
EXODUS 3:1 Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to God's mountain, to Horeb.

Moses keeping the flock of Jethro at Mount Horeb, the angel of the Lord appears to him in a burning bush, Exo 3:1, Exo 3:2. Astonished at the sight, he turns aside to examine it, Exo 3:3, when God speaks to him out of the fire, and declares himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Exo 3:4-6; announces his purpose of delivering the Israelites from their oppression, and of bringing them into the promised land, Exo 3:7-9; commissions him to go to Pharaoh, and to be leader of the children of Israel from Egypt, Exo 3:10. Moses excuses himself, Exo 3:11; and God, to encourage him, promises him his protection, Exo 3:12. Moses doubts whether the Israelites will credit him, Exo 3:13, and God reveals to him his Name, and informs him what he is to say to the people, Exo 3:14-17, and instructs him and the elders of Israel to apply unto Pharaoh for permission to go three days' journey into the wilderness, to sacrifice unto the Lord, Exo 3:18; foretells the obstinacy of the Egyptian king, and the miracles which he himself should work in the sight of the Egyptians, Exo 3:19, Exo 3:20; and promises that, on the departure of the Israelites, the Egyptians should be induced to furnish them with all necessaries for their journey, Exo 3:21, Exo 3:22.

Verse 1

Jethro his father-in-law - Concerning Jethro, see Clarke's note on Exo 2:18. Learned men are not agreed on the signification of the word חֹתֵן chothen, which we translate father-in-law, and which in Gen 19:14, we translate son-in-law. It seems to be a general term for a relative by marriage, and the connection only in which it stands can determine its precise meaning. It is very possible that Reuel was now dead, it being forty years since Moses came to Midian; that Jethro was his son, and had succeeded him in his office of prince and priest of Midian; that Zipporah was the sister of Jethro; and that consequently the word חֹתֵן chothen should be translated brother-in-law in this place: as we learn from Gen 34:9, Deu 7:3, Jos 23:12, and other places, that it simply signifies to contract affinity by marriage. If this conjecture be right, we may well suppose that, Reuel being dead, Moses was continued by his brother-in-law Jethro in the same employment he had under his father.

Mountain of God - Sometimes named Horeb, at other times Sinai. The mountain itself had two peaks; one was called Horeb, the other Sinai. Horeb was probably the primitive name of the mountain, which was afterwards called the mountain of God, because God appeared upon it to Moses; and Mount Sinai, סִינַי, from סֵנֶה seneh, a bush, because it was in a bush or bramble, in a flame of fire, that this appearance was made.

EXODUS 3:2 the LORD's angel appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Verse 2

The angel of the Lord - Not a created angel certainly; for he is called יְהוָה Jehovah, Exo 3:4, etc., and has the most expressive attributes of the Godhead applied to him, Exo 3:14, etc. Yet he is an angel, מַלְאָךְ malach, a messenger, in whom was the name of God, Exo 23:21; and in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, Col 2:9; and who, in all these primitive times, was the Messenger of

the covenant, Mal 3:1. And who was this but Jesus, the Leader, Redeemer, and Savior of mankind? See Clarke's note on Gen 16:7.

A flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush - Fire was, not only among the Hebrews but also among many other ancient nations, a very significant emblem of the Deity. God accompanied the Israelites in all their journeying through the wilderness as a pillar of fire by night; and probably a fire or flame in the holy of holies, between the cherubim, was the general symbol of his presence; and traditions of these things, which must have been current in the east, have probably given birth, not only to the pretty general opinion that God appears in the likeness of fire, but to the whole of the Zoroastrian system of fire-worship. It has been reported of Zoroaster, or Zeradusht, that having retired to a mountain for the study of wisdom, and the benefit of solitude, the whole mountain was one day enveloped with flame, out of the midst of which he came without receiving any injury; on which he offered sacrifices to God, who, he was persuaded, had then appeared to him. M. Anquetil du Perron gives much curious information on this subject in his Zend Avesta. The modern Parsees call fire the off-spring of Ormusd, and worship it with a vast variety of ceremonies. Among the fragments attributed to Aeschylus, and collected by Stanley in his invaluable edition of this poet, p. 647, col. 1, we find the following beautiful verses: Χωριζε θνητων τον Θεον, και μη δοκει Όμοιον αυτω σαρκινον καθεσταναι. Ουκ οισθα δ' αυτον· ποτε μεν ως πυρ φαινεται Απλαστον όρμη· ποτε δ' ύδωρ, ποτε δε γνοφος. "Distinguish God from mortal men; and do not suppose that any thing fleshly is like unto him. Thou knowest him not: sometimes indeed he appears as a formless and impetuous Fire, sometimes as water, sometimes as thick darkness." The poet proceeds: Τρεμει δ' ορη, και γαια, και πελεριος Βυθος θαλασσης, κωρεων ύψος μεγα, Όταν επιβλεψη γοργον ομμα δεσποτου. "The mountains, the earth, the deep and extensive sea, and the summits of the highest mountains tremble whenever the terrible eye of the Supreme Lord looks down upon them."

These are very remarkable fragments, and seem all to be collected from traditions relative to the different manifestations of God to the Israelites in Egypt, and in the wilderness. Moses wished to see God, but he could behold nothing but an indescribable glory: nothing like mortals, nothing like a human body, appeared at any time to his eye, or to those of the Israelites. "Ye saw no manner of similitude," said Moses, "on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the Fire," Deu 4:15. But sometimes the Divine power and justice were manifested by the indescribable, formless, impetuous, consuming flame; at other times he appeared by the water which he brought out of the flinty rock; and in the thick darkness on Horeb, when the fiery law proceeded from his right hand, then the earth quaked and the mountain trembled: and when his terrible eye looked out upon the Egyptians through the pillar of cloud and fire, their chariot wheels were struck off, and confusion and dismay were spread through all the hosts of Pharaoh; Exo 14:24, Exo 14:25.

And the bush was not consumed - 1. An emblem of the state of Israel in its various distresses and persecutions: it was in the fire of adversity, but was not consumed. 2. An emblem also of the state of the Church of God in the wilderness, in persecutions often, in the midst of its enemies, in the region of the shadow of death - yet not consumed. 3. An emblem also of the state of every follower of Christ: cast down, but not forsaken; grievously tempted, but not destroyed; walking through the fire, but still unconsumed! Why are all these preserved in the midst of those things which have a natural tendency to destroy them! Because God Is In The Midst Of Them; it was this that preserved the bush from destruction; and it was this that preserved the Israelites; and it is this, and this alone, that preserves the Church, and holds the soul of every genuine believer in the spiritual life. He in whose heart Christ dwells not by faith, will soon be consumed by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

EXODUS 3:3 Moses said, "I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

EXODUS 3:4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses! Moses!" He said, "Here I am."

EXODUS 3:5 He said, "Don't come close. Take your sandals off of your feet, for the place you are standing on is holy ground."

Verse 5

Put off thy shoes - It is likely that from this circumstance all the eastern nations have agreed to perform all the acts of their religious worship barefooted. All the Mohammedans, Brahmins, and Parsees do so still. The Jews were remarked for this in the time of Juvenal; hence he speaks of their performing their sacred rites barefooted; Sat. vi., ver. 158:

Observant ubi festa mero pede sabbata reges.

The ancient Greeks did the same. Jamblichus, in the life of Pythagoras, tells us that this was one of his maxims, Ἀνυποδητος θευε και προσκυνει, Offer sacrifice and worship with your shoes off. And Solinus asserts that no person was permitted to enter into the temple of Diana, in Crete, till he had taken off his shoes. "Aedem Numinis (Dianae) praeterquam nudus vestigio nulles licito ingreditur." Tertullian observes, de jejuniis, that in a time of drought the worshippers of Jupiter deprecated his wrath, and prayed for rain, walking barefooted. "Cum stupet caelum, et aret annus, nudipedalia, denunciantur." It is probable that נעלים nealim, in the text, signifies sandals, translated by the Chaldee סנדל sandal, and סנדלאל sandala, (see Gen 14:23), which was the same as the Roman solea, a sole alone, strapped about the foot. As this sole must let in dust, gravel, and sand about the foot in travelling, and render it very uneasy, hence the custom of frequently washing the feet in those countries where these sandals were worn. Pulling off the shoes was, therefore, an emblem of laying aside the pollutions contracted by walking in the way of sin. Let those who name the Lord Jesus Christ depart from iniquity. In our western countries reverence is expressed by pulling off the hat; but how much more significant is the eastern custom! "The natives of Bengal never go into their own houses with their shoes on, nor into the houses of others, but always leave their shoes at the door. It would be a great affront not to attend to this mark of respect when visiting; and to enter a temple without pulling off the shoes would be an unpardonable offense." - Ward.

The place whereon thou standest is holy ground - It was not particularly sanctified by the Divine presence; but if we may credit Josephus, a general opinion had prevailed that God dwelt on that mountain; and hence the shepherds, considering it as sacred ground, did not dare to feed their flocks there. Moses, however, finding the soil to be rich and the pasturage good, boldly drove his flock thither to feed on it - Antiq., b. ii., c. xii., s. 1.

EXODUS 3:6 Moreover he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look at God.

Verse 6

I am the God of thy father - Though the word אבי abi, father, is here used in the singular, St Stephen, quoting this place, Act 7:32, uses the plural, Ὁ Θεος των πατερων σου, The God of thy Fathers; and

that this is the meaning the following words prove: The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. These were the fathers of Moses in a direct line. This reading is confirmed by the Samaritan and by the Coptic. Abraham was the father of the Ishmaelites, and with him was the covenant first made. Isaac was the father of the Edomites as well as the Israelites, and with him was the covenant renewed. Jacob was the father of the twelve patriarchs, who were founders of the Jewish nation, and to him were the promises particularly confirmed. Hence we see that the Arabs and Turks in general, who are descendants of Ishmael; the Edomites, now absorbed among the Jews, (see Clarke's note on Gen 25:23), who are the descendants of Esau; and the Jewish people, wheresoever scattered, who are the descendants of Jacob, are all heirs of the promises included in this primitive covenant; and their gathering in with the fullness of the Gentiles may be confidently expected.

And Moses hid his face - For similar acts, see 1Kgs 19:13; Isa 6:1, Isa 6:5; Neh 9:9; Psa 106:44; Act 7:34. He was afraid to look - he was overawed by God's presence, and dazzled with the splendor of the appearance.

EXODUS 3:7 The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.

Verse 7

I have surely seen - ראה ראיתי raah raithi, seeing, I have seen - I have not only seen the afflictions of this people because I am omniscient, but I have considered their sorrows, and my eye affects my heart.

EXODUS 3:8 I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey; to the place of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

Verse 8

And I am come down to deliver them - This is the very purpose for which I am now come down upon this mountain, and for which I manifest myself to thee.

Large - land - Canaan, when compared with the small tract of Goshen, in which they were now situated, and where, we learn, from Exo 1:7, they were straitened for room, might be well called a large land. See a fine description of this land Deu 8:7.

A land flowing with milk and honey - Excellent for pasturage, because abounding in the most wholesome herbage and flowers; and from the latter an abundance of wild honey was collected by the bees. Though cultivation is now almost entirely neglected in this land, because of the badness of the government and the scantiness of the inhabitants, yet it is still good for pasturage, and yields an abundance of honey. The terms used in the text to express the fertility of this land, are commonly used by ancient authors on similar subjects. It is a metaphor taken from a breast producing copious streams of milk. Homer calls Argos οὐθαρ ἀρουρης, the breast of the country, as affording streams of milk and honey, Il. ix., ver. 141. So Virgil:

Prima tulit tellus, eadem vos ubere laeto Accipiet.

Aen., lib. iii., ver. 95. "The land that first produced you shall receive you again into its joyous bosom." The poets feign that Bacchus, the fable of whom they have taken from the history of Moses, produced rivers of milk and honey, of water and wine: - Ῥεῖ δε γαλακτι πεδον, Ῥεῖ δ' οἰνω, ῤεῖ δε μελισσαν Νεκταρι.

Eurip. Bacch., Εποδ., ver. 8. "The land flows with milk; it flows also with wine; it flows also with the nectar of bees, (honey)." This seems to be a mere poetical copy from the Pentateuch, where the sameness of the metaphor and the correspondence of the descriptions are obvious.

Place of the Canaanites, etc. - See Gen 15:18, etc.

EXODUS 3:9 Now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to me. Moreover I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

EXODUS 3:10 Come now therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

EXODUS 3:11 Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Verse 11

Who am I - that I should bring - He was so satisfied that this was beyond his power, and all the means that he possessed, that he is astonished that even God himself should appoint him to this work! Such indeed was the bondage of the children of Israel, and the power of the people by whom they were enslaved, that had not their deliverance come through supernatural means, their escape had been utterly impossible.

EXODUS 3:12 He said, "Certainly I will be with you. This will be the token to you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Verse 12

Certainly I will be with thee - This great event shall not be left to thy wisdom and to thy power; my counsel shall direct thee, and my power shall bring all these mighty things to pass.

And this shall be a token - Literally, And This to thee for a sign, i.e., this miraculous manifestation of the burning bush shall be a proof that I have sent thee; or, My being with thee, to encourage thy heart, strengthen thy hands, and enable thee to work miracles, shall be to thyself and to others the evidence of thy Divine mission.

Ye shall serve God upon this mountain - This was not the sign, but God shows him, that in their return from Egypt they should take this mountain in their way, and should worship him in this place. There may be a prophetic allusion here to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. As Moses received his commands here, so likewise should the Israelites receive theirs in the same place. After all, the

Divine Being seems to testify a partial predilection for this mountain, for reasons that are not expressed. See Clarke's note on Exo 3:5.

EXODUS 3:13 Moses said to God, "Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and tell them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you;' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' What should I tell them?"

Verse 13

They shall say - What is his name? - Does not this suppose that the Israelites had an idolatrous notion even of the Supreme Being? They had probably drank deep into the Egyptian superstitions, and had gods many and lords many; and Moses conjectured that, hearing of a supernatural deliverance, they would inquire who that God was by whom it was to be effected. The reasons given here by the rabbins are too refined for the Israelites at this time. "When God," say they, "judgeth his creatures, he is called אלהים Elohim; when he warreth against the wicked, he is called צבאות Tsebaoth; but when he showeth mercy unto the world, he is called יהוה Yehovah." It is not likely that the Israelites had much knowledge of God or of his ways at the time to which the sacred text refers; it is certain they had no written word. The book of Genesis, if even written, (for some suppose it had been composed by Moses during his residence in Midian), had not yet been communicated to the people; and being so long without any revelation, and perhaps without even the form of Divine worship, their minds being degraded by the state of bondage in which they had been so long held, and seeing and hearing little in religion but the superstitions of those among whom they sojourned, they could have no distinct notion of the Divine Being. Moses himself might have been in doubt at first on this subject, and he seems to have been greatly on his guard against illusion; hence he asks a variety of questions, and endeavors, by all prudent means, to assure himself of the truth and certainty of the present appearance and commission. He well knew the power of the Egyptian magicians, and he could not tell from these first views whether there might not have been some delusion in this case. God therefore gives him the fullest proof, not only for the satisfaction of the people to whom he was to be sent, but for his own full conviction, that it was the supreme God who now spoke to him.

EXODUS 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM," and he said, "You shall tell the children of Israel this: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Verse 14

I am that I am - אהיה אשר אהיה Eheyeh asher Eheyeh. These words have been variously understood. The Vulgate translates Ego Sum Qui Sum, I am who am. The Septuagint, Εγω εμυ ὁ Ων, I am he who exists. The Syriac, the Persic, and the Chaldee preserve the original words without any gloss. The Arabic paraphrases them, The Eternal, who passes not away; which is the same interpretation given by Abul Farajius, who also preserves the original words, and gives the above as their interpretation. The Targum of Jonathan, and the Jerusalem Targum paraphrase the words thus: "He who spake, and the world was; who spake, and all things existed." As the original words literally signify, I will be what I will be, some have supposed that God simply designed to inform Moses, that what he had been to

his fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he would be to him and the Israelites; and that he would perform the promises he had made to his fathers, by giving their descendants the promised land. It is difficult to put a meaning on the words; they seem intended to point out the eternity and self-existence of God. Plato, in his Parmenides, where he treats sublimely of the nature of God, says, Οὐδ' ἀρα ὄνομα ἐστὶν αὐτῷ, nothing can express his nature; therefore no name can be attributed to him. See the conclusion of this chapter, Exo 3:22 (note) and on the word Jehovah, Exo 34:6 (note), Exo 34:7 (note).

EXODUS 3:15 God said moreover to Moses, "You shall tell the children of Israel this, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations.

Verse 15

This is my name for ever - The name here referred to is that which immediately precedes, יהוה יהים אלהים Jehovah Elohim, which we translate the Lord God, the name by which God had been known from the creation of the world, (see Gen 2:4). and the name by which he is known among the same people to the present day. Even the heathens knew this name of the true God; and hence out of our יהוה Jehovah they formed their Jao, Jeve, and Jove; so that the word has been literally fulfilled, This is my memorial unto all generations. See Clarke's note on the word Elohim, Gen 1:1 (note). As to be self-existent and eternal must be attributes of God for ever, does it not follow that the לעלם leolam, for ever, in the text signifies eternity? "This is my name to eternity - and my memorial," לדר לדר ledor dor, "to all succeeding generations." While human generations continue he shall be called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; but when time shall be no more, he shall be Jehovah Elohim. Hence the first expression refers to his eternal existence, the latter to the discovery he should make of himself as long as time should last. See Gen 21:33. Diodorus Siculus says, that "among the Jews, Moses is reported to have received his laws from the God named Jao," Ἰαω, i.e., Jeue, Jove, or Jeve; for in all these ways the word יהוה Jehovah may be pronounced; and in this way I have seen it on Egyptian monuments. See Diod., lib. I., c. xciv.

EXODUS 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and tell them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt;

Verse 16

Elders of Israel - Though it is not likely the Hebrews were permitted to have any regular government at this time, yet there can be no doubt of their having such a government in the time of Joseph, and for some considerable time after; the elders of each tribe forming a kind of court of magistrates, by which all actions were tried, and legal decisions made, in the Israelitish community.

I have surely visited you - An exact fulfillment of the prediction of Joseph, Gen 50:24, God will surely visit you, and in the same words too.

EXODUS 3:17 and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.”

EXODUS 3:18 They will listen to your voice, and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt, and you shall tell him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Now please let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD, our God.’

Verse 18

They shall hearken to thy voice - This assurance was necessary to encourage him in an enterprise so dangerous and important.

Three days' journey into the wilderness - Evidently intending Mount Sinai, which is reputed to be about three days' journey, the shortest way, from the land of Goshen. In ancient times, distances were computed by the time required to pass over them. Thus, instead of miles, furlongs, etc., it was said, the distance from one place to another was so many days', so many hours' journey; and it continues the same in all countries where there are no regular roads or highways.

EXODUS 3:19 I know that the king of Egypt won't give you permission to go, no, not by a mighty hand.

Verse 19

I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand - When the facts detailed in this history have been considered in connection with the assertion as it stands in our Bibles, the most palpable contradiction has appeared. That the king of Egypt did let them go, and that by a mighty hand, the book itself amply declares. We should therefore seek for another meaning of the original word. $\alpha\lambda\iota$ velo, which generally means and not, has sometimes the meaning of if not, unless, except, etc.; and in Becke's Bible, 1549, it is thus translated: I am sure that the kyng of Egypt wyl not let you go, Except wyth a mighty hand. This import of the negative particle, which is noticed by Noldius, Heb. Part., p. 328, was perfectly understood by the Vulgate, where it is translated nisi, unless; and the Septuagint in their $\epsilon\alpha\nu\ \mu\eta$, which is of the same import; and so also the Coptic. The meaning therefore is very plain: The king of Egypt, who now profits much by your servitude, will not let you go till he sees my hand stretched out, and he and his nation be smitten with ten plagues. Hence God immediately adds, Exo 3:20 : I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders - and after that, he will let you go.

EXODUS 3:20 I will reach out my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in its midst, and after that he will let you go.

EXODUS 3:21 I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and it will happen that when you go, you shall not go empty-handed.

EXODUS 3:22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbour, and of her who visits her house, jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons, and on your daughters. You shall plunder the Egyptians."

Verse 22

Every woman shall borrow - This is certainly not a very correct translation: the original word **שאל** shaal signifies simply to ask, request, demand, require, inquire, etc.; but it does not signify to borrow in the proper sense of that word, though in a very few places of Scripture it is thus used. In this and the parallel place, Exo 12:35, the word signifies to ask or demand, and not to borrow, which is a gross mistake into which scarcely any of the versions, ancient or modern, have fallen, except our own. The Septuagint has **αἰτησεί**, she shall ask; the Vulgate, **postulabit**, she shall demand; the Syriac, Chaldee, Samaritan, Samaritan Version, Coptic, and Persian, are the same as the Hebrew. The European versions are generally correct on this point; and our common English version is almost the sole transgressor: I say, the common version, which, copying the Bible published by Becke in 1549, gives us the exceptionable term borrow, for the original **שאל** shaal, which in the Geneva Bible, and Barker's Bible of 1615, and some others, is rightly translated aske. God commanded the Israelites to ask or demand a certain recompense for their past services, and he inclined the hearts of the Egyptians to give liberally; and this, far from a matter of oppression, wrong, or even charity, was no more than a very partial recompense for the long and painful services which we may say six hundred thousand Israelites had rendered to Egypt, during a considerable number of years. And there can be no doubt that while their heaviest oppression lasted, they were permitted to accumulate no kind of property, as all their gains went to their oppressors.

Our exceptionable translation of the original has given some countenance to the desperate cause of infidelity; its abettors have exultingly said: "Moses represents the just God as ordering the Israelites to borrow the goods of the Egyptians under the pretense of returning them, whereas he intended that they should march off with the booty." Let these men know that there was no borrowing in the case; and that if accounts were fairly balanced, Egypt would be found still in considerable arrears to Israel. Let it also be considered that the Egyptians had never any right to the services of the Hebrews. Egypt owed its policy, its opulence, and even its political existence, to the Israelites. What had Joseph for his important services? Nothing! He had neither district, nor city, nor lordship in Egypt; nor did he reserve any to his children. All his services were gratuitous; and being animated with a better hope than any earthly possession could inspire, he desired that even his bones should be carried up out of Egypt. Jacob and his family, it is true, were permitted to sojourn in Goshen, but they were not provided for in that place; for they brought their cattle, their goods, and all that they had into Egypt, Gen 46:1, Gen 46:6; so that they had nothing but the bare land to feed on; and had built treasure cities or fortresses, we know not how many; and two whole cities, Pithom and Raamses, besides; and for all these services they had no compensation whatever, but were besides cruelly abused, and obliged to witness, as the sum of their calamities, the daily murder of their male infants. These particulars considered, will infidelity ever dare to produce this case again in support of its worthless pretensions?

Jewels of silver, etc. - The word **כֶּלִי** keley we have already seen signifies vessels, instruments, weapons, etc., and may be very well translated by our English term, articles or goods. The Israelites got both gold and silver, probably both in coin and in plate of different kinds; and such raiment as was necessary for the journey which they were about to undertake.

Ye shall spoil the Egyptians - The verb נָצַל natsal signifies, not only to spoil, snatch away, but also to get away, to escape, to deliver, to regain, or recover. Spoil signifies what is taken by rapine or violence; but this cannot be the meaning of the original word here, as the Israelites only asked, and the Egyptians with out fear, terror, or constraint, freely gave. It is worthy of remark that the original word is used, 1Sam 30:22, to signify the recovery of property that had been taken away by violence: "Then answered all the wicked men, and men of Belial, of those that went with David, Because they went not with us we will not give them aught of the Spoil (מֵהַשָּׁלַל mehashShalal) that we have Recovered, אֲשֶׁר הִצַּלְנוּ asher Hitsalsnu. In this sense we should understand the word here. The Israelites recovered a part of their property - their wages, of which they had been most unjustly deprived by the Egyptians.

In this chapter we have much curious and important information; but what is most interesting is the name by which God was pleased to make himself known to Moses and to the Israelites, a name by which the Supreme Being was afterwards known among the wisest inhabitants of the earth. He who Is and who Will Be what he Is. This is a proper characteristic of the Divine Being, who is, properly speaking, the only Being, because he is independent and eternal; whereas all other beings, in whatsoever forms they may appear, are derived, finite, changeable, and liable to destruction, decay, and even to annihilation. When God, therefore, announced himself to Moses by this name, he proclaimed his own eternity and immateriality; and the very name itself precludes the possibility of idolatry, because it was impossible for the mind, in considering it, to represent the Divine Being in any assignable shape; for who could represent Being or Existence by any limited form? And who can have any idea of a form that is unlimited? Thus, then, we find that the first discovery which God made of himself was intended to show the people the simplicity and spirituality of his nature; that while they considered him as Being, and the Cause of all Being, they might be preserved from all idolatry for ever. The very name itself is a proof of a Divine revelation; for it is not possible that such an idea could have ever entered into the mind of man, unless it had been communicated from above. It could not have been produced by reasoning, for there were no premises on which it could be built, nor any analogies by which it could have been formed. We can as easily comprehend eternity as we can being, simply considered in and of itself, when nothing of assignable forms, colors, or qualities existed, besides its infinite and illimitable self.

To this Divine discovery the ancient Greeks owed the inscription which they placed above the door of the temple of Apollo at Delphi: the whole of the inscription consisted in the simple monosyllable Ei, Thou Art, the second person of the Greek substantive verb εἰμι, I am. On this inscription Plutarch, one of the most intelligent of all the Gentile philosophers, made an express treatise, περὶ τοῦ Εἰ ἐν Δελφοῖς, having received the true interpretation in his travels in Egypt, whither he had gone for the express purpose of inquiring into their ancient learning, and where he had doubtless seen these words of God to Moses in the Greek version of the Septuagint, which had been current among the Egyptians (for whose sake it was first made) about four hundred years previously to the death of Plutarch. This philosopher observes that "this title is not only proper, but peculiar to God, because He alone is being; for mortals have no participation of true being, because that which begins and ends, and is continually changing, is never one nor the same, nor in the same state. The deity on whose temple this word was inscribed was called Apollo, Ἀπόλλων, from α, negative, and πολλος, many, because God is One, his nature simple, his essence uncompounded." Hence he informs us the ancient mode of addressing God was, "Εἰ Ἐν, Thou art One, οὐ γὰρ πολλὰ τὸ θεῖον ἐστίν, for many cannot be attributed to the Divine nature: καὶ οὐ πρότερον οὐδὲν ἐστίν, οὐδ' ὕστερον, οὐδὲ μέλλον, οὐδὲ παρωχημένον, οὐδὲ πρεσβύτερον, οὐδὲ νεώτερον, in which there is neither first nor last, future nor past, old nor young; ἀλλ' εἰς ὧν ἐνὶ τῷ νῦν τὸ αἰὲν πεπληρώκε, but as being one, fills up in one Now an eternal duration." And he concludes with observing that "this word corresponds to

certain others on the same temple, viz., ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ Know thyself; as if, under the name EI. Thou Art, the Deity designed to excite men to venerate Him as eternally existing, ὡς οντα διαπαντος, and to put them in mind of the frailty and mortality of their own nature."

What beautiful things have the ancient Greek philosophers stolen from the testimonies of God to enrich their own works, without any kind of acknowledgment! And, strange perversity of man! these are the very things which we so highly applaud in the heathen copies, while we neglect or pass them by in the Divine originals!