. To prevent an increase of population among the Israelites, and in process of time procure their entire extermination.

It is conjectured, with a great show of probability, that the edict mentioned in this verse was not made till after the birth of Aaron, and that it was revoked soon after the birth of Moses; as, if it had subsisted in its rigour during the eighty-six years which elapsed between this and the deliverance of the Israelites, it is not at all likely that their males would have amounted to six hundred thousand, and those all effective men.

In the general preface to this work reference has been made to Origen's method of interpreting the Scriptures, and some specimens promised. On the plain account of a simple matter of fact, related in the preceding chapter, this very eminent man, in his 2d Homily on Exodus, imposes an interpretation of which the following is the substance. "Pharaoh, king of Egypt, represents the devil; the male and female children of the Hebrews represent the animal and rational faculties of the soul. Pharaoh, the devil, wishes to destroy all the males, i.e., the seeds of rationality and spiritual science through which the soul tends to and seeks heavenly things; but he wishes to preserve the females alive, i.e., all those animal propensities of man, through which he becomes carnal and devilish.

Hence," says he, "when you see a man living in luxury, banquetings, pleasures, and sensual gratifications, know that there the king of Egypt has slain all the males, and preserved all the females alive. The midwives represent the Old and New Testaments: the one is called Sephora, which signifies a sparrow, and means that sort of instruction by which the soul is led to soar aloft, and contemplate heavenly things; the other is called Phua, which signifies ruddy or bashful, and points out the Gospel, which is ruddy with the blood of Christ, spreading the doctrine of his passion over the earth. By these, as midwives, the souls that are born into the Church, are healed, for the reading of the Scriptures corrects and heals what is amiss in the mind. Pharaoh, the devil, wishes to corrupt those midwives, that all the males - the spiritual propensities, may be destroyed; and this he endeavors to do by bringing in heresies and corrupt opinions. But the foundation of God standeth sure. The midwives feared God, therefore he builded them houses. If this be taken literally, it has little or no meaning, and is of no importance; but it points out that the midwives - the law and the Gospel, by teaching the fear of God, build the houses of the Church, and fill the whole earth with houses of prayer. Therefore these midwives, because they feared God, and taught the fear of God, did not fulfill the command of the king of Egypt - they did not kill the males, and I dare confidently affirm that they did not preserve the females alive; for they do not teach vicious doctrines in the Church, nor preach up luxury, nor foster sin, which are what Pharaoh wishes in keeping the females alive; for by these virtue alone is cultivated and nourished. By Pharaoh's daughter I suppose the Church to be intended, which is gathered from among the Gentiles; and although she has an impious and iniquitous father, yet the prophet says unto her, Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house, so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, Psa 45:10, Psa 45:11. This therefore is she who is come to the waters to bathe, i.e., to the baptismal font, that she may be washed from the sins which she has contracted in her father's house. Immediately she receives bowels of commiseration, and pities the infant; that is, the Church, coming from among the Gentiles, finds Moses - the law, lying in the pool, cast out, and exposed by

his own people in an ark of bulrushes, daubed over with pitch - deformed and obscured by the carnal and absurd glosses of the Jews, who are ignorant of its spiritual sense; and while it continues with them is as a helpless and destitute infant; but as soon as it enters the doors of the Christian Church it becomes strong and vigorous; and thus Moses - the law, grows up, and becomes, through means of the Christian Church, more respectable even in the eyes of the Jews themselves, according to his own prophecy: I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation, Deu 32:21. Thus taught by the Christian Church, the synagogue forsakes idolatry; for when it sees the Gentiles worshipping the true God, it is ashamed of its idols, and worships them no more. In like manner, though we have had Pharaoh for our father - though the prince of this world has begotten us by wicked works, yet when we come unto the waters of baptism we take unto us Moses - the law of God, in its true and spiritual meaning; what is low or weak in it we leave, what is strong and perfect we take and place in the royal palace of our heart. Then we have Moses grown up - we no longer consider the law as little or mean; all is magnificent, excellent, elegant, for all is spiritually understood. Let us beseech the Lord Jesus Christ that he may reveal himself to us more and more and show us how great and sublime Moses is; for he by his Holy Spirit reveals these things to whomsoever he will. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen.

Neither the praise of piety nor the merit of ingenuity can be denied to this eminent man in such interpretations as these. But who at the same time does not see that if such a mode of exposition were to be allowed, the trumpet could no longer give a certain sound? Every passage and fact might then be obliged to say something, any thing, every thing, or nothing, according to the fancy, peculiar creed, or caprice of the interpreter.

I have given this large specimen from one of the ancients, merely to save the moderns, from whose works on the sacred writings I could produce many specimens equally singular and more absurd. Reader, it is possible to trifle with the testimonies of God, and all the while speak serious things; but if all be not done according to the pattern shown in the mount, much evil may be produced, and many stumbling blocks thrown in the way of others, which may turn them totally out of the way of understanding; and then what a dreadful account must such interpreters have to give to that God who has pronounced a curse, not only on those who take away from his word, but also on those who add to it.