

THE
HISTORY
OF
MOSES

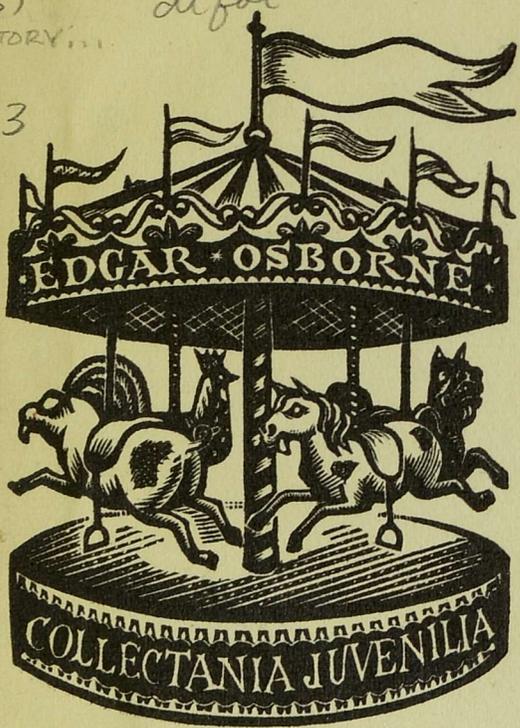
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

Sophia Mellich
25th December 1854.

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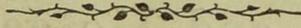


THE
HISTORY OF MOSES.



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THE HISTORY OF MOSES.



IT was God the Holy Spirit who taught good men to write the Bible. The histories found in it are given to us to make us wiser and better. One account, which is always pleasing to young persons, is the history of Moses. We will now give it in a simple manner; but you must read it more fully another time in the Bible; for God's book is always better than any book that man can make.

Over the sea, and a long, long way from England, there is a country called Egypt, and I am going to tell you what happened there many hundreds of years ago.

There was once a good man named Joseph ; his home was in a distant land, called the land of Canaan, but God sent him to Egypt, and He gave him great power, and made him very wise, so that all the people, and even the king himself, loved Joseph for the good that he had done. All Joseph's family came to live in Egypt : his father, Jacob, who was also called Israel, and his brothers, and their children ;—a very great number. And they were very kindly treated for a long time, and lived in a pleasant part of the country, where there was plenty of green grass to feed their flocks, for they were shepherds. Shepherds, you know, love to be in the sunny meadows, and beside the cool, shady streams. And here the children of Israel lived happily with

their flocks. They were called the children of Israel, although most of them were grown-up men and women, because Israel was a name which God had given to their father, and they liked to be called by their father's name.

But after many years, when Joseph was dead, another king reigned over the land of Egypt, who was cruel and hard-hearted, and did not like to see the children of Israel so happy. It is very wicked to envy other people, and try to injure them: this the cruel king of Egypt did. He took the children of Israel from minding their flocks, and made them slaves to the people of Egypt, and put them to the very hardest work. They had to dig for clay to make bricks in the hot field, and to dry the bricks in the burning sun.

Besides this, when they had done their best to please their masters, they were treated unkindly, and beaten, so that their lives were made bitter with the hard bondage; for the king thought that the children of Israel might become so many as to fight against his people, and become masters of the country. He tried first to kill them with hard work, and at last became so cruel, that he gave orders to have all their little boys put to death as soon as they were born. And many tender and innocent babes were taken away from their weeping mothers, and killed; so that the hearts of all the children of Israel were full of grief and woe.

Stop here, young reader, and think how sad it is to give way to sin. If we do so, and do not repent, we are sure to

go on from bad to worse. When the king of Egypt first began to treat the children of Israel so ill, he did not think of taking away the lives of their little infants. So, if you begin to do wrong, you cannot tell how far you may go on, for you have a sinful heart which makes it hard to stop in the way of evil. Ask of your Saviour to put good desires into your mind by his Holy Spirit, and never to let you give way to feelings of envy, or hatred, or any other sin.

Now I will go on with the story.

There was one tender mother among the children of Israel who had a little boy, and she hid him, until he was three months old, from the men who were sent by the cruel king to put the babes to death. But at the end of three months,

she could not hide her child any longer. And she made a little cradle for him of the rushes that grew by the river-side, and put pitch and slime outside to keep out the water, and then she laid her baby in the cradle, and we may suppose that his father kissed him, with tears, and bade him good-bye; and also that his little sister kissed him, and wept over him. The poor mother, no doubt, wept also, and had prayed for her dear baby, and trusted that God would keep him alive. So she took up the cradle and carried it gently to the river-side, and laid it among the flags or rushes that grew on the bank of the river. Then she went away and left it. She was sorry to leave it, but she dared not stay, for fear that the cruel people should find her baby. The baby's

sister did not go quite away. She stayed at a distance, where no one was likely to notice her, to watch the cradle, and see what became of her dear little brother.

The river was called the river Nile. It was deep and wide, and in its waters were large and fearful creatures called crocodiles. But the little baby knew nothing of danger, and slept sweetly in its cradle among the flags. And it was as safe there as it would have been in its mother's arms, for it was under God's care. He had heard the mother's prayer, and he saved her baby from the deep waters, and from the great crocodiles, and from the hands of cruel men. It is a safe and a happy thing to be under God's care.

Before long, while the baby's sister

was still watching at a little distance, the king's daughter, the princess of Egypt, came with her ladies to wash by the river-side. The princess saw the little cradle among the flags, and she told one of her maids to bring it to her. So the cradle was drawn from the water, and brought to the princess; and when she took off the covering, she saw the baby lying there. It was one of the fairest and most beautiful babes that was ever seen; and the heart of the princess was moved with pity. Perhaps it missed its own dear mother's face among so many strangers, for it began to weep; and the princess at once thought that it was one of the babes of the people of Israel. She knew it would be very cruel to put it back into the river, so she said she would send it to

some woman of that nation, to nurse it, and bring it up for her.

It was God who put these kind thoughts into the heart of the princess of Egypt.

Now the baby's sister had ventured to come nearer and nearer, and she saw that the princess felt kindly towards her little brother. So she came up close to her, and said, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And the princess said to her, "Go." Then she ran and called the baby's own mother to take care of it. Think with what joy she would carry home the good news! How gladly would the fond mother hasten to the river-side, with a heart full of praise and thanks to God who had heard her prayers!

So the baby was taken home again to be nursed for the princess of Egypt. The princess called him her son, and she gave him the name of Moses, which means "drawn out."

While he was a little boy he lived with his parents, who brought him up with care, and taught him to know the only true God. For the people of Egypt did not know the true God. They put their trust in idols, and prayed to false gods, which could neither hear nor help them. But the children of Israel worshipped the true God.

When the princess thought Moses old enough, she took him to live with her in the palace. And there he was brought up like a king's son. He wore rich clothing, and rode out in a chariot, and

had servants to wait upon him. He had also masters to teach him all kinds of knowledge, for the people of Egypt were very wise ; they were the wisest people in the world at that time. But one thing you know they could not teach him, which was better than all the rest. They could not teach him about God. His parents had taught him this knowledge, and he did not forget their words.

Dear young reader, Are you like Moses in this ? Do you keep in mind what is told you about God, and about his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to die for sinners ? And if you do know anything of God, are you trying to please him ? Do you pray to him for the pardon of your sins, with your whole heart, or do you only say the words with your lips ?

Do you ever ask that the Holy Spirit would take away your naughty temper, and make you a child of God? Are you careful to obey your parents in all things? The way to be happy is to love God for Christ's sake, and obey him, and this is the way to obtain God's favour, which is better than all the riches in the world.

All this time, the children of Israel were kept as slaves by the cruel king. He made them work very hard, digging up the clay, and making the bricks; and he set task-masters over them, who beat them when they were tired and could not work. Now, though Moses was called the son of the princess of Egypt, and lived in the palace like a prince, he knew that he was one of the children of Israel;

and it grieved him to see the sufferings of his people. When he grew up to be a man, he wished very much to help them ; and he did not like to live in a splendid palace, and to be called the son of the princess, while they were so hard at work making bricks under the burning sun.

One day, Moses went to see the children of Israel when they were at work. He saw a wicked Egyptian cruelly beating one of them ; and Moses killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. But when the king heard of it he was in a great rage, and he said that Moses should be put to death for having killed one of the people of Egypt. So Moses was obliged to hide himself from the king ; and he

went into a distant country, and stayed there many years.

While Moses was in this distant country, he lived with a rich man, and took care of his sheep. It was a great change for him, after having lived in a palace in state and splendour, as if he had been a king's son. But Moses would not have been happy to live like a king's son while his people were in such bitter slavery. There was another reason why Moses could not have been happy amidst all the riches of Egypt. He knew the only true God ; his mother, no doubt, had piously instructed him. He did not like to see the people of Egypt bow down to worship idols, nor would he join in any of their evil ways. He chose rather to endure sorrow with



the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He wished to serve and please God. For he knew that this life must soon come to an end, and that only the people who love God here can go to live with him afterwards.

Those who have God's favour can be happy anywhere, and Moses, though he was now only a shepherd, never wished to return to his former greatness. He fed his flocks in a lonely place; and often, when he thought about the sad state of the children of Israel, whom he had left in Egypt, he used to pray that God would look upon them with pity, and deliver them from their cruel bondage. For God had chosen the children of Israel to be his own people;

and he had promised that he would some time give them a better country to live in,—a rich and lovely country, far away, where they should dwell in peace and joy, with none to make them afraid.

Moses was feeding his flocks in a lonely place, near to a high mountain. All at once he saw a great light, and when he looked, there was a bush at some distance burning with fire. The fire kept burning, but yet the bush was not burned away. This was very strange, and Moses said to himself, “I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.” Then he heard a voice, calling him by his name. The voice came out of the midst of the bush. It was the voice of God.

The voice said to Moses, “ Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

Why should we be afraid to look upon God? Because he is a holy God; but we are sinners, and have done many things to displease him. It was for our salvation that God sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world, to die upon the cross for our sins. If we believe in him, God will pardon us for his sake, and then, because his anger is turned away, we need not be afraid.

God told Moses that he would send him into Egypt again, to help the children of Israel, and to lead them to that rich

and lovely country, the promised land. But Moses was afraid to go. He thought the people would not believe that God had sent him. Then God gave him power to do great miracles, which should cause the children of Israel to believe. God also said that he would send Aaron, the brother of Moses, to meet him on his way to Egypt, and that Aaron should go with him to talk to the children of Israel, and to speak for them to the king.

So Moses took home the sheep, and said farewell to the rich man with whom he had lived; and he set out on his journey to Egypt. Aaron met him on his way, as God had told him, and the two brothers, no doubt, were very glad to see each other again.

Then Moses and Aaron went to the children of Israel, and Moses showed them wonders by which they might know that he came from God. And they gave thanks to God, who had looked upon their sorrow, and heard their prayers. So Moses and Aaron went next to the king, to ask leave for the children of Israel to go away from Egypt.

Many years had passed by while Moses had been living in a distant country, and the old king of Egypt was dead. But the new king was even more cruel and hard-hearted than the other had been. He did not worship the true God. And he said to Moses and Aaron, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel

go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” And though he saw the wonders that Moses did,—for God enabled Moses to work miracles,—he would not believe; but made the children of Israel work harder than ever, and caused the task-masters to beat them more cruelly than before.

Then God was very angry, and he sent great plagues upon the king, and upon all the land of Egypt. But the children of Israel were free from them. At one time the great river, the river Nile, was turned into blood. Another time, there was a great swarm of frogs, which came into all the houses, and even into the bed-chamber of the king. Another plague was a grievous sickness among the cattle, so that many of them

died. And there came a terrible hail-storm, with thunder and lightning, and the hailstones fell upon all that was in the land of Egypt, and broke the trees of the field. Another plague was a thick darkness over all the land, which lasted for three days. The darkness was in every house, and in every place, among the people of Egypt. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

These were some of the plagues which God sent to punish the wicked king; but his heart became harder and harder, and he would not let the children of Israel go. At last, God sent a dreadful plague, worse than any that had gone before.

In the middle of the night, when all

was still, and all the houses were shut up close, on a sudden there was heard a great cry in Egypt—a great and mournful cry, for there was not a house in which there was not one dead. God had struck with death the first-born in every family; from the eldest child of the king who sat upon the throne, to the eldest child of the captive in his dungeon. And there was grief and mourning through all the land.

Then the king called for Moses and Aaron while it was yet dark, and told them to make haste away from Egypt, and to take with them all the children of Israel from among his people. He was afraid to keep them any longer. The people of Egypt also begged them to go away; for they were afraid that



they would all die if the Israelites did not go. So they helped them to get ready, and sent them away with speed. And the children of Israel left the land of Egypt, with all their flocks and herds. There was a very great number; and Moses and Aaron went with them to lead them to the fair country where they were to live—to the promised land.

God showed them the way that they must go. A pillar of cloud went before them in the day-time; and at night it became a pillar of fire to give them light. How wonderful is God's care and kindness towards his people! He knows what they have need of, and keeps them from every evil. Soon a great danger came, to show the

children of Israel that they might safely trust in him.

Even before they had left Egypt, the wicked king began to repent that he had given them leave to go. So he called for his chariots and his horsemen, and went after them with a great army. He overtook them just as they had reached the borders of the sea, called the Red Sea. The children of Israel heard the noise of his chariots, and they looked and saw this terrible army coming near. Before them was the deep sea. On each side of them were high mountains. Behind them was the king of Egypt, with all his army. They trembled and were very much afraid, for they saw no way of escape. But Moses told them not to

fear, for God would save them from their danger, and they should never see the people of Egypt, nor the cruel king, again. Then Moses and the children of Israel prayed to God for help.

And God told Moses to lift up his rod, and stretch his hand over the sea. And when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, the waters began to divide, and were lifted up like a wall on each side, and the dry ground lay between. So the children of Israel walked through the sea on dry ground.

The king of Egypt and his army, his chariots and his horsemen, went after them into the midst of the sea. But when the children of Israel had crossed over, with their flocks and

herds, and were all safe on the other side, God caused the deep waters to return to their place, and the proud and wicked people of Egypt were buried in the waves.

When the children of Israel saw this, they sang a song of praise to God, who had saved them in their great and terrible danger. The sister of Moses was there ; perhaps that sister who had waited by the river-side when he was a little baby, and lay in his cradle of rushes among the flags. She played sweet music, and sang to it a song of praise. These were some of the words of her song : “ Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

So now the children of Israel could

go on their journey without fear. They had seen the great power and goodness of God. They knew that the cruel people of Egypt could not trouble them again. And they all said that they would obey the commands of God, which he gave to them by the voice of Moses his servant, whom he had chosen to lead them to the promised land.

Now, young reader, my story is ended. When you think of little Moses lying in his cradle of rushes on the deep river, remember that it was God who kept him alive. The same God takes care of you, and keeps you from day to day. You could not live for a single moment if he were to leave you to yourself. Try, then, to please him, as Moses did, by loving him, and doing his

holy will. The kind Saviour will help you to do right, if you pray to him; for he loves little children, and was once himself a little child. And if you trust in him for the pardon of your sins, he will guide you safely through every danger while you live, and bring you at last to that better country where you shall see his face, and join with happy angels, and saints in glory, in songs of praise to God and to the Lamb.



THE CHOICE OF MOSES.

Heb. xi. 24—26.

WISE and happy was the choice
Which believing Moses made :
Hearkening unto Wisdom's voice,
He the heavenly call obey'd.

'Twas by faith he did refuse
Egypt's wealth and pomp to share ;
And affliction rather choose,
With the saints of God, to bear.

Sinful pleasures, well he knew,
Only for a season last ;
Ending all in misery too,
When the short-liv'd joy is past.

That reproach of Christ he bore,
Greater riches he esteem'd
Than the whole of Egypt's store,
Boundless as her treasure seem'd.

Moses knew that Israel's God
Better things for him design'd,
And a more secure reward
Than in Egypt he could find.

Oh may I, in youthful days,
Make the choice of Moses mine ;
Walk betimes in wisdom's ways,
And the joys of sin resign.



